

PRESS RELEASE

Bertelsmann Investments Strengthens EMBRACE with Acquisition of VOCANTO

- **Move expands HR Tech within Bertelsmann Next**
- **Third HR Tech acquisition following Studyflix and Milch & Zucker**
- **Deniz Pielsticker: “Another step in expanding the strategic growth area of HR Tech at Bertelsmann Next.”**

Gütersloh, December 4, 2024 – Bertelsmann Investments (BI) has strengthened its portfolio company EMBRACE, part of the Bertelsmann Next unit tasked with advancing the emerging fields of digital health, pharma tech, mobile ad tech and HR tech, by acquiring Cologne-based VOCANTO. BI had previously expanded EMBRACE significantly by acquiring the renowned German HR solutions provider Milch & Zucker, and Studyflix, the largest career platform for school and university students in the German-speaking territories. VOCANTO is an e-learning platform for commercial and industrial/technical apprenticeships.

Deniz Pielsticker, CFO of Bertelsmann Investments and responsible for EMBRACE within Bertelsmann Next, said: “The Vocanto acquisition is our next step in expanding EMBRACE into a leading HR tech provider. We will keep investing in the continued organic and acquisitive growth of EMBRACE in the years ahead as part of the Bertelsmann Next program.”

Gero Hesse, CEO of EMBRACE, added: “The acquisition of VOCANTO means that we now cover all key challenges related to the fields of attraction, hiring and retention – and are another step closer to our vision of a comprehensive HR ecosystem with a strong footprint in the young target group.”

VOCANTO founders and co-CEOs Stephan Hansen and Johannes Schulte said: “We are passionate fans and advocates of dual vocational training. We believe that we can lend even more power and assertiveness to this passion in the EMBRACE family. By facilitating education, we want to support even more companies in recruiting, training and retaining future skilled workers.”

Following the acquisition, the renowned e-learning brands VOCANTO and PRÜFUNGS.TV (with a focus on banks and insurance companies) will remain independent brands under the EMBRACE umbrella. Founders Stephan Hansen and Johannes Schulte will also remain their roles in the company’s management.

About Bertelsmann Investments

Bertelsmann Investments (BI) comprises Bertelsmann's global venture capital activities as well as the Bertelsmann Next growth unit. The venture capital arm includes the Bertelsmann Asia Investments (BAI), Bertelsmann India Investments (BII), and Bertelsmann Digital Media Investments (BDMI) funds, as well as selected fund and direct holdings in markets including Europe, the United States, Brazil, Southeast Asia and Africa. The Bertelsmann Next unit advances the entrepreneurial development of new growth sectors and business areas, including Digital Health, HR Tech, and Mobile Ad Tech. To date, around €1.9 billion has been invested in around 500 innovative companies and funds through Bertelsmann Investments. Bertelsmann Investments currently holds over 350 active investments worldwide through its network of start-ups and funds.

About EMBRACE

EMBRACE, part of Bertelsmann Investments, company bundles innovative offerings from the areas of recruiting, retention and HR tech. Its team is united by a common vision: Everyone deserves the best possible job and employer. Which is why they are making the world of work more human, more optimistic, and more technology-driven. The strategy is to build the leading HR tech ecosystem covering the areas of Attract, Hire & Retain in the German-speaking world. This includes consulting and agency services for employer branding and recruiting as well as scalable HR tech platforms and products. The EMBRACE family includes milch & zucker, Ausbildung.de, MeinPraktikum.de, Trainee.de, JobStairs.de, Studyflix, VOCANTO, and EMBRACE.Agency. The company's annual festival, the associated community, and content offerings such as white papers, webinars and podcasts round off our range of services. EMBRACE has more than 550 employees in Augsburg, Bochum, Giessen, Gütersloh, Cologne and Hamburg. For more information: www.embrace.family

About VOCANTO

VOCANTO is the leading e-learning platform for vocational training in German-speaking countries, combining practical learning with modern technology. The idea is to impart knowledge that is immediately usable in practice – both during vocational training and when pursuing advanced training and professional qualifications. VOCANTO's digital learning solutions make vocational training more tangible and interactive. The platform offers innovative content in the form of 3D visualizations, interactive animations and quiz formats that are specially tailored to the requirements of the particular apprenticeships. Close support by tutors ensures that learners receive competent and individual support from training experts. Designed for apprentices, trainers, and companies, VOCANTO supports an optimal combination of theory and practice. VOCANTO is based in Cologne. For more information: www.vocanto.com

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