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Ascential plc

Acquisition of Digital Commerce businesses

Ascential plc (LSE: ASCL.L), the specialist information, data and analytics company, announces the agreement of an important acquisition for our Digital Commerce business in China. Hangzhou Duozhun Data Technology Co. Ltd. ("X Target"), combined with our existing high growth Yimian business, will provide a full set of measurement and trading execution capabilities in the world's fastest-growing Digital Commerce marketplace. X Target specializes in media trading execution and provides similar capabilities for China as our Flywheel brand does for Western eCommerce platforms.

In parallel Ascential has also agreed to acquire Intellibrand, based in Brazil, which provides eCommerce analytics solutions for brands across Latin America. Intellibrand also enables Ascential's Digital Commerce business to enter the fast growing food aggregation delivery measurement market globally. Both acquisitions are expected to complete in Q1 2021.

X Target

With approximately 100 staff based in Hangzhou and Shanghai, X Target helps multi-national and premium Chinese brands optimise their consumer targeting, media execution and content marketing strategy across the leading eCommerce platforms in China, including Alibaba and JD. X Target won the prestigious Alibaba Premium ISV of the year award in 2020.

The acquisition will allow Ascential to extend its offering in China, with the broadest available eCommerce analytics proposition for consumer product companies, while also providing the opportunity to cross-sell and enhance customer relationships with Ascential's Yimian business.

Ascential will acquire X Target, for an initial cash consideration of £11.9m, plus earn out payments payable over three years resulting in an estimated total consideration (including the initial consideration) of between £29m and £35m. The total consideration payable for the company, in the event that very stretching targets are reached, is capped at £55m.

In the year ended December 2019, X Target delivered revenue of £4.6m (growth of over 90% vs 2018) and unaudited adjusted EBITDA of £0.9m. It had gross assets of £3.0m at December 2019.

Intellibrand

Based in São Paulo with approximately 40 staff, Intellibrand provides global brands operating in Latin America with expert local market digital shelf analytic capabilities. These services cover the major Latin America eCommerce platforms, notably MercadoLibre, as well as Food Service Aggregators ("FSAs"), such as Just Eat and Uber Eats.

The acquisition provides Ascential with an opportunity to scale its Digital Commerce operations in the fast-growing Latin America eCommerce market. It also offers proven capability in Food Service Aggregator analytics: a product that is growing in demand among Ascential's global digital shelf customers.

ASCENTIAL

Duncan Painter, CEO of Ascential, commented:

"X Target's expertise in consumer analytics and media optimisation on Chinese platforms provides a clear complement to Yimian and Edge's suite of services, broadening the range of our Digital Commerce offering in the world's fastest growing eCommerce marketplace.

Meanwhile, Intellibrand extends our digital shelf capabilities across the fast growing Latin American platforms, as well as allowing us to address the exciting FSA performance measurement business. These deals together expand and deepen our Digital Commerce capabilities and further extend our global reach, strengthening our competitive offering in this key space."

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About Ascential

Ascential is a specialist information, data and analytics company that helps the world's most ambitious businesses win in the digital economy. Our information, insights, connections, data and digital tools solve customer problems in four principal disciplines:

- Digital Commerce via data, analytics and managed services brands Flywheel Digital, Yimian and Edge;
- Product Design via global trend forecasting service WGSN;
- Marketing via global benchmarks for creative excellence and effectiveness, Lions and WARC, and MediaLink; and
- Retail & Financial Services, including the world's premier payments and FinTech congress Money20/20 and events, data and tools for retailers.

Ascential also owns three digital information products in the Built Environment and Policy sector.