

METRO TARGET RETAIL ACCELERATOR: FIRST FIELD TESTS STARTED

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- In August, international start-up teams presented their wholesale and retail tech solutions in Minneapolis in front of about investors, mentors and industry experts.
- The start-ups LISNR, IDEE and Perksy are being field-tested at METRO. Further potential pilots are under discussion at METRO and Target.
- There has been a considerable development from the 3 months wherein Sezzle went public in Australia in August.

Düsseldorf/Berlin, 19 August 2019 – During the past 3 months selected later stage start-ups have further developed their digital solutions for wholesalers and retailers. Now the international teams of the first “METRO Target Retail Accelerator, Certified by Techstars” have presented their business models in front of investors, mentors and industry experts at Target in Minneapolis. The spectrum of projects is wide; ranging from data analyses for better efficiencies in business to autonomous driving to data-supported campaigns for small companies. 3 start-ups have also on board field-testing their innovations with METRO. LISNR, for example – a start-up that has developed a new communication standard between devices which is based on ultrasonic waves – will be collaborating with the METRO store in Berlin-Friedrichshain starting August, while Sezzle, a US “buy now, pay later” payment platform, went public in Australia during the course of the programme. In addition, further discussions are being held regarding potential pilots at METRO and Target.

“Being part of the METRO Target Retailer Accelerator IDEE had the opportunity to get an internal view on METRO and all its different business units. The greatest benefit of the programme is that within the shortest amount of time we met with numerous decision makers and now understand their current challenges,” says IDEE CEO Al Lakhani. “This way we quickly learned how METRO works, and that IDEE’s digital identity perfectly supports METRO’s efforts to provide a secure and smooth user experience across all different business units. For example, a METRO customer can simply unlock his smartphone with IDEE and transfer the identity of one METRO service to another METRO service in order to log in there. Now, we are all the more looking forward to our pilot.”

“Issues like data privacy, intelligence in the supply chain or analytics applications will be highly relevant in the future, for traditional retailers as well as for networked retail companies,” says Sylvia Dudek, who is in charge of the accelerator programmes at METRO. “For this reason we invested in technology start-ups in May which cover all segments in the retail and wholesale industry’s value chain – from the back end through to the customer. Now, 3 months later, they have made tremendous progress, including going public. Throughout the process we kept 3 things in mind: investment, test and international scalability. Consequently, we expect that more than half of the start-ups are ultimately going to test their ideas in our companies.”

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First field tests at METRO

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- **IDEE** from Munich (Germany) – The software company IDEE generates reusable digital “identities” so that users can pay immediately and without having to enter a password or data, and have themselves verified. For this, the customer only has to activate his smartphone for the respective products and services once. In this way the start-up allows end users to also use registration or payment data for further activities on the internet without having to re-enter information. Crypto and blockchain technology are employed to create the digital identities. The data are stored in the cloud.

Field test: As part of a pilot, IDEE will work together with METRO in the coming months on offering METRO customers the option of logging onto different METRO platforms simultaneously with just one registration. The goal: higher customer satisfaction and a seamless shopping experience.

- **LISNR** from Cincinnati (USA) – LISNR has developed a new communication standard. Unlike Bluetooth or Wi-Fi, LISNR’s technology is based on data transfer through ultrasound, which allows for safe communication. Data is transmitted between speaker and microphone. This technology has endless use cases; it can, for example identify a specific customer, authenticate buyers and process payments safely. The result: a smooth and simple shopping experience.

Field test: In a 3-month field test starting in Berlin-Friedrichshain in August, METRO will use ultrasound waves that connect with the customers’ smartphones via loudspeakers and a METRO app to analyse where the customers are at the store and how long they are waiting in the checkout area. This information could be used to provide them with them a simpler and more individualised shopping experience in the future.

- **Perksy** from New York (USA) – Perksy is a market research platform based on an immersive, gamified app for mobile devices where users are rewarded for answering questions.

Field test: METRO was able to conduct a representative survey on customer behaviour in the areas of reservations and food orders within just a few days. The results impact the activities of Hospitality Digital, a subsidiary of METRO which develops innovative approaches for food service professionals. Perksy might also be considered for further collaboration in the context of market research in the future.

The following start-up ventured to go public in Australia

- **Sezzle** from Minneapolis (USA) – Sezzle is a US “buy now, pay later” payment platform which helps retailers to boost their online sales and order figures. Customers can shop right away and pay later on the basis of interest-free instalment plans.

METRO is a leading international wholesale company with food and non-food assortments that specialises on serving the needs of hotels, restaurants and caterers (HoReCa) as well as independent traders. Around the world, METRO has some 24 million customers who can choose whether to shop in one of the large-format stores, order online and collect their purchases at the store or have them delivered. METRO in addition also supports the competitiveness of entrepreneurs and freelancers with digital solutions and thereby contributes to cultural diversity in retail and hospitality. Sustainability is a key pillar of METRO’s business. METRO has been the sector leader in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index for the last four years. The company operates in 36 countries and employs some 146,000 people worldwide. In financial year 2017/18, METRO generated sales of €36.5 billion. In September 2018

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METRO AG initiated the divestment process for the food retail chain Real with its 34,000 employees.
More information at www.metroag.de.

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METRO Xcel (previously METRO Accelerator) operates under Hospitality Digital, a subsidiary of METRO founded in 2015 with the mission of bringing digital solutions to the HoReCa (hotel/restaurant/catering) sector, to also build a platform of innovators, founders and independent business owners. In order to cater to the target groups of METRO AG, there are 2 METRO Xcel programmes: Hospitality, which focuses on solutions for the hotel, restaurant and catering sector, and Retail, which focuses on the retail, wholesale and trade sector. The METRO Xcel for Hospitality was launched in 2015, and the Retail programme began in 2017. To bring the programme closer to the business, METRO Xcel now focusses on bringing value to later stage start-ups via expert sales masterclasses, incremental distribution channels and complementary partnerships. For more information visit www.metroaccelerator.com.

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