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nsa Announces U.S. PlayBox Spin-Off

12/02/2016



PRINCETON, N.J.-Athensa, a start-up company targeting the broadcast playout market, officially announced its launch this week; however, the announcement came after a parting of the ways between current and former members of PlayBox Technology, a

U.K.-based provider of broadcast automation/payout technology.

The saga begins in September 2015, when Digital Media Technologies, owner of intellectual property for software products, documentation, databases and trademarks of a number of companies-including PlayBox Technology Limited-announced a licensing agreement between PlayBox and Athensa. The message, posted on the playbox.tv domain, announced that both licensees had the right to use the software products, the documentation and the databases, and any parts thereof, in any form or manner, now know or be devised in the future, taking effect on Sept. 30, 2015.

Two months later, in a release entitled An Important Message from PlayBox Technology, PlayBox clarified what it called inaccurate information currently circulating the marketplace, assuring its customers that it would still be offering its full range of services. PlayBox characterized one of the original licensees-Athensa-as a purely a software company that is a spin off operated by four former PlayBox Technology Limited managers and employees, with a different approach to PlayBox Technology Limited, targeting a separate market sector. PlayBox added that Athensa's customer support offering is provided by its selected partners and the company in no way represents our innovative range of next generation of PlayBox Technology Limited products.

PlayBox Technology Ltd. said that Athensa was targeting PlayBox clients and dealers in an attempt to build its newly starting business. Sadly, this creates confusion in the market. In addition, the company has effectively expropriated the playbox.tv domain, which is the key reason PlayBox Technology Limited has switched domains and we can now be found at www.playboxtechnology.com.

Vassil Lefterov, one of the original four founders of PlayBox and now CEO and founder of Athensa, responded to the accusations in an email to TV Technology. My previous partners are trying to convince the world that they are the original' PlayBox and Athensa is some kind of new vendor, Lefterov wrote. They are trying to promote the message that they own the existing PlayBox customer base of 16,000+ TV channels. This is very far from the actual reality. All the key management people who made PlayBox a worldwide success for the last 15 years are with me in Athensa now. Citing moral differences among two of the founders-Don Ash and Pavlin Rahnev-Lefterov said that we really had to split PlayBox Technology HQ [the name of the original company], into new vendors and commence on different routes in life.

Lefterov also emphasized that Athensa is targeting the same market sector as PlayBox Technology Ltd., adding that Athensa is now booking more than 75 percent of the new PlayBox sales of licenses worldwide, to the same customer base that PlayBox Technology HQ was targeting before the split. According to Lefterov, the split resulted in separate system integration companies: PlayBox USA is now www.pbtusa.tv; PlayBox Europe is now www.pbteu.tv and PlayBox UK is the new www.playboxtechnology.com.

Athensa has a very ambitious R&D program and therefore operates three separate R&D centers, Lefterov continued. In the future, Athensa will also address other markets beyond the traditional broadcast market of PlayBox Technology HD-digital signage, NRCS, etc. But this is for the remote future. In our reality today-the market sectors of PlayBox Technology and Athensa are 100 percent the same.

Lefterov calls the new start-up the indisputable logical step in the further development of PlayBox Technology, and that by adopting a software-only approach, makes us much more agile and flexible and allows us to go beyond the old PlayBox worldwide offices structure and replace it with a greater number of independent system integration companies, previously known as PlayBox dealers.

According to the announcement, Athensa delivers more than 75 percent of newly sold PlayBox products to the worldwide market=

LINK: <http://www.tvtechnology.com/business/0011/athensa-announces-us-playbox...>

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