



Press Release

Official Launch of Alexa's First Store Competition in Berlin

The shopping centre Alexa on Alexanderplatz supports innovative business ideas and store concepts with an exclusive competition

Berlin, 30 June 2016 The motto of “First Store by Alexa” is “Exceptional ideas deserve exceptional opportunities”. Registration for the global retail casting initiated by the Alexa shopping centre on Alexanderplatz in Berlin opens on 30 June. The challenge: to win over the jury and the public with creative business ideas and innovative store concepts. The prize: the first store, for half a year at Alexa.*

Alexa on Alexanderplatz is one of the most successful shopping centres in Germany as well as one of the busiest, with 16 million visitors each year. As part of its strategy and a key factor in its success, new and regional concepts get opportunities there in addition to international retail chains—and everyone benefits.

The “First Store” idea: a platform for innovation

The retail casting competition “First Store by Alexa” is the logical continuation of this strategy and its scale is unique in Europe: The companies Sonae Sierra and Union Investment want to give impetus to the development of new business ideas that enrich retail and keep it attractive. They wish to support innovative store concepts and provide them a promising platform with top store space in Alexa. Fabian Hellbusch, Head of Marketing at Union Investment Real Estate GmbH, says “Newcomers and existing brands will find an excellent platform for trying out new things right here in the heart of Berlin. We wanted to showcase this for Alexa’s 10th anniversary. The “First Store” contest is a perfect fit and we are confident that the courage to tread new paths will pay off. If we can encourage young or established entrepreneurs to take this step, a part of our goal will have been achieved.” Jens Horeis, General Manager at Sonae Sierra, adds: “Berlin’s openness and vibrancy play a major role for companies with innovative new products or labels when choosing a location. And when one of the most successful shopping centres in Germany is also located there on a historic and cosmopolitan square like Alexanderplatz, these are powerful arguments for hosting this special competition in Alexa. Alexa has stood for ‘new’, ‘different’, ‘innovative’ and ‘successful’ from the start. We want to promote this innovative spirit with ‘First Store’. We’re investing in the companies of the future and are in the fortunate position of being able to offer them a prestigious platform in Alexa.”



“Best Newcomer” and “Best Brand”

The “First Store by Alexa” contest will be held in two categories. The category “Best Newcomer” is reserved for start-ups that have not yet established themselves in the market and want to open their first store. The category “Best Brand” is a good fit for established players that previously sold their products only as a shop-in-shop or online and want to open their first bricks-and-mortar store or those that want to bring a completely new product or concept to the market. One of the key prerequisites for participation for both categories: There are as yet no stand-alone stores with the submitted concept in Germany. The challenge: a creative, innovative, unique and compelling store concept.

The contest procedure

The application period runs from 30.6.2016 to 11.30.2016. Information, registration, and a place to upload the application documents can all be found at www.firststorealexa.com. Winners will be then determined in a three-step selection process:

Step 1 - Private pre-selection In January 2017, a seven-member jury of experts will select three finalists per category. These will be announced at a press conference.

Step 2 - Public vote In February 2017, the finalists’ concepts will be presented to the public in Alexa and on digital platforms. Visitors and users will then have one month to choose and rate their favourites in Alexa or online.

Stage 3 - The decision In March 2017, the six finalists will present their concepts to the jury, which will then choose a winner for each category. The jury’s decision and the results of the public vote each account for 50% of the final vote. The winners will be announced on 31 March, 2017.

Six months’ base rent free and more*

The attractive prize for the winners: six months’ base rent free in Alexa.* That means: The two winners will each move into a representative store on Alexa’s ground floor and only have to pay a set lump sum for utilities and operating costs for the first six months. The stores will open in late October 2017 as part of Alexa’s 10-year anniversary. The parallel marketing campaign guarantees them attention.

In order to ensure that a lack of starting capital at small start-ups does not slow down their creativity, the winner in the category “Best Newcomer” will receive further assistance. Jens Horeis: “Sonae Sierra is an internationally renowned shopping centre developer and has great expertise that we will of course make available to the winner.” Alexa will also support the store design, shopfitting and marketing of the first store launch with a fixed amount.

The contest “First Store by Alexa” will be publicised on various platforms: on the website, www.firststorealexa.de, via marketing activities within Alexa and via viral marketing campaigns on social media. Participants will receive great publicity during the casting process—participation in the competition alone can support the building of a brand.



Jury with loads of expertise and diverse experience

A seven-member expert panel is responsible for the selection of the most promising store concepts. It brings together expertise and experience from various fields. The jury in detail: Volker Noack, Managing Director of Union Investment Real Estate GmbH; Susanne Risch, Managing Director of brand eins Wissen; Jens Peter Klatt, Head of Multichannel at Mister Spex, tenants with their first store in Alexa since 2016; Markus Heckhausen, founder and Managing Director of the Berlin cult brand Ampelmann, tenants in Alexa since 2016; Member of the Management Queens Center in New York; Dr. Kai Hudetz, Managing Director of the Institute for Retail Research (Institut für Handelsforschung); and Oliver Hanna, Alexa's Centre Manager from the very start.

Sonae Sierra and Union Investment are already looking forward to a great response: "We live in an increasingly global world in which there are no limits for retail. We embrace the new in any way we can—that's what makes the competition 'First Store by Alexa' so special. We are therefore really looking forward to some very dynamic participation—and even more so if numerous applications come in from other countries," said Jens Horeis of Sonae Sierra.

Since its opening in September 2007, Alexa on Alexanderplatz and its around 185 shops on a total lettable area of 56,559 square meters of GLA has risen to become a visitor magnet right in the historic centre of Berlin. The shopping and leisure centre owes its name to its central location on Alexanderplatz in Berlin-Mitte. From 10 am to 9 pm, Monday to Saturday, Alexa offers its visitors a variety of shopping and leisure opportunities. It is owned by Union Investment Real Estate GmbH (91%) and Sonae Sierra, Portugal (9%). Sonae Sierra (Sierra Management Germany GmbH) is responsible for centre management and letting.

Photographs:

1. First Store by Alexa Startschuss : Official start for the retail casting „First Store bx Alexa“. From left to right.: Jens Peter Klatt, Member of the Jury and Head of Multichannel Mister Spex; Oliver Hanna, Center Manager Alexa Berlin; Fabian Hellbusch, Head of Marketing Union Investment Real Estate GmbH
2. Alexa Shopping Center Mall
3. Alexa Shopping Center at Alexanderplatz
4. First Store Logo

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