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Engine USA Announces Acquisition of Noise

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NEW YORK, Dec. 10, 2010 /PRNewswire/ -- Engine USA, the communications and marketing services group, today announced the acquisition of Noise, the business invention shop specializing in the young adult market. Headquartered in New York City with offices in San Francisco, Noise creates and markets innovative products, programs, and interactive platforms for new and established consumer brands. Terms of the agreement were not disclosed.

Martin Puris, Chief Executive Officer of Engine USA said, "The size and purchasing power of the young adult market is extraordinary, and we think it has mostly been underserved, with no one until Noise really focusing on it as a whole. Led by Noah Kerner, the idea of creating a shop that starts with the consumer and builds solutions from the ground up is critically important to Engine. We see this as a model for the future."

Noise was co-founded by CEO and chief creative officer Noah Kerner. Among its many creations, Noise launched Facebook's API feed and its first "application," created a private label version of Amazon, developed the first credit card to reward financial responsibility, co-created the world's largest animation collaboration with Intel, and created vitaminwater's flavorcreator, an interactive Facebook platform that allowed users to decide the flavor, vitamins and design of the next vitaminwater. The program was listed as one of the top 20 social programs of all time by *Forbes*.

"Noah has set himself apart with the way he has approached the business," said John Bernbach, COO of Engine USA. "Given the fact that he has focused Noise on the important 18-to-34 demo, and utilizes any creative platform necessary to reach that audience, whether it is a new product, game, packaging, or online experience, the company cannot be categorized or defined by tradition, which we view as vital to its ongoing success."

"We take the perspective of 'consumer first,'" said Kerner. "Everything begins there. We know and respect this audience. We treat them like we want to be treated. And once we've figured out the challenge, we come up with a creative solution -- a new product, interactive service, communication strategy, whatever. We don't discriminate. We call what we do 'business invention' because, in essence, we're just inventing new ways for companies to grow their businesses."

Kerner, commenting on the acquisition, said, "Although we've been approached by many companies with interesting opportunities, the main reason we chose Engine is because I trust and respect Martin Puris and John Bernbach. I have known them for seven years, and like the idea of being in business with smart, creative, good people who will help scale Noise properly at this critical point in our trajectory."

Engine USA is part of the Engine Group, London's largest independent communications and marketing company. It was established in New York in February 2010 with Puris as CEO and Bernbach as COO. Engine USA's first acquisition was social media marketing agency Deep Focus, based in New York. Both acquisitions reflect a determined effort by Engine USA to transplant the same culture of innovation and collaboration that's been so remarkably successful in London since Engine Group's inception five years ago.

In October, Engine announced a \$100 million investment in the business by an affiliate of global private investment firm H.I.G. Capital. The investment will allow Engine to push forward with significant growth across key markets, including in the USA, China, Brazil and selected European markets.

Peter Scott, Chairman of Engine Group and Engine USA, said, "The addition of Noise underscores the importance of the 18-34 demographic to Engine. Today 50 percent of the world's population is under 30, and in key emerging markets such as India the percentage is even higher, at over 60 percent. Noise has an outstanding track record in reaching the young adult market, and this acquisition is a great step in expanding our capabilities with that demo."

Noah Kerner began his career as a DJ at 14, spinning in nightclubs across the country, performing as stage DJ for artists like Jennifer Lopez, and appearing on *The Today Show* and *The Tonight Show*. In college, frustrated by the lack of access to DJ gear and Hip Hop culture, Kerner founded the first online hip hop one-stop, which led to a position managing online marketing for the *VH1 Group* one year out of school. Noah then co-founded the business invention shop, *Noise*, with the mission of transforming the way brands engage young adults. His first book, *Chasing Cool*, was published by Simon & Schuster in 2007 and named one of *Adage's* "top 10 books you should have read" that same year. Kerner has been featured in *Billboard Magazine's* "Top 30 Under 30" most influential business executives list, keynote conferences for the likes of Moet Hennessy and eBay, and just recently joined the board of Russell Simmons' Global Grind. Kerner is a graduate of Cornell University where he studied Psychology and Economics.

Martin Puris, formerly Co-Founder, Chairman and CEO of Ammirati & Puris, has more than 30 years experience building some of the world's most esteemed brands, including BMW ("The Ultimate Driving Machine"), Club Med ("The Antidote For Civilization") and UPS ("The Tightest Ship In The Shipping Business"). *Adweek Magazine* named him "One of the twenty most influential figures in advertising during the past 20 years."

John Bernbach was Chairman and CEO of the Bernbach Group. He worked for many years at Doyle Dane Bernbach, including eight as president/COO of DDB Needham Worldwide, where he helped to create the Omnicom Group. Throughout his career,

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Bernbach has developed marketing campaigns and branding strategies for clients such as Volkswagen and Audi, Universal Studios, Anheuser-Busch, Avis, IBM, Michelin, Porsche, Seiko, Chivas Regal Scotch, Martell Cognac and Mumm Champagne.

PALAZZO Advisory|Acquisition served as financial advisor to Engine in this transaction. Noise was advised by Salem Partners, LLC and Littman Krooks, LLP.

About Noise

Noise is a business invention agency that creates and markets new products, brands, and programs for companies targeting the young adult market. noisewyork.com/

About Engine

Engine was established in 2005. Today 600 people work in Engine, across 12 different communications companies operating in disciplines including digital communications, advertising, direct marketing, public relations and strategy consultancy.
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