



Press Release

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### **Vorwerk Ventures invests in DaWanda GmbH, the online marketplace for unique and handmade items**

Wuppertal, November 30<sup>th</sup> 2011 – Vorwerk Direct Selling Ventures, the Corporate VC fund of the Vorwerk Group, is investing € 4 Million, together with Piton Capital, in DaWanda GmbH (<http://en.dawanda.com>), Europe's biggest online marketplace for unique and handmade items. With new business partners Vorwerk Ventures and British investor Piton Capital on board, the company plans to continue its growth and enhance its international profile.

With 120,000 designers, 1.5 Million registered users and a web presence in German, French and English, DaWanda is already the European market leader within its segment. The goal now is to further strengthen this position. One of the most strategically significant countries for DaWanda is France, which is now being addressed as a priority. "When we started out five years ago, no one believed that handmade products could find a home outside of niche markets. We have worked to change the perception of handmade items across Germany, and as such we have created a completely new market," says Claudia Helming, founder and CEO of DaWanda GmbH. "There is still unbelievable potential for this in other European countries, just waiting to be seized."

#### **Shareholders invest in a successful model**

DaWanda has been on the road to success for the last five years: turnover has increased yearly, as has the number of sold products and of users. The company has been operating profitably since 2010. "In the last five years, the DaWanda team has put a lot of love and hard work into creating a fascinating company which inspires not only customers, but investors too. Their highly successful combination of e-commerce and social community makes for a pioneering internet business model," says Dirk Meurer, Managing Director of Vorwerk Ventures. Managing Director Norbert Muschong adds, "We are assisting DaWanda not only through financing, but also with the Vorwerk Group's many years of experience in integrating social networks into offline business models." While Vorwerk Ventures is newly on board following this financing round, Piton Capital is an existing shareholder. "We are delighted to continue to support DaWanda," says Andrin Bachmann, partner at Piton Capital. "We invest in online companies with strong network effects. These could be marketplaces or large communities. DaWanda combines both." The investment company, which was founded by Swiss-native Bachmann among others, is based in London.

DaWanda's long-term investors and shareholders – Holtzbrinck Ventures, Team Europe Ventures, The European Founders Fund and Point Nine Capital – continue on board and welcome their accomplished new partners.

#### **Close customer relationships as a unique selling point**

DaWanda continually works to optimise its platform in order to assist each individual designer in finding success. A highly committed customer service team, cost-effective legal advice from partner law firms and assistance with marketing for individual shops are just some of the range of services offered to designers. "We have always kept the needs of creative individuals as our consistent focus," says Claudia Helming. "This is what makes us stand out from our competitors." So it's with a win-win attitude that the online marketplace continues its success story on an international level.

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**About Vorwerk Direct Selling Ventures:**

Vorwerk Direct Selling Ventures is an investment entity within the Vorwerk Group. The company's investment focus is on rapidly growing companies with direct-to-consumer business models. The Corporate Venture Capital company invests worldwide and is based in Germany. Its portfolio includes leading companies such as Dinner-for-Dogs, ENJO, pauldirekt.de, meinauto.de, Neato Robotics, Ringana, Stowa and stylefruits.de

[www.vorwerk-ventures.de](http://www.vorwerk-ventures.de)

**About DaWanda:**

DaWanda is the online marketplace for unique and handmade products. Going against the grain of industrialised mass production, DaWanda provides a meeting point for people who know how to appreciate the special qualities of unique and handmade items, and are interested in buying fashion, jewellery and home items. At [www.dawanda.com](http://www.dawanda.com), around 120,000 designers offer over 1.9 million products for sale, with ca. 20,000 new products added daily. DaWanda was founded by Claudia Helming and Michael Pütz in December 2006, and today has around 1.5 million members. The company is based in Berlin. In studies undertaken by the German language Startup-Monitor of ethority GmbH & Co.KG, DaWanda was elected several times as the favourite startup of internet users. This year the company was given the title of "Selected Location 2011" in the competition "365 Places in the Land of Ideas", as part of the "Deutschland – Land der Ideen" initiative.

[www.dawanda.com](http://www.dawanda.com)