

FINANCE

## M&A is poised for a comeback. Here's how this AI-powered dealmaking startup is getting in on the action.

[Bianca Chan](#) Dec 19, 2024, 4:15 AM EST



Louisa AI



- **Rohan Doctor was a managing director at Goldman Sachs when he founded Louisa AI.**
- **The startup uses AI to feed deal ideas and networking prompts to bankers and investors.**
- **Here's why he wants to bring the dealmaking playbook to startups.**

Cold call after cold call, Rohan Doctor wasn't getting as far as he would've hoped.

The former Goldman Sachs managing director had emailed a list of digital strategy execs at banks and private equity firms to try to sell them on his startup, Louisa AI. But he only got a handful of replies back.

Two years since its launch, Louisa AI has secured about a dozen clients, including some of the biggest names in corporate America. They include Goldman Sachs, VC firm Insight Partners, and, more recently, one of the biggest AI chipmakers and a top consulting firm. But he didn't secure those contracts from cold outreach. He used his own startup's technology, which proactively prompts deal ideas based on people's personal and professional connections, to get in through the front door.

Now, Doctor wants to bring his dealmaking playbook to other startups ahead of an anticipated M&A boom.

"If we're able to close more deals through warm relationships this way, then other startups can, too," he said.

The near-term outlook for M&A activity has gotten brighter, with lower interest rates reducing the cost of borrowing. Wall Street execs are optimistic that Trump's return to the White House, and any business-friendly regulations that may come with it, will be a tailwind for dealmaking. Also, companies resetting their valuations could spur more transactions to close as price expectations align between buyers and sellers.

Meanwhile, in Silicon Valley, VCs and founders are hopeful about the anticipated looser environment, which could boost tech building and dealmaking. VCs, which rely on selling startups in M&A deals for many

of their returns, have been dampened by the Federal Trade Commission's antitrust stance on M&A.



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Louisa AI was built to suggest potential deals based on the data it's exposed to. It ingests information about who and what employees know by plugging into company CRMs, messaging platforms like Slack and Symphony, and email providers. Since spinning out of Goldman Sachs in 2023, Louisa AI has raised \$5 million in seed funding. It suggests about \$1 billion in deal values per quarter, Doctor said.

It also highlights mutual connections to establish a warm introduction, which can make all the difference in the multi-billion investment banking industry built on relationships. While running the bank-solutions group at Goldman Sachs, Rohan Doctor used his network to close transactions worth tens of millions of dollars. As a startup founder, it's been a different story.

"I've tried the cold outreach and just emailing," Doctor said, adding that the startup stopped doing that after it didn't yield good results. What has worked for Doctor is realizing he knows someone who knows someone.

Louisa AI scored the chipmaker contract after the AI flagged that one of Doctor's staff used to work for someone who now worked at the chip manufacturer. With the consultancy, one of Louisa AI's investors connected Doctor with the consulting firm they used to work for. He declined to name these firms due to non-disclosure agreements.

"Everything needs to be warm when it comes to big companies doing big things with other people. It has to rely on trust," he said.