
How Cathay Capital helped e-multiculturalism pioneer become a global reference brand



Founded in 2000, Datawords pioneered the innovative discipline of e-Multiculturalism – leveraging technology to adapt brand content (e.g., websites, marketing, advertising, SEO, social media, videos etc.) to cultural specificities of local markets. Datawords chose to partner with Cathay to find the right levers that would transform their new invention into a global reference brand.



Acquisitions



turnover (2019)

Doubled turnover in 4
year period (2015-19)

DATAWORDS
Multicultural Technologies

Sector:	Software / Big data
Country:	France
Fund:	Mid Cap
Status:	En portefeuille
Investment Date:	2019

Challenge

When Cathay first invested in 2009, Datawords had already developed a unique offer in digital marketing combining the understanding of local cultures and technological expertise. But its activity was mainly focused on French brands, its headcount below 100 people and its annual turnover around €10M.

As a shareholder, first between 2009 – 2011 and again between 2015-2020, our goal was to help the team realize the full strategic value of Datawords e-multiculturalism with international business expansion and evolving the scope and expertise of the brand to new industries beyond luxury goods and watches.

Solution

To support Datawords' growth plans, the Cathay team helped develop and implement new market entrance strategies along with key buy-and-build acquisitions. This includes accelerating development in the Americas, with an enlarged US customer base and opening new offices in Montreal and Mexico City, as well as Asia, with new offices in Hong Kong, Seoul, Tokyo and 2 new production units in the Philippines.

To boost external growth and diversify its offerings, the Cathay team supported several cross-border acquisitions including Luxembourg-based digital communications agency Vanksen, video production company 87 Seconds, and HK-based AI chatbot provider Whatsquare. Cathay also supported Datawords in securing a partnership with Content Square, as well as investing and incubating semantic asset management digital solution Wezen. Thanks

to Cathay's global ecosystem, Datawords broadened its customer reach with new brands and industries such as Procter & Gamble, Mac Cosmetics, Coach, Total Energies, Groupe SEB, Pernod Ricard and more.

By the end of the first investment cycle, Datawords saw an increase in EBITDA by 80%. After the second, both turnover and number of employees doubled within 5 years. Today, the company is growing by double digits every year, recording a €70M turnover in 2019 and is strong of 800 employees over three continents. Datawords is now a global leader in its sector as a fully integrated group that combines technical expertise and cultural understanding to facilitate the international deployment of content.

“Cathay Capital will always hold an important place in our history for having twice supported us as a shareholder in the creation of a truly international Group. When we started working with Cathay we were a small-cap and together we have built a global platform with an integrated offering. In the name of the whole Datawords team, I would like to thank Mingpo Cai, Edouard Moinet, François Rosenfeld, Thierry Auzel and all the members of the Cathay ecosystem who contributed to this adventure.”

STANISLAS DE NERVO
CO-FOUNDER & CEO, DATAWORDS