

# THE FOUNDERS CIRCLE

ClearCourse<sup>®</sup>

Issue 2  
Q2 2026

## Rezcontrol's story

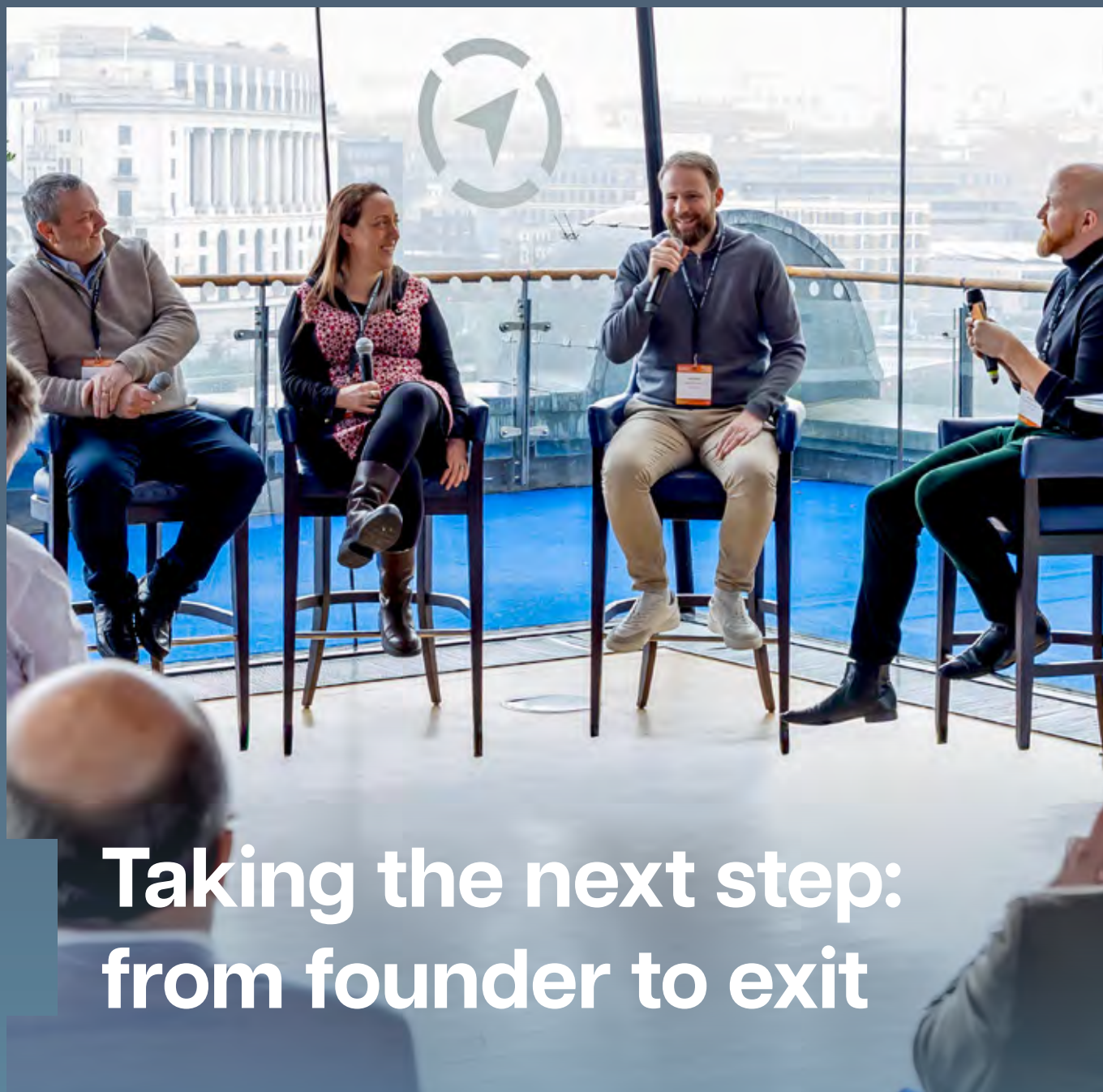
We spoke with Rezcontrol owners Sarah and Mark to find out about life since acquisition.

## Due diligence

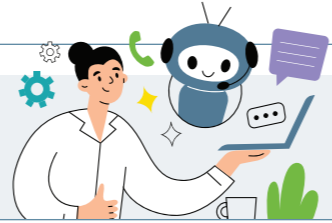
Learn what each part of your business needs to get the most from due diligence.

## New acquisitions

Meet Motosoft and Kurve, our newest acquisitions within Field Services and Hospitality.



**Taking the next step:  
from founder to exit**



# Understanding the role of AI in acquisitions – what to consider



**Andrew Gore**  
Chief Technology and Transformation Officer

**AI is currently dominating the headlines across almost every industry, and software perhaps most of all. There is no area of software that remains unaffected by the vast and rapid rollout of artificial intelligence tools – what you build, how you build it, and how your team uses it.**

Unsurprisingly, the acquisition process is no different.

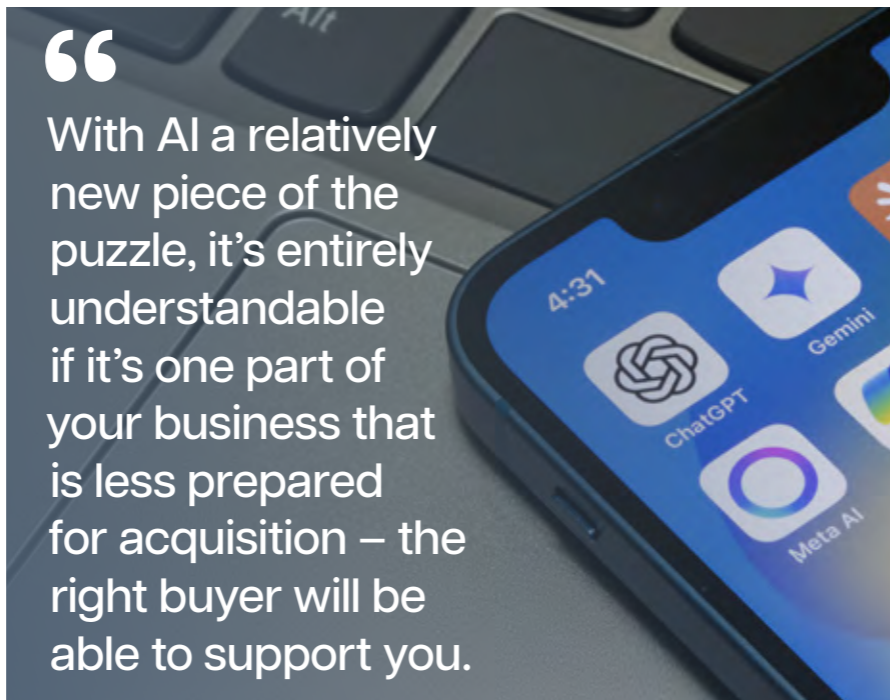
The issue is – when you're selling your business – there's a whole lot of other things to think about; things that you've likely been working on for many years.

With AI a relatively new piece of the puzzle, it's entirely understandable if it's one part of your business that is less prepared for acquisition. Don't worry – we're here to tell you that that's okay. The right buyer will be able to support you.

There are two main areas to think about with regard to AI when selling your business:

Firstly, due diligence. During this process you will be asked about your AI strategy, how it adds value to your product and what steps have been taken so far to take full advantage of it.

If you're still in the infancy of your AI rollout, don't panic. What's crucial at this stage – as with the other areas of due diligence – is that you can show you've been looking into it and are on the correct path to incorporating it where there is real evidence that it will make a difference.



“With AI a relatively new piece of the puzzle, it's entirely understandable if it's one part of your business that is less prepared for acquisition – the right buyer will be able to support you.”

If this is only in specific areas of your product, or you are still researching where it is most effective – that's okay.

The key is that you're open and curious about the possibilities and have not just shut down the conversation because you lack knowledge.

Secondly, you need to look at acquirers who can support you with your AI strategy. As previously mentioned, there's nothing wrong with being at the very start of your AI journey, but if that's the case it is crucial that you find a buyer who can provide expert knowledge and guidance along the way.

At ClearCourse, we've been considering and implementing AI across our products and practices for a while now.

We have an AI strategy in place across the entire group that encompasses how we build practical solutions for customers, and how we empower our teams with tools internally.

Spearheaded by our newly appointed AI Transformation Lead who's been working in the world of artificial intelligence since 2013, we are committed to rolling out AI best practices wherever possible, using the tool to improve our product development and better serve our customers.

If you're looking for a new home for your business that will help you harness the powers of AI to grow your product further – while steering away from the negative connotations that are often wrongly placed upon it – get in touch with our team to kickstart those conversations.



# Latest acquisitions at ClearCourse

## Motasoftware joins ClearCourse, deepening our specialist garage management offer in Field Services

Running a garage means juggling a lot, from bookings and parts to invoices and customer calls.

Motasoftware was built to take the pressure off, giving independent automotive businesses one place to manage it all.

Founded in Bristol and shaped by decades of hands-on experience in the trade, Motasoftware joins ClearCourse within our Field Services vertical, sitting alongside GDS, with its own niche and features built around the specific needs of its customers.

Managing Director Andrew Burgess is looking forward to what's next: "We're particularly excited to develop an



Above  
The Motasoftware Team – (L-R) Leon Murphy, Andrew Burgess, Andy Meikle

embedded payments solution under the Motasoftware brand, removing the traditional separation between the software platform and the payment experience."

ClearCourse CEO Christina Hamilton added: "Together we will continue to invest in sector-specific features,

embedded payments and AI functionality, helping UK SMEs get more from the tools they rely on every day."

For Motasoftware's customers, it's business as usual, with more resource, more expertise, and the backing of a group that knows their sector.

## Kurve joins the group, strengthening ClearCourse's hospitality offer with self-serve ordering technology

For hospitality operators, the pressures of rising wage costs, labour shortages, and customers who increasingly want to order on their own terms are changing the landscape.

Kurve helps them tackle these challenges whilst continuing to deliver excellent customer experiences.

Its digital, self-service-first technology, including self-service kiosks and specialist EPOS, is already trusted by quick service restaurants, bakeries, theatres, and cafes across the UK.

Now, as part of ClearCourse, Kurve sits alongside TISSL, Rezcontrol and Giftpro, creating the foundations for



Above  
(L-R) Toby Usher, Steven Rolfe, Steve Boyes, James Prosser

a genuinely connected hospitality platform, where ordering, payments, and gift card redemption work together seamlessly.

CEO Steven Rolfe said: "This partnership will enable us to bring together specialist hospitality technology with embedded

payments, delivering more complete and seamless solutions to our customers."

ClearCourse CEO Christina Hamilton added: "They differentiate our offering in the hospitality sector, and we are excited by the natural integration points this partnership will bring."



# Demystifying M&A – advice from ClearCourse experts



**Andrew Gore**  
Chief Technology and  
Transformation Officer

**Andrew Gore, Chief Technology and Transformation Officer, has been part of our team at ClearCourse since 2019.**



**Jesse Williamson**  
Head of M&A

**Jesse Williamson joined as Head of M&A in January 2026 to help support our continuous growth across both existing markets and new verticals.**

## Can you tell us about your roles and how you're involved in acquisitions?

Andrew: I've been involved in most of ClearCourse's acquisitions to date, which means I've seen a lot of different businesses, tech stacks, and approaches. My main focus is leading the technology and operational due diligence side of things. In practice, that means getting under the hood of a business – looking at their systems, infrastructure, security, how scalable their platform is, and how operationally mature they are as a team. I'm also thinking ahead to what integration might look like and where there are opportunities to create real value once a business joins the group.

Jesse: My main role is to help us partner with best-in-class

entrepreneurs, technology and business leaders, with the aim of accelerating our mission to be the leading engine powering UK SMEs.

M&A is the strategic heart of ClearCourse and when our strategies are executed with precision, we create value and provide the leverage to help everyone at ClearCourse, as well as our customers and end users, achieve success.

## How do you assess businesses that are considering joining the group?

Jesse: First, we look for strong, recurring SaaS revenues, ideally with a clear payments opportunity. Financially, we focus on businesses that are achieving – or are close to achieving – the Rule of 40, balancing revenue growth and EBITDA performance.

Second, the quality of the management team is critical. Leaders who genuinely care about their product, customers, and people tend to navigate both the acquisition and integration process far more effectively.

Andrew: From a technology perspective, we prioritise security and resilience as baseline requirements. Beyond that, we look for platforms with the capacity to scale, and clear opportunities for further growth and innovation within the group.

We're not just assessing where a business is today; we're thinking about where it could go.

## How would you explain what tech due diligence involves?

Andrew: I'd describe it as a structured yet collaborative deep dive into the business – but not something to be daunted by.

It starts with an introductory call to outline what to expect and answer any questions before the session is scheduled face-to-face. Our M&A team issue an information request list (IRL) and provide access to a virtual data room to store all necessary documentation.

The session itself is then led by our external advisors; we cover the product, its architecture, development practices, operational processes, support model and team structure,

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“At ClearCourse, we're big believers in what we call 'Guided Autonomy' – we want businesses to keep doing what made them great in the first place.”

with a consistent focus on security and resilience. We'll also consider integration and where we see opportunities further down the line.

An independent report is then produced which provides an objective assessment, ensuring all key points can be reflected in post-acquisition planning.

Whilst the process is detailed, it's often just as useful for the seller as it is for us.

## What do you wish more founders understood about the due diligence process?

Jesse: The most important thing to remember about due diligence is that it's not a test or an audit, it's about discovery. There are no right or wrong answers, what matters is transparency and building a clear, honest understanding of how the business operates.

It's also important to go in with an open mindset. Due diligence isn't about being perfect, it's about being clear. In our experience, founders who are straightforward about both their strengths and their weaknesses tend to have much more constructive conversations, and better outcomes as a result.

## When it comes to technical due diligence, what are the key areas you focus on?

Andrew: There are four areas we focus on most closely.

First of all, security. We need to ensure the data, systems and processes are protected and there is a mature approach to risk management and compliance. Following this we think about resilience – understanding how reliable and robust the platform is, including uptime, disaster recovery and operational continuity.

Thirdly, we consider scalability. Can the technology handle growth? Can it deal with more customers? More transactions? More product capability? All without costs or complexity spiralling out of control. Ultimately, we want to understand where the platform is today, and how well-positioned it is for what comes next.

Finally, we look at how suitable the platform is for integration into the wider group, and what potential it has to support further growth, innovation and future opportunity.

## What practical steps can founders take today to prepare for tech due diligence?

Andrew: There is plenty founders can prepare. Most importantly, ensure fundamentals are well documented. An overview of infrastructure, architecture diagrams, development processes, security protocols and disaster recovery arrangements will all speed up the due diligence process.

You can also review your security posture, including things like access controls, how you handle data protection, vulnerability management, and whether you have evidence of regular testing or audits, and identify – and fix – any obvious gaps now instead of having them surface mid-process.

It's helpful to have a clear understanding of how the platform scales too and be able to explain trade-offs transparently. Approaching the whole process with openness is vital – due diligence is not about perfection or finding weaknesses, it's about gaining clarity.

On the practical side, get your paperwork in order. Having key contracts, third-party agreements, IP documentation, technical policies organised and easy to access will save a lot of time once you receive an information request list.

## Once a business joins, what operational and technical support is put in place?

Jesse: Selling a business is a once-in-a-lifetime event – and getting there is no small feat. We recognise that and so aim to make the first few months' post-completion as straightforward as possible. There will always be a few immediate priorities to work through, but we're conscious of not piling on unnecessary change all at once, and will always be pragmatic to minimise disruption.

Andrew: After the first few months, our central technology and operations teams work with the business to agree a structured integration plan. Depending on complexity, this runs over a three to 12-month period and is designed to support integration, strengthen foundations and create opportunities for further growth.

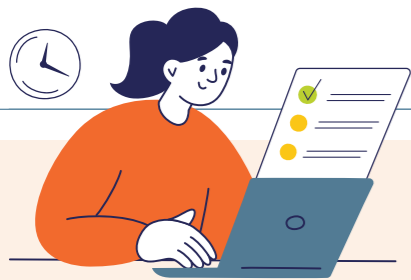
## What kind of support do founders tend to value most after joining ClearCourse?

Jesse: Every business is a little different, but the thing founders tend to appreciate most is support in navigating what it means to be part of a larger group.

We're big believers in what we call "Guided Autonomy" – basically, we want businesses to keep doing what made them great in the first place. But there's no getting around it: there are new processes to learn, governance expectations to meet, and relationships to build. Having proper support through that transition makes a real difference.

Each founder will have a dedicated point of contact who provides guidance on internal processes where needed and helps prioritise activities. Think of them as your go-to person when you're not sure who to call or what to do next. We also encourage them to remain close to the M&A team as these familiar relationships offer support as they're introduced to the wider leadership team and the rest of the business so that everyone knows who you are, what you do, and the people behind it all.

Our main focus here is making the transition as smooth as possible, and we find this goes a long way in helping a new business feel like part of the family from day one.



## ENSURING A SUCCESSFUL ACQUISITION

### PART 2 OF 4

# Navigating the due diligence process – what you need

**Due diligence is a vital stage of acquisition where the potential buyer will evaluate your business to identify any potential risks, reviewing financial records, product information, organisational structure and legal documentation.**

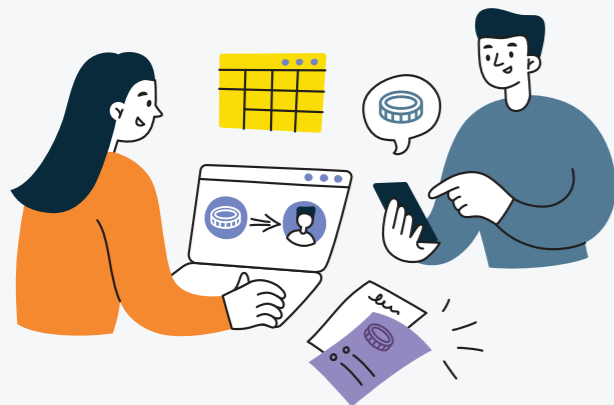
of time ensures there are no unexpected set-backs. But remember, due diligence is fact-finding, not fault-finding. The purpose is to confirm the value, identify risks, and jointly agree on what should be addressed post-acquisition.

Before you enter into due diligence, it is important to ensure you have all the necessary information ready and in an appropriate format – unorganised data can severely slow down the process and delay a sale, so preparing ahead

In our issue next quarter, we'll explore what you need to prepare from a legal and compliance perspective to ensure a successful acquisition, helping you tackle one of the latter stages of the process, and guarantee your business is backed by the necessary support in all four key areas.

## Finance

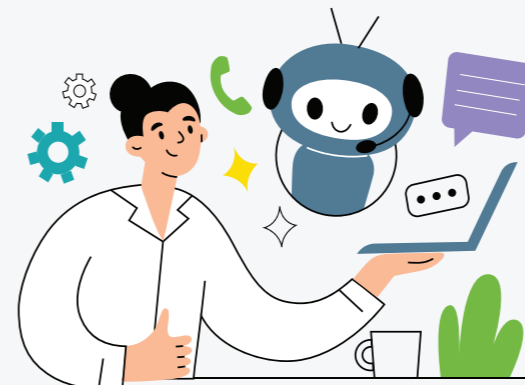
Ahead of due diligence beginning, you should ensure all financials are organised so your buyer can model future performance with confidence.



- **What we're looking for**
  - Revenue breakdown (recurring vs. non-recurring)
  - Customer concentration analysis
  - Position on aged debtors
  - Tax compliance.
- **What's less important?**
  - Short-term fluctuations explained by context
  - Imperfect KPIs or dashboards.
- **What's good to consider?**
  - Any pending or historical liabilities
  - Clarity on deferred revenue and multi-year contracts
  - Long term contracts/capital commitments.

## Operations

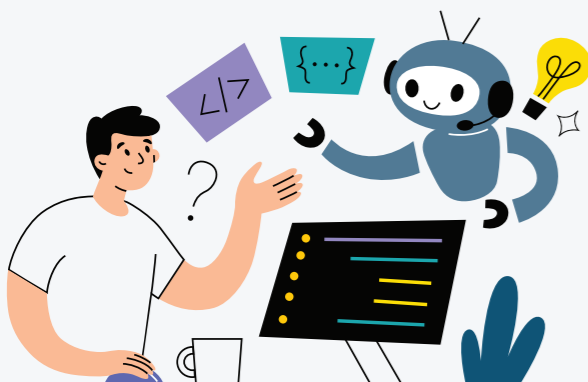
Clearly defined core processes, contracts, agreements and dependencies are necessary for operations to ensure resilience and identify any single points of failure.



- **What we're looking for**
  - Customer onboarding and support processes
  - Contract templates and SLAs
  - Vendor contracts and renewals
  - Insurance certification and related claims.
- **What's less important?**
  - Ad-hoc internal communications or workflows
  - Manual task tracking.
- **What's good to consider?**
  - Any regulatory exposure (sector-dependent).

## Tech

For tech, it's important to have clear documentation across your operations, so buyers can assess scalability, risk and the true cost of integration.



- **What we're looking for**
  - Architecture overview, hosting models, APIs and integrations
  - Security controls and access management
  - Evidence of product stability (uptime, incident logs etc.)
  - An appetite for AI and how that could shape your future product
- **What's less important?**
  - Legacy systems that can be modernised
  - Manual deployments or outdated tooling .
- **What's good to consider?**
  - IP verifications and licence compliance
  - Technical debt that must be prioritised post-completion.

## HR

During due diligence your buyer will want to understand the team they're inheriting and plan for retention.



- **What we're looking for**
  - Full list of employees, contractors and associated costs
  - Payroll compliance and benefits structure.
- **What's less important?**
  - Lack of formal performance management
  - Minimal training documentation.
- **What's good to consider?**
  - Identifying key personnel for retention plans .



THE ACQUISITION EXPERIENCE



“It’s been nine months since we sold our business to ClearCourse and I have to say so far, we’ve been treated brilliantly.”

Sarah Cade

**Opposite**  
Some of the Rezcontrol team at a recent social

**Left**  
Sarah Cade, Rezcontrol Product Director

# Rezcontrol: a real-life review of the acquisition journey

We spoke to Sarah and Mark Cade, who ran and sold Rezcontrol, to get their thoughts on the acquisition process and how life has been since joining ClearCourse in June 2025.

**What mattered to you most when choosing a buyer?**

Sarah: We didn’t specifically look for a buyer, we embarked upon an exploratory exercise to see if any of the interest we’d been getting was serious, and it grew legs!

Mark: Our priority was finding a place where our team could continue their careers, grow into new roles if desired, or keep doing they work they’ve excelled at for 30 years.

**How did you find the due diligence process?**

Sarah: It’s hard to put into words. Your business is deeply personal, and it’s hard to expose it for others to see. I learned a huge amount and took comfort throughout the process that

if the deal didn’t complete for any reason, I would use what I’d learned to improve the business, and myself as a business leader.

However, it did complete of course, and it’s probably the proudest achievement of my career.

Mark: I couldn’t have handled the process alone. Our advisor helped us separate emotion from facts and stay practical. Something that seems like a big problem in the moment often proves to be minor when you look back.

**What surprised you most after joining ClearCourse?**

Sarah: I was pleasantly surprised at how warmly we were welcomed and how highly our business was thought of. It made me feel super proud.

Mark: The team. Matt, the Managing Director of our Hospitality vertical and Josh, MD of Retail have been excellent. Our management accountant too has really helped support us as we’ve integrated.

**How did your role change – immediately, and after the first six months?**

Sarah: Immediately, there was no change to my role. However, over the following months it evolved significantly. I was given additional responsibilities that were completely new to me, which was a great opportunity to learn and develop new skills. At times it felt a little confusing, but after I shared how I was feeling, I was quickly provided with extra support. This made everything much more manageable and helped me adapt confidently to the new expectations.

Mark: My schedule now includes additional meetings, which has required some adjustments to established workflows, but has helped improve collaboration and alignment across teams. Our initial focus was on payment conversion and client onboarding, followed by technical

integrations with other ClearCourse brands, supporting broader connectivity and growth.

**What new support or resources came after acquisition?**

Sarah: HR support is a big one. Having HR taken care of centrally has made a real difference and allowed us to focus more on our core work. Central marketing support has also been a valuable addition, giving us access to more expertise and resources than we had previously.

Mark: I initially felt anxious about the GDPR and PCI audits, however the team handled the entire process effortlessly. Their experience and preparation meant everything was managed efficiently – it was a relief.

**Is there anything you’d do differently if you went through the process again?**

Sarah: I’d make sure our accounting practices were a little tidier to make it easier to produce data when it’s requested, but that’s about it.

Mark: Ideally, I would have had an external team review my business to

address any issues before starting the process. However, in reality, every business and acquisition reveals things you wish you’d handled differently, so a pragmatic approach is necessary, and an M&A advisor is essential.

**What would you say to someone considering ClearCourse as a new home?**

Sarah: It’s been nine months since we sold our business to ClearCourse and I have to say so far, we’ve been treated brilliantly. No promises have been broken and ClearCourse do everything they can to make sure you, you team, and your business is supported.

Mark: ClearCourse is ideal if you’re looking for a company that will keep advancing your product and offer your team room to develop professionally.

**What are you most excited for with Rezcontrol in the future?**

Sarah: Progression for our brilliant team and lots more Rezcontrol customers.

Mark: To reach 1,000 customers!



“Having access to key ClearCourse personnel and founders was so useful – a very relaxed atmosphere and a great community spirit.”

Comment from a ‘Getting Deal Ready’ event attendee

# Getting Deal Ready – our recent event for software founders

February 2026 saw us host our first official M&A event and launch **The Founders Circle**, an exclusive community where software founders can learn more about finding a new home for their business.

This event was established following feedback from our own internal founder community, remarking on how valuable it had been to them to find a network of peers and experts that they could learn from before and during the acquisition process. We wanted to create a space where founders could help each other with common challenges and answer questions about running a business and navigating a sale, without any pressure or compromise to their existing businesses.

The day was a great success packed with insights, panel discussions and networking opportunities, and we’d like to extend our thanks to everyone that contributed and joined in.



(L-R) Nigel Bayles, Adam Rayner, Steve White, Andrew Gore and Jesse Williamson in conversation

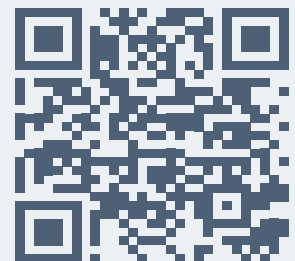


Our recent event saw founders and business leaders come together for discussion

## Join ClearCourse Founder Events

We are always looking for great businesses to join ClearCourse and will be hosting events in London, Manchester and Bristol where you can learn about acquisitions, due diligence, and valuation, and connect with founders.

**To register for updates on dates and how to book, scan the QR code or visit:**  
[clearcourse.co.uk/founders-circle](https://clearcourse.co.uk/founders-circle)



 [clearcourse.co.uk](https://clearcourse.co.uk)

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**ClearCourse**   
SOFTWARE + PAYMENTS

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