



ICFN

GLOBAL M&A

Q1 2024 news

# M&A&AI

Welcome to a new ICFN moment, friends of M&A.

What happens if we ask Chat GPT if we should use AI for M&A processes?:



BA You

"Is it desirable to use ai in m&a processes?"

ChatGPT

"Using AI in M&A processes can offer several benefits and is increasingly desirable for companies involved in such transactions. Here are some reasons why:

*Data Analysis and Insights: AI can analyze vast amounts of data quickly and efficiently, providing valuable insights into potential M&A targets, market trends, and financial performance. This helps companies make more informed decisions throughout the M&A process.*

*Due Diligence: AI can streamline due diligence processes by automating the review of documents, contracts, and financial records. This accelerates the due diligence timeline and reduces the risk of missing critical information.*

*Predictive Modeling: AI techniques such as machine learning can be used to develop predictive models for assessing the success and potential synergies of M&A transactions. These models can analyze historical data to forecast future outcomes and identify potential risks.*

*Target Identification: AI-powered algorithms can assist in identifying potential M&A targets by analyzing market trends, competitor landscapes, and strategic fit criteria. This helps companies identify opportunities that align with their growth objectives.*

*Integration Planning: AI can play a crucial role in post-merger integration planning by analyzing data from both merging entities to identify synergies, redundancies, and integration challenges. This enables companies to develop more effective integration strategies and accelerate the realization of synergies.*

*Risk Management: AI can help identify and mitigate various risks associated with M&A transactions, including financial, operational, regulatory, and reputational risks. By leveraging AI-powered risk assessment tools, companies can make more informed decisions and minimize potential downside risks.*

*Overall, incorporating AI into M&A processes can enhance efficiency, improve decision-making, and drive better outcomes for companies involved in transactions. However, it's essential to recognize that AI is a tool that should complement human expertise and judgment, rather than replace it entirely. Effective implementation of AI requires careful consideration of ethical, regulatory, and privacy considerations, as well as ongoing monitoring and refinement to ensure optimal results."*

# ICFN welcomes AT SWISS VENTURES to the network

Strengthening our global network. It is with great pleasure that we welcome to the International Corporate Finance Network the Swiss firm  
**AT SWISS VENTURES:**



*[www.atswiss.vc](http://www.atswiss.vc)*

AT Swiss Ventures is a global investment and advisory firm and combines a wide and collective experience in financial advisory, M&A, strategy consulting, and private equity. The leadership team also has extensive operational experience.

AT Swiss Ventures is supported by a team of field experts in many industry verticals, which allows us to uniquely position our clients in terms of their people, business models and technology to the most appropriate investors, strategic acquirers and financial counterparties.

AT Swiss Ventures is supporting both buy-side and sell-side transactions as well as value creation plans development and Post-merger integration.



**Mr. Amine Tazi**  
**Managing Partner**

Amine Tazi is the founder and Managing Partner of AT Swiss Ventures. With an experience of over 25+ years in corporate, management consulting and investment, Amine Tazi has lead several transactions in different sectors from TMT, ICT, Digital, Energy, Real-Estate, Industrial and Financial services. He supports both strategic investors, private equity and entrepreneurs in their sell-side and buy-side transactions but also restructuring their portfolio and optimising their value creation.

Amine Tazi holds an MBA from London Business School and MSc in Engineering from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology.



## Brazil M&A scenario

The expectation of the Brazilian capital market is that corporate transactions will reach greater momentum in 2024, after declines in business volumes observed in the last two years.



According to data from PwC, the number of mergers and acquisitions (M&A) in Brazil fell 17.3% in 2023, totaling 1,287 announcements, 45% of which were concentrated in the TMT segment. Despite the drop, this is a volume considered historically significant for the country, which in 2020 renewed the local record with 1,038 transactions. In 2021, Brazil reached the highest historical volume of M&A, with 1,659 deals announced.

There are still some important challenges to improve the economic scenario in Brazil, mainly due to political and fiscal issues, in addition to a domestic credit market with still restricted supply, but the country has Inflation expectations that are apparently better anchored and has already recorded successive falls in the country's basic interest rate (SELIC) at the latest meetings of the Central Bank of Brazil.

After turbulent presidential elections at the end of 2022, the M&A market in Brazil began 2023 on hold, evaluating the impacts of the new government's initial measures, and only began to observe a more vigorous increase in M&A activity in the third quarter, when 405 deals were complete, an increase of 9.46% compared to the same period in 2022, as reported by KPMG.

The prospects for this year promise to begin to awaken the appetite of international investors for selected opportunities in the 9th largest economy in the world.



Rockworth  
Management Partners,  
Ltd

## UK M&A activity

There are strong indications from official data\* that the last quarter of 2023 and the start of 2024 will see an uptick in UK M&A trends, versus Q1 – Q3 of 2023. This is attributed to a number of factors, including a resilient PE environment, where high-quality assets are being snapped up in highly competitive sales processes.

At **Rockworth** we are seeing plenty of dry powder among PE investors with large amounts of unused capital ready to deploy. For trade acquirors, interest from overseas buyers is strong, particularly as uncertainties over post-Brexit regulatory challenges have now passed.

**Rockworth** is a sell-side advisor to UK-based privately-owned companies, and many of the entrepreneurs and shareholders that we work with are seeing it as a good time to plan their exit. Some of the relevant factors include a few years of strong trading post-covid and an entrepreneur/business friendly political environment in the UK.

\*Office for National Statistics, ONS - <https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/changestobusiness/mergersandacquisitions>



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s.p.k

## Poland: regaining international confidence

After the parliamentary elections and the new pro-UE government being set up (end of 2023-beginning of 2024), valuations and Polish currency have increased. The political changes have been positively assessed by the markets and foreign investors.

So, the trend of the M&A market being driven by domestic deals may be strengthened thanks to the return of foreign investors due to increased trust and stability with respect to the Polish economy and domestic administration.



Nevertheless, the real effects of the aforementioned changes are still underway and are to be expected later this year and in 2025.

For this reason, we do not present potential targets as, for the time being, they are relatively small and, as such, remain interesting only for local (national) purchasers.

**MILNER**  
CORPORATE FINANCE

**Milner Corporate  
Finance**

### **Denmark: large volume of small /mid-sized deals and a market hedging against risks**

The M&A market in Denmark is currently driven by “volume of deals not value of deals” as the number of small to mid-sized deals are reasonably healthy while the number of large deals remains limited.

Private equity players are active in the market driven by the need for turnover of investment portfolios, and debt funding of PE-transactions has increased from a low level in 2023 in line with falling interest rates and more positive outlook into budgets for 2024.

Transaction multiples bottomed out during first half of 2023 and have been slowly increasing to a level which supports M&A activity positively. Strategic buyers with an offensive acquisition strategy and healthy balance sheet have remained active in the market throughout the past year.

A number of financial restructurings have surfaced in recent months in companies with highly leveraged balance sheets operating in sectors which have been negatively impacted by sluggish demand.

The outlook for the future remains impacted by high geopolitical risks which lead to companies focusing on shortening their supply chain and near-shoring supply structure. In particular, Danish companies are looking into reducing strategic and commercial risks related to China and the Middle east.





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3J Partners OY

## Finland: unexpected M&A joy in H2 2023

The strong turnaround in the Finnish M&A market, seen since Q3 2023, continued through Q4.

Statistics for Q4 2023 show that the number of acquisitions was 45% higher than last year in the same period. The high growth figures compared to those in the previous year are mainly explained by weak comparison figures.

However, the clear recovery of the Finnish M&A market is indicated by the fact that the number of acquisitions in Q4 was already 2Q in a row when the number of deals was higher than long-term averages in the comparison periods.

Thanks to the good activity in Q3 and Q4 periods, the number of deals for 2023 was approximately 5% higher than in 2022.

The strong market growth towards the end of the year is somewhat surprising, as Private Equity investors have been conspicuous by their absence from the market, as current holdings have not been able to be exited at sufficient valuation levels on the one hand, and new funds have not been raised on the other\*.

When Stock Markets panic and the financiers disappear from the market, it's the Finnish entrepreneurs who keep the economy going.

\*We are looking forward to seeing when the first Finnish Private Equity fund service companies will move to private credit, which is one of the only alternative investment classes that is currently growing (the collection of new Real Estate, VC and equity alternative investment funds is currently completely frozen).



## Recently, in the ICFN world

### Sale of Aspect Ecology

**Rockworth** acted as lead adviser to the founders and shareholders of **Aspect Ecology** on their successful exit to **APEM Group**. Based in Banbury, Oxfordshire, **Aspect Ecology** provides a range of ecological consultancy services connected to the planning process for building and development projects. The company works primarily with residential property developers and strategic land promoters, but also has clients across sectors including leisure, commercial property, infrastructure and renewable energy.

The logo for Rockworth, featuring a stylized white graphic of three curved lines to the left of the word "Rockworth" in a white sans-serif font, all on a black rectangular background.

Rockworth  
Management Partners,  
Ltd

**APEM** is a global environmental consultancy business, backed by private equity firm **Westbridge**. With its roots in marine and water ecology, the **APEM** business has expanded significantly in recent years through both organic growth and strategic acquisitions.

### Sale of Cherwell Laboratories

**Rockworth** acted as lead adviser to the shareholders of **Cherwell Laboratories** on their successful exit to **Analytichem**.

Based in Bicester, Oxfordshire, **Cherwell** manufactures and supplies cleanroom microbiology solutions to pharmaceutical and related industries across the UK and Europe. It is led by Andy Whittard, whose father founded the company in 1971.

**Analytichem** is a Germany-headquartered group of life science companies that provide laboratories around the world with analytical chemicals, certified reference materials and laboratory equipment. The group was formed in 2021 by US private equity investor **Battery Ventures**.

## Factor & Ros closed deals for the Quarter

Sale of **Hubspot** powerhouse **Vet Digital** based in the Netherlands and Denmark to Private Equity investor **Delta Equity Partners**.

Parallel to the sale, **Vet Digital** merged with **Hubspot** service provider **Bright Digital**. **Delta Equity Partners** is planning to further expand their **Hubspot** service providers platform.



Factor & Ros  
Bedrijfsovernames en  
Managementregie B.V.



Sale of real estate service partner **Renshof Bouwbedrijf** to **Elk Groep** backed by Private Equity investor **Waterland**.



Participation of Private Equity Investor **Anders Invest** in **Vanmac Group**. **Vanmac Group** has its Headquarters in the Netherlands with subsidiaries in the UK and Vietnam and a global international dealer network. **Vanmac** is the OEM of **Trilo** machinery, which services the airport maintenance industry, waste collection and sports & green maintenance.



## DZP advises HANZA on the acquisition of an experienced Swedish electronics manufacturer

In an international collaboration with the Swedish law firm **Lindahl**, DZP has advised **HANZA**, a global company specialising in the modernisation and optimisation of industrial processes, on the acquisition of 100% of shares in **Orbit One**, a leading Scandinavian manufacturer of electronics.

**HANZA** is one of Europe's largest manufacturers of electronic products that specialises in sheet metal processing and PCB, wiring and turbine manufacturing. It offers its customers complete solutions encompassing production, logistics and technology support to enable complex manufacturing processes. The company concentrates its production in six clusters in Sweden, Finland, the Baltics, Central Europe, Germany and China.

Our client's acquisition of the Swedish company that also operates in Poland will increase its production capacity in Sweden and Central Europe. It will also contribute to achieving the group's financial targets for 2025.



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## DZP advises CV Sciences on its first acquisition on the European market

DZP has advised **CV Sciences**, a US leader in the use of plant-based products for consumer wellbeing, on its first acquisition on the European market. The company acquired **Cultured Foods**, a Polish producer and distributor of alternative vegan foods, thereby securing access to the European market and new distribution channels for its products.

**CV Sciences** is a leading company in the wellness sector specialising in nutraceuticals and plant-based foods. Its leading brand, PlusCBD, offers products and dietary supplements using hemp extracts, which until now have only been available in the US. With this transaction, our client will not only expand the reach of its products but will also gain a market recognised partner and broaden its brand portfolio. The purchase of **Cultured Foods** also creates an opportunity to introduce the Polish brand's vegan products to the US market.

In cooperation with the law firm **Procopio**, DZP was responsible for carrying out a due diligence of the Polish company and providing **CV Sciences** with comprehensive transaction advice.

### 3J Partners Oy acted as the buyer's financial advisor in the acquisition of industrial maintenance company SSG Sahala Oy ("SSG")

**SSG** is one of the leading industrial maintenance companies in Finland with 20 MEUR revenue and 200 employees. **SSG** offers total maintenance, condition monitoring and extensive maintenance and installation projects in Finland and the Nordics.

**Elcoline** is private equity backed and one of the fastest growing industrial maintenance companies in Finland. The combined entity's turnover will be approximately 100 MEUR. The acquisition supports **Elcoline Group's** strategy to grow into the leading industrial maintenance service company in the Nordic countries.



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3J Partners OY

elcoline



### Sale of Imagon's foreign operations to BrandFactory in Sweden

**3J Partners Oy** acted as the sellers' financial advisor in transaction where **Imagon Oy**, the one of the largest illuminated signs provider in the Nordics, sold the company's Swedish and Norwegian operations to the Swedish **BrandFactory Scandinavia AB**.

In the transaction, **Imagon Oy's** subsidiaries **Imagon AB** and **Imagon AS** and approximately 20 employees will be transferred to the buyer. **Imagon Oy** and **BrandFactory Scandinavia AB** also signed a cooperation agreement whereby **Imagon** will become a significant manufacturing partner for **BrandFactory Scandinavia** in the Swedish and Norwegian markets.

## AURIS Finance assists ID Search in its sale to the Partnaire Group

The acquisition of **ID Search** by **Partnaire** offers numerous strategic and operational synergies, consolidating the position and diversifying the activities of the new entity resulting from this merger.

Founded in 2005, **ID Search** is a specialist staffing group based in the Paris region. **ID Search** offers a wide range of human resources services: temporary staffing, recruitment/headhunting, freelance administration and interim management. The Group is active in the field of qualified profiles in the tertiary sector, via brands that are experts in their respective business families.

**Partnaire** is a family-run temporary employment group with a network of 200 offices in France, Switzerland, Belgium and Luxembourg. The group delegates temporary workers and recruits staff in all sectors of activity and for different types of functions and levels of qualification via 3 distinct brands. Geographically, TalentSkills is firmly established in Orléans, Paris, Rennes and Lyon, which fits in perfectly with **ID Search**'s network of branches in the Paris region.

In addition, **ID Search**'s expertise in freelance administration and interim management gives **Partnaire** the opportunity to strengthen its services to meet growing market demand.



Auris Finance

## AURIS Finance assists Groupe Kaizen in its equity reorganisation

**Kaizen Solutions** is an ESN with offices in Grenoble (head office), Paris, Lyon and Toulouse, specialising in high added-value IT services (systems engineering, cybersecurity, data, embedded systems, etc.) for leading-edge sectors (aerospace, industry, energy, etc.). The company generates sales of more than €20 million, mainly for major accounts.

**AURIS Finance** assisted the company's shareholders in raising bank financing to reorganise the company's capital. This transaction was financed jointly by two leading banking partners.

## AURIS Finance assists Omedo in its sale to the LIP Group

Founded in March 2020, **Omedo** is a temporary employment agency specialising in the pharmacy sector. Faced with a market that had become too small for their ambitions, the Company wanted to join forces with a group in the sector to deploy the **Omedo** solution in the medical sector. **LIP** was quickly chosen because of the operational and technological complementarities it offered in the service of a shared ambition: to become a benchmark HR player in the medical sector.

**LIP** brings to the young company its expertise in the medical sector, its know-how in ultra-specialist temporary work and the financial resources to support this ambitious project.

# ICFN Annual Summit: Lisbon 27th May 2024



Our 2024 Annual International Corporate Finance Network Summit will be held in Lisbon on May 27.

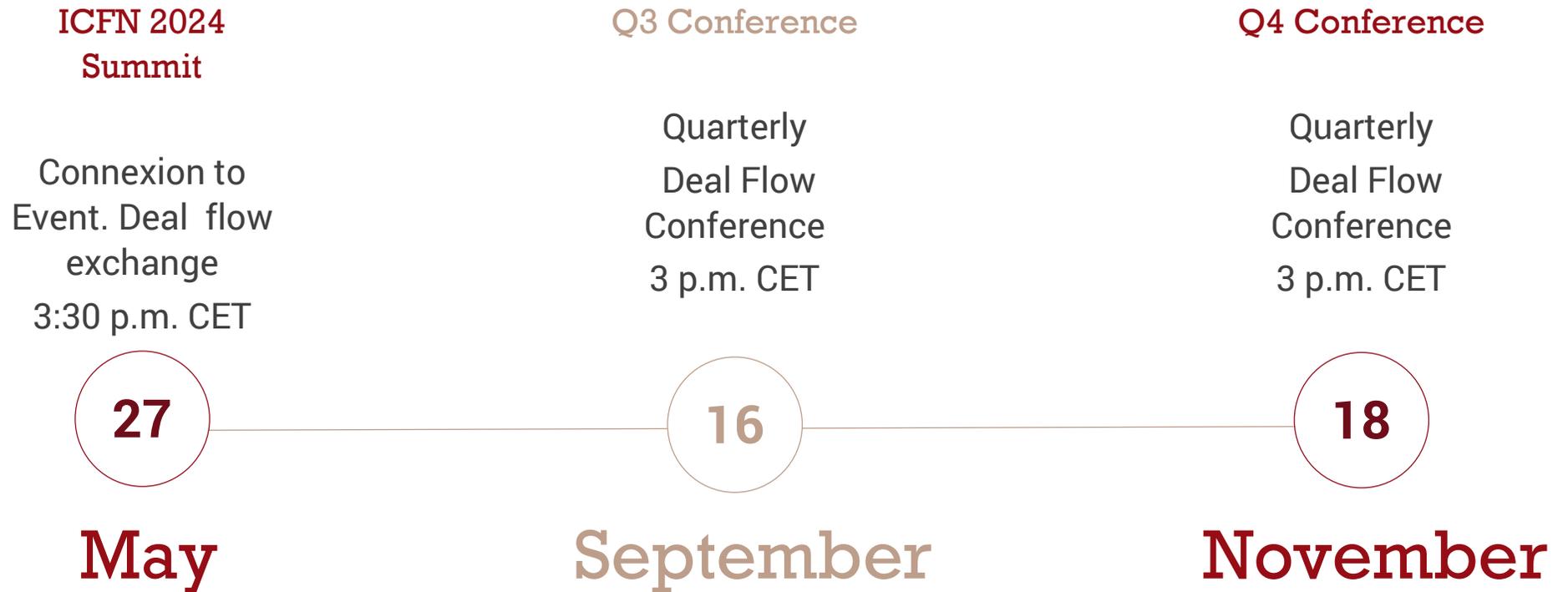
Members and friends of ICFN will have the opportunity to meet in person, talking about the M&A developments in the different countries and focusing on cross border M&A transactions and opportunities.

On-line connection to the different sections will be possible for those members not able to attend in person, and for designed invitees.

WHEN: 27 May 2024  
WHERE: HF Fénix Lisboa.  
Praca Maquês de Pombal, 8  
Santo Antonio, 1269-133 Lisboa



# Events calendar 2024



## Some of our ongoing projects

MEMBER OF:

**ICFN**  
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**exG**  
M&A Advisory

[www.exg-consulting.com](http://www.exg-consulting.com)

- **Software development** / Buy-Side / Software development / > 5M / Europe
- **Cloud services** / Buy-side / Cloud services / > 20M / Europe
- **QA - SW Testing** / Buy-Side / QA – SW Testing / > 5M / Europe

**BAUM**  
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[www.baum.es](http://www.baum.es)

- **Dairy Farm** / Sell-Side / Dairy / size of the company 20,3M € (2022) / Type of investor Strategic - PE / From any region to any region / Trader of dairy products for the food industry. No significant competitor. EBITDA of 1.4M €



PARTNERS

[www.3j.fi](http://www.3j.fi)

- **Coldplay** / Sell-Side / Manufacturing / 46 MEUR / Type of investor: PE Special Situations – Industrial / Finland to any region / The Company is a professional refrigeration equipment and cold and clean room designer and manufacturer. Products and solutions are used by mass caterers, restaurants and hotels, hospitals and laboratories, as well as in pharmaceutical and food industry institutions. Main clients in the Nordic Countries. Restructuring case, heavy debt burden behind and challenges with profitability.



[www.factor-ros.nl](http://www.factor-ros.nl)

- **Logistics** / Sell-Side / Value added logistics / Annual Sales € 25M – Annual EBITDA € 3,4M / Type of investor: Strategic / From Netherlands to Europe - US / Logistics service provider operating in the BeNeLux area, with a fleet of over 150 vehicles and 150 FTE, 18.000m2 warehousing facility (20.000 pallet positions)

**MILNER**

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[www.milnerfinance.com](http://www.milnerfinance.com)

- **Agro industry** / EURm 150/ Type of investor: Strategic / From Denmark to Denmark / Financial restructuring of a PE controlled company. MilnerFinance is advising a minority shareholder in connection with a financial restructuring involving injection of EURm 15 from existing investors as shareholders loan and negotiating a new agreement with the consortium of banks providing debt company enabling the company to continue operations

**AURIS**  
FINANCE

[www.auris-finance.fr](http://www.auris-finance.fr)

- **Gaia project** / Sell-Side / Production – distribution of deli food products / T/O 12M€ (2022) - FTE 70p / Type of investor Strategic-Industrial / From France to France, Belgium / Production-Distribution of deli food products. Recognized know-how. Expert and dedicated team. Labels and certifications. Regular investments. Strong growth potential.
- **Brehat** / Sell-side (retirement) / Transport and logistics / T/O 6 M€ - FTE 49p - Paris and Southern France / Type of investor: Strategic / From France to Netherlands – Poland / Daily transport both ways from Paris to Marseille (Pickup – Tracking – Distribution)
- **Link** / Sell-side / Interim – HR / T/O 200 M€ / Type of investor: Strategic – Financial / From France to France, Belgium / More than the 50% of the T/O in transport sector.

## Michael says



**Dr. Michael Hirt**

Global Executive Coach

CEO coach

Management Expert

In today's business landscape, there is no skill more valuable than negotiation. That's why ICFN Executive Director Dr. Michael Hirt recently held the very well received interactive video training program "The Power of Negotiation" for ICFN members firms and their teams, to take them to the next level in serving their demanding local and international M&A Advisory Clients.

The event was designed to equip participants with actionable, proven tools, methods, and techniques to transform their contract negotiation skills and results.

Master Negotiator Michael has trained and coached executives, managers, and salespeople throughout the world in the art of negotiating. As a ghost negotiator he advises and accompanies his clients in difficult negotiations. He brings a wealth of 30 years of experience from different roles and many negotiations.

*"When asked for a (even small) concession by the other side, always ask for something in return.*

*Sometimes you ask for something specific in return, as in "if we do this for you, will you do that for us?".*

*On other occasions use this expression: "If we can do that for you, what can you do for us".*

*You may just get something in return. As a minimum, it elevates the value of the concession so you can use it as a Trade-Off later. Most importantly, it stops the grinding process."*

# We are International Corporate Finance Network

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**VAT SWISS**  
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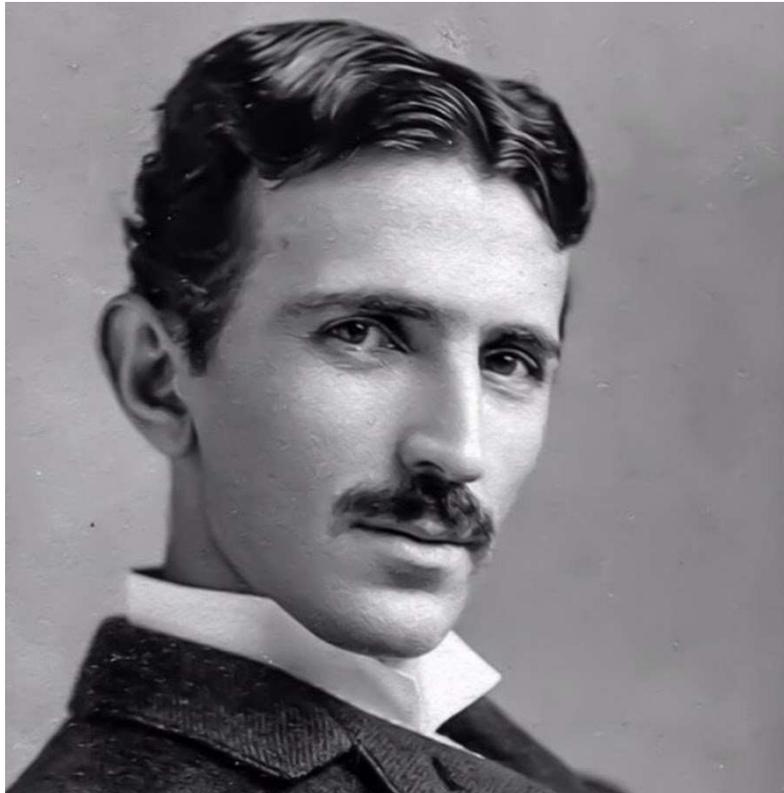
**HIRT&FRIENDS**

  
**Rockworth**

[www.icfnetwork.com](http://www.icfnetwork.com)

 **Factor & Ros**  
bedrijfsvernames en managementregie

► ... Bye!



*“Marconi is a good fellow. Let him continue. He is using seventeen of my patents.”* – Nikola Tesla

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