

HUNTSWORTH

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Huntsworth plc Pre-Close Trading Statement

Huntsworth on track to meet 2012 management expectations New CEO for Grayling to join March 1 2013

Huntsworth plc ("the Group"), the international public relations and healthcare communications group, today issues its pre-close trading statement for the year ended 31 December 2012. The key highlights are:

- Rigorous action on costs will deliver a double digit improvement in Group profitability compared to 2011
- Management expects to meet its expectations for 2012
- Appointment of new CEO for Grayling

Group revenues in 2012 were, in common with other companies in the marketing services sector, adversely affected by the economic conditions in the UK and Europe - which account for circa 60% of Group revenues - and by the downturn in financial and corporate activity in the UK financial markets. However, rigorous cost control will deliver a double-digit improvement in profitability in 2012 over the previous year and the Board expects to meet current management expectations.

The Group balance sheet continues to be strong. Careful working capital management throughout the year has resulted in net debt improving ahead of management expectations with the balance at 31 December 2012 expected to be circa £67m.

The Board is delighted to announce the appointment of Pete Pedersen who joins Grayling as Chief Executive Officer after nearly 20 years at Edelman where he was a leading member of the executive team on key accounts such as Microsoft and Xbox, before becoming Global Chair of the Edelman Technology Practice.

Lord Chadlington, Chief Executive Officer of Huntsworth, said: "Pete is a seasoned operator with long experience of winning and handling global accounts, and has built a global technology practice which over the last few years has averaged double digit growth.

"I'm confident that Pete's client, technology and management experience will be a great fit with Grayling as it takes the next step towards becoming a global PR business with social media and technology at its core."

Sally Withey, Chief Operating Officer and Finance Director, said:

"I am pleased that despite the difficult economy we will deliver strong profit growth and tight cost control this year. With some early signs of more positive economic conditions in some of our markets, we are focusing on growing revenues, winning more global accounts and leveraging our expertise and leadership in digital communications into more of our work.

"The appointment of Pete Pedersen as Chief Executive Officer of Grayling reflects the Board's ambition to expand and invest in the digital capabilities of the Group.

"The Group's 2012 Preliminary results will be announced on 25 April 2013 at which time we will also give an update on our first quarter revenue growth as well as the progress we are making in global accounts and digital revenues."

The Annual Report will be posted to shareholders on 14 May. The Annual General Meeting will be held on 13 June.

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