

## FLOTATION

# A first step towards moving internationally

The IBI firm, a provider of consultancy services in flotation and capital opening, supports SMEs in their search for financing and international development.

**IBI (Industrie, Bourse, International,** in English "Industry, Stock Exchange, International") is an independent firm offering aid to companies seeking to raise capital through the stock exchange or else through non-indexed operations via investment funds or bank loans. "International development is financed by capital stock. A majority of our clients seek our services in this framework, to increase capital in order to win market shares outside of France," indicates Louis-Victor d'Herbès, founder of the consultancy firm.

A privileged instrument of IBI is the IPO, especially on Alternext. "What makes the stock exchange interesting is the possibility of recuperating funds in attractive conditions. It allows bringing the value of a company up by 25 to 30% compared with the raising of capital via investment funds," explains Louis-Victor d'Herbès. "Of course not all companies are in a position to take risks on the stock exchange: they have to make the effort to structure themselves in such a way as to produce regular reports and to communicate their account figures rigorously. If these conditions come together, it is entirely in the interests of companies with turnovers upwards of about ten million euros to offers shares on Alternext: a flotation budget is lower than that of a handover of activities, and an indexed company inspires more confidence than a non-indexed one."

## The stock exchange, a vector of growth

Amongst IBI's clients is Inventoriste, a stocktaking specialist that entered the free market in May 2004. This company's growth enabled it to make a transfer to Alternext in 2007, resulting in a turnover that multiplied its 2003 turnover by more than five in 2008, with the opening of subsidiaries in Spain, Portugal, Italy and Belgium. "Long histories begin on the stock exchange, which is only the start and



not the end of a trajectory. We don't sell companies, we propel them," says Louis-Victor d'Herbès. "One of the companies to have placed their trust in us upstream for their IPOs is Eurofins Scientific. Amongst the foremost international providers of bioanalytical services, this company achieved a turnover of 3.5 million euros in 2003, compared with over 600 million euros in 2009. Entering the stock market in 1997, the company gradually raised capital to match its growth, whilst the company head maintained control of a majority of the capital. Today, the international sphere, including Europe and the US, represents 80% of its activity."

Founded in 1996, IBI offers services, in France, on all stock exchange markets (free market, Alternext, Euronext) and investment funds for capital openings and fundraising. In the context of an IPO, the firm – independent from banks – carries out company assessments as well as legal, tax and financial engineering for operations, determines the amount and nature of capital to be raised, takes charge of documents to be presented to stock exchange authorities and investors, helps

indexed operations, it provides assistance in selecting financial partners and negotiation until funds are made available. Its target clientele: family-run or independent (and wishing to remain so) companies in the industrial sector or specialising in services for persons or companies, with development projects requiring an injection of funds.

The stock exchange value of IBI's current clients represented, in December 2009, 2.6 billion euros, as opposed to 1 billion euros on the first day of indexing. And a major proportion of its clients are in the forefront of the fastest climbers in terms of turnover and stock market value. So what does IBI hope to achieve next? To accompany US companies as they set out to enter the European stock exchange via France, and to manage cross-border operations. As well as opening out towards China, thanks to rigorously selected partners. ●

with the selection of financial establishments, the organisation of communication plans and the coordination of various service providers. When called on for non-

## Louis-Victor d'Herbès, an entrepreneur serving other entrepreneurs

To establish his consultancy activity, Louis-Victor d'Herbès relied on his past professional experience at the British investor, 3i, as well as at the chief holding company of the Edmond de Rothschild group in France. Finance, however, was not the first calling of this farmer's son.

"I always wanted to be an entrepreneur, but initially, I wanted to set up an export company for rosé wine in the US, a market of the future." Entrolling in an MBA at HEC Business School in view of becoming a company head, he eventually specialised in capital development at 3i before discovering the profession of managing IPOs. He finally founded IBI in 1996 with serious assets up his sleeve: his independence and his perfect familiarity with the psychology of the various actors who intervene in the framework of initial public offerings. His everyday routine is made up of long days at work, often beginning at 5 am to catch the first plane or train of the day for his many business trips that require him to be at the top of physical form. It is not by chance if IBI's logo is a statue of a stone lifter. Louis-Victor d'Herbès is one of these company heads who places an importance on work capacity. Hence his penchant for entrepreneurship. "What motivates me is the entrepreneur. My vocation is to help company leaders to reveal themselves and develop their activities," he points out. "The IPO is amongst the high-performance tools that they can use. It helps them to unleash energy."

After a subdued 2009, Louis-Victor d'Herbès is looking forward to clear-cut recovery in 2010. In his opinion, it is the right time to prepare for entering Alternext, a platform perfectly adapted to the needs of SMEs wishing to export. "Companies that still exist in 2010 have survived the crisis. They have succeeded in keeping their clients. Now they have to grab the money before their competitors." An expert's vision.