

Etsy prices shares at \$16 for stock market debut

April 16 2015

Etsy priced its shares at \$16 ahead of its Thursday Wall Street debut for the online marketplace known for handicrafts and strong social values.

The [share price](#) valued Etsy at \$1.78 billion and promised to raise about \$267 million for the Brooklyn, New York-based firm.

The stock is set to trade on the Nasdaq market Thursday under the symbol "ETSY."

Etsy was founded in 2005 and pegs itself as the "antidote to mass manufacturing" by selling handmade and vintage goods.

"I intend to keep our unconventional operating philosophy as we become a public company," chief executive Chad Dickerson said in a letter included with the Etsy regulatory filing.

"We eat on compostable plates, and employees sign up to deliver our compost by bike to a local farm in Red Hook, Brooklyn, where it is turned back into the soil that produces the food we enjoy together."

Etsy plans to maintain its status as "a certified B Corporation," which seeks to contribute to solving social and environmental problems.

Only two B corporations, however, are publicly traded, reflecting the apparent contradiction between social values and responsibility to shareholders.

"Investors want a company to do good, but they don't want too much at the expense of getting the profit they are looking for," says Kathleen Smith at Renaissance Capital, a research firm which specializes in IPOs.

"There could be a little bit of contention between the investors' constituency and social responsibility."

In the past year, Etsy reported a loss of \$15 million as it ramped up marketing efforts. But it has generated sales on the platform of \$1.93 billion, one-third of which came from outside the US market.

Last year, Etsy boosted its international presence with the acquisition of French-based rival, "A Little Market."

Etsy has gained a reputation as a hipster, artisanal version of eBay, featuring a large number of vintage and handmade items. But critics say mass-produced goods from China and counterfeit items make their way onto Etsy despite the company's efforts.

As of December 31, Etsy had 1.4 million active sellers and 19.8 million active buyers, with a large number of both coming back to the platform.

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