



## Rakuten Acquires Alpha Direct Services

*Global e-commerce leader bolsters merchant offering with logistics stronghold in France*

**November 6, Paris and Tokyo** - Rakuten, the world's third largest e-commerce company, today announced that it has agreed to acquire a leading French e-commerce logistics business, Alpha Direct Services (hereafter, "ADS"). The acquisition marks Rakuten's first logistics investment outside of Japan and is set to provide business synergies for its global e-commerce marketplaces, in particular Rakuten's European business including PriceMinister in France.

Founded in 2002 and headquartered in Beauvais, ADS ([www.alpha-d-s.net](http://www.alpha-d-s.net)) is France's leading e-commerce logistics business with over 100 merchants ranging from small businesses to large well-known brands such as Nestle, L'Oreal and Sarenza. Over the last decade the company has established a highly effective and cost efficient full service e-commerce logistics model encompassing front-end websites, order management, warehousing, fulfillment delivery and customer support. The company has the potential to quickly scale beyond France into wider Europe. Markedly, from a retail service perspective, the acquisition will allow merchants to capitalize on same day delivery in Paris and next day delivery across Europe. ADS is currently owned by its founder, Adrian Diaconu, and FCDE (<http://www.fonds-fcde.fr>), a French capital-growth fund.

Following recent investments in e-commerce marketplaces across Europe, the acquisition of ADS represents a significant step forward in building out Rakuten's e-commerce services capability and marks the company's sixth European acquisition since 2010. Rakuten will benefit by adopting best practice automation processes including ADS's unique robotic automation system to reinforce its existing logistics services and improve operational efficiency in Japan.

Hiroshi Mikitani, Chairman and CEO of Rakuten, explained the strategy behind the acquisition: "Speed and quality of delivery is at the heart of any solid e-commerce proposition and ADS will give us a logistics stronghold in Europe, which will further empower merchants using Rakuten's marketplaces, as well as supporting future marketplaces. ADS's management team, their proprietary warehouse automation technology and existing infrastructure have strong synergies with Rakuten's e-commerce and logistics businesses, and will be invaluable as we continue our growth in Japan and globally."

Adrian Diaconu, Founder and CEO of ADS, commented on why the business is a solid acquisition for Rakuten: “ADS’s business success to date stems from our strong relationships with merchants of all sizes as well as the flexibility and scalability of our e-commerce logistics model. We also bring our strong culture of in-house development and innovation, which fuelled the development of our unique robotic automation system. This culture of partnership, innovation and growth is very much in line with Rakuten’s and we are excited to become part of their wider business plans.”

“This deal is a significant step forward, not only for Rakuten’s PriceMinister, but for the development of Rakuten’s global business. By drawing upon ADS’ market expertise and cutting-edge warehouse automation technology, developed here in France, we now have the potential to build a truly global e-commerce logistics offering from the ground up. We are excited to extend the existing support offered to local merchants selling via the Rakuten PriceMinister marketplace and beyond”, added Pierre Kosciusko-Morizet, CEO, Rakuten’s PriceMinister.

Rakuten ranks among the top 10 internet companies in the world by market cap. Among its numerous online properties, its flagship B2B2C (business-to-business-to-consumer) model e-commerce site Rakuten Ichiba is the largest e-commerce site in Japan and among the world’s largest by sales. Its global presence has been reinforced through the acquisitions of Canadian eReader company, Kobo, Spanish streaming and video on demand business, Wuaki.tv and leading online marketplaces including Rakuten’s Buy.com in the US, Rakuten’s PriceMinister in France, and Rakuten’s Play.com in the UK, as well as investments in Pinterest, Ozon.ru, AHA Life and Daily Grommet. Whereas other marketplaces may compete directly with sellers, Rakuten’s model seeks to empower merchants to deliver Omotenashi, a Japanese high service mindset, which helps merchants create lasting relationships with customers.

The completion of this acquisition is subject to its prior approval by the French competition authority.

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### **About Rakuten**

Rakuten, Inc. (JASDAQ:4755), is one of the world’s leading Internet service companies, providing a variety of consumer- and business-focused services including e-commerce, e-reading, travel, banking, securities, credit card, e-money, portal and media, online marketing and professional sports. Selected by Forbes as the World’s 7<sup>th</sup> Most Innovative Companies of 2012, Rakuten is expanding globally and currently has operations throughout Asia, Western Europe, and the Americas. Founded in 1997, Rakuten is headquartered in Tokyo, with over 10,000 staff worldwide. For more information, visit <http://global.rakuten.com/group>.