

STOCK MARKET NEWS

VNU vets raise \$250m for MR acquisition vehicle



FROM LEFT: RICHARD GOULD, EARL DOPPELT, FRANK MARTELL AND MICHAEL CONNORS

BRIAN TARRAN

Michael Connors, former head of VNU's media measurement arm, has resurfaced as CEO of Information Services Group (ISG) – a multi-million dollar acquisition vehicle looking to buy companies operating in the business, media, marketing and consumer information sectors.

Connors is joined in the venture by another ex-VNU man, Frank Martell. Martell was global chief operating officer and president of European operations for

VNU's ACNielsen until late last year, when he left in the wake of a restructure.

He is now CFO of ISG. Other board directors include Robert Chrenc, a former ACNielsen finance chief, and Robert Weissman, a former CEO of IMS Health, Cognizant and The Dun & Bradstreet Corporation.

ISG announced the completion of an initial public offering on the American Stock Exchange last month, raising more than \$250m in funds – \$100m more than it originally set out to make.

Its takeover targets will most likely be research and information businesses with an enterprise value of between \$250m and \$700m.

Neither Connors nor his fellow directors were available for comment as the company is still in the 'quiet period' surrounding the IPO.

Connors was vice chairman of ACNielsen until 2001, when VNU acquired the consumer goods researcher.

He then went on to lead VNU's media measurement business group, comprising TV ratings giant Nielsen Media Research, Nielsen Entertainment and online audience measurement agency NetRatings.

He left VNU in July 2005, telling *Research* he wanted to chase his dream of becoming CEO of a publicly-listed company – an ambition he has now fulfilled.

Following his departure, VNU was bought by a group of private equity firms and has since been renamed The Nielsen Company.

Profile: who's behind Information Services Group

MICHAEL CONNORS (CEO) was a senior vice president of The Dun & Bradstreet Corporation until 1996, when D&B was broken up into three companies, including ACNielsen.

FRANK MARTELL (CFO) joined D&B as head of internal audit in 1995, and then held a variety of positions within ACN.

EARL DOPPELT (GENERAL COUNSEL) was general counsel for D&B from 1994, then ACN

from 1996. He was chief legal officer of VNU from 2001 to November 2006.

RICHARD GOULD (EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT) is a 20-year veteran of Morgan Stanley with experience in capital markets, global sales management, marketing and new product innovation.

ROBERT CHRENC (DIRECTOR) was CFO of ACNielsen from June 1996 to February 2001.

He was then made chief administrative officer before retiring in December 2001.

R. GLENN HUBBARD (DIRECTOR) has been Dean of Columbia University, Graduate School of Business since 2004.

ROBERT WEISSMAN (DIRECTOR) was chairman and CEO of D&B, then Cognizant, then IMS Health between 1994 and 1999. He retired as IMS chairman in 2001.

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