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Hartmut Ostrowski appointed to Bertelsmann AG Executive Board as successor to Gunter Thielen / Head of successful Bertelsmann Services Group to head up Arvato as of September 2002 - growth and excellent customer service as top priorities

Gütersloh (ots) -

The Bertelsmann AG Supervisory Board has appointed Hartmut Ostrowski, 43, as a deputy member of the Bertelsmann Executive Board, effective October 1, 2001. Ostrowski is scheduled to become a regular Executive Board member on September 1, 2002. He will then become the successor to Gunter Thielen, the Executive Board member in charge of the Arvato corporate division. Thielen will turn 60 in August 2002 and will be leaving the Bertelsmann AG Executive Board on August 31, 2001. Ostrowski has headed the Bertelsmann Services Group within the Arvato division since 1995. Thomas Middelhoff, Chairman & CEO of Bertelsmann AG, welcomed the supervisory board's decision: "Here at Bertelsmann, Hartmut Ostrowski stands for entrepreneurial spirit, competence, excellent customer service and economic success. Under his leadership, the Services Group has flourished into a globally active, highly profitable group of companies, which in Germany alone counts one in two DAX companies - and internationally speaking, a number of top addresses - among its customers. I am delighted that Hartmut Ostrowski will be contributing his wealth of experience and his energetic manner to the Bertelsmann Executive Board in future." Ostrowski, born in Bielefeld in 1958, joined Bertelsmann immediately after obtaining his business degree. He started out as an executive assistant in Bertelsmann Distribution, the germ cell of what is now the Services Group. He quickly rose through the company's ranks, interrupted briefly in the 1980s by a job with a US financial services provider. He returned to Bertelsmann Distribution in 1990 as divisional manager; in 1992, he became the general manager, and in 1995 the CEO of the newly formed Bertelsmann Services Group. He has been an Arvato AG Executive Board member since 1996.

Ostrowski led the Services Group, which in the early 1990s had just under 3,000 employees, and generated revenues of DM 150 million and DM 6 million operating profit, to its current employee base of more than 11,000 employees. In the fiscal year 2000/01 just ended, the Services Group generated turnover of roughly DM 2 billion and EBITA of DM 202 million. The company does business at 30 offices in 17 countries. Its core competencies are logistics (inventory management, mail-order shipping, accounting) and communications (service centers) for major customers like Deutsche Lufthansa, Allianz, Lego, Microsoft, Hewlett Packard and Deutsche Bahn. Early on, Ostrowski aligned the Services Group to booming industries, securing two-digit growth rates and high yields for the group.

As the designated Executive Board member in charge of the Arvato AG, Hartmut Ostrowski will be assuming responsibility for a globally positioned media service provider, which includes - beyond the Services Group - state-of-the-art printing works and the production of storage media. Gunter Thielen has developed Arvato into a market-leading, internationally famous group of companies that offers its customers the entire value chain: from design and content generation to data management, printing and reprocessing down to distribution and associated financial services. Arvato currently has offices in 23 countries, with a total of 22,500 employees. For fiscal year 2000/01, the company reports revenues of DM 5.9bn and an EBITA of DM 283m.

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