CHL and B2Biscom join forces in e-commerce

CHL cooperation agreement with B2Biscom and e.Voci (e.Biscom group) leverages commercial and technological strengths

Milan, May 16, 2001 – CHL S.p.A. -- a key player in Italy's e-commerce market with revenues in excess of 176 billion lire in 2000 and a major ASP specialising in e-business solutions (TwoASP platform) with more than 70,000 business clients in Italy and Spain -- has reached an agreement for joint e-commerce activities with B2Biscom. B2Biscom, a company controlled by e.Biscom S.p.A., was founded in April 2000 to develop and manage vertical and horizontal marketplaces. In its first year of operations, it reported revenues of 5.2 million Euro.

The agreement provides for the partners to develop a commercial strategy for the gradual introduction of the CHL catalogue on the B2Biscom general-spending goods marketplace. CHL offers one of the most varied and best-established product selections in Europe, with more than 5,500 different types of products and 70 different brands. Under the new partnership, CHL will also channel its offer via eBixtrade.it (the B2Biscom portal for SMBs), enabling B2Biscom to significantly expand its product offer. CHL and B2Biscom are planning a series of joint marketing initiatives to promote the eBixtrade.it portal to CHL's 70,000 business clients.
Additionally, through the TwoASP platform, CHL will provide a series of value-added services similar to those available on the www.chl.it site, which include an integrated logistics service and transaction tracking for immediate updates on order status.

The agreement also creates potential synergies among e.Biscom's e.Voci retail chain, CHL's consultancy points (approximately 300), the chl.it portal and the eVoci.it site. Specifically, a number of e.Voci shops will provide consumer advisory services and facilities for customers to place orders, use the payment method of their choice and collect merchandise; it will be possible to make purchases on the CHL.it site or directly at e.Voci shops. The companies are also considering joint development of a range of mobile products (especially mobile phones) for online sales.

Furthermore, B2Biscom and CHL plan to create vertical digital markets in the Information & Communication Technology (ICT) area in order to optimise producer/distributor relations with offers of guaranteed second-hand items or end-of-series stocks.

"Our partnership with B2Biscom and e.Voci is important for several reasons," said CHL Chairman and Founder Stefano Bargagni. "First, because we have formed an agreement with a company at the leading-edge of the Italian economy. This is the first step toward the entry on to the marketplace of all the companies that already use CHL's online marketing services (TwoASP). CHL intends to be a 'facilitator' of online product marketing, leveraging a multi-channel approach: the CHL.it and iol.chl.it sites, our network of consultancy points and now also the eBixtrade.it marketplace. This will stimulate significant growth in CHL's B2B user base, boosting our sales of ICT products and making our TwoASP online marketing service available to a wider range of potential customers. I am also convinced the agreement is the first in a series of joint projects with B2Biscom."

"CHL is a key partner for development of an all-round e.business project," said B2Biscom Chief Executive Giuseppe Caruso. "The agreement will increase the number of products available through the eBixtrade.it portal and guarantee competitiveness on quality and prices. It will give SMBs a business tool to help them buy better, at lower costs. B2Biscom today offers advanced, flexible B2B solutions based on direct development and management of marketplaces like eBixtrade.it, and cooperation agreements with leading Italian businesses. The agreement with CHL – which follows our strategic partnerships with Banca Popolare di Bergamo/Credito Varesino, Banca Popolare di Lodi and Banca Popolare di Milano – confirms this."

CHL
CHL, the leading Italian provider of e-business services, combines international external and internal resources for the creation of high-performance online infrastructures (front-end web sites, control and monitoring extranets, hosting and band) and offline infrastructures (optimisation of the supply chain: warehousing, transportation and delivery/payment of goods at physical points of presence, home deliveries). Its online retailing infrastructure and expertise is now available to third parties via the TwoASP service (www.twoasp.com).

B2Biscom
Founded in April 2000, B2Biscom operates as an integrated partner to support B2B e-commerce needs. Its services offer includes marketplace development, supply of technology and consultancy to help customers develop their own marketplaces, and supply of software as an ASP. Through the B2Lab unit, B2Biscom also acts as a technological-operational investor on vertical markets. It employs more than 100 specialised professionals on technology, consultancy and project management. It is 99.8% owned by e.Biscom (Milan's *Nuovo Mercato*: EBI) and 0.2% by management.
www.b2biscom.it
Toll Free Phone Number: 800 188.888

eBIXTRADE
e.Bixtrade.it is a portal for Italy's SMBs developed by B2Biscom, which went on line on March 19, 2001. The heart of eBixtrade.it is the electronic marketplace developed on the Ariba® technological platform (www.ariba.com), where businesses can easily buy and sell office supplies, IT and telephone equipment, office furniture. In addition to the marketplace, eBixtrade.it also acts as an ASP and provides editorial content (from e.BisMedia) and on-line services, such as personnel selection and access to the Dun & Bradstreet's database. B2Biscom is gradually enhancing its offer with value services for users of the eBixtrade.it marketplace, including e-learning solutions and new software for its ASP offer.
www.ebixtrade.it

e.Voci
e.Voci is another company of the e.Biscom group that specialises in digital products and services, focusing on mobile communications. With a selection of leading-brand products for fixed and mobile telephony, pay-tv and hi-tech, e.Voci assists customers in choosing the best solutions to meet their requirements. The first sales outlet opened in March 2000. Today, e-Voci has outlets in Milan, Rome, Alessandria, Monza, Bergamo and Piacenza (June 2001). Visitors to the www.evoci.it site can make online purchases and find out about the latest e.Voci developments. The call centre (Toll Free: 800 188.800) provides customers with information as well as after-sales support.

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