

**The first Italian platform dedicated to start-ups and their key investors hosted an event in partnership with International Venture Club**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**“INTESA SANPAOLO START-UP INITIATIVE” AND “INTERNATIONAL VENTURE CLUB” PRESENTED THE COMPANIES THAT HAVE SHOWN THE GREATEST INNOVATION IN DIGITAL MEDIA TO EUROPEAN INVESTORS**

- **Other 30 companies met with key international investors**
- **The 4 Italian start-ups selected by the Intesa Sanpaolo platform were present: CircleMe, Sounday, Spreaker and Spinvector**

*Milan/London, 6 March 2012* – The **Intesa Sanpaolo Start-up Initiative** hosted the **IVC Growth Arena**, an event organised in partnership with the **International Venture Club**, a network that includes some of Europe’s foremost venture capital investors.

The **Growth Arena Meeting**, which was held at the Intesa Sanpaolo Group’s London Hub Branch, was dedicated to the companies that have achieved the greatest innovation in **digital media**.

A selected portfolio of over 30 companies thus had the opportunity to present themselves to numerous investors from all of Europe.

The companies chosen to participate in the event also included several Italian start-ups previously selected by the Intesa Sanpaolo platform: **CircleMe, Sounday** and **Spreaker**.

Also participated **Spinvector**, in which Atlante Ventures, the Intesa Sanpaolo Group’s venture capital arm, is an investor.

The **Intesa Sanpaolo Start-up Initiative** – the first Italian platform of its kind promoted by the Intesa Sanpaolo – confirms the Bank’s **aim** of bringing finance technological innovation and research to develop new businesses and new entrepreneurs.

**In November 2010**, the launch of the **International Roadshow** marked an important first stage in the growth of the Intesa Sanpaolo Start-up Initiative, which took the best companies selected during the Italian editions to London, Frankfurt, San Francisco, New York and Paris for a series of meetings that involved the participation of over **1,200 international investors**.

In October 2011 a new stage in the growth process began, resulting in the involvement of the initiative not only with early-stage start-ups, but also growth start-ups, meaning companies that have already obtained some financing and are seeking additional funding for further growth. This additional expansion was achieved in partnership with the EVC (European Venture Club in 2011) and which was renamed to be the IVC (International Venture Club). Two years since its launch, there have been **15 editions in Italy** and **12 international events** in which over **1,000 start-ups and early-stage companies** have been **contacted for selection**, **over 250** have been **provided with training** (boot camps), and **over 160** have been presented at the **Investor Arena Meetings**, where they **met with over 2,500 potential investors and industrial partners**, for a total of approximately **1,400 shows of interest**.

### **The Italian start-ups present at the Intesa Sanpaolo Start-Up Initiative – IVC Growth Arena**

**CircleMe** – An innovative social network that allows users to create highly evocative profiles based on their interests, discover new activities and connect with like-minded people.

**Sounday** – A self-service digital record label. The platform offers music recording, production and distribution services, as well as access to a broad community of enthusiasts and industry professionals.

**Spreaker** – An innovative platform that allows a radio-listening experience to be combined with the interaction typical of a social network: users can create radio programmes complete with dialogue, mixing the songs directly online.

**Spinvector** – Innovation on the boundary between the material and virtual. Development of rich multimedia experiences, including mobile gaming, augmented reality and three-dimensional projections.

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*“We are extremely proud of having organised such a prominent event together with the International Venture Club, one of the world’s most important networks of venture capital investors. The partnership with IVC represents a further stage in the process of internationalising our platform,”* commented Gaetano Micciché, General Manager of Intesa Sanpaolo. *“The success with which our events meet both in Italy and abroad confirms the strength of our initiative, which offers the top real talent the opportunity to introduce themselves to those with an interest in financing innovation throughout the world...”*

*“The International Venture Club, as a collaborative initiative of international capital investors, is delighted to join forces with Intesa SanPaolo to promote promising Digital Media companies. Growing digital media companies at international level require a strong cross-border syndicates of investors,”* commented **William Stevens**, coordinator of the Club. *“The Growth Arena events facilitate the formation of such strong investment syndicates involving independent, corporate or institutional international investors.”*

### **Intesa Sanpaolo Group**

It operates approximately 5,900 branches in Italy through consolidated leadership in all business segments. Abroad, the Bank has a selective, strategic presence in over 40 countries: in Central Eastern Europe and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) through its retail banks (1,700 branches) and around the world through its banks, corporate branches and representation offices. The Intesa Sanpaolo Group provides Italian companies interested in embarking on a process of growth through innovation and research with access to a very wide range of products, as well as support and consulting services, loans and equity through its dedicated units.

### **IVC profile**

The International Venture Club ([www.iVentureClub.com](http://www.iVentureClub.com)) brings together independent, corporate and institutional (direct) venture investors that are active in Europe. It is a collaborative investor-focused platform that works internationally to facilitate mutual knowledge, portfolio company growth and fund raising through live and online events and services. The iVentureClub has a complementary role to the EVCA and the different national private equity associations. Europe Unlimited ([www.e-unlimited.com](http://www.e-unlimited.com)) acts as the service provider.

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