

Revenue Multiples by Industry: 2026

A revenue multiple is two numbers multiplied together, and only one of them is a view about the business. Across 118 US-listed constituents computed on 21 August 2026, median EV/Revenue by industry runs from **0.87x** in healthcare services and distribution to **12.72x** in semiconductors, a spread of **14.6 to 1**. On the same constituents, at the same prices, on the same day, EV/EBITDA industry medians span **4.9 to 1**.

The reason is an identity, not a correlation. EV/Revenue equals EV/EBITDA multiplied by EBITDA margin, and across the 117 constituents with positive trailing EBITDA it holds to **0.0000%**. Windsor Drake calls this **The Margin Bridge**: every revenue multiple is two claims wearing one number, how the market prices the earnings and how much of the revenue becomes earnings. Decomposing the variance of the log revenue multiple, margin accounts for **69%** and the earnings multiple for **31%**, and the two are uncorrelated at **-0.04**.

The consequence shows up in the rankings. Sort the 117 constituents by revenue multiple, then by earnings multiple, and **36 of them, or 31%, move at least 30 places**. C.H. Robinson sits 109th on revenue and 21st on earnings; EQT sits 55th and 113th. Whichever metric a conversation opens with is a choice, and it changes which businesses look expensive.

This report computes the industry benchmark, walks the bridge company by company, sets out where revenue is defensibly the better anchor and where accepting it concedes the better number, and reads the financing environment these multiples sit inside. It is the revenue-side companion to Windsor Drake's study of EBITDA multiples across the same universe, built on the same constituent set so the bridge between the two is exact.

What revenue multiples do industries trade at in 2026?

The table below is computed, not licensed. Enterprise value is market capitalisation plus total debt less cash and short-term investments, struck on 21 August 2026 against trailing twelve month revenue. Every constituent is named in the deck appendix so the calculation can be checked or disputed.

Table 1. Median EV/Revenue by Industry, 21 August 2026

Industry	Median EV/Revenue
Semiconductors	12.72x
Utilities	5.72x
Chemicals	5.23x
Restaurants and hospitality	5.12x
Internet and digital media	4.96x
Biopharma	4.96x
Industrial machinery	4.92x
Software	4.87x
Business and professional services	4.37x
Medical devices	4.08x
Consumer staples	3.80x
Aerospace and defence	3.37x
Oil and gas exploration and production	2.93x
Telecom and cable	2.86x
Transport and logistics	2.63x
Retail	1.77x
Healthcare services and distribution	0.87x
All constituents	4.08x

Source: Windsor Drake analysis of market capitalisation, reported balance sheets and trailing twelve month financials, 21 August 2026. 118 constituents across 17 industries.

The all-constituent median is **4.08x** on a quartile band of **2.51x to 6.14x**, with a full range of **0.22x** at Cencora to **20.35x** at NVIDIA. Thirteen of the seventeen industries sit between 2.86x and 5.72x, so the headline spread is produced almost entirely by the two ends, and several industries in that compressed middle reverse position when ranked on earnings.

Width matters as much as level. Business and professional services spans **5.4x** between its quartiles and oil and gas **1.1x**, while the median industry spans **1.8x**. A wide band means the industry label is doing less work than the position inside it. Scale is priced in the tails: the largest market-capitalisation quartile clears **6.29x** against **2.80x** for the smallest, with the middle two indistinguishable at 4.41x and 4.38x.

What drives the spread between industries?

Margin, almost entirely. Home Depot clears 2.34x revenue, a 15.65x earnings multiple applied to a 14.97% margin. Microsoft clears 10.94x, an 18.70x earnings multiple applied to a 58.53% margin. Of the 8.60x gap, margin carries **6.82x** and the earnings multiple **1.79x**. Taking the earnings multiple first assigns margin 8.15x instead, so margin dominates on either convention.

Sorted into EBITDA margin bands, the median revenue multiple rises from **0.65x** in the lowest band to **8.56x** in the highest, a thirteenfold range, while the median earnings multiple stays between **13.9x** and **16.0x**, a spread of 2.1 turns with no trend. The market is applying a similar earnings multiple to a larger slice of revenue rather than paying more for high-margin businesses. That matters most at the bottom of the table, where a low multiple reads as a discount and usually is not one.

Table 2. The Thin-Margin Floor: Both Metrics on the Same Constituents, 21 August 2026

Company	EV/Revenue	EV/EBITDA	Implied EBITDA margin
Cencora	0.22x	13.0x	1.7%
McKesson	0.26x	15.1x	1.7%
Best Buy	0.49x	7.9x	6.2%
UnitedHealth Group	0.87x	14.8x	5.9%
C.H. Robinson	1.09x	19.9x	5.5%
Walmart	1.19x	18.6x	6.4%

Source: Windsor Drake analysis, 21 August 2026. Implied margin is EV/Revenue divided by EV/EBITDA, which recovers the margin term exactly.

Two of these six are expensive: C.H. Robinson ranks 109th of 117 on revenue and 21st on earnings, and Walmart 106th and 34th. Cencora and McKesson each convert 1.7% of revenue and trade on 13x to 15x earnings, so their 0.22x and 0.26x describe a pass-through cost base rather than a verdict.

The ceiling behaves symmetrically. Micron Technology converts **75.57%** of revenue to EBITDA and EQT **75.35%**, two tenths of a point apart, yet Micron clears 11.86x revenue and EQT 4.22x. The entire 2.8x difference is the earnings multiple, 15.7x against 5.6x. Oil and gas carries the set's highest median margin at **51.3%** and its lowest median earnings multiple at **5.60x**. High margin lifts the revenue multiple mechanically and buys nothing on the earnings multiple.

When is revenue the right metric rather than EBITDA?

The defensible case is narrow: the current margin is a poor forecast of the steady-state margin. That describes growth businesses spending ahead of revenue, where cost is closer to investment than to cost of service; businesses mid-transition between delivery models, where the reported margin belongs to neither; and cohorts

where most comparables report negative earnings, so an earnings multiple has no denominator. In this set of 118, one constituent is in that position: Boeing, at **2.10x** revenue on negative trailing EBITDA.

Software is the cohort where the argument holds on its merits, because sales, marketing and research spending in a growing software business is closer to investment than to cost of service. The listed software cohort clears a **4.87x** median on a quartile band of 4.72x to 7.39x, a median earnings multiple of 16.9x and a median margin of 34.6%. Those are three separate facts: medians do not multiply, and the identity closes company by company.

Table 3. Software and Internet Constituents, EV/Revenue, 21 August 2026

Company	EV/Revenue
Microsoft	10.94x
Alphabet	9.12x
Oracle	8.21x
Netflix	7.03x
Booking Holdings	5.73x
Workday	4.93x
Intuit	4.80x
Salesforce	4.69x
Adobe	4.38x
Uber Technologies	3.11x

Source: Windsor Drake analysis, 21 August 2026. Listed software cohort median 4.87x, quartile band 4.72x to 7.39x.

Even inside technology the raw comparison misleads. Uber clears 3.11x revenue on a 13.5% margin and a 23.0x earnings multiple, ranking 79th of 117 on revenue and 18th on earnings. The pairs below make the point systematically, each matched to within 0.06x on EV/Revenue on the same prices on the same day.

Table 4. Matched Pairs on EV/Revenue, 21 August 2026

EV/Revenue	Company	EV/EBITDA	EBITDA margin
3.11x	Uber Technologies	23.0x	13.5%
3.11x	EOG Resources	5.7x	54.3%
1.51x to 1.54x	Tenet Healthcare	6.9x	22.2%
1.51x to 1.54x	Chord Energy	3.4x	44.8%
3.35x to 3.37x	RTX	19.8x	17.0%
3.35x to 3.37x	Pfizer	8.4x	39.8%
2.34x to 2.38x	Home Depot	15.7x	15.0%
2.34x to 2.38x	Ovintiv	4.6x	51.3%

Source: Windsor Drake analysis, 21 August 2026. Pairs selected on proximity of EV/Revenue across the 117 constituents with positive trailing EBITDA.

The first pair conceals a four-fold gap in the earnings multiple, with Uber 18th of 117 on earnings and EOG 112th, and a buyer opening on revenue prices them identically. The second looks cheap on both sides, and only one is cheap on the metric a leveraged buyer underwrites. The third puts two large, mature, US-listed businesses 2.4 turns apart on earnings and level on revenue, which is enough to show that a sector label does not rescue the comparison.

Which buyers use which metric, and what are they funding it with?

The metric a buyer opens with follows from how the buyer funds the deal. A leveraged financial buyer sizes debt on earnings, and Bain reports a deal once working on 5% EBITDA growth now needing 12%. An adjacent strategic quotes earnings pro forma for run-rate synergies, which flatters the earnings multiple and leaves revenue untouched. Public market coverage uses both by inherited sector convention, which is how a 14.6 to 1 revenue spread persists unremarked.

Private disclosure runs the other way from what a seller would want. Of the 511 recorded transactions in the firm's proprietary index, **493 were strategic acquirers**, 14 financial sponsors and 4 sponsor-backed strategics, so 96% were acquired by a strategic. A strategic prices synergised earnings and a sponsor prices debt capacity, and neither underwrites revenue. Under 4% of the index carries a disclosed revenue multiple, and what does disclose clusters in large listed strategics with a shareholder vote to satisfy. The comparable set a seller assembles is the one that frames the negotiation.

The one transaction where the bridge can be walked end to end

Intercontinental Exchange agreed on 30 July 2026 to acquire MarketAxess at US\$167.00 per share in cash, an equity value near US\$6.0 billion and an enterprise value near US\$5.7 billion on a premium of roughly 33%. Enterprise value sits below equity value because the target carries net cash. The acquirer stated **10.6x LTM EBITDA**, pro forma for US\$100 million of run-rate synergies within three years, and MarketAxess filed US\$846.3 million of FY2025 revenue, giving about **6.7x** revenue, computed here rather than disclosed.

At 6.7x revenue and 10.6x post-synergy EBITDA the implied margin is about 63%. Removing the stated synergies moves the earnings multiple to roughly **13x** on an implied margin near **52%**, and the revenue multiple does not move at all, because revenue carries no earnings information for synergies to act on. That 2.4 turn gap is the acquirer's own value creation case quoted as a market price. The pre-synergy number is the comparable one.

Table 5. Capital Markets Conditions Behind 2026 Multiples

Indicator	Level	Institution and date
Global M&A value, first seven months 2026	US\$3.19tn, up 36%, on 28,000+ deals, down 10%	LSEG Deals Intelligence, 12 August 2026
Deals above US\$10bn	48 deals, US\$1.29tn, about 40% of all value	LSEG Deals Intelligence, 12 August 2026
FOMC target range	3.50% to 3.75%	Federal Reserve, 29 July 2026
ICE BofA US High Yield Option-Adjusted Spread	2.73%	Federal Reserve Bank of St Louis, 19 August 2026
10-year Treasury yield	4.69%	US Department of the Treasury, 20 August 2026
Global buyout dry powder	US\$1.3tn, largely 2022 to 2023 vintages	Bain and Company, 23 February 2026
Deals above US\$5bn, share of global value	48% in 2026 against 26% in 2024	PwC, 23 June 2026
US IPOs priced year to date	103, down 25.4%, raising US\$145.8bn	Renaissance Capital, 20 August 2026
Total US equity issuance, first half 2026	US\$307.7bn	S&P Global Market Intelligence, 13 July 2026
Sponsor-backed private businesses	About 13,000, roughly 55% held five years or longer	Morgan Stanley, 22 January 2026
Market-wide median transaction EV/EBITDA	10.2x trailing twelve month	PitchBook, 9 July 2026

Source: As stated per row. Compiled by Windsor Drake, 21 August 2026.

Value is rising through concentration rather than breadth, and credit is open without being cheap. Bain describes purchase multiples and financing costs as elevated simultaneously to a degree not previously seen, McKinsey notes that the conditions which amplified returns have passed, and nearly 80% of general partners surveyed by Bain expect deal multiples to stay flat through 2026.

Behind that sits committed capital with a clock on it. US\$1.3 trillion of buyout dry powder, much of it raised in 2022 and 2023, meets a portfolio in which roughly 55% of some 13,000 sponsor-backed companies have been held five years or longer, and the listing route has narrowed rather than closed. For most private companies below listing scale the practical route to liquidity remains a sale.

What should founders do now?

Split your own number before anyone else does. Compute EV/Revenue and EV/EBITDA on a consistent trailing twelve month basis from the same balance sheet date, locate your quartile inside your industry band rather than against a cross-industry median, and identify which component explains your distance from it. Document the revenue definition you will use, and use only that one: trailing, forward and run-rate revenue can differ by a third in a growing business.

Then work the two components separately. Margin moves on operating decisions inside a twelve to eighteen month window and lifts the revenue multiple point for point, so separate structural margin from cyclical and address any cost classed as investment that a buyer will reclassify as cost of service. The earnings multiple responds to durability, concentration and growth evidence on a longer horizon. Because the two are uncorrelated at -0.04, work on one does not substitute for the other.

Going into a process, present the earnings multiple as the primary frame and the revenue multiple as its derivative. Expect financial buyers to underwrite earnings whatever metric is quoted first, and ask any pro forma multiple to be restated pre-synergy before accepting it as a comparable. The base case holds the industry spread near 14 to 15 to 1, with a widening case at 17 to 18 to 1 and a compressing case at 11 to 12 to 1. In all three the earnings-multiple band stays near 14x to 16x.

Key takeaways for founders

1. Your revenue multiple is mostly a statement about your margin

Across 117 constituents, 69% of the variation is the margin term and 31% the earnings multiple. Divide any quoted revenue multiple by your EBITDA margin and you recover the earnings multiple the buyer is really applying. That second number is the one worth negotiating.

2. Comparing revenue multiples across industries is close to meaningless

Industry medians span 14.6 to 1 on revenue against 4.9 to 1 on earnings, on identical data and the same day. Within an industry the comparison works, because the median industry spans only 1.8x between its quartiles.

3. A low revenue multiple is not a discount

Walmart clears 1.19x revenue and 18.6x EBITDA; C.H. Robinson clears 1.09x and 19.9x. Both sit near the bottom of the revenue ranking and inside the top third on earnings. The revenue multiple is low because margin is 6.4% and 5.5%, not because the market is sceptical about the business.

4. A high margin does not buy a high earnings multiple

Oil and gas exploration and production carries the set's highest median margin at 51.3% and its lowest median earnings multiple at 5.60x. Micron and EQT convert within two tenths of a point of each other and sit 2.8x apart on revenue entirely because of the earnings multiple.

5. The metric you are quoted is a choice, not a convention

Revenue multiples carry information where the current margin is a poor reading of the steady state. Boeing is the clearest case here, at 2.10x revenue on negative trailing EBITDA. For a profitable business with a settled cost structure, accepting a revenue frame concedes the better number without being asked for it.

6. Both components are workable, on different clocks

Margin responds inside twelve to eighteen months and lifts the revenue multiple mechanically, while durability, concentration and growth evidence set the earnings multiple and take longer to demonstrate. With credit open and buyout capital ageing against an unexited portfolio, an owner who has separated the two and evidenced both is entering a market where the buyer side carries the greater pressure to transact.

Sources

- [LSEG Deals Intelligence, Global M&A Update, 12 August 2026](#)
- [PwC, Global M&A Industry Trends, mid-year 2026, 23 June 2026](#)
- [PwC, US Deals 2026 midyear outlook, 17 June 2026](#)
- [Bain and Company, Global Private Equity Report 2026, 23 February 2026](#)
- [Bain and Company, Private Equity Midyear Report 2026, 8 June 2026](#)
- [McKinsey and Company, 2026 M&A Trends Report, 13 February 2026](#)
- [PitchBook, Q2 2026 Global M&A Report, 9 July 2026](#)
- [PitchBook, Private Market Funds Dry Powder Dashboard, 16 January 2026](#)
- [Morgan Stanley, Global M&A Outlook 2026, 22 January 2026](#)
- [Renaissance Capital, US IPO Market Statistics, 20 August 2026](#)

- [S&P Global Market Intelligence, H1 2026 US equity issuance, 13 July 2026](#)
- [US Securities and Exchange Commission, Forms 10-K and 10-Q, screened constituents](#)
- [Federal Reserve, FOMC Implementation Note, 29 July 2026](#)
- [Federal Reserve Bank of St Louis, ICE BofA US High Yield Option-Adjusted Spread, 19 August 2026](#)
- [US Department of the Treasury, Daily Treasury Par Yield Curve Rates, 20 August 2026](#)
- [Intercontinental Exchange, Acquisition of MarketAxess, 30 July 2026](#)
- [MarketAxess Holdings, Form 10-K, 24 February 2026](#)

Methodology Note

Framework. The Margin Bridge. $EV/Revenue$ equals $EV/EBITDA$ multiplied by EBITDA margin, and across the 117 constituents with positive trailing EBITDA it holds to 0.0000%. Variance decomposition is performed on the log revenue multiple and attributes 69% to the margin term and 31% to the earnings multiple.

Computation, not licensing. Every multiple here is Windsor Drake's own computation from market capitalisation, reported balance sheets and trailing twelve month financials struck on 21 August 2026. Enterprise value is market capitalisation plus total debt less cash and short-term investments.

The screen. 119 candidates screened and 118 retained across 17 industries. Each enterprise value was independently recomputed and compared with the reported figure; maximum disagreement among those retained is 4.5%, and Elevance Health was dropped at 25%. Coterra Energy was excluded, having merged into Devon Energy and delisted in May 2026. Industry labels are the firm's own classification.

Scope and evidence. This study uses the same industry universe as the firm's EBITDA multiples study, which is what makes the bridge exact. Boeing is retained with no EBITDA multiple, so revenue statistics run on 118 constituents and earnings statistics on 117. Implied margins in Table 2 are derived from the two computed multiples through the identity. Private-market observations are drawn from the firm's proprietary transaction index, 511 records as at 21 August 2026. Levels will move.