FOUNDER-OWNED & BUILT TO LAST

Planning for the Next 14 Years, Not the Exit

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Systech MDP is planning on an entirely different timescale to the standard private equity clock, and we think it is worth explaining why.

Ask most people in professional services how long a private-equity-backed firm's current ownership will last, and the honest answer is: not very. Three to seven years is the typical hold period before a fund needs to realise its return, whatever stage the business, its clients, or its people happen to be at when that clock runs out.

Two founders, both 66, planning to build for another 14 years

Our founding shareholders are both 66 years old. Rather than treating that as a signal to plan an exit, they are planning to continue running and growing Systech MDP **until they are 80**. That is not a typo, and it is not a vanity project. It reflects a simple belief: that a professional services firm built on relationships, judgement and reputation is worth more, and serves its clients and people better, when it is **built for decades rather than for a defined investment cycle**.

This is unusual in the UK, where founder-led professional services firms typically sell, merge, or bring in external capital well before their founders reach their seventies, often because there is no other route to liquidity or succession on offer. It is far less unusual in the United States, where a longer tradition exists of founders continuing to lead, chair, or actively shape businesses well into their seventies and beyond, backed by strong professional management beneath them. Systech MDP is deliberately following that model rather than the more common UK pattern of an early sale.

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Longevity supported by strength, not just by will

Planning to lead for another 14 years only works if it is backed by real governance and real depth of management, and that is exactly how the business is structured. Our founders are supported by a senior management team running the business day to day, and by non-executive directors bringing independent challenge and external perspective to the boardroom.

This is not two individuals holding onto control. It is **long-term ownership deliberately paired with strong internal leadership and external governance**, so that continuity does not depend on any single person, and so that the business is genuinely well run at every level, not just well led at the top.

Family joining the business, and being promoted on merit

Family members have joined Systech MDP, and it would be easy to assume that comes with the usual concerns about nepotism that so often surround family businesses. It does not, because **promotion here is on merit, the same as for anyone else in the firm**. Family members are expected to earn their progression exactly as any other colleague would, through the quality of their work and their client relationships, not through their surname.

At the same time, we have been actively headhunting genuine industry leaders into the senior management team, bringing in external expertise and challenge alongside the family members who have chosen to build their careers here. That combination, family succession earned on merit, sitting alongside external talent recruited specifically to strengthen the business, is a refreshing model in a market where the alternative is so often a scripted PE exit.

A genuine alternative to the standard PE exit strategy

The standard playbook for a PE-backed professional services firm is well known: acquire, professionalise the reporting, drive margin through utilisation and cost discipline, and sell within the fund's investment horizon, typically to another PE house or a larger consolidator. Employees experience that cycle as a series of ownership changes, often every five to seven years, each bringing new priorities, new reporting lines, and sometimes redundancies driven by portfolio-level cost synergies that have nothing to do with how the business is actually performing.

Systech MDP offers a genuine alternative. Ownership is not for sale to the next fund in the cycle. Leadership is not planning an exit; it is planning for growth over the next decade and beyond, backed by a strengthening management team and considered succession, including family members who have earned their place alongside recruited industry leaders. For clients, that means a consultancy that will still be here, under the same values and the same long-term thinking, in fourteen years' time. For our people, it means **a career built on a foundation that is not quietly counting down to someone else's exit date.**

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If a business built for the long term, rather than for the next transaction, is the kind of place you want to build your career, we would like to hear from you.

Systech MDP is founder-owned and privately financed. This article sets out the firm's long-term ownership and succession approach and is general commentary, not a statement about any specific transaction.