



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cossette Finds A New Partner For Global Expansion

Mill Road Sells Vision7 NA Assets to Chinese Communications Giant BlueFocus

Quebec City, December 15, 2014: Two leading independent agency networks – Canadian Vision7 International and Beijing-based BlueFocus Communications Group Inc. – have joined forces in a deal that will accelerate the ambitious growth plans of both organizations in North America and globally.

In today's announcement, BlueFocus, the leader in brand management solutions in the Chinese market, confirms that it has acquired a majority position in Vision7, whose two major brands include Canadian agency leader Cossette and the international PR firm Citizen Relations.

"We are very excited about the great potential we see in this partnership with such a dynamic and growth-oriented organization as BlueFocus," said Vision7 and Cossette CEO Brett Marchand. "BlueFocus emerged from the sale process as the best partner that was most closely aligned with our growth plans for Cossette in North America and Citizen internationally, as well as our strategy to expand and grow in digital, CRM and other key technology sectors such as mobile."

"Vision7 is a very impressive company with great achievements in the marketing services sector. Having Vision7 join the BlueFocus family will help us gain better access to the North American market and emphasizes our "To Be Global" strategy. We're very excited about this partnership and confident that the current management will lead the company to the next level of success," said Oscar Zhao, CEO of BlueFocus Communications Group.

The deal marks the conclusion of a seven-month process that began in May when Connecticut-based Mill Road Capital, the private equity majority owner of Vision7 for the past five years, announced it was looking for strategic options for Vision7's North American assets.

Although the details are proprietary and confidential, Vision7 senior executive management will significantly increase its ownership stake and opportunities in the company as a result of this new agreement.

“BlueFocus has demonstrated a strong commitment towards the existing management team and the direction we are taking the company,” said Marchand. “This confidence, along with increased management ownership, will ensure that our brands will continue to operate independently and, in the case of Cossette, we will remain a Canadian agency, with its head office in Quebec City.”

The Vision7 assets include: the integrated agency Cossette, with offices across Canada and in Chicago; Citizen Relations, a global PR agency with offices in Canada, the U.S. and the U.K. and a network of global affiliates; Vision7 Media, a media planning and buying agency with brands Cossette Media and Jungle Media; Dare and Elvis. Vision7 recently announced that its UK assets, including agency brands Dare, Elvis, and Identica, will no longer be run as a group, and will now shift to a new operational focus as individual brands.

The top executives of Vision7, Cossette and Citizen Relations remain in their respective leadership roles, including: Brett Marchand, CEO of Vision7 and Cossette; Melanie Dunn, President of Vision7 and Cossette in Quebec; Dave Lafond, President of Cossette in English Canada; Louis Duchesne, Vice-President and Director General of Cossette in Quebec City; Colin Schleining, President of EDC North America; and Daryl McCullough, CEO of Citizen Relations, in LA.

In a related management change, two of Cossette’s founding partners, Claude Lessard and Pierre Delagrave, will assume non-executive roles within the organization, providing ongoing counsel to the executive team.

In this transaction, BlueFocus has retained Houlihan Lokey as its financial advisor, Davis & Gilbert LLC as its U.S. legal advisor, Gowling Lafleur Henderson LLP as its Canadian legal advisor, and PwC as its accounting advisor. Moelis is retained as sell-side financial advisor and Davies Ward Phillips & Vineberg LLP as sell-side legal advisor.

About BlueFocus

Founded in 1996 and headquartered in Beijing, BlueFocus is the No.1 integrated communication and marketing services group in China. The firm has over 3,500 employees globally and provides a wide spectrum of PR and brand management services to a number of blue-chip clients, including Lenovo, China Merchants Bank, Cisco, AMD, L'Oreal, Estee Lauder, Pepsi, Wrigley, Financial Times, GM, Siemens, ABB etc. It operates in the fields of public relations, media buying, digital communication and digital advertising in China, including: Blue Digital

(formerly BlueFocus PR) - Asia's no. 1 PR agency, SNK - China's No.1 online gaming advertising agency and Bojie Media.

"To Be Global" is one of BlueFocus' core strategies. The firm controls We Are Social, the world's largest specialist social media agency in UK, and owns a c.20% stake in Huntsworth, a UK-based leading international public relations group. As part of its expansion plan into North America, BlueFocus acquired a controlling stake in Fuseproject, a top industrial designing company in US, in 2014. The firm became the first publicly listed PR company in China in February 2010 via its IPO on Shenzhen Stock Exchange. As at September, 2014, the company has a revenue of c. US\$ 900m and a market capitalization of US\$3.9bn.

About Vision7

Vision7 is a fully integrated marketing communications company that serves various well-known brands in North America and worldwide. Vision7 has four operating divisions: Cossette, Vision7 Media, Citizen Relations and Dare. Cossette is Canada's biggest marketing communications agency that provides fully integrated advertising services; [Cossette has offices in Quebec City, Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, Halifax and Chicago](#). Vision7 Media is Canada's largest independent media planning, buying group, operating primarily under the Cossette Media and Jungle Media brands; Citizen Relations is a leading public relations company with an international presence (US, Canada and UK) and multiple global partnerships; Dare is a digital-based agency that focuses on advertising, digital marketing, Internet communications and social media.