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Recurring Revenue Financing: Structuring, Documentation, and Financial Covenants

Alternative Financing for Early Stage Growth Companies

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Recurring Revenue Financing: Structuring, Documentation, and Financial Covenants

Strafford Webinar: July 7, 2022

Speakers:

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Topics for Today's Presentation

- Introduction to Recurring Revenue Credit Facilities
- Calculating the Borrowing Base
- Reporting
- Financial Covenants
- Collateral, Credit Support, and Diligence
- Use in Acquisition Financing
- Workouts and Exit Strategies

Introduction to Recurring Revenue Credit Facilities

- A. What is Recurring Revenue?
- B. Recurring Revenue Credit Facility Structures
- C. Market Participants

What is Recurring Revenue?

Predictable revenue that is highly likely to continue.

→ Contractually obligated stream of payments

Examples:

- Subscription agreements
- Content based subscription business
- Multi-year contracts
- Software and other Licensing agreements
- Purchases of platforms/hardware where the customer will need to continue to pay to have access to components or software

Sources of Recurring Revenue:

- New Customers/Subscriptions
- Expansion Revenue/Upsell to Existing Customers

Common Borrower Industries:

- Popular with “as a service” companies; venture debt model due to pre-EBITDA growth phase
- Software as a Service (SaaS)
- Hardware as a Service (HaaS)
- Platform as a Service (PaaS)

Recurring Revenue Credit Facility Structures

- Non-investment grade/secured debt
- Different types of revolvers
 - Cash flow based (requires sustainable EBITDA)
 - Asset-Based Loans (ABL)
 - Advance rates based on %s of “Eligible Accounts” and “Eligible Inventory”
 - Usually requires EBITDA to test a fixed charge coverage ratio, but can be springing; lots of fine tuning
 - Recurring Revenue
 - Revolver advance rates based on %s of “Recurring Revenue”
 - Can be used in conjunction with an ABL borrowing base, or standalone.
 - EBITDA not required
 - In contrast to ABLs, focus on “inventory light” or where inventory is non-existent, or where stand-alone liquidation value is not supported
 - In contrast to ABLs – no A/R if all revenue is booked at once
 - Typical 2-5 year terms
- Also able to support a term loan
 - Typically sized based on a multiple of Recurring Revenue (e.g. 1.2 times ARR)

Lenders have not forgotten the tools from the ABL toolbox

- Recurring revenue valuations/collateral audits/field exams
- Eligibility criteria – e.g., failure to pay within a certain number of days
- Ability to impose reserves
 - Bank products
 - Other reserves in lenders' "Permitted Discretion"
- Detailed reporting requirements/projections
 - Break-out by revenue type
 - Customers/contract value/length of relationship
- Overadvance/mandatory prepayments
 - Outstanding revolver borrowings exceed the % of recurring revenue
 - Outstanding revolver borrowings exceed the revenue retention rate
- Updates to borrowing base certificate

Examples: Eligible Recurring Revenue

“Eligible Recurring Revenue Subscriptions” means customer subscriptions billed and collected in any country or jurisdiction worldwide yielding Monthly Recurring Revenue, provided that standards of eligibility may be fixed and revised from time to time by Lender in Lender’s reasonable judgment and upon notification thereof to Borrower in accordance with the provisions hereof.

“Eligible Recurring Revenue Contracts” means Contracts billed and collected within the United States yielding Monthly Recurring Revenue, provided that standards of eligibility may be fixed and revised from time to time by Lender in Lender’s reasonable judgment and upon notification thereof to Borrower in accordance with the provisions hereof. Unless otherwise agreed to by Lender, Eligible Recurring Revenue Contracts shall not include the following:

- (a) Contracts with payments past due more than thirty (30) days from the invoice date;
- (b) Contracts in which the customer thereunder has elected to cancel, cancelled or has failed to renew within the time period prescribed in such Contracts; and
- (c) Contracts with respect to which the customer is subject to any Insolvency Proceeding, or becomes insolvent or goes out of business.

Example: Eligible Recurring Revenue

“Eligible Recurring Revenue” means, as of any date and period of determination, the amount of service subscription revenue for analyzing and cleaning a customer’s [_____], earned and recognized or recognizable during such period, in accordance with GAAP, and calculated on a basis consistent with the financial statements delivered to Bank. Eligible Recurring Revenue shall exclude (a) any contracts (i) that have not been duly and properly executed, (ii) that have not been entered into in the ordinary course of business, (iii) for which Borrower has collected more than twelve (12) months of payments during the twelve (12) months period then ended, (iv) that are not billed by Borrower from the United States, in Dollars, and collected by Borrower in the United States, (v) that have expired, are in dispute, or customer has provided a notice of non-renewal, (vi) that Lender reasonably determines may not be collectible, and (vii) related to an account debtor that is subject to any insolvency proceeding, or becomes insolvent, or goes out of business, (b) any recurring subscription revenue from companies whose accounts receivable are aged more than ninety (90) days from invoice date without Bank’s written consent or whose total obligations to Borrower exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of all subscription revenue including subsidiaries and affiliates except as approved in writing by Lender, (c) with respect to any recurring revenue from a multi-year contract where Borrower receives, within the first (1st) year of such contract, cash payment(s) representing all or substantially all of the contract amount, such revenue shall be excluded as Eligible Recurring Revenue commencing with month thirteen (13) of such contract, (d) any discounts, credits, reserves for bad debt, customer adjustments, or other offsets relating to such recurring revenue, (e) any recurring revenue whom Borrower is liable for goods sold or services rendered by such customer to Borrower, but only to the extent of any amounts owing to such customer against amounts owed to Borrower, (f) any revenue related to a customer who is an individual or an officer, employee, agent or Affiliate of Borrower, (g) revenue that is non-recurring in nature or not received in the ordinary course of business, revenue relating to perpetual licenses, one-time, non-recurring transactions, and revenue related to installation, implementation and/or set-up fees or services, and (h) such other exclusions as Lender shall determine in its good faith credit judgment.

Market Participants

Lenders:

- Technology-focused banks
- Specialty-lending groups/technology banking groups at commercial banks
- Direct Lenders
- Certain money-center banks

Borrowers:

- Software/technology companies
 - Venture Backed
 - Bootstrapped
 - PEG owned
- Consumer businesses

The Borrowing Base

- A. Unpacking the Recurring Revenue Borrowing Base
- B. Advance Rate: MRR v. ARR
- C. Churn Rate and Retention Rate
- D. Reserves and other Controls

Unpacking the recurring revenue borrowing base

- What is “recurring revenue” and how is it measured
- For a company that generates revenues from different business streams, need to define what types of revenues truly give rise to “recurring revenues”
- Example: “all hosted, subscription, and maintenance fee revenues attributable to software owned by any Borrower or any of its Subsidiaries earned by any Borrower or any of its Subsidiaries during such period, calculated on a basis consistent with the financial statements delivered to Lender prior to the Closing Date”
- Example exclusions from Recurring Revenue:
 - Revenue not in the ordinary course of business
 - One-time installation or set-up fees
 - Add-on purchases not resulting in a continuous stream of revenue
 - Revenue from hardware leases
 - Amounts in excess of concentration limits

Unpacking the recurring revenue borrowing base (Continued)

- Net revenues, less refunds/chargebacks
- How is it measured (option 1) – trailing twelve months; quarterly?
 - Consider issues of volatility and seasonality
 - Examples of seasonality – Retail, education
- How is it measured (option 2) – retention rates
 - Current month recurring revenues (multiplied by [3][6][9][12]) divided by actual recurring revenues over the prior [3][6][9][12] months
- **How to Calculate the Borrowing Base:** (a) Borrower's Recurring Revenue for the most recent testing period [month/quarter, etc.] multiplied by (b) the Advance Rate.

Unpacking the recurring revenue borrowing base (Continued)

- **What is included in the Borrowing Base:**
 - Recurring Revenue on balance sheet
 - Recurring Revenue from Eligible Contracts/Subscriptions (ineligibles may include cross-aging, concentration, insolvency, intent to cancel, contracts with customers outside of the United States)
 - Recurring Revenue with certain parameters (i.e. ongoing revenue from services provided to third parties acceptable to lender minus discounts and offsets)
 - Calculated for specific time periods, such as:
 - The monthly Recurring Revenue for the prior month
 - The aggregate Recurring Revenue for the prior 3 months/quarter
 - The aggregate Recurring Revenue for the prior year
 - The average monthly Recurring Revenue for the prior 3 months/quarter
 - The average monthly Recurring Revenue for the prior year
 - The specific time period for calculation depends on the time period of contracts that the Borrower typically has. For e.g. if the Borrower has monthly billings from contracts whose terms are 1 year or more, then Lender may consider lending against Annual Recurring Revenue (ARR)
 - Lender may have ability to update the Recurring Revenue calculation real time based on information it receives

Advance Rate

Advance Rate

Advance Rate is the percentage of Recurring Revenue against which the Lender is willing to provide a loan. This rate is usually determined based on a multiplier (the *Advance Rate Multiplier*) which is then adjusted for a Churn/Retention Percentage.

- $Advance Rate = Advance Rate Multiplier * (100\% - Churn Percentage)$
- Advance Rate Multiplier is a multiple of Recurring Revenue
- Range 1 to 7 for “MRR” (1-7 x Monthly Recurring Revenue) and 0.75 to 1.50 for “ARR” (0.75-1.50 x Annual Recurring Revenue)
- Annual Recurring Revenue typically = Monthly Recurring Revenue x 12
- Example Adjustments to Advance Rate
 - Adjusted by Lender in its reasonable discretion based on:
 - Quality and dilution of the Recurring Revenue
 - Churn or lost customers
 - Other events or risks that adversely affect the collateral

Churn/Retention Percentage

Churn

- Churn is quantitatively defined as cancellations (either through loss of revenue or loss of customers) as a percentage of total revenue.
- How to determine Churn
 - Listing of cancellations provided by the Borrower
 - Audits conducted by Lender
- Risks in calculating Churn
 - Adjustments in billing policies
 - Failure to disclose cancellations
 - Poorly drafted contracts
- Negotiated Item rather to include additions in the calculation, or just cancellations

Sample Churn Definitions

“Churn Percentage” is, expressed as a percentage, (a) the amount of Recurring Revenue lost or not retained (including in each case by customer attrition and reduced usage by a customer) in a measurement period (as determined by subtracting the amount of Recurring Revenue during such measurement period from the amount of Recurring Revenue during the previous measurement period) (provided, however, if such amount is less than zero (0), then such amount shall be deemed to be zero (0)), divided by (b) the amount of Recurring Revenue during the previous measurement period.

“Revenue Retention Percentage” means, as of any date of determination, a percentage calculated as follows: (a) one hundred percent (100%), minus (b) the Churn Percentage as of such date. For example, if the Churn Percentage were five percent (5.00%), the Revenue Retention Percentage would be ninety-five percent (95.00%), calculated as follows: 100% minus 5.00%.

Primary Churn Calculations – Subscription Churn

Primary Churn Calculations:

- Subscription Churn (also known as Customer Churn, “Logo” Churn or Attrition Rate):
 - The percentage of total customers/subscribers who choose to stop using a Borrower’s services during a particular testing period
 - How to calculate: Number of Churned subscriptions in a period divided by total number of customers at the beginning of the period

EXAMPLE:

- Total Customers in May 2022: 100
- Total Customers in June 2022: 90
- Logo Churn for the monthly testing period at the end of June 2022 is $(100-90)/100 = 0.1$ or 10%

Primary Churn Calculations – Gross Revenue Churn

Primary Churn Calculations:

- Gross Revenue Churn:
 - The percentage of revenue that is lost during a period due to customers cancelling or downgrading
 - Does NOT account for Expansion Revenue
 - How to Calculate: Amount of Recurring Revenue lost in a period divided by total Recurring Revenue at beginning of a period

Primary Churn Calculations – Net Revenue Churn

Primary Churn Calculations:

- Net Revenue Churn:
 - The percentage of revenue lost from existing customers in a period, modified by Expansion Revenue
 - Includes Expansion Revenue, which is the amount of revenue received from existing customers who are expanding their use of a Borrower's product from upsells, add-ons, cross-sells or premium offerings
 - How to Calculate: Net Recurring Revenue lost from existing customers in a period divided by total Recurring Revenue at the beginning of a period

Determining Churn Rates

Determining Churn Rates

- Measured for specific time periods
 - Monthly, quarterly or annually
 - Varies based on business models, market trends, demographics, subscription terms

Weighted Average Churn for different cohorts

- Cohort analysis for determining Churn Rate is important when Churn Rate is being calculated on quarterly or annually basis.
- Each set of new customers for a month are considered as a separate cohort and for each such cohort Churn Rate is calculated separately weighted for number of customers in each cohort.

Example: Calculating Gross Revenue Churn and Net Revenue Churn

Gross Revenue Churn

- For example, if Company X begins January with \$100,000 in Monthly Recurring Revenue (MRR) and existing subscribers cancel \$10,000 worth of subscriptions, we can calculate the **Gross Revenue Churn Rate** as follows:
 - $10,000 / 100,000 = 0.1$ (or 10%)

Net Revenue Churn

- For calculating Net Churn, we start with the MRR Churn and subtract any revenue gained from subscribers upgrading their subscriptions.
- In the above scenario, let's say that the upsell, add-ons, etc. from existing subscribers of Company X resulted in an additional \$5,000 in MRR. The **Net Revenue Churn** is then calculated as follows:
 - $(10,000 - 5,000) / 100,000 = 0.05$ (or 5%)

Customer Churn vs. Revenue Churn

Customer Churn v. Revenue Churn

- Customer Churn measures the rate at which the existing customers cancel their subscription
- Revenue Churn is used to look at the rate at which MRR is lost, as a result of churned customers and downgraded subscriptions from existing customers

- *Which is better, Gross Customer Churn or Net Customer Churn?*

- *Which is better, Customer Churn or Revenue Churn?*

Example: Calculating Customer Churn v. Revenue Churn

Calculating Customer Churn s. Revenue Churn

- Borrower X has 2 product lines:
 - Basic: 100 customers that pay \$10/month per customer = \$1000 MRR
 - Premium: 10 customers that pay \$50/month per customer = \$500 MRR
- This gives Borrower X a total of 110 customers and \$1500 MRR for the month
- Let's say that in the one-month testing period, 5 basic customers and 2 premium customers Churn
- **Customer Churn:**
 - $(5 + 2)/110 = 7/110 = 6.36\%$
- **Revenue Churn:**
 - $((5 \times \$10) + (2 \times \$50))/\$1500 = (\$50 + \$100)/\$1500 = \$150/\$1500 = 0.1$ or 10.0%

Reserves and other Controls

1. Reserves

- Reserves against the amount available to be borrowed to reflect various adverse events
- Reserves against a cash collateral/collections account to hold amounts in the account to be applied to outstandings either during a default or if the lender believes a default may occur

2. Adjustments to the Advance Rate

- Right to adjust the Advance Rate in lender's discretion or based on adverse events

3. Account Debtor Exclusions/Eligibility Criteria

- Right to exclude Recurring Revenue the lender finds unacceptable

Financial Reporting

- Monthly/Quarterly/Annual Financial Statements
- Borrowing Base Reports
 - Recurring Revenue calculation
 - Advance Rate/Churn calculation
 - Accounts Receivable Aging
 - Accounts Payable Aging
- Additional Periodic Reports
 - Detailed Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Metrics Report
 - Detailed Recurring Revenue Report
 - Detailed Churn Analysis
 - Customer Acquisition Cost Report
 - Customer Lifetime Value Report
- Covenant Compliance Certificates
- Annual Projections – used to set financial covenants

Sample KPI Reporting

- Quarterly KPI Metrics/Dashboard. As soon as available, and in any event within thirty (30) days after the last day of each fiscal quarter of Borrower, a key performance indicator metrics/dashboard tracking the details of Borrower's recurring revenue including, without limitation, total recurring revenue, total customers, new subscriptions in process, revenue and customer churn, customer acquisition cost (CAC), customer lifetime value (LTV), in a form reasonably acceptable to Lender.
- Within thirty (30) days after the last day of each month, Borrower shall deliver to Lender an aged listings report by invoice date of accounts receivable and accounts payable and an SaaS metrics report (including month-end recurring subscription revenue, customer count, upsell, downsell, churn, Annual Eligible Recurring Revenue, and a key performance metrics table).

Financial Covenants

- ABL/Cash Flow Loans – Generally focused on financial maintenance tests
 - Minimum Fixed Charge Coverage Ratio (can be springing)
 - Maximum Leverage Ratio
- Recurring Revenue Facilities – Generally focused on liquidity and growth
 - Minimum Liquidity (Unrestricted cash and cash equivalents plus revolver availability)
 - Cash here is often limited to cash held at the Lender or subject to a control agreement
 - Minimum Revenue (GAAP Revenue or ARR)
 - Minimum EBITDA
 - Can be negative
 - Free cash flow
- Covenant Package often changes over term of facility
 - Example: Minimum liquidity year 1-2; Minimum EBITDA thereafter

Financial Covenants (Continued)

Common EBITDA Adjustments

- Add-backs:
 - Transaction costs
 - Sponsor management fees
 - Increase in Deferred Revenue
 - Non-cash stock compensation
- Deductions:
 - Capitalized software development costs
 - Capitalized customer acquisition expenses
 - Decrease in deferred revenue
- Equity Cure Rights
 - Will be guardrails based on which defaults can be used, how often cures can be used

Collateral, Credit Support, and Diligence

- Collateral
 - Blanket lien on all assets, including accounts receivable
 - Occasionally intellectual property is excluded from collateral with a negative pledge
 - Pledge of subsidiary equity interests
 - **Deposit Account Control Agreements/Primary Depository Relationships**
- Credit Support
 - Guarantees
 - Holding companies
 - Domestic Subsidiaries
 - Material Foreign Subsidiaries/Foreign Subsidiaries contributing to MRR/ARR
 - Occasional Investor guarantees and/or MAE based on failure of investor support
 - Upstream Equity Pledges

Typical Due Diligence

- Lenders typically perform contractual and account debtor due diligence internally
- Key Terms of Recurring Revenue contracts
 - Billing schedule
 - Pricing
 - Packages/tiers of products or services
 - Renewal mechanism
 - Contract term
- Account debtor diligence
 - Concentration
 - Credit Worthiness
- Field exams

Use of Recurring Revenue Structures in Acquisition Financing

Recurring Revenue Term Loans and Revolvers are increasingly supporting acquisitions

- Sponsored buyouts
- Strategic investments/bolt on acquisitions

SaaS business valuations typically tied to Annual Recurring Revenue (ARR)

Acquisition financings typically utilize ARR structures

Current lender underwriting expects the senior debt component of the capital structure to be around 25-35%

- Equity and management rollover generally higher than in ABL/Cash flow acquisition structures
- ARR multiples generally range from 0.75 – 1.50x

Workouts and Exit Strategies

- Workout Framework – How are recurring revenue facilities unique?
- Workout Strategies
- Lender Protections

Workout Framework – How are recurring revenue facilities unique?

- Lending against cash and a revenue stream from contracts
 - Limited or no accounts receivable and inventory to monetize
- Key assets are General Intangibles
 - Contract Rights
 - Intellectual Property
 - Difficult to monetize
 - Article 9 Foreclosure Sales are generally not a practical option
- Borrowers may not be good candidates for a bankruptcy process
 - Future revenue could diminish if Borrower's continued operation as a going concern is question
 - Customer Setoff Rights build up if Borrower defaults on underlying contracts
 - Bankruptcy is expensive - requires significant scale

These factors place limitations on workout strategies available to Recurring Revenue lenders

Common Workout Strategies

Primary Objective: Ensure that distressed borrower performs out contracts to continue revenue stream

- Consider engagement of a chief restructuring officer or financial advisor
- Additional Runway through amendments/resetting financial covenants
- Operational Improvement
 - Runway to execute on a turnaround plan
- Key Investor Support
 - Assistance with operational issues
 - Cash infusion
 - Investor guaranty or make-well agreement

Plan B Options:

- Take-out financing
 - Lenders willing to refinance banks at a higher return if the business is viable
 - Take-out financing market is less established than in the ABL world
- Going concern sale process
- Wind-down

Lender Protections

- Initial Structuring and Diligence
 - Consider back-end risks when setting advance rates
 - Churn calculations should reflect borrower's characteristics
 - Ability to impose reserves, exclude ineligible revenue and adjust the advance rate
 - Thorough and detailed Reporting Obligations
 - Limit adjustments to financial covenants
 - Conduct Investor Support Diligence
 - Consider Investor Guarantee
- Perfect security interests in key collateral
 - Contract Rights → UCC Financing Statement
 - Deposit Accounts → Account Control Agreements/Transition deposits to Lender
 - Intellectual Property → UCC and IP Filings (Required for registered Copyrights, good practice for Patents and Trademarks)
- Access to Cloud-based storage

Lender Protections (Continued)

- Additional diligence/protections for Key Customer Contracts
 - Understand Duration of Agreements and Key Terms
 - Understand Assets needed to perform out contracts (are these included in the Lender's collateral?)
 - Collateral Assignment/Consent signed by customer giving Lender the right to step in Borrower's shoes and cure/enforce contract
- Maintain Key Investor Relationship and Dialogue
- Engaged Portfolio Management
 - Monitor Reporting
 - Monitor Churn and other key metrics
 - Conduct regular field exams
 - Shore up position early when issues arise

Any Questions?

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