

Brands4friends invests in Secretsales – private buying clubs remain hot!

by Steve O'Hear on February 18, 2010



[UK/Germany] Private buying clubs have become such a hot item of late, it's perhaps inevitable that we're starting to see a move towards consolidation.



Germany's leading online private shopping club, [Brands4friends](#), has invested in the UK's [Secretsales](#). And while the actual figure is undisclosed, which isn't a surprise considering how competitive this space is right now, sources say it's in the 'multi-million' pound region.

London-based Secretsales will use the additional funding to accelerate growth as well as leverage Brands4friends' expertise and track record, which has enabled the company to become the "fastest growing" private buying club in Europe with annual revenues of €80 million. For Berlin-based Brands4friends this is all about widening its reach outside of Germany and builds on the startup's **recent expansion** into Austria.

The biggest competitor to both Brands4friends and Secretsales is **Vente Privee**, with annual revenue said to be nearing €650m globally. The Paris-based company is also thought to be **courting Amazon**, with the US e-tailer desperate to get into the lucrative private buying club market.

Other players in Europe include News International-owned **BrandAlley UK**, Russia's **KupiVIP.ru**, and Spain's **BuyVIP**.

Launched in 2007, Secretsales has become one of the UK's largest online private shopping clubs. Its members get access to discounted offers on 450 lifestyle, fashion, homeware and leisure brands, exploiting the overstock market – while the site and brands themselves retain an air of 'exclusivity'.

Secretsales will remain based in London, while **Sergio Dias** (former Carrefour and LVMH International executive) joins the company as Chairman and **Ed Bussey** (Founder of Figleaves.com and COO of ZYB) as an Advisory Board Member. Brands4friends CEO, **Christian Heitmeyer** and the Director International and Corporate Development, **Olivier Schuepbach** will also join the Secretsales board.