



# Private Equity & Transactions 2020

2020 deal activity at a glance



**OC&C**  
Strategy consultants

uncommon sense

# 2020 deal activity at a glance...

While 2020 was a turbulent year for the world, private equity activity remained very resilient - with the strong slowdown in activity in Q2 as the COVID pandemic hit followed by an equally strong step-up in activity in the second half of the year. High levels of cash and dry powder enabled private equity investors to be active in seeking good investment opportunities once they had had a chance to work through how COVID would impact the attractiveness of different investment plays.

OC&C commercial advisory in Private Equity very much reflected this trajectory, with 2020 ending up as the busiest year for our Private Equity practice in our 33-year history. We supported private equity clients on hundreds of deals globally across the US, Europe and Asia in our core industry sectors. We believe our robust approach, founded on deep sector expertise combined with local insight and transaction experience, is critical in helping our clients really understand the assets and industries they are investing in and this depth of insight is critical in such a fluid and uncertain external environment.





































Below, we share some selected successful transactions we have supported in the last 12 months that highlight our experience.

# Communications & Technology

Our technology team had a record year in 2020 despite the April/May dip and we are privileged to have worked with so many great investors and businesses on landmark deals. Hg's 2020 re-investment in Visma was the largest ever software buyout globally. We are proud and delighted to have supported Hg and to have worked closely once again with Visma, a business whose legend now extends far beyond the Nordics.

2020 was a year in which high quality technology assets continued to thrive, proving the resilience of their growth and profitability. The continuing success of companies like Access Group, Wireless Logic, Webpros and Exclaimer through a year of disruption was predictable, but still a pleasure to see. Some technology businesses found COVID to be a new tailwind, of course, such as Vitruvian's investments in Scrive and Global-e. Artificial Intelligence continues to be strong and we were pleased to support the eViso IPO.

Vertical software has continued to attract investors, a trend we see continuing long into the future. Examples this year included Big Hand and STP in Legal, Caseware in Accounting and Infoplex in Healthcare. Looking into 2021, we are particularly excited about infrastructure software (with Webpros perhaps the best example from our 2020 activity).

<p><b>Access Group</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p> <p></p> <p></p>	<p><b>Alphaserve</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p> <p></p> <p></p>	<p><b>Arkessa</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p> <p></p> <p></p>	<p><b>Arrow Business Communications</b></p> <p>Vendor Due Diligence for</p> <p></p> <p></p>	<p><b>Big Hand</b></p> <p>Vendor Due Diligence for</p> <p></p> <p></p>
<p><b>Caseware</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p> <p></p> <p></p>	<p><b>Citation</b></p> <p>Vendor Due Diligence for</p> <p></p> <p></p>	<p><b>eViso</b></p> <p>IPO for</p> <p></p> <p></p>	<p><b>Exclaimer</b></p> <p>Transaction support for</p> <p></p> <p></p>	<p><b>Eze Castle</b></p> <p>Re-Financing for</p> <p></p> <p></p>
<p><b>Global-e</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p> <p></p> <p></p>	<p><b>InfoFlex</b></p> <p>Buy-side support for</p> <p></p> <p></p>	<p><b>Scrive</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p> <p></p> <p></p>	<p><b>STP Legal Software</b></p> <p>Vendor Due Diligence for</p> <p></p> <p></p>	<p><b>Symfonia</b></p> <p>Vendor Due Diligence for</p> <p></p> <p></p>
<p><b>Visma</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p> <p></p> <p></p>	<p><b>Webpros</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p> <p></p> <p></p>	<p><b>XCM Solutions</b></p> <p>Vendor Due Diligence for</p> <p></p> <p></p>		



























# Media

Following the general arc of 2020, the Media sector also saw disruption during the earlier months of the year, followed by a period of very strong transaction activity.

Following from our work in 2019 we continued to support online classifieds as sector consolidation continues. In 2020 we supported Adevinata in the \$9bn acquisition of eBay classifieds creating the world's largest classifieds group, Schibsted in the acquisition of DBA & Bilbasen (eBay Denmark) and Oakley in the sale of atHome Group, (the market leading online real estate and auto classifieds business in Luxembourg). Online marketplaces continue to be a hot topic. OC&C supported Admiral on the sale of Penguin portals (confused.com, Rastreator, LeLynx.fr) and Schibsted in the acquisition of Oikotie a Finnish multi-vertical online marketplace. Marketing services witnessed robust deal flow with OC&C supporting the sale of Dept a leading integrated and full-services digital agency and Smartly.io a leading global creative and digital advertising platform.

In B2B media, the scenario was also one of buzzing activity across different verticals. B2B information & software have been particularly prized assets given resilient performance during the pandemic with subscription models and digital solutions proving their worth. OC&C supported Evaluate Pharma, Ascential (Groundsure & Glenigan) and XCM (tax & accounting) on the sell side and Energy Aspects on the acquisition of Medley Global Advisors (economic research). We continued to support education & training transactions advising Eureka Capital in the acquisition of Ipec a leading provider of coach training and certification solutions to the worldwide professional coaching industry. In Italy we supported the acquisition of Alpha Test (admission prep books and courses).

Despite the degree of uncertainty on how the pandemic will play out, we expect a robust pipeline of deal activity across online platforms, B2B information and Software, Marketing Services and Education during the first half of 2021, possibly reverting to more normal levels in the second half of the year. Many of these segments have proved resilient through the pandemic, attracting a lot investor appetite that is likely to continue as the journey out of the crisis remains uncertain.

<p><b>Alpha Test</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>atHome Group</b></p> <p>Vendor Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>DBA &amp; Bilbasen</b> (eBay Denmark)</p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Dept</b></p> <p>Vendor Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>eBay Classified</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  
<p><b>Evaluate Pharma</b></p> <p>Vendor Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Glenigan</b></p> <p>Vendor Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Groundsure</b></p> <p>Vendor Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>iPEC</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Medley Global Advisors</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  
<p><b>Oikotie</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Penguin Portals</b> (confused.com, Rastreator, LeLynx.fr)</p> <p>Vendor Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Smartly.io</b></p> <p>Vendor Due Diligence for</p>  		

# B2B / Services

The shock of the pandemic had a highly variable impact on different corners of the B2B landscape. Our primary focus areas of Testing & Inspection, Automotive & Logistics, Insurance, Professional Services & BPO, Waste and the circular economy, FM and Infrastructure experienced different fortunes with implications for investors in the coming year.

Overall, the TICC sector enjoyed market resilience and growth in response to safety concerns, with the exception of some hard-hit sectors such as Transportation and Energy. There has been rapid adoption of technologies such as remote inspection and audit and increased demand for "Assurance" services, including inspection, audit, and compliance, especially where related to supply chains, digital security, or sustainability. Adler & Allen, Reliable Analysis, Millbrook & Process Risk Technologies were just a handful of transactions demonstrating these trends. These trends have driven some very high multiples paid on any 'platform' business that had shown resilience through the year, with more expected through 2021.

































While Professional Services & BPO experienced tremendous uncertainty during H1 2020, the end of the year saw a cementing of the shift in "investability" of this sector. This attraction has been driven by rising demand (underpinned by "megatrends" such as supply chain complexity, Digital, and ESG) combined with an increasing competition for talent and a premium for access to it. Market consolidation could be seen across Engineering Services, Management Consulting, Environmental Consulting, and other multi-disciplinary professional services aggregators.

In the wide world of industrials, some segments of industrial automation also proved resilient (e.g. Electric80 and Applied Vision deals). There is also a lot of interest around food-productivity enhancers especially related to agriculture (e.g. Arrigoni deal) and we expect to see a lot of investment activity in this space in 2021. As the initial shocks of the pandemic began to settle, we saw a surge in investor interest in circular economy assets, where we anticipate a lot of transaction activity in 2021. While there was some short term "pain" for parts of the sector exposed to Construction & Infrastructure, recovery in global supply chains will likely drive some bounce-back in recycling. Moreover, the strong long-term fundamentals and continuing shortening of global supply chains will support continued investor interest in the circular economy during uncertain times.

<p><b>Adler &amp; Allen</b></p> <p>Vendor Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Amex GBT</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Applied Vision Corporation</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Arrigoni</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Electric 80</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  
<p><b>Gamma Multiservice</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Global Freight Solutions</b></p> <p>Re-Financing for</p>  	<p><b>Millbrook</b></p> <p>Vendor Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Monrif</b></p> <p>Restructuring for</p>  	<p><b>MQL</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>   
<p><b>NRG Fleet Services</b></p> <p>Vendor Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Process Sensing Technologies</b></p> <p>Vendor Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Reliable Analysis</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>SECI</b></p> <p>Restructuring for</p>  	<p><b>Sicer</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  
<p><b>Viridor</b></p> <p>Vendor Due Diligence for</p>  				

# Consumer Goods

Consumer Goods was one of the stronger sectors for transactions in 2020 - with investors valuing the proven strength and resilience of the sector plus some upsides as volume shifted from foodservice into grocery. OC&C activity reflected this, where we advised on assets across a broad range of sizes and sub-sectors. For example, in Chilled / Fresh our work included supporting the divestments of Signature Foods, Winterbotham Darby and acquisition of Addo. Pets was a sector receiving substantial investor focus (underpinned by the combination of resilience and premiumisation) and we supported the acquisition of Forthglade and MPM and the sale of Armitage to Spectrum Brands. Another emerging trend was interest in alternative distribution channels, a lens we brought to the acquisition of CallmeWine, Everton Tea and Bertoncello in Italy. A final area of focus for us was in fashion manufacturing where there has been considerable consolidation, with T&J Vestor, Alce, ABC Morini and Lanificio dell'Olivo all transacting this year.

<p><b>ABC Morini</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Addo</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Alce</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Armitage Pet Care</b></p> <p>Vendor Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Bertoncello</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  
<p><b>Callmewine</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Everton Tea</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Forthglade</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Fox's</b></p> <p>Vendor Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Greenland Seafood</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  
<p><b>Hovis</b></p> <p>Vendor Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Lanificio dell'Olivo</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>MPM</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Signature Foods</b></p> <p>Vendor Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>T&amp;J Vestor</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  
<p><b>Winterbotham Darby</b></p> <p>Vendor Due Diligence for</p>  				

# Retail & Leisure

Retail and Leisure were some of the sectors most impacted by the COVID pandemic – with many businesses in the sector either grappling with long periods of severe operating restrictions or being shut down – and outside that dealing with huge uncertainty in their outlook.

Within Retail, the investment focus swung even more heavily than previously towards online retailers and digital platforms, benefitting from the major online channel shifts that lockdowns accelerated and the step changes in scale and profitability this drove in many of these businesses. OC&C was very active in this space throughout 2020 – from supporting some of the largest deals such as the \$11 bn IPO of Allegro (the leading Polish eCommerce platform) to more mid-sized specialist plays such as the successful sale of Seraphine and acquisition of Displate. In physical stores, grocery and essential retail demonstrated their resilience – and this was reflected in some of the transaction activity we supported in this space (acquisition of D.M.O. Petcare, valuation of Esselunga).

With Leisure suffering from a huge one-off shift in consumer spending away from leisure services and experiences, investors spent a lot of time supporting their existing portfolios through the challenges of the COVID period rather than new acquisitions. Despite that, there were investment opportunities, particularly in ‘Digital Leisure’ and online platforms, and OC&C activity included supporting KKR’s acquisition of a stake in Zwift and Searchlight’s investment in Get Your Guide.

At some point (subject to a successful vaccine rollout) the leisure landscape will dramatically re-adjust, and we expect substantial pent-up demand to come through as the leisure sector opens up. From an investment perspective, there will be a major opportunity to direct capital towards the structural winners (eg digital and “distributors” of leisure) and for those with a confident view on timing perhaps also an opportunity to invest in business with long-term winning proposition but requiring capital to overcome short term stress.

<p><b>Allegro</b></p> <p>IPO for</p>  	<p><b>Apaczka</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>D.M.O Petcare</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Displate</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Esselunga</b></p> <p>Valuation for</p> <p><b>Private Owner</b></p> 
<p><b>Get Your Guide</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Seraphine</b></p> <p>Vendor Due Diligence for</p>  	<p><b>Zwift</b></p> <p>Commercial Due Diligence for</p>  		

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We're delighted to have had the opportunity to work with so many great partners on such important opportunities. We would be delighted to share our deep sector and topic expertise with you further on any of the areas highlighted here that are of interest: [privateequity@occstrategy.com](mailto:privateequity@occstrategy.com)



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