

PRESS RELEASE

Bertelsmann Investments and Applike Group Invest €100m in Global Expansion of App Platform

- **Establishment of new companies, technologies, and platforms in the app market**
- **Investment focus: in-app video ads, mobile games publishing, and marketing technologies**
- **One platform to scale all key stages of the smartphone app value chain**

Hamburg/Gütersloh, April 28, 2022 – As the Hamburg-based applike group continues its global growth course, it will receive strategic expansion financing from its shareholder Bertelsmann Investments. A total of €100 million is to be invested in the development of new businesses, technologies, and platforms within the applike group. This move is part of Bertelsmann’s “Boost 2025” growth strategy. In connection with the financing, Bertelsmann Investments has valued the company at €500 million.

The applike group was founded seven years ago by Jonas Thiemann and Carlo Szelinsky in conjunction with Gruner + Jahr. Following the merger of G+J and RTL Deutschland, the stake has been held by Bertelsmann Investments (BI). Here, applike has been assigned to Bertelsmann Next, a new division with which BI is developing promising future business areas for the international media, services and education group Bertelsmann. The applike group currently comprises four companies: adjoe, JustDice, Sunday and justtrack. The businesses cover app marketing, reach building, mobile games development, and automation.

Last year, the applike group and its subsidiaries generated revenues in the low three-digit million range. It has been highly profitable for several years now. The company is active in more than 100 markets, with the U.S. being the largest market, accounting for more than a third of revenues. The applike group currently employs around 120 people from over 50 countries at its Hamburg site, and plans to double this number to 250 by the end of 2022.

The applike group is a leading company builder in the app economy and pursues a vision of reaching all app users worldwide. The growth financing is to be used to expand adjoe, the already leading ad network, into an in-app video platform. Sunday – which is already successfully developing “hyper-casual games” – will be further expanded into a publishing platform for external studios. Applike’s justtrack technology will also be used to help app publishers outside the applike group expand their reach. And justDice – the leading loyalty program for mobile gamers – will develop new loyalty apps.

“Hardly any media channel is currently growing as fast worldwide as smartphone apps. From Germany, the applike group is leading the market as a global player with innovative

technologies. Its founders Jonas Thiemann and Carlo Szelinsky have repeatedly demonstrated entrepreneurial vision and creative know-how. That is why we are investing in the strategic expansion of this growth business as part of our group-wide 'Boost' program," says Thomas Rabe, CEO of Bertelsmann and Bertelsmann Investments.

"This strategic expansion financing from Bertelsmann is a key step in realizing our vision of reaching the world's six billion app users and further expanding our position as a leading company builder in the app economy," says Jonas Thiemann, co-CEO and founder of the applike group. Carlo Szelinsky, his fellow co-CEO and founder, adds: "We have already spun off our fourth company this year in the form of justtrack, and more are planned. The new funding gives us the unique opportunity to develop a platform that covers all key stages of the value chain for successfully scaling smartphone apps."

About Bertelsmann

Bertelsmann is a media, services, and education company that operates in about 50 countries around the world. It includes the entertainment group RTL Group, the trade book publisher Penguin Random House, the music company BMG, the service provider Arvato, the Bertelsmann Printing Group, the Bertelsmann Education Group and Bertelsmann Investments, an international network of funds. The company has 145,000 employees and generated revenues of €18.7 billion in the 2021 financial year. Bertelsmann stands for creativity and entrepreneurship. This combination promotes first-class media content and innovative service solutions that inspire customers around the world. Bertelsmann aspires to achieve climate neutrality by 2030.

About the applike group

Founded in 2015 by Jonas Thiemann and Carlo Szelinsky in conjunction with the publishing house Gruner + Jahr in Hamburg, the applike group is the leading company builder in the app economy. The company offers solutions in mobile user acquisition, mobile gaming, and ad monetization. In 2020, AppLike was converted into a holding company (the applike group). It now employs more than 120 people and generated revenues of more than €100 million in 2021.

Bertelsmann online



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