

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Auctionata/Paddle 8 looks toward growth with new executive hires

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Paddle 8 app

By STAFF REPORTS

Auctionata/Paddle8 has chosen new leadership to help the newly merged company transition its operations.

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Thomas Hesse is joining the company as CEO, while Lucas Hlsmann has been appointed chief financial officer. Recognizing the need for an experienced CEO to head the company as it looks towards further growth, Auctionata founder Alexander Zache, who was CEO of the company since 2012, will step down from his role to become chief merchandising officer.

Changing leadership

Mr. Hesse comes to Auctionata/Paddle8 with 20 years of experience in television and media, having helped companies navigate the move into digital. Most recently, he was at German media corporation Bertelsmann, where he was president of corporate development and a member of the executive board.

As Sony Music Entertainment's president of global digital business and U.S. sales, Mr. Hesse oversaw the merger of Sony Music and BMG. An early force in the music industry's move to digital, Mr. Hesse was CEO of RTL Newmedia and the co-founder of streaming platform Vevo.



Thomas Hesse

The executive's resume also includes angel investor roles at startups, which has given him insights on leadership of new companies.

In May, Auctioneers Paddle8 and Auctionata announced their merger, which aims to exploit a gap in the auction market.

Paddle8's focus on contemporary art and design and its timed auctions and charity sales format complements Auctionata's "vintage luxury" and industry-first livestreaming, cross-pollinating their respective consumer base. The merger will help serve an online-oriented consumer segment at a more accessible price point, with items up to \$500,000 ([see story](#)).

As part of the merger, Auctionata/Paddle8 is changing its positioning from an auction platform to a network of curated live video and a marketplace for luxury.

"Three years after the launch of the live-stream auction, Auctionata/Paddle8 is one of the most promising and innovative companies at the highly dynamic intersection of ecommerce, media, art and luxury goods," Mr. Hesse said.

"The recently merged company has built a strong digital platform with a powerful business model in a short amount of time, and has enormous opportunities to scale further," he said.



Micro Kelly bag for sale on Auctionata

In his new role as chief merchandising officer, Mr. Zache will oversee the launch of new product categories for the site.

Mr. Hlsmann, who will start at Auctionata/Paddle8 on Oct. 1, is currently at Procter & Gamble, where he has spent more than 20 years. In his most recent role as associate director global development markets, he was in charge of finance and strategy for P&G's global export and distribution to more than 120 countries.

"With Thomas Hesse and Lucas Hlsmann, Auctionata/Paddle8 has gained two seasoned managers who are both internationally experienced and highly competent," said Dr. Christian Nagel, chairman of the supervisory board. "In this new constellation, the global management team is ideally set up to implement our ambitious and exciting growth plans."

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