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Presidio Investors brings operational expertise to expand The Only Agency

The Only Agency represents makeup artists, stylists and photographers for celebrities like Christina Aguilera and Selena Gomez.

Iris Dorbian - 5 hours ago

In late October, Austin-based **Presidio Investors** announced **a majority stake in Los Angeles-based The Only Agency**, which represents makeup artists and other creative talent. To learn more about the deal, *PE Hub* conducted a Q&A with Josef Auboek, managing director at Presidio Investors, which targets the media, technology and financial services sector.

Founded in 2014 by Kent Belden, The Only Agency represents celebrity stylists, makeup artists, hair stylists, photographers and production designers in the fashion, beauty and entertainment industries. Among those repped by the talent firm are Los Angeles-based makeup artist Etienne Ortega, whose roster of clients includes Christina Aguilera, Lana Del Rey, the Kardashians and Paris Hilton; New York City-based fashion stylist Mickey Freeman, whose work has been featured in publications such as *GQ*, *Vogue* and *Marie Claire*; and London-based photographer Rebecca Spencer, whose credits include advertising campaigns for brands Kurt Geiger and Newlook and celebrities including Emily Ratajkowski and Selena Gomez.

Auboek explained in greater detail why his firm was so bullish about The Only Agency and outlined the goals for its latest portfolio company.

Why did Presidio invest in The Only Agency?

We see tremendous potential in The Only Agency's innovative approach to talent representation and the broader creative industries. This investment reflects our confidence in their exceptional leadership and ability to set new standards for growth and transformation. We're excited to support The Only Agency's CEO Kent Belden, and his team as they expand their influence and continue building momentum in the industry.

How did the deal come about?

We learned about this opportunity through one of our investment banking contacts, who shared that Kent was seeking a strategic partner to help scale his operations and expand into new verticals and geographies, all while maintaining The Only Agency's white-glove service. After several in-person meetings with Kent and his team, we recognized there was strong alignment between his vision, the company's values and strategy, and Presidio's investment approach. We also identified multiple areas where Presidio could add immediate value, further enhancing the potential for long-term success.

How long did the deal process take?

We spent a significant amount of time working closely with Kent and his team to develop a comprehensive strategy and a detailed 100-day plan prior to finalizing the transaction. The process was thorough and collaborative, ensuring that we were well-positioned for success from day one.

The entertainment sector has undergone a number of high-profile disruptions recently, ranging from the recent strikes to the "Hollywood contraction," which has led to job losses, salary cuts and fewer shows in production. How did this inform Presidio's investment in The Only Agency?

The Only Agency's client pool is highly diversified. While Hollywood is a key market, the company also has a strong presence in other verticals such as music, fashion and sports, so this was a relatively limited concern for Presidio.

Does this deal fit into Presidio's investment strategy?

As a leading middle-market private equity firm that partners with niche market leaders in growing industries, The Only Agency perfectly aligns with Presidio's investment strategy. We will primarily focus on supporting operational growth and providing expertise in building scalable systems. We will also have representation on the board to guide high-level strategy on organic growth drivers and potential future add-on acquisitions.

Tell us about Presidio's portfolio.

Presidio focuses on investing in B2B services companies, with a particular emphasis on media, technology and financial services. Over the past decade, we have made several investments in the media sector. Notably, we are the majority owner of Podium Audio, a publisher of audiobooks written by self-published authors in the sci-fi and fantasy genres.

How will Presidio help grow The Only Agency?

This partnership provides The Only Agency with the investment and operational support needed to enhance its services, expand into new markets, and drive future growth. The investment will allow the agency to grow the team, strengthen its infrastructure, streamline processes, and expand into new markets and categories.

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