



Press release

Brussels, 5 October 2016

KBC Match'it It's a deal! **KBC starts up dating site for businesses**

Tomorrow, 6 October KBC Securities launches KBC Match'it, a digital platform where buyers and companies that are looking to be taken over, meet each other. This makes KBC the first financial institution in Europe to offer such a platform. KBC Match'it completes KBC's offering to companies, to which it can now offer guidance and solutions in every phase of their life cycle.

Bartel Puelinckx, CEO of KBC Securities: *'KBC Match'it is KBC's innovative tool to complete its service provision to SMEs at all stages of the company's life cycle: with Start it @KBC, Bolero Crowdfunding and the Start it Fund, KBC supports businesses in their start-up phase. Then, our relationship managers help them through each successive phase in their growth and development. Combining the flexibility of an online process with the expertise of offline advisers will make finding the right match a less time-consuming and labour-intensive exercise. The strongest point is that we can rely on KBC's extensive network and that we have a broad client base on both the buyer and seller sides. This will appreciably increase the likelihood of finding the perfect match.*

Research by the Enterprise Agency shows that we can expect a wave of company acquisitions in the next few years. The issue of company acquisitions is a major topic in companies owned by the over 50s. And demographics in Belgium mean there are increasing numbers of such companies. According to estimations, over 25% of these businesspeople want to sell their companies within the next five years. If no family succession is possible, a sale to a third party is needed. 72% of companies considering an external sale agree with the statement that it's hard to find a suitable buyer. A matching platform offers a solution to this.

The ambient conditions for takeovers are favourable, partly buoyed by the cheap finance that's available. However, a company transfer is still a complex process with major financial, tax and legal implications for both buyer (transferee) and seller (transferor). Professional assistance and a structured approach are therefore absolute necessities. The first, and by far the most important, step in the acquisition process is to find a suitable counterparty.

Acquisitions via KBC Match'it

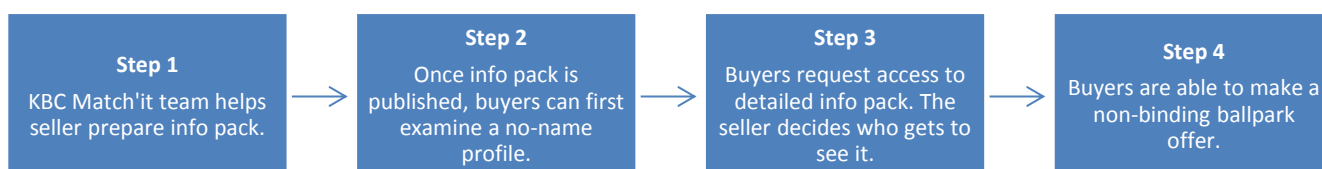
KBC Match'it helps 'transferors' and 'transferees' in this search. It's a secured digital platform where buyers and sellers of SMEs can exchange information and embark on negotiations in the knowledge that confidentiality is assured. It's a **closed platform** with no free access for the wider public. All parties undergo pre-screening and potential investors have to sign a confidentiality agreement covering the information that's provided to them. This information is contained in a detailed info

pack prepared for each target, giving insight into its identity, operations, finances and organisation. This gives investors the basis they need for carrying out a thorough investment analysis and issuing a ballpark offer. The acquisition process is subsequently continued offline in the classic M&A manner.

The platform sets great store in being use-friendly and efficient: all the investment files are just a mouse click away. Plus, its strongest point is that KBC Match'it is backed up by the extremely extensive network of KBC, CBC and KBC Brussels. This considerably increases the chances of finding the perfect match. Plus, via the platform, users also have access to professional advice on the legal, tax and accounting aspects or to financial services in relation to the purchase or sale.

Michiel Vanhauwere, co-founder of Match'it confirms "two aspects are crucial in any negotiation: professionalism and confidentiality. These are the two building blocks that were used building KBC Match'it, our clients will find these values in any step they take."

How it works



Further info: www.kbcmatchit.be

KBC Match'it is ideal for SMEs with EBITDA (operating cash flow) between 300 000 and 1.5 million euros.

KBC is your ideal partner for an all-in solution

KBC facilitates the full acquisition process with help from others in certain quarters. Offering a solution for all aspects of the acquisition process involves working in conjunction with a selection of preferred partners, who can be contacted via the platform. Our partners can assist both buyers and sellers in preparing their due diligence and in the tax and legal aspects of a deal, though clients can of course seek out their own advisers if they wish.

The launch of KBC Match'it further illustrates that companies are important to KBC and reconfirms its role in society by stimulating and supporting innovation and entrepreneurship. As a bank-insurer and expert in finance, KBC is ideally positioned to support and advise companies.

The platform has been developed together with Kunstmaan.

Spokesperson
Tel. + 32 2 429 85 45

E-mail: pressofficekbc@kbc.be

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