

GUALA CLOSURES SIGNS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH IOT AGENCY SHARPEND TO SCALE CONNECTED PACKAGING WORLDWIDE

Guala Closures Group and SharpEnd set a new direction in the packaging industry by transforming closures into valuable media touchpoints for consumer engagement and data acquisition.

Luxembourg, 24 February 2020 - Guala Closures S.p.A., a world leading manufacturer of closures for spirits and wine, as well as one of the leaders in connected caps with an industry-unique range of products, announces the signing of a strategic investment with London-based agency SharpEnd to combine forces and offer turnkey solutions.

Guala Closures has developed unparalleled tech competencies in the IoT (Internet of Things) packaging hardware manufacturing, enabling the production of unique and patented NFC-integrated closures at scale. Guala Closures' solutions, under the NESTGATE™ proprietary technology, enable supply chain management as well as ground-breaking customer engagement programmes.

Founded in 2015 as the world's first IoT agency, SharpEnd is known for being a pioneering creative technology partner with an appetite for pushing the boundaries of consumer engagement with a global client list including AB-InBev, PepsiCo, Nestlé, Unilever and Pernod Ricard. This partnership enables SharpEnd to continue this journey and accelerate its growth strategy through Guala Closures' backing.

SharpEnd and Guala Closures already have a consolidated relationship with their ground-breaking activities on NFC-enabled closures. Most recently, they partnered with Californian wine brand Böen, the first United States wine brand to deploy NESTGATE™ NFC technology. By simply tapping the cap with their smartphones, consumers are taken to a virtual vineyard, to discover wine pairings and learn about the wine's heritage and share their experiences on social media.

The Böen campaign has delivered significant engagement metrics for the client, resulting in valuable data acquisition, setting a new direction for the wines & spirits market whose digitalization challenges are centred on consumer engagement and product traceability. After confirming its production expertise on the hardware essential components, Guala Closures is leading the pack once more by investing in and developing the necessary content to make hardware readily value-adding for its client base and the packaging industry at large.

Guala Closures' investment in a strategic partner follows its intent to provide turnkey solutions to customers by becoming a technology integrator of connected packaging solutions. SharpEnd will scale up the development of their IoT software platform to be implemented by Guala Closures' clients also in the context of supply chain management, stock management, theft prevention and ultimately product security.

The deal consists of the initial acquisition of 20% of SharpEnd shares by GCL International Sàrl, the Guala Closures' Luxembourg company, through a capital increase and for a limited amount. Potential further capital injections in the company are planned, nevertheless Guala Closures will remain a minority investor while Cameron Worth, SharpEnd's founder and current sole shareholder, will retain the majority of the company's shares.

Marco Giovannini, Guala Closures Group Chairman and CEO says “This agreement is in line with our Group strategy to take on board IoT expertise and help our clients provide better brand experience to consumers via the most advanced digital marketing solutions and turn data into actionable consumer insights. Digital technology will also enhance once more packaging security barrier and we are fully committed to equip our safety products to help customers against brands’ counterfeiting.”

Cameron Worth, CEO and founder at SharpEnd, adds “The partnership and growth capital from our friends at Guala Closures gives us access to their vast R&D facilities and accelerates everything we are doing across creative technology and data in key verticals such as Fashion, FMCG, Spirits and Cosmetics.”

With the entrance of Guala Closures in the share capital of SharpEnd, the board of the UK company will have five directors, three selected by Cameron Worth and two by Guala Closures.

Guala Closures Group

Guala Closures Group has more than 4,700 employees and operates in 5 continents through 30 production plants and markets its products in over 100 countries. Today the Group sells nearly 20 billion closures yearly, with a 2018 turnover of 543 million Euros. Thanks to a policy of continuous business development and technological innovation, the Group is recognized as a global point of reference in the production of alcohol safety closures and is a leading manufacturer of aluminium closures for spirits, wines and beverages.

From August 2018, Guala Closures S.p.A. has been listed on the STAR segment of the Italian Stock Exchange, entering the FTSE Italia Mid Cap index in September 2019.

Fund out more on www.gualaclosures.com

SharpEnd

SharpEnd is moving brands closer than ever to consumers by connecting packaging, retail and experiential activity.

You can find out more here <https://wearesharpend.com>

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