



**PUBLIC RELATIONS IN GERMANY
BRIEF INSIGHTS**



1

THE GERMAN MARKET

Germany has a population of more than 80 million people generating a GDP of 3,73 billion USD in 2013. Germany is well known for its vital automotive, machinery, chemical-pharmaceutical and food industry. Foundation for the country's international competitiveness are 30 DAX holdings such as Siemens, Volkswagen or BASF and ten-thousands of specialized SMEs, located in the South and West.

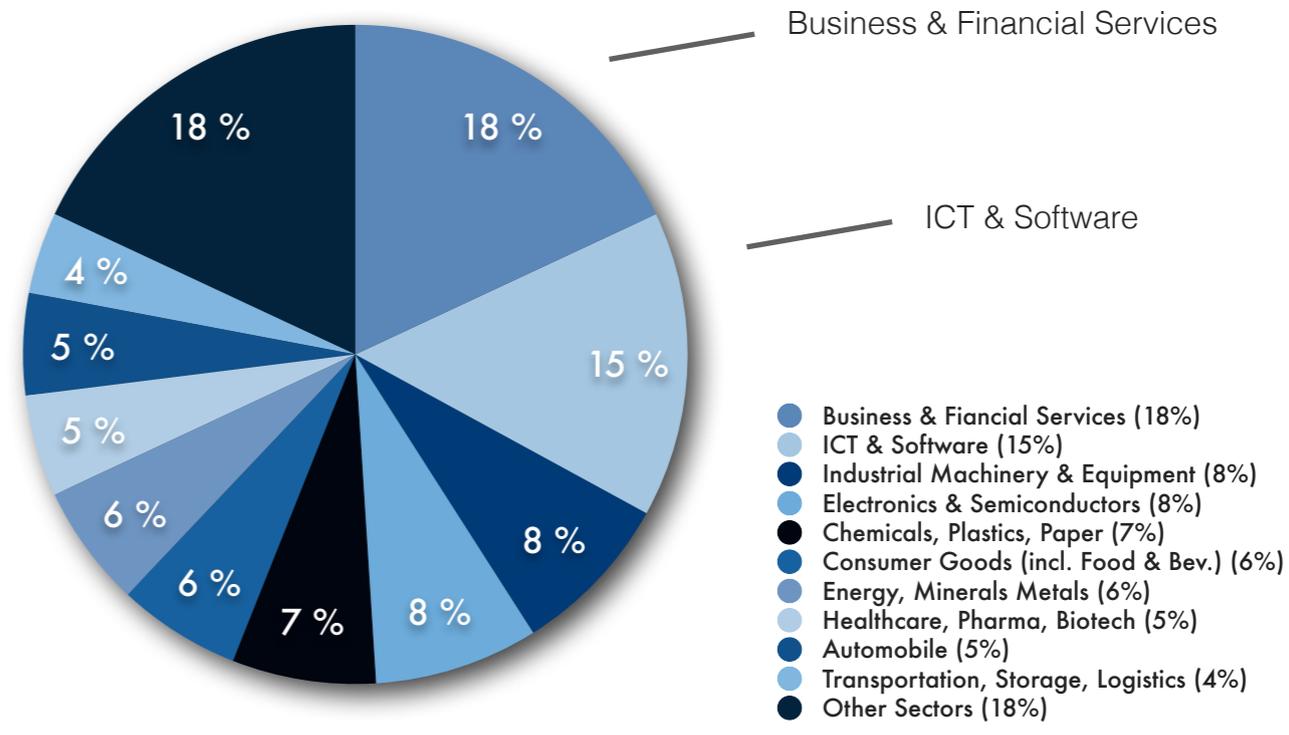


Photo: © Sergii Figurnyi - Fotofia.com

Frankfurt am Main is not only the financial center of Germany but also home to the largest cargo airport in Europe, with more than 2 million tons of cargo annually.

INVEST IN GERMANY

Following [Germany Trade & Invest's](#) FDI Reporting, in 2014 more than 1.688 foreign investments were made in Germany. Considering also M&A transactions, the United States is the most important partner for direct investments in Germany. Foreign investors focus on business and financial services, followed by IT and software industry. In 2014 Germany attracted a record 3.2 billion euros in foreign investment, a fifth more than the year before. Investors recognize Germany for being a safe haven in Europe and one of the fastest-growing industrial countries. Top five countries for investments in Germany are USA, China, Switzerland, United Kingdom and France (Greenfield projects and M&A deals).



Source: Regional Development Agencies 2015, Bureau van Dijk Electronic Publishing, Orbis Database, 2015

BOOMING SOUTH

Together with business magazine Handelsblatt, research institute [Prognos](#) analyzes every three years the cities and areas in Germany with the best chances for their (economic) future. Looking at demographic change, prosperity & social situation, job market and competition & innovation, Prognos considers not only the regions' strengths as status quo but also their dynamics of change. „Prognos Zukunftsatlas 2013“ states a growing difference between the prospering south and the weakened north and north east of Germany. Compared to other regions, the south of Germany is economically booming. Out of 402 cities and counties, 78 have been identified having high or very high chances for the future. 83% out of these booming areas are located in Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg and Hessen.

Despite big differences between the South and North, enormous investments and subsidies in eastern Germany show their effect in successful rising cities such as Erfurt, Jena, Dresden, Leipzig and Potsdam near Berlin. One of the biggest winners is Erfurt, jumping by 191 positions since 2004 to a current rank of 124.

Germany's capital Berlin has balanced economical chances and risks and continues to be the place to be for IT and digital media businesses. In 2012 German and foreign VCs invested 133 million Euro in Berlin startups, but only 24 million Euro in Baden-Württemberg, 19 million Euro in Bavaria or only 14 million Euro in Hamburg (McKinsey Berlin, 2013: [Berlin builds businesses](#)).





2

GERMAN CONSUMERS

Most Germans have a solid monthly income, allowing them to spend a lot for consumption. Recent trends show that German consumers prefer to spend their money instead of saving it. The German consumer behavior is complicated and heterogeneous though. Various consumer types outline groups with different interests and purchase decisions, strongly influenced by online reviews and friends' recommendations.



Photo: © Kim Schneider - Fotolia.com

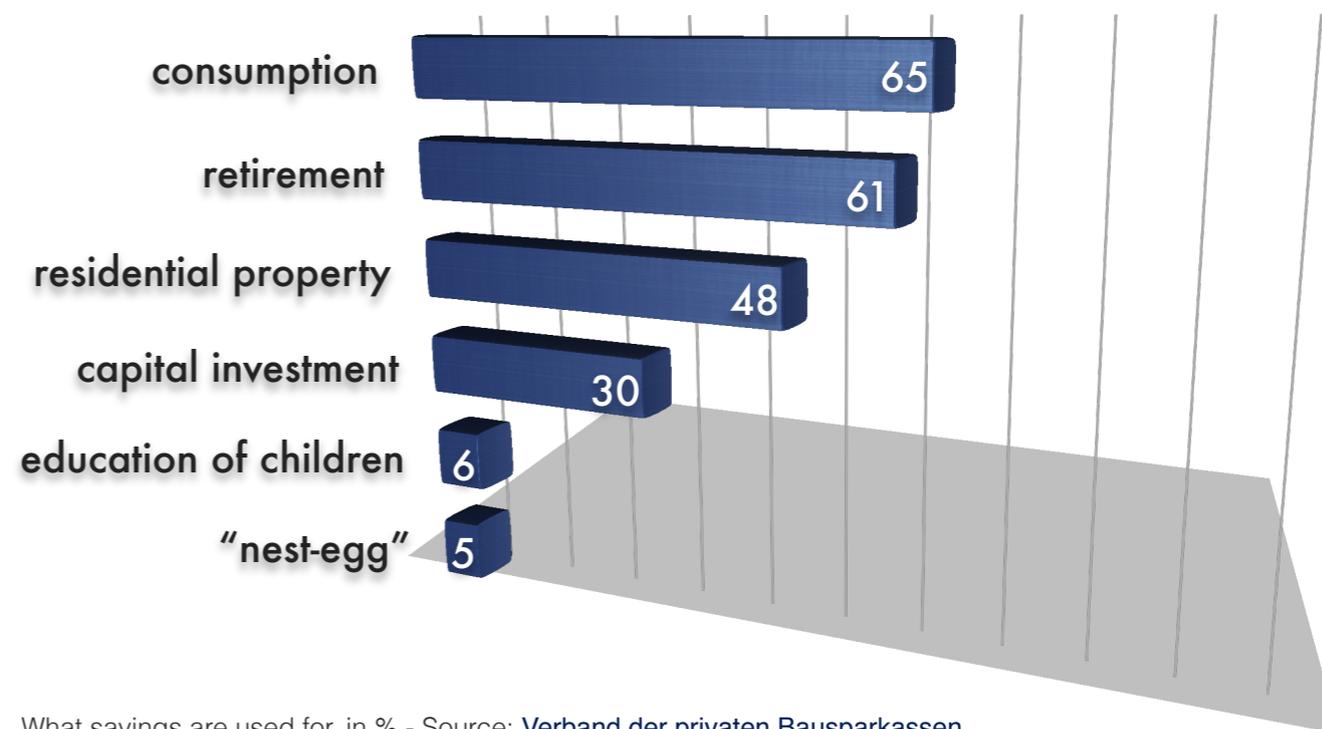
With an average of about 1.300 EUR net freely available every month, German consumers are an important foothold of the national economy.

INCOME AND CONSUMPTION

In 2011 German consumers had an average monthly net income of nearly 2.988 EUR, with big differences between east and west and depending on industry sectors. After rent and food an average of about 1.300 EUR remains freely available (Source: destatis.de).

A good income is surely one of the reasons why Germans are known for being happy consumers.

Additionally consumption increased in recent years because of very low interest rates for bank savings. Currently consumers feel it does not make sense to save money. They rather spend it. 65% of all savings flow into shopping. 61% of all savings are used for retirement and 48% of all savings are spent for residential property.



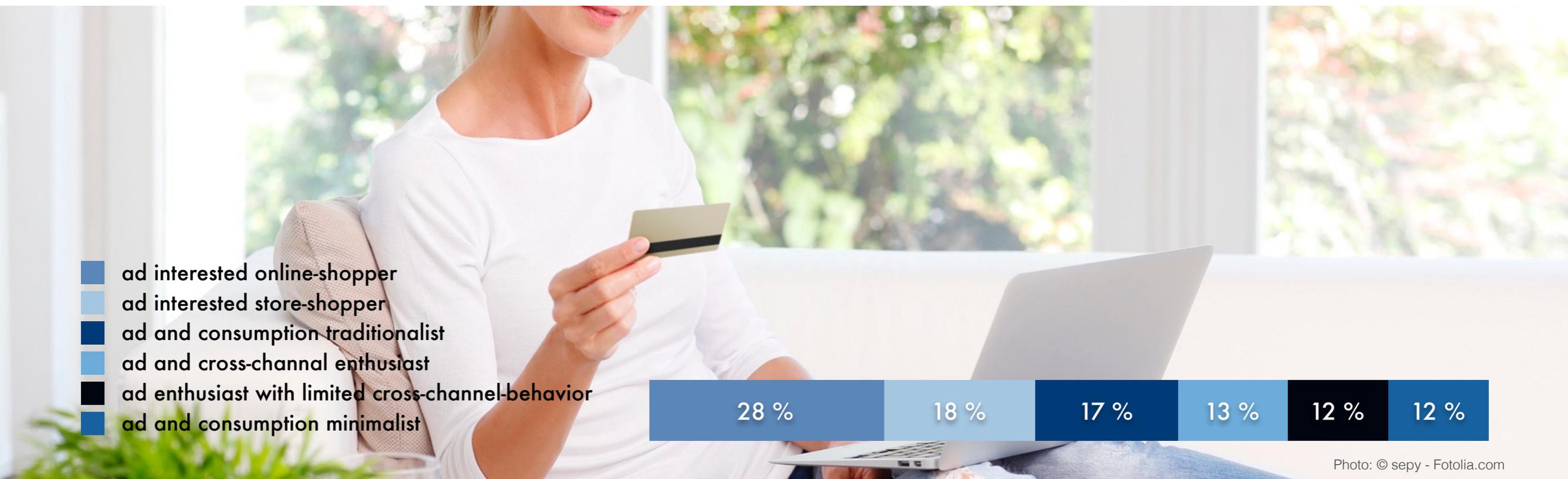
What savings are used for, in % - Source: Verband der privaten Bausparkassen

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

More than 50% of all Germans older than 14 years say they often or sometimes go shopping, just for fun in their freetime ([best for planning 2015](#)). But despite a good monthly income and a strong interest in going shopping, German consumers are no typical early adopters. Marketers have to focus on building a large amount of trust to create acceptance for new products and services. Internet reviews become increasingly important for consumers to compare prices and quality before making a purchase decision.

An international study of deals.com with research institute Ipsos ([Internationale Gutscheine Studie 2013](#)) surveyed 10.000 consumers (1.000 in Germany). The study proves that for two-thirds of German consumers (64%) saving money is part of their life philosophy. Even though Germans are Europe's brand victims (32% prefer brand products regardless of higher prices), most of German consumers usually buy no-name products to save money. Saving money is also one reason why most Germans buy from large chains instead of smaller, local and usually more expensive retailers. A purchase decision is usually made based on discounts and special offers, say 54% of all surveyed German consumers. 48% say they trust the opinion and reviews of others before they make a purchase. Also the trustworthiness of the retailer (37%) and the reviews of journalists and experts in media (24%) have a strong influence on the purchase decision of Germans consumers.





- ad interested online-shopper
- ad interested store-shopper
- ad and consumption traditionalist
- ad and cross-channel enthusiast
- ad enthusiast with limited cross-channel-behavior
- ad and consumption minimalist



Photo: © sepy - Fotolia.com

In 2012 IFH Cologne and AZ Direct published „Customer-Journey-Typology 2012“ and defined 6 consumer types based on their multi-channel behavior.

90% MULTI-CHANNEL CONSUMERS

Today, consumers have the opportunity to chose and combine different information and shopping channels. For the study „[Customer-Journey-Typology 2012](#)“ more than 4.000 German consumers have been surveyed.

The **ad interested online-shopper (28%)** shows a high affinity for advertisement and is a multi-channel-user with an online-shop tendency. Users in this group are rather male and between 30 and 45 years old. This is the largest group within all German consumers. Also the **ad interested store-shopper (18%)** is very affine towards advertisement but has a tendency to stationary trade and is a rather younger person. The **ad and consumption traditionalist (17%)** has some sympathy for advertisements and consumption and uses not

only stationary trade. This group includes rather females at an age between 45 and 60 years and the growing number of teleshopping fans. The **ad and cross-channel enthusiast (13%)** has a very high cross-channel affinity and is a rather young male person in families with children. No purchase by telephone or mailing, says the **ad enthusiast with limited cross-channel-behavior (12%)**, a rather young female Person seeking information in catalogues and brochures. The **ad and consumption minimalist (12%)** has generally a rather cricital view on advertisement and consumption, prefers the stationary trade and is usually an older person older than 60 years. All together, this makes 90% of all Germans being multi-channel consumers that go different ways to buy products.



3

THE GERMAN MEDIA LANDSCAPE

German inventors laid the groundwork for today's mass media. Germany is one of the most diverse and dense media markets in Europe. TV and radio are the most important daily sources of information for Germans. The younger generation clearly prefers online media, not for gaming or videos but to search information and read online news. Storytelling and Content Marketing are the tools needed to communicate successfully.

DENSE MEDIA LANDSCAPE

When Johannes Gutenberg invented the movable-type printing in Germany around 1436 he gave the initial spark for the development of mass media. In 1605 the very first periodical newspaper, called „Relation“, appeared weekly in Straßburg. No wonder that Germany has one of the most dense and diverse media markets in Europe today with more than 300 daily newspapers, about 1.600 special interest magazines and more than 3.800 professional journals for all kinds of industry sectors and braches, thats print media only. German consumers can select from 64 radio channels governed by public law plus 231 private radio channels as well as 16 private TV channels, 54 private special interest TV channels and 80 pay-TV channels adding to 12 national public law TV channels. The [German TV landscape](#) is internationally unique and offers a broad range of diverse programmes. Not to forget, 84% of the German population uses the internet frequently.

Looking at the German media landscape, one can see six media hubs gathering most of Germany's media businesses. Because of location, nearby industries, businesses and government, each media hub has its very own focus. Media in Frankfurt, for being Germany's financial center, has naturally a strong interest for corporate and financial topics whereas Berlin media is rather focused on political topics and digital media news because of its startup scene.



Depending on location, each media hub has media companies with special interests and focus.



Photo: © raperonzolo / photocase.de

TV is still the most consumed media of people older than 30 years (daily average of 223 minutes). But the age group 14 to 29 clearly prefers the internet with 233 minutes daily.

MEDIA CONSUMPTION HABITS

With the rise of internet and social media, like in many other countries, the media consumption habits of Germans changed on large scale. Generally, TV is still the most consumed media of Germans, with a primetime between 7:00 PM and 11:00 PM. Radio is an important tool for marketers in Germany to reach the broader public especially in the morning hours between 7:00 AM and 10:00 AM. Print media loses influence since years and continues to struggle. Young people clearly prefer the internet as their primary source of information and for entertainment. In 2014 79% of Germans used the internet at least sometimes, 58% daily. The use of mobile internet is continuously growing. In 2014 22% of all online users (primarily the younger generation) used mobile internet every day. Also the numbers of “silver surfers”, aged over 50, are rising.

Going online means for users within all age groups primarily to search directly for information, use email systems, check the weather and to read the news. Blogs and special interest online magazines are increasingly important for targeted communication.

	tv	radio	www	newspaper	recorded music	books	magazines
total 14 +	240	192	111	23	27	22	6
14 - 29	128	142	233	10	63	30	4
30 - 49	223	207	135	18	26	15	4
50 +	297	203	46	34	10	23	9

Average time Germans (14 +) spent with media per day in 2014

Source: ard-zdf-onlinestudie.de

STORYTELLING & CONTENT MARKETING

When editorial offices in print media started to shrink, it became even more important for German PR managers to create truly interesting and relevant stories that have a value for journalists - not only in print but also online with an average 8 second [attention span](#). Today its not only about having good contacts and knowing journalists and bloggers. Its all about fascinating with a compelling story that people like to read, hear and share.

Therefore storytelling, the oldest and most natural way to market a product or service anyway, is increasingly important. Marketers need to be creative, quick and relevant to get the attention from multipliers and their audiences. With the possibilities of social media and the significance of search engines for online marketing, also content marketing started to have its influence for German businesses. Using a well balanced mix of paid (advertisement), earned (PR) and owned (content marketing) media is the way to success.

Therefore doing public relations in Germany does not mean to send as many press releases as possible. Good public relations will analyze what relevant target groups are interested in and create compelling content in various formats that can be distributed through multipliers and own media channels such as social networks or corporate blogs, to create awareness, reputation and trust.





4

DOING BUSINESS IN GERMANY

Germans are logical people in business. Therefore structures and laws and regulations providing these structures are essential in daily business life in Germany. Surely its good to know about them. Working with Germans means you are expected to „walk the talk“. Germans do not like surprises in business, so its wise to involve your business partners in your decision making process.

STEREOTYPES AND REALITY

We all do have our stereotypes when it comes to different cultures - fair enough. Though it is important to recognize differences as valuable chance to broaden our horizon. Internationally, Germans are often perceived as stubborn, distant and humorless people that are too obsessed with details. So how about doing business in Germany?

Frankly, we Germans do love to plan. We like to create structures in business and daily life, giving us a feeling of safety and creating possibilities to evaluate our activities and forthcoming.

Germany has many laws and regulations helping to provide these structures and doing business in Germany means you have to know about them or at least you should have a competent partner - and not only knowing about them, but following them 100%. This also means, that verbal agreements and especially signed contracts with German business partners mean its irrevocable and there shall be no room for any interpretation.

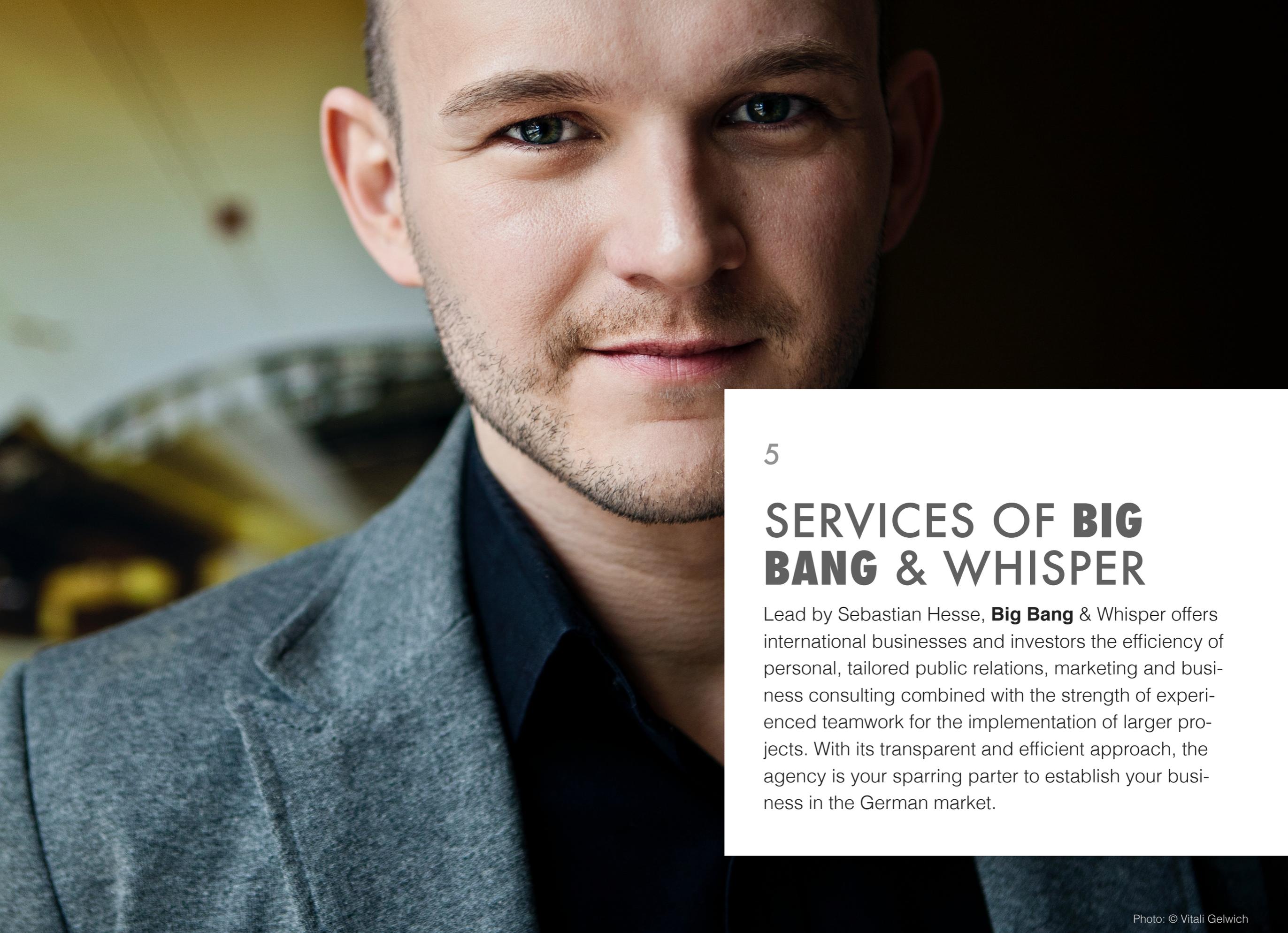
When running a project in Germany, never act differently than you said you will, even if you think you can improve the outcome. Be transparent and discuss your planned change of direction with your German business partner. Otherwise Germans might perceive this as highly unprofessional, as a lack of management abilities, unfair or even as an attempt of cheating. Its not that Germans are not flexible enough. Its more that we do expect to be involved and part of a joint

decision making process. German business partners and especially customers, expect full transparency, honesty and reliability.

More structure leads also to stronger management hierarchies in German companies compared to European neighbors or enterprises abroad. At the same time the structure at work is not necessarily the structure you would find in a German home. Germans do separate work and life a lot more than other cultures. Calling or even asking for a meeting after business hours is perceived as rude and intrusion into our lives. In recent years work-life-balance became a growing trend in Germany, especially within a younger generation that is focusing on a happy and healthy lifestyle and a job with meaning, instead of a big career and much money.

At the beginning of your business relationship you might think your German business partner is rather cold hearted and distant. Give it some time. A German heart needs warmth and time to open up and beat strong for you and your joint enterprise.

Greeting a German involves a firm but brief handshake when doing business. This counts for both, men and women. In many cases a female secretary will receive a greeting with handshake even before you turn to your male business partner, who is her boss. Germans will acknowledge this as a good manner. Keep in mind, many times German women do not only open you doors but also sign your contracts - or not.



5

SERVICES OF **BIG BANG & WHISPER**

Lead by Sebastian Hesse, **Big Bang & Whisper** offers international businesses and investors the efficiency of personal, tailored public relations, marketing and business consulting combined with the strength of experienced teamwork for the implementation of larger projects. With its transparent and efficient approach, the agency is your sparring partner to establish your business in the German market.

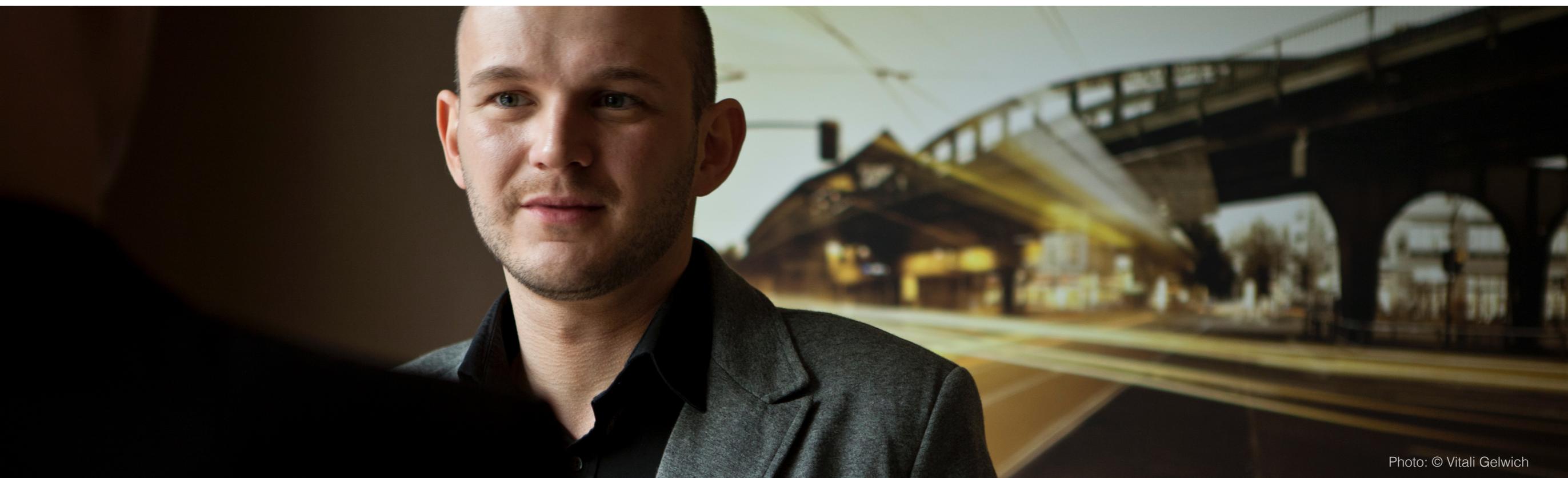


Photo: © Vitali Gelwich

„Communication today is not based on „good contacts“ to journalists, but savvy ideas to create compelling content for paid, owned and earned media.“

PHILOSOPHY

You expect simply the best for your enterprise and project. So do we.

Recognising changes in media and consulting business in recent years, Sebastian Hesse founded **Big Bang** & Whisper in 2012 with the ambition to provide personal, tailored consulting for successful public relations, marketing communication and business development for the German market. How does **Big Bang** & Whisper differentiate itself from other agencies? Its about passion - its not only a job but true passion for communication. Its about efficiency - no fancy office, no vice presidents, no incentives. We prefer to spend your money for your campaign. Also WYPIWYG - what you pay, is what you get - no interns, no bullshit. Your account

will only be managed by experienced staff. We want to work transparently and straightforward to manage your expectations and provide you with the best possible consulting. Sometimes this will also lead to the decision, that we are not the right partner for your approach.

Big Bang & Whisper is your sparring partner and service provider, to analyze complex structures with a sharp eye and to provide efficient communication strategies and their successful implementation in Germany and western Europe.

SERVICES

Strategic consulting & influencer mapping

With our strategic consulting we enable you to make thoughtful decisions concerning your B2B and B2C communication, provide you with a communication strategy and PR plan and support you along the way in all communication matters, even if you are facing a crisis. Furthermore we provide a full influencer mapping, to understand the local market.

Media relations and storytelling

To be heard and to earn trust in a very heterogeneous media market, like the German one, it requires a well-prepared press office. We support your efforts with strategic consulting, tailored media relations activities including the development and distribution of media information and materials, and a long-term relationship building with media representatives and multipliers.

Content marketing and social media

Content marketing gives you the opportunity to enhance your SEO and communicate your key messages directly as you create and distribute your own content in your own media channels. We support you with the setup of your corporate blog and newsletter, develop editorial plans based on your resources and focal points and even do the whole magic for you if needed.

Blogger relations

Blogger Relations describes the focused relationship building with blog editors with the aim to communicate the company's or brand's key messages through creative, interesting content. Standard press releases are a no-go. Good content and ideas are needed that will most likely inspire the blogger as a multiplier and ultimately his readers.

Copywriting and corporate publishing

Whenever you communicate you need to form your thoughts in informative and entertaining media. We support you with the planning, creation and distribution of blog articles, social media news, press releases, flyers, brochures, advertorials, photo and video material, interview snippets as audio files and much more.

Live communication

Whether it is a one to one talk with a journalist, a press conference, a press trip or a glamorous reception – with our expertise in creating memorable moments we are offering you tailored, scalable live communication based on your needs. For the big gigs we involve our event specialists that will let your brand shine like a star.

PROJECT EXAMPLE

BLOGGER RELATIONS FOR ME&I

me&i, the Swedish fashion brand for children and women, tried to increase its awareness and sales in the German market.

Big Bang & Whisper was contracted to create an awareness campaign, focusing on young mothers.

A blogger relations campaign was established across the country to target the most influential multipliers and opinion-leaders. One project was a joint coffee table meeting with bloggers and their readers in Berlin and Bonn.

As a result, me&i gained awareness with articles in more than 50 leading blogs and increased its revenue by 40% within one year.

„Sebastian quickly familiarized with our brand and delivered very good results. Our common objectives for revenue growth and recruitment were not only met but far exceeded.“

*Carina Josefsson
Country Manager me&i Germany*

Learn more about it in our [credentials](#).



PROJECT EXAMPLE

GERMANY'S FIRST INTERACTIVE CLASSROOM - 1EDU

In 2012 1edu cooperated with INTEL Germany to present the very first interactive classroom, becoming alive with a brandnew laptop, specifically designed for students to work individually, in small groups or jointly with their teacher in a classroom network, or even connected with other students through internet.

The task for **Big Bang** & Whisper: To create broad public awareness about Germany's first Interactive Classroom coming alive with the innovative 1edu Classmate PC.

For the launch of 1edu Classmate PC we invited media to attend our press conference at Herman-Nohl-Schule followed by a look in a real Interactive Classroom – 5th grade students jointly created powerpoint presentations on their 1edu Classmate PCs and told media representatives why working with a laptop in a network environment is not only fun but very helpful to learn efficiently.

The media hype was huge and 1edu recognized a significant increase of awareness amongst stakeholders and opinion leaders about 1edu's competence as expert for interactive classrooms and the 1edu Classmate PC. Sales increased by more than 600 1edu Classmate PCs within 6 weeks after the PR launch. Even Chancellor Angela Merkel gained interest in the innovative idea of 1edu.

Learn more about it in our [credentials](#).



CLIENT REFERENCES

Working in public relations and marketing communication for more than 14 years, Sebastian Hesse consulted companies and organizations such as

1edu

Abbott

Berlinagenten

Bertelsmann Foundation

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

brands4friends

BVMed - The German Medical
Technology Association

Casting Company

Dealerdirect Group

DOW Water & Process Solutions

eBay Germany

Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior
Citizens, Women and Youth

Food from Finland

Germany – Land of Ideas

GLASKLAR Berlin

L'Oréal Paris

Lamb Weston Meijers

machtfit

me&i

Mrs. Sporty

Oxfam

PayCash Europe

Russian Standard Vodka

Save Darfur Coalition

Ski Dubai / Mall of the Emirates

Smartbox

SOS Children's Villages

The Welsh Development Agency

Transmedics

Vattenfall Europe

Zippo

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