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## **B. Riley & Co. Acts as Exclusive Financial Advisor to U Brands in Connection with its Strategic Investment from The Smead Manufacturing Company**

LOS ANGELES, Oct. 25, 2017 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- B. Riley & Co., LLC ("B. Riley"), a full service investment bank and a wholly-owned subsidiary of B. Riley Financial, Inc. (NASDAQ:RILY), served as the exclusive financial advisor to U Brands LLC ("U Brands") in connection with a strategic investment from The Smead Manufacturing Company, Inc. ("Smead Manufacturing"). As part of the investment, Smead Manufacturing will acquire a controlling interest in the organization and U Brands' founders will retain a meaningful equity stake and leadership positions in the business. Specific terms of the transaction, which closed on September 30, 2017, were not disclosed.

U Brands is a rapidly growing Southern California based design house specializing in a diverse line of fashionable stationery, office, and home goods. The company sells its products through leading big box retail customers and eCommerce platforms. U Brands is a dynamic, trend-forward brand focused on bringing fashion and fun back to the commercial and home office categories. The company was co-founded by CEO Mike Cerillo and President Ben Hoch in 2014 and the executives were regional finalists for Ernst & Young's 2017 Entrepreneur of The Year Program. U Brands will continue to operate out of its Southern California headquarters and its leadership team will report to Casey Avent, President of Smead Manufacturing.

B. Riley initiated, structured and negotiated the transaction on behalf of U Brands. The deal team was led by Senior Managing Director Greg Presson, Director Chris Ankley, and Analyst Patrick Haddan.

"The transaction is a great result for U Brands' shareholders as it provides meaningful liquidity and an opportunity to partner with a global leader in the office management solutions sector," said Ankley. "The newly formed strategic partnership is built on U Brands' plan to expand into the commercial market and Smead Manufacturing's long-term goal of scaling through new channels and product diversification."

"Smead Manufacturing represents the perfect partner for U Brands. We share an appreciation for premium quality products, maintain loyal customer followings, and support the same charitable foundations," said Mike Cerillo, CEO of U Brands. "The B. Riley team played a critical role in securing the right partner and structuring the relationship to ensure it was a win-win for both organizations."

In connection with the strategic partnership, the companies plan to combine core competencies from both organizations. Smead Manufacturing will share its time-honored reputation, salesforce, commercial relationships and efficient distribution processes. U Brands will share its creative design work, expanded product line, retail relationships and established procurement contracts.

"This is a great opportunity for two leading brands to leverage each other's channel strengths and offer their customers an expanded set of innovative solutions. We are also very appreciative of B. Riley's Consumer Group for securing a transaction that maximized shareholder value. They were the clear choice to represent us and we are exceptionally pleased with the outcome," said Ben Hoch, President of U Brands.

"Joining forces with U Brands provides Smead Manufacturing with a great opportunity to diversify our product portfolio and offer a more comprehensive set of solutions to our existing customer base," said Casey Avent, President of Smead Manufacturing. "It's an exciting time for Smead Manufacturing as we leverage the power and reputation of our legacy brand while building a new future with a dynamic and progressive partner like U Brands."

Sunbelt Business Advisors, Minneapolis acted as the financial advisor to Smead Manufacturing in connection with the transaction.

**About U Brands:** U Brands is a dynamic consumer products company specializing in a diverse line of stationery, storage, home and office products (including presentation boards, office tools and supplies, filing and organizational products, locker accessories, and more). The company's pledge is to deliver innovative and creative designs with great quality and value. For more information on U Brands' innovative products, visit [ubrand.com](http://ubrand.com).

**About Smead Manufacturing :** Smead Manufacturing, a global leader in office management systems, was established in

1906 in Hastings, Minnesota. The company is a privately held, certified Women's Business Enterprise ("WBE") offering thousands of organizational products for use in the home or office. For more information on Smead Manufacturing's high-quality organizational products, including hundreds of products made in the USA, visit [Smead.com](http://Smead.com).

**About B. Riley & Co., LLC:**

B. Riley & Co., LLC is a leading investment bank which provides corporate finance, research and sales and trading to corporate, institutional and high net worth individual clients. Investment banking services include initial, secondary and follow-on offerings, institutional private placements and merger and acquisitions advisory services. The firm is nationally recognized for its highly ranked proprietary equity research. B. Riley & Co., LLC is a member of FINRA and SIPC.

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