



Q & A

Steve Alesio, chairman and CEO of THE DUN & BRADSTREET CORP. (DNB), says he feels honored to be leading the continued transformation of a company with a 165-year-old brand. Dun & Bradstreet, known as D&B, identifies itself as the leading provider of global business information and insight, and boasts a rich heritage: Among the employees who went on to establish names for themselves were four U.S. presidents — Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses S. Grant, Grover Cleveland and William McKinley. Yet it's the company's more recent history that has people talking. Since 2000, D&B reports, its stock price has increased more than 250 percent.

The catalyst for turning D&B from an underperforming company with underleveraged assets to a growth company was the launch of its Blueprint for Growth strategy five years ago, says Alesio. The strategy focuses on repositioning D&B's brand, creating a flexible business model to invest in growth and build shareholder value, and fostering a culture of improved leadership. Since joining D&B in 2001 as senior vice president of marketing, technology, communications and strategy implementation, Alesio, 51, has been a driving force in the company's transformation. Named president and chief operating officer in 2002, he became CEO in January 2005 and chairman in May, succeeding the retiring Allan Loren.

If you ask Alesio why he joined D&B, he'll say it's because he recognized the growth potential locked in the company's brand — a perspective he gained as a D&B customer during his 19-year career in marketing and general management with AMERICAN EXPRESS CO. (AXP). Alesio says he will leverage this perspective as he leads the company to achieve its aspiration "to become the most trusted source of business insight so our customers can decide with confidence."



Unlocking a Brand

D&B TRANSFORMS ITSELF FROM A DATA PROVIDER TO
A LEADER IN GLOBAL BUSINESS INSIGHT.

>> How has D&B evolved?

If you ask people about D&B, many will say “we pull a D&B” to get credit information on companies. That’s because at the foundation of D&B is a long history of providing customers with business information, highly recognized in the risk-management domain. As we’ve evolved, we’ve gone beyond delivering reports to mitigate risk to helping customers increase revenue, identify savings and, as a result, drive growth and profitability. Our evolution can best be described as migrating our 165-year-old globally recognized brand built on being a data provider to reflect our position as the leading provider of global business information and insight.

What makes D&B unique in the global marketplace?

Having the world’s largest and best quality global commercial business information in the marketplace. It’s what we do for a living. Our entire business is built on collecting, aggregating, editing and verifying information from thousands of global sources every day. We recently celebrated a milestone when our database reached 100 million business records. We’re able to turn this data into business insight with our patented proprietary quality assurance process we call DUNSRight. That’s what sets us apart in the marketplace.

How do you describe D&B’s global presence?

We have a leading position in all major markets around the world. Our global presence is unique in that it combines owned entities in some markets with strategic partnerships we’ve established with leading business-information providers in other markets. Together, these businesses make up the D&B Worldwide Network — an alliance that has dramatically strengthened our value proposition for

customers globally by enhancing the breadth and depth of our global data coverage. Today, our owned entities and partnerships outside the U.S. contribute more than 60 percent of the records in our international business database.

How do you grow a 165-year-old company?

Transforming a traditional company like D&B isn’t easy. Five years ago, we began turning this company into a growth engine by creating a sound strategy that we stuck to day in and day out. As a result, our highly recognized brand, which previously identified us only as a data provider, is now seen as a source of business insight. We’re able to continually invest in delivering more value to customers and shareholders through our flexible business model. Most impressive, our culture — built on the strength of our people — fosters improved leadership. These are core assets you simply won’t find

together in most companies, and they create a formula for continued transformation and growth.

What changes do you see for D&B in the future?

I describe what we’ve done with this company in the past five years as a financial and cultural transformation. And we’re still transforming. The next phase will be all about increasing our focus on our customers’ successes. Our customers tell us they rely on D&B to help them address the

increasingly complex and challenging business decisions they face every day. They are looking for us to manage more of their information processes while continuing to help them grow and compete globally. Looking ahead, we’ll continue to innovate and invest in providing business insight so D&B can become “most trusted” in our customers’ eyes. ▢

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