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AGN International is defined by relationships according to Nick Blake. He notes that the usual communication channels of email, telephone and fax often fall short of conveying one's thoughts. Ultimately, he believes that "the real message doesn't get across unless you're looking at somebody in the eye." However, such a practice is often impractical from a time and cost perspective. In this respect, the association's main priority is to facilitate meetings and it does this in several ways. It holds an annual World Congress which all member firms are strongly encouraged to attend. Such gatherings help emphasise the strengths of AGN International - 197 member firms from 90 countries congregate to renew personal relationships and discuss business opportunities. More frequently held throughout the year are regional conferences in the Asia-Pacific, Central & South America, Europe, North America, and West Asia & Africa, separately organised by AGN's regional groups. Mr Blake also comments that the association also organises events on a same speaking language basis with French and German-speaking firms getting together, and are hopeful of creating a Russian-speaking member group in 2009. Besides conferences, he states that the regional groups have also set up committees on specific matters such as taxation, membership, business development and training. "These committees meet together and discuss how the membership can be serviced." AGN International also keeps its members up to date via newsletters and independently produced technical updates on matters of interest. Mr Blake explains that these communiqués allow AGN to continuously advise members of the association's activity, member activity and what technical changes in fiscal and accounting-related matters are taking place around the world. These updates are a powerful tool for member firms as it allows them to render accurate and comprehensive international services to their

clientele. It means that "our members have the ability to be considered on both a regional and international basis", comments Mr Blake.

The lengths that AGN goes to in order to help its member firms form strong bonds may appear extraordinary but it is a basic necessity according to Mr Blake. "Quite frankly, it is very important and almost essential that we provide these opportunities to meet." He explains that with regular contact comes confidence in each other's abilities, and a bond must be formed before client referrals can begin. "This is one of the reasons why firms join an association like AGN - client protection," he confirms, adding that it provides confidence amongst our member firms and amongst individuals to know they're dealing with people able to service their clients, with the necessary technical abilities and know-how to do so."

Maintaining a high standard of membership is crucial to this aspect and consequently, AGN insists upon an extensive admission process. Unsurprisingly, it begins with a meeting, face-to-face between the association and the firm. This provides a chance to provisionally assess the firm's qualities, after which the firm is asked to complete an extensive application form. Once this is reviewed with satisfactory results, it is then sent to the association's international board of directors and then voted onto the next stage of process, a pre-admission peer review. The firm's operations, results and goals are scrutinised intensively and eventually, "all that information comes back for review at my London office, and once everything is tied up, it is formalised into an official package sent off to the international board for them to vote upon whether the prospective member should be admitted." To a lesser organisation, it may appear excessive but Mr Blake explains that it is also in the prospective firm's best interests to be subjected to such an exhaustive review. He said "from the very early stage, we ask them why they want to

be a member. If the answer is such that we feel that we can provide that, then the application can go ahead but if not, we look elsewhere. We don't just plough ahead and carry on regardless; we like to think of the needs of our members and whether they can be met. There's nothing worse than having one's expectations not met and it leaves a sour taste on both sides."

Completing such a gauntlet obviously conveys significant advantages for those that successfully enter AGN International. In addition to the social networking aspects, technical workshops and seminars are also provided. They are not confined to fiscal and accounting-related practices however; Mr Blake recalls that one of the most remembered sessions was a fascinating presentation by a brain surgeon who explained how to organise one's working space and day to maximise concentration. "He was so popular that we invited him back a few years later. It's of interest and the people attending apply so much everyday with technical issues and matters that it's great for us to be able to provide them with alternate subjects that capture their imagination. Not only does it encourage more people to come but it gives a lot more benefit to the attendees."

2009 is shaping up to a promising year for the association. "We have a basic, very simple equation that we use," reveals Mr Blake. "It states geographical coverage plus quality equals confidence: greater confidence means more work." For coverage, AGN will be seeking to expand in certain areas and bring in boutique firms with specialist niches whilst the pre-admission peer review has been enhanced to address quality aspects. "We're also instituting a member visit programme between firms which doesn't look at quality but allows collaboration on issues like practice management, staff retention, business strategies and so forth. That's what we're aiming for during the course of 2009."



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Consultatio is one of the most well established tax, accountant and auditing firms in vienna. With decades of tradition established, it is closely connected to the name androsch. Hans and lia androsch founded the company as early as the 1940s but the firm has been known by the name consultatio since 1970.

Since right from the beginning, consultatio has been dealing with fiscal challenges. And so it isn't astonishing that consultatio was the first company to take the step eastwards and as early as the late 1980s established sites in countries still operating under communism. The firm is managed by ten partners, with each one backed by a large and knowledgeable team. From the moment a client employs consultatio's services, they are afforded personal and direct support from one of the partners and staff.

Should a particularly difficult or unusually comprehensive task need solving, the firm pools together its strengths without delay. Its comprehensive diversity of qualification, resources and dedicated team work make it possible to execute requests thoroughly to their clients' satisfaction. Consultatio recognises that the decisions its consultants make are of vital economic, financial and legal relevance for the businesses it represents. For this reason the firm sets high standards regarding the qualification, training as well as the dedication of employees.

In order to offer excellent tax and business consultancy, however, it takes more than an above average technical knowledge. It demands a high degree of strength in communication skills, flexibility, intuition and reliability. What the firm looks for are individuals with broad horizons and clear, above average social competence. To ensure this high degree of competence remains in the long term, consultatio invests more in the education and training of its employees than other tax and business consultancies. Approximately 5,000 hours a year are spent on lectures, education and training to optimise the specialist knowledge and advisory capacity of consultatio employees. Its employees augment their knowledge with the latest specialist literature, meaning that the consultants are always reliably informed on all relevant aspects, big or small.

Consultatio is flexible. Operating from the heart of europe, it comprises of small, highly specialised units which make it possible to deal with detailed queries, whilst clients benefit from the experience and the specialised knowledge of a large internationally minded company.

Schwarzer & co is a partnership admitted in the areas of public accounting and tax consulting and was founded in 1985. The firm currently includes two partners and a staff of nine. The office is located in vienna, adjacent to the city centre. The austrian capital, being the seat of all local governmental and also of numerous international organisations, vienna's central geographical position and excellent transportation and communication facilities, provide ideal access to the emerging markets of central & eastern europe.

To comply with the client's needs better in a rapidly changing and increasingly global business environment schwarzer & co became a member of tag international in 1995. After the merger of tag and agn, the austrian firm affiliated with agn international from 2002 on.

Schwarzer & co's services include auditing, tax consulting and planning, accounting, payroll accounting (including foreign employer and expatriate services), formation of companies ("one-stop-shop") and start-up assistance. Due to requirements of austrian professional law legal advice and representation as well as notary services are rendered through a well established network of corresponding law firms and notary public.

According to the firm's business approach, all services performed have to comply with the following criteria of expertise, client orientation and personal approach:

Expertise is preserved by selective recruiting, internal and external training and long-term employment of highly qualified staff. The direct access to fellow agn members, not at least through well established and regular contacts at international, european and regional meetings and conferences excellently complements to schwarzer & co's business approach and enables the firm to maintain their vision on an international level.

Client orientation and personal approach means offering services custom-tailored to the client's needs, the persistent involvement of a partner in charge and/or (depending of the type of services) permanent assignment of highly motivated staff.

Schwarzer & co is a member of the austrian chamber of public accountants and tax consultants, and one of the partners is also a member of the chamber's examining board for tax consultants.

The firm's clients range from small to medium sized businesses in various industries to subsidiaries of multinational enterprises based from the usa to japan. It also assists non-profit associations and governmental organisations.

Hall Chadwick's roots stretch back to 1924 when the firm began under the name of Griffith Grill Love & Co. In the past seventy years, it has grown into one of Australia's most prominent the taxation and audit firms with offices in New South Wales, Sydney, Queensland, Adelaide and the New Territories.

Today, the firm continues to provide quality taxation and business services, audit and corporate services, and business recovery and insolvency services to all aspects of Australia's industry. Its clients include construction, heavy and light engineering, manufacturing and fabrication, agriculture, mining, retail, transport and distribution, clothing and fashion. The firm's different practices utilises their varying experiences and skills to compliment each other.

To provide the most effective service to clients, Hall Chadwick's partners and staff make it their business to understand every aspect of their business.

Hall Chadwick has also been a member of AGN International since 1995. As a member of the association, it can call on the professional knowledge and specialist resources of more than 480 offices worldwide. Clients of Hall Chadwick can tap into this national and international resources bank, while still dealing with the local team known and trusted nationwide.

Vyvey & Co, situated in the heart of Europe has been established since 2003. Even though the firm has grown considerably, its management is still very accessible to clients. Vyvey & Co has recently joined AGN International so it can provide the necessary international services to its clients with the same quality and commitment as Vyvey & Co does in Belgium. Thanks to the different conferences arranged by AGN International, the firm has enjoyed the opportunity to meet different contact partners of various member firms affiliated with the association. "This helps the communication and access to information on an international level," remarks Steven Vyvey.

Mr Vyvey also adds that AGN International has helped the Belgian firm to expand their business at the highest level. At the moment, Vyvey & Co provides various services for its local and internationally active clients including the area of company audits and accounting. Vyvey & Co possesses the necessary licences to provide legal audits in the following areas: audits of annual accounts and consolidated accounts, contributions in kind, restructuring and liquidation of companies and groups of companies nationally as well as internationally. We also perform mergers and de-mergers.

VYVEY & CO'S ABILITIES ALSO ALLOW THEM TO TAILOR THEIR AUDITING SERVICES AT A CLIENT'S REQUEST

Vyvey & Co's abilities also allow them to tailor their auditing services at a client's request. For example, the firm can perform in-depth analysis of a company's management systems, its purchase and sale cycles, a review of internal control procedures at all levels, and of the company's development and risks. The firm also provides certification of the cost declaration made by contractors, which have to be represented to European Community, assistance with internal control and compliance obligation, and auditing of management tools, performance indicators and financing using different automated audit tools.

The chartered accountants of Vyvey & Co and its partners assist small to medium enterprises as well as large multinational corporations. Vyvey & Co's clientele operate mostly from the private sector, and Vyvey & Co assists in all the regulatory. Mr Vyvey also reveals that they provide services linked to financial and accounting expertise in the field of due diligence, strategic planning, and the development of business plans.

Dobson and Co joined AGN International in April 2006. According to Guri Dobo, the firm joined the association to "improve our firm's identity to attract more clients, market our firm by being recognised both locally and internationally and to improve the quality and standard of the services we render to our clients." The Botswana accounting and auditing consultants chose entry into AGN because it "is one of the biggest worldwide associations of separate and independent accounting and consulting firms. That allows members and partnership or corporate entities practicing in their own right and nothing in the rules of the association that constitutes or implies a partnership between the members."

Since joining, Dobson & Co has acquired significant advantages. "It has helped our firm to develop an audit approach based on international standards on auditing, and compliance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS)," explains Mr Dobo, adding that entry has also "earned us an identity locally and attracted many local foremost professionals." Dobson & Co's affiliation with AGN has also boosted the firm's image locally in the provision of high quality professional services and standards to clients. Lastly, Mr Dobo states that the valuable information and friendships gained have assisted in helping clients meet the challenges posed by successful local ventures and providing advice on the diverse financial and tax rules governing them locally. Attendance at AGN International conferences has also been useful: "it has benefited our firm by keeping us up to date with professional and business developments, sharing of knowledge and experience and exchange of ideas on practice management."

Prior to its AGN International membership, "our firm had no identity thus our client base was small," reveals Mr Dobo. "But being a full member of AGN International, we have increased the number of clients." The firm won a government tender to audit of the Government Community Junior Secondary Schools in different regions within Botswana during 2006/2007, 2007/2008 and 2008/2009. It also won a tender from the US government to assess the financial management processes of the Department of Engineering and Building Services in Botswana and another from the UN to assess 80 Implementing Partners in different regions across Botswana.

Numerous plans are in place for 2009. The firm plans to conduct seminars directed at its clients to ensure they fully understand the statutory requirements for adopting IFRSs when preparing annual financial statements. Increasing visibility with senior government officials with the view to win more state tenders will also be on the agenda.

He Yuanquan states that one of the main reasons for China Regal's entry into AGN International was that the structure of the organisation complemented the Chinese firm's. "The network of AGN is across the world, the members of AGN are located in many countries: it is convenient for our firm to develop global businesses," confirms Mr He. This was one of many reasons prompting China Regal's decision to join the international association of accounting and consulting firms. The firm complements AGN well by offering an experienced professional team that are well-versed in Chinese accounting standards and regulations.

Mr He states that since China Regal has joined AGN, the firm "have established good cooperating relationships with some members of AGN." He also adds that the firm has enjoyed new opportunities to develop their global business services by leveraging their membership with AGN International. As a result then, Mr He states that China Regal has seen increased business volume as a direct result from their entry into the association. "For example, a Singapore member of AGN has a client located in Singapore. This client is a listed company and has a daughter company in China. The Singapore member introduced this daughter company to our firm, and our firm has audited the financial statements of this daughter company for two years now."

Though such business referrals make up a key aspect of affiliation with AGN, they are not the only outstanding advantages. Mr He remarks that "through the conferences or meetings organised by AGN, our firm understands the global accounting markets more than ever. We communicate with the members of AGN for developing both global and Chinese businesses."

Commenting on the peculiarities of Chinese accountancy, Mr He states that because China has changed its accounting system recently, its accounting and auditing standards have tended to mirror those of the International Accounting Standards. Furthermore, the Chinese government has issued new regulations relating to enterprises, such as income tax law, which some Chinese enterprises have little or no experience with.

China Regal will be seeking to assist Chinese enterprises with minimising the impact of the sub-prime mortgage crisis on their businesses, as well as developing new services. "We also plan to strengthen the communication with members of AGN for exploring the world's accounting market," affirms Mr He.



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Schaffer & Partner is an international group of tax advisers, auditors and lawyers with offices in Prague and Nuremberg. The head office, located in Nuremberg, was established in 1987. Today, Schaffer & Partner is an international team with over 100 experts.

Thanks to its membership within AGN International, an association of separate and independent accounting and consulting firms, the firm cooperates with similarly structured offices throughout the world. For this reason, the competence of Schaffer & Partner's advisers with respect to international issues is always guaranteed. At the time same, the firm can reply on its years of practical experience in the Czech Republic and offer the services of experienced professionals possessing great knowledge of the Czech market.

Schaffer & Partner's Prague office has been active within the Czech Republic since 1997, comprising as one of the few international offices in the country to offer a variety of services including tax, legal and auditing services. Each of these services is rendered by a company specialising in offering them: tax counselling is provided by Schaffer & Partner s.r.o.; auditing services are provided by Schaffer & Partner audit, s.r.o. Legal services are provided by lawyers of Schaffer & Partner. Furthermore, the Prague office is fluent in Czech, German, English and Slovak.

We see ourselves as advisors with know-how gained over many years and with a thorough understanding of our clients' problems. We represent our clients individually - whether we are addressing run-of-the-mill questions or long-term strategic planning. Close cooperation between the experts in the various fields and deep understanding of the issues together build trust and the possibility for successful cooperation with our clients over the long term. We consider that we have established a place for ourselves on the market as an attractive and competent firm.

Martin Felenda graduated from the University of Economics, Prague in 1997. After graduating he worked as a tax advisor and has been a member of the Chamber of Tax Advisors of the Czech Republic since 1995. He is also an auditor, and has been a member of the Chamber of Auditors of the Czech Republic since 2001. Martin Felenda is a founding partner of Schaffer & Partner in the Czech Republic and today is the leading partner of the firm.

He is a specialist in international tax law, M&A and international tax advisory services.

Caderas Martin celebrates its 30th anniversary this year. It became a member of AGN in 2002. Caderas Martin has 15 partners and 70 staff, led by its president Philippe Richeux. It attaches great importance to providing personalised services to its clients.

We are pleased and honoured to be a member of AGN for the following reasons:

- AGN is among the first 18 international entities including the Big Four and the first pure association of independent firms. It contributes to our recognition as an international firm, our international clients represent 60% of our activity on a total amount of sales of 10 millions Euros.

- AGN membership allows us to refer clients worldwide to quality companies (the members of AGN) and provides some assurance of the reliability of the clients we receive.

- We are able to improve our technical quality through common training in IFRS, international taxation and by exchange management experiences at European or international meetings. We are PCOAB registered which reassures clients from the US.

Caderas Martin's contact partner for AGN International is François Martin who at present is chairman of the European board and doing his best to bring more members to the association.

Caderas Martin provides services ranging from full administrative outsourcing, bookkeeping and payroll management to auditing and advisory services in taxation, mergers and acquisitions in sectors spanning chemical industries, banks, transport, engineering, software, fashion and food. Because we attach particular importance to the satisfaction of our clients, we maintain and nourish our relations with other professionals in the field in order to provide multi disciplinary services to our clientele.

Our client base consists mainly of subsidiaries of international corporations based in France and we count a growing number of small to medium sized European companies among our clients. Assignments of particular relevance have been for listed companies including some on the "CAC 40".

Our offices are located in the heart of Haussmann's Paris, ten minutes away from the Champs Elysées, in a district which, like the rest of the city, has both homes and offices. Indeed, we occupy four of the 10 or so 'flats' in a typically gracious building of the time.

Caderas Martin is a young firm, the partners representing an average age of around 40. It has been very successful in renewing itself by offering opportunities of growth both to its professional staff and as well as to its clients.

Becker Büttner Held (BBH) is one of the leading law firms in the areas of energy and infrastructure industry in Germany and Europe. BBH has its offices in Berlin, Cologne, Munich and Stuttgart and a representative office in Vienna. The law firm, which was founded in 1971, is especially characterized by an interdisciplinary approach: lawyers, auditors, tax consultants and engineers work together, hand in hand, and thereby provide full service for their clients. Thus clients' specific problems are analysed and solved within the framework of the company as a whole. Based on the special expertise in this area, BBH has succeeded in making an essential contribution in the course of the liberalization of the German and European energy markets. This contribution regards the active shaping of European Directives and of national laws as well as main policy decisions (such as the network access or the conceptual collaboration for the development of power exchange markets). Moreover, the integration of INVRA Treuhand AG Wirtschaftsprüfungsgesellschaft (auditing firm) allows that all services to be provided by auditors are offered by BBH in a full service package.

BBH advises about 600 national and international energy suppliers, waste management enterprises and industrial enterprises (power, gas, heat, water, wastewater, local public transport, telecommunications) as well as cities, municipalities, public bodies, associations, and political bodies in Germany and Europe.

Further practice areas of the law firm, in addition to energy and infrastructure law, are company law, intellectual property rights/copyright/media law, municipal consulting, public law/public procurement law/education law, tax consultancy/accounting, competition law and anti-trust law as well as the civil law and labour law.

Since January 1, 2009 BBH is in new offices in the heart of the capital close to the legendary square Alexanderplatz, which above all, in addition to many other advantages, offer much space.

And this is exactly what BBH needs, as the firm keeps growing. During the last five years BBH has doubled the turnover and the number of employees. This expansion will continue in the years to come.

In order to ensure the same growth on the international level, both BBH and INVRA have been AGN members for a long time. Numerous consultancy assignments and annual audits are passed on to AGN partners worldwide.

Established in 1992, the Castle Trust Group includes Knights Chartered Accountants which is regulated by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. A number of other companies, all regulated and registered with the Financial Services Commission (FSC), provide the following specialist services: property sector holding and development companies, employee incentivisation schemes, international pension arrangements including Qualifying Recognised Overseas Pension Schemes (QROPS), and obtaining special residency for ultra and high net worth individuals.

Gibraltar now offers a unique position in the EU. With a tax rate of 10% applying from July 2010, and its Hong Kong style basis of taxation, considerable opportunities exist for those that deal in more than one jurisdiction. We regularly advise both individuals and companies who expand outside their original country and especially those considering Portugal, Spain and Morocco. We are pleased to meet existing and potential new clients outside Gibraltar and regularly travel to the UK, Spain and further afield. We also have expertise in forming Experienced Investor Funds (EIFs). These can be set up as standard limited companies, open ended investment funds or using Protected Cell Companies. Advice and assistance can be given on setting up Investment Management Companies (IMCs). Both EIFs and IMCs are fully EU compliant and may be passported throughout Europe once the appropriate permission is obtained.

Individuals can become tax resident in Gibraltar and be subject to flat rate taxation only. The maximum payable is £23,000. There are no inheritance, capital gains or death taxes. There is no minimum time stipulated to be in Gibraltar but it is necessary to retain residential accommodation either owned or rented for exclusive use. There are over 350 residents in this category.

Our Wealth Management Company offers an independent free of charge second opinion on existing investment portfolios. The company specialises in capital protected products and other hybrids to ensure maximum security on a long term basis.

We are a focused boutique Financial Services Group. Our staff are qualified in banking, accounting and tax advisory services as well as corporate and trust administration and management. In-house fluency in English, Spanish, French, Czech, Russian, German and Slovakian languages are available. The services we offer are covered by professional indemnity insurance and the Group corporate entities are audited by Deloitte.

Orion Certified Auditors S.A. joined AGN International at the beginning of 2004 reveals Dimitrios Mandilaras. He states that the Greek firm joined the association as "it was very suitable to our size, our philosophy and our strategic plans." Upon its entry, the firm has accrued a number of benefits. "We obtained sharing of knowledge," affirms Mr Mandilaras. Client referrals from other AGN International affiliates have also been advantageous with Orion receiving €150,000 in work over the past five years. It also enjoys participating at several regional and international meetings organised by AGN, where Mr Mandilaras states they have "met new and old members of AGN, contacted friends from other regions with different ethics and philosophy, shared our knowledge and travelled in various countries all over the world."

Mr Mandilaras notes that Greece has a complex legal framework that applies to legal entities in Greece and that therefore various legal issues may arise. He explains that the most common difficulty concerns the formation of the company's income/revenue and other tax issues. He adds that other legal issues that need particular handling and special knowledge include merging, liquidations and company breakaways.

Orion has encountered the legal issues described over and possesses extensive experience in handling them. "First of all a specific team that is familiar with the relevant cases undertakes the project," reveals Mr Mandilaras, explaining that they then study the issue that arises and advise a number of possible solutions. "The next step is to inform the client, discuss the solutions and conclude to the one that is most suited for the company. At last, we plan the steps needed to be taken and we proceed to the confrontation of the legal issue."

According to Mr Mandilaras, Orion increased its turnover in 2008 by almost 40%, compared to last year's figures, when a new partner also joined the firm. For 2009, "our goal is to increase our turnover another 10%, despite the global financial crisis," affirms Mr Mandilaras. "We believe that we can achieve this goal, taking into account that our firm is new at five years old, passing the time we are empowering our advantages, we are improving our skills, our personnel is becoming more experienced in its duties and finally our clients trust our firm more than they did in the past due to our long term cooperation." The firm will leverage its membership in AGN International to achieve this goal and promote its international and localised services worldwide.

Ricky Wong comments that through the firm's operations over the years, partners realised the need to fulfil demand for international professional services by their clients. It was the main reason to motivate Wong Brothers to join the International Accounting network CKL International as a member firm in September 1991. "CKL International later merged with the Continental Association of CPA Firms in the USA in 1996 and formed a new global association in the name of AGN International," reveals Mr Wong. The firm has been impressed with the quality and size of its fellow AGN affiliates. "Members of AGN International are mostly well established good size professional accounting firms with high local reputation," confirms Mr Wong, adding that "they provide top quality professional services to clients by identifying their needs, offering them with attainable solutions, assisting them in achieving goals and most importantly growing in parity with them." He concludes that "we share the spirit of the member firms and enjoy our stay with AGN International."

This positive relationship between the firm and AGN has been reflected in the former's increased business volume. "We have good connection with other member firms within the Association, and have received increasing number of referral work due to the growing market in China, of which Hong Kong is the gateway," reveals Mr Wong. "In recent years, we have been requested by a number of member firms in Europe and USA to look after their clients' activities in Hong Kong and China. The number is on an upward trend."

With a history stretching back to 1964, Wong Brothers provides auditing, taxation, accounting, company secretarial, insolvency, management advisory, financial and commercial services to clients. It also acts as reporting accountants and financial advisers for clients applying for listing on the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong.

Hong Kong is a renowned financial centre and its accounting and auditing standards are in parity with international standards, according to Mr Wong. He adds that the legal system in Hong Kong is reliable and sophisticated, compared to other parts of the world. Future growth in the Chinese market is also expected to be a key global economic driver, and as a result, "we plan to put more focus on clients' needs in China," states Mr Wong. "We are in the process of setting up a joint venture consulting firm with an AGN affiliate in Shenzhen, China as an extension for serving local and international clients."



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Following the collapse of Soviet governments in Eastern Bloc countries in the late 1980s, Hungary was one of the first to take the necessary steps into a market economy. On January 1, 1989, the corresponding economic laws came into power. This transition and anticipated growth situation demanded intensive guidance and supervision for companies in the reform countries. As one of the leading tax consultancy firms, Consultatio Vienna had already foreseen this and founded an affiliate in Budapest in June 1989. Consultatio KFT quickly opened other offices elsewhere in Hungary: in Szombathely, Kecskemét, Miskolc and Debrecen. Since then, managing director Dr. József Knapp and his team have been offering a broad range of services.

The company concentrates on asset and business evaluation. In the last few years, new services have been offered, including auditing, balance appraisal and tax and business consultancy, as well as comprehensive consultancy on the foundation of new companies, representation, establishments and the reformation of corporate entities.

Since entering the EU, familiarity with the fundamental principles of international accounting standards, such as IAS and US GAAP, has become essential. To facilitate this, Consultatio KFT is a member firm of AGN International and is thus always informed of the latest developments. This allows the firm to consistently offer its clients the highest quality of consultancy. AGN member firms must also meet stringent quality requirements and are subject to regular quality control. They meet regularly for exchanges of experience, to report to other members on what is happening in their countries, and to establish the personal contacts that are essential to the optimum use of information sources for the client.

External audits can enhance a company's reputation and offer new opportunities. The auditing of annual and interim accounts (individual or group) as required by law or on a voluntary basis is one of Consultatio's main activities. The audits are carried out in conformity with Hungarian commercial law and international accounting standards.

Consultatio KFT also carries out special audits such as examinations of company formations or conversions, economic feasibility studies, credit checks, audits on acquisition or sale, stock market floatation and due diligence. The firm is also experienced in assisting with the purchase or sale of companies or parts of businesses. One of Consultatio's particular strengths is assisting in the search for partners and the formation of joint ventures.

Duignan Carthy O'Neill has enjoyed a longstanding association with AGN International. "We were involved with AGN's predecessor TAG for over ten years," states Liam McQuaid, "and I am a Director of AGN Europe and AGN International." He states that AGN is an internationally competitive organisation which appeals to Duignan Carthy O'Neill. The primary reason for membership is to gain an "international perspective," explains Mr McQuaid, adding that "we wanted an organization and correspondent Firms where we could be happy to refer our clients to."

The ability to refer clients has been a key advantage according to Mr McQuaid. "Our clients can be serviced in Europe, North America and really most countries worldwide." The Irish Firm has also enjoyed some referral work, especially in the past three years. Another benefit of AGN International is access to the broad spread of different expertise. "The calibre of the correspondent Firms is very important, and particularly how some of them might specialise in different service lines. Asked about the AGN organised conferences, Mr McQuaid said "the main focus of those conferences for us is the people that you meet there. We find that very useful when we come to refer work."

"Ireland is one of the most open economies in the world," affirms Mr McQuaid. He states that the country continues to attract foreign investment with some considerable success: both Intel and HP have setup major Irish operations and many other high profile international companies use Ireland as a European or shared services base. "It's very easy to set up a company in Ireland... you can be up and running very quickly." The government has also played a key role in promoting Ireland; despite an already low corporate tax rate of 12.5%, it recently removed the tax on profits for the first three years of a newly formed business.

"We obviously want to grow our Firm but we realise 2009 will be a difficult year," states Mr McQuaid. Duignan Carthy O'Neill is still looking at modest growth however, with an anticipated fee increase of 10%. Business from the USA is likely to contribute as the firm was recently authorised as a Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (PCAOB) registered firm. Mr McQuaid explains that "the purpose is to authorise firms to audit overseas subsidiaries of American public limited companies. So an Irish Firm must have PCAOB registration to allow it audit the Irish subsidiary of a US quoted company."

L B Jha & Co, which was established in 1934 in Calcutta has major presence in Eastern India for 75 years. For the last 20 years, it has also set up offices in Northern and Western India. It now operates out of Delhi, Mumbai and Calcutta and is a major non-Big Four consulting and certified accountancy firm in India.

L B Jha & Co's clientele is vast and diverse, encompassing a range of industrial sectors such as manufacturing (including sugar, tea, jute, metal products, industrial rubber, chemicals, pharmaceuticals and petrochemicals), hospitality, infrastructure, real estate, hospital, banking, financial services, mutual fund, educational institutes and IT-enabled services. The services offered include audits and assurance covering statutory audits, internal audits, due diligence/special audits and investigation as well as tax, company law and other legal compliances. The firm also offers consultancy in the area of pre-investment and techno-economic feasibility studies, viability studies, strategy formulation, valuation of business, valuation of assets, mergers & acquisitions, de-mergers and spin-offs, business and financial restructuring, joint venture, technical and financial collaboration.

L B Jha & Co is also an important member of AGN International, a premier association of separate and independent accounting firms. The international association ensures quality standards of each affiliate firm are upheld through strict selection criteria, and also arranges training on an international scale. AGN International carries out periodic reviews of member activities to ensure strictest compliance with the norms of the international association.

L B Jha & Co has rendered services all over India besides major presence in Bhutan and handled assignments in United Kingdom, Micronesia (South Pacific Region), Uzbekistan, the CIS, Nepal, Republic of Sri Lanka, Republic of Maldives and Italy. The firm has nine partners and a large number of chartered accountants, cost accountants, company secretaries, lawyers, engineers and MBAs. Its total staff strength is more than 150. The firm's senior partner has been appointed by the Indian government and various other state governments to a large number of expert committees that deal with bank reforms, tax reforms and industrial development.

In spite of its comparatively small size, L B Jha & Co has a comprehensive national and international reach, offering tailor-made services to its clients – many of whom has enjoyed long relationships with the firm since its inception.

We all know that a membership of an international organization is very important for a professional operator, and specifically for an audit firm. It gives the opportunity to follow clients in their activities abroad, providing them with specific professional services in foreign countries. This is particularly important when an audit firm is appointed as auditor of consolidated financial statements of a corporate group with established subsidiaries in foreign countries.

It is well known that numerous Italian manufacturing companies have foreign subsidiaries all over the world. The parent companies need to know that their foreign entities are controlled by somebody responsible and knowledgeable, and the corporate group's auditors need to be sure on local accounting and auditing issues and transparency.

In our experience the capability to provide this kind of services is considered really important by Italian Groups when they select an auditor, and is a fundamental success factor for our audit proposals. We think that high quality services provided by local AGN members represent the best way to make our organization and its fellows firms grow even closer together, and to improve the AGN International image all over the world.

Since 2007, when Antonino Girelli was appointed as the contact partner of SERCA in Italy, we are working hard to have the opportunity of referring professional assignments to our fellow AGN firms abroad, and this work is yielding important results.

We try to resume what happened in 2008: this is an occasion to give many thanks to our colleagues who helped us and to spur all of us to improve our professional relationships within AGN International. (Due to privacy client names are missing).

ABC Group is an organisation with a first-rate position in the chemical sector, and an international network of production plants and sales structures.

In 2008 three fellow AGN firms were appointed as new auditors in ABC foreign subsidiaries, in USA (Greensboro), Turkey (Izmir), and Indonesia (Jakarta).

JKL Group is the second European manufacturer of cooker hoods.

The Group is also present in China. Our fellow AGN firm in Beijing was appointed as auditor for the Chinese subsidiary.

Hanai & Associates has been an AGN International member firm since 2001. The firm has two offices located in Tokyo, with a total of five staff, three of which are partners. The firm mainly provides services in the region of taxation compliance and planning, accounting (preparation of annual accounts for income tax purposes) and also payroll services.

Serhal Nassar & Company, an audit and consulting firm was first established in 1967 in Lebanon by Serhal Nassar, a Lebanese CPA and a sworn court expert. The firm has continued to operate and increase its client base, as well as to welcome a new partner, Zalpha Nassar, a US Certified Public Accountant and a US Certified Bank Auditor. Today, the firm offers a diversified array of consulting activities to international, multinational and local entities, while its core business remains auditing. In addition to a qualified trilingual staff including Certified Public Accountant qualified from the USA, the firm has specialised consultants in the major business fields



Our auditing is carried out according to the International Standards on Auditing and could be carried out according to US Generally Accepted Audit Standards, if required. The firm also provides compilation and review of financial statements services according to Standards for Accounting and Review Services (SARS). In addition, we do undertake reporting on special purpose financial presentations to comply with contractual agreements and/or regulatory provisions. Also our tax consultancy team provides analysis of tax implication on financial transactions including mergers and acquisitions and covering both national and international levels. Tax compliance services insure corporate adherence Lebanese tax laws and regulations including submission of tax returns and settlement of tax dues on a timely basis. We also provide a full set-up of companies; joint-stock, LLCs, holding, offshore, in collaboration with law firms.

Our business advisory and financial consulting services include financial analysis, preparation of budget forecasts and projections and analysis of financial statements and underlying data. Furthermore, we perform market and feasibility study services including market research, SWAT analysis and sensitivity studies. We also undertake the establishing and/or reengineering of internal audit functions whenever such functions are outsourced. We are proficient in the study and setup of an internal control structure including production of reports outlining material weaknesses, providing suggestions to improve the existing structure and enhance the control over expenses, safe guarding fixed assets and insuring compliance with corporate policies and procedures.

Serhal Nassar & Co also offers due diligence corporate governance consulting. Proper corporate governance structures encourage companies to create value and provide accountability and control systems commensurate with the risk involved. To facilitate this, we perform studies of proposed mergers, acquisitions and joint ventures.



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Karl Horsburgh explains that as a former partner in a Big Four corporation, he used to enjoy extensive contacts around the world in the accountancy and auditing field. After founding HT Group S.A. in 1993, he sought membership in an international association of accounting and advisory firms to help re-establish these relationships. "AGN had the international coverage in the world," he recalls, also adding that the association did not have a member in Luxembourg at the time.

According to Mr Horsburgh, "strong reliable contacts with firms in other countries is vital" as Luxembourg is a competitive international environment and therefore a location of choice for many business people setting up their holding companies and investment funds. Whilst HT Group has gained referrals thanks to its entry into AGN International, it has also been able to utilise member firms in other countries for assistance in helping clients succeed in their business affairs. "We have also been able to get advantageous subscription deals to software and publications as part of AGN which we would not have achieved individually," reveals Mr Horsburgh. HT Group's relationship with AGN International is not one-way traffic either. "We have created a number of Luxembourg parent companies for clients of AGN member firms," states Mr Horsburgh. He notes that the firm has also performed group audits for Luxembourg-based subsidiaries of international groups, and assisted AGN-referred clients in setting up investment funds and completing personal tax declarations.

"Conferences and meetings organised by AGN are of extreme importance," affirms Mr Horsburgh, adding that "they are the only way that one can meet the partners of other member firms in the association." Furthermore, he states that at the meetings, the firm is able to exchange information and may not have been previously accessible to them.

HT Group is a tax expert in international structures, providing services ranging from company formation through to bookkeeping, tax compliance, audit and salary administration. "We can accompany the client from cradle to grave in every aspect of their business," maintains Mr Horsburgh. The firm intends to continue assisting the development of AGN as a leading association. "Together we are strong," he said. "Luxembourg itself is developing all the time and creating new interesting tax efficient structures for investors to base themselves here."

Simon Ciantar notes that the firm was already participated within AGN International before he had joined the Certified Public Accountants firm in January 2007. He recalls that the initial reason for membership was "to have an international dimension to our firm's name." Since then

The usual benefits gained by AGN-affiliated firms have also been enjoyed by Ciantar. The firm has enjoyed an increase in business volume thanks to referrals from other member firms, as well as access to information about the latest developments in the fiscal and accounting-related field. The high vetting standard of AGN has also produced "a pool of highly specialised professionals in their respective fields and countries available to us at the tip of our fingers," comments Mr Ciantar. "This is an asset which is highly prized by our clients especially in an international context, such as in international tax planning." A more abstract benefit - but still hugely beneficial - is the powerful connotations associated with AGN. It is a powerful marketing tool for firms to promote their cross border credentials.

"One of the most common issues we have to deal with not only the tax situation in Malta but also the tax implications of any tax advantages benefited of in Malta of any investment incentives utilised locally in the client's country of origin," details Mr Ciantar. "In situations like this the expertise and knowledge of an association as AGN is invaluable as you can tap on the expert knowledge of professionals all over the world, professionals who are specialised in either a country or a state's legislation or specialised in a particular field."

Mr Ciantar feels optimistic for his firm's prospects in 2009. Like other astute professionals, he believes opportunities are available in the current economic quagmire, but they will only be uncovered through effective and diligent application. "If we manage to market ourselves intelligently by focusing on the right market segments we can beat the credit crunch by attracting clients who are feeling the squeeze." This is especially significant given the attractive financial and investment incentives offered to foreigners owning companies in Malta, such as a low tax jurisdiction fully compliant with OECD and EU tax laws, A Eurozone country, one of the best IT infrastructures in the EU, a low cost base, an English speaking country with an European culture and mindset, a sound banking system, a stable economy and government.

Mr El Hajjaoui states that his firm Audit Management & Conseil D'Enterprises chose to join AGN International in 1994 because the firm's French partners were already in the association. "They encouraged us to join," he said, adding that AGN was also attractive because the Moroccan firm "deemed it was useful to develop business contacts with foreign countries including those with which Morocco was developing its relationships." The powerful social networking opportunities offered by AGN are often praised by its members with Audit Management & Conseil D'Enterprises being no exception. Mr El Hajjaoui reveals that he has "established contacts with many professionals in Europe, the USA, Canada, the Middle East, Latin America and Asia."

He adds that the organised conferences also represent an outstanding opportunity for AGN member firms. He notes that firms can get back in touch with participants, be informed about the evolution of their respective professions, take advantage of the discussions on topics on the conference agenda and also take advantage of conferences and presentations on topics which specialists are invited. Its attendance at such events has boosted Audit Management & Conseil D'Enterprises to be an important consultancy in Morocco. The firm has a team of 20 people, led by three partners. It provides quality service and assists its Moroccan and foreigner customers with areas linked into corporate life.

Audit Management & Conseil D'Enterprises' services are broad and extensive. Our main activity is audit & consultant, but its services include creating financial statements for companies and monitoring accounts. It also provides a tax consultancy service, helping clients with creating or organising tax documents, assisting in case of a corporate audit by tax authorities and implementation of a tax strategy. In the area of corporate law, the firm also helps clients with all the stages of their operation's legal formalities.

Mr El Hajjaoui states that Morocco's development is accelerating, having reached an advanced status in its relationship with the EU and has also signed free trade agreements with the USA, Turkey, Egypt and Tunisia. Audit Management & Conseil D'Enterprises plans to capitalise on these developments. "Our objective is to take advantage of all these agreements and try to develop our relationships with our partners in all these countries."

Rietveld Rosenberg Otten's membership in AGN International was born out of its involvement with TAG according to Olav Rosenberg. The firm joined TAG in 2000 and once the latter has joined with AGN, became part of the latter association. He cites the reason for joining was that "our clients needed assistance for their international business affairs. Our philosophy as a medium sized audit and advisory firm is that we want to render all the services that our colleagues of the big major accounting firms also deliver."

"AGN combines the best of two worlds," explains Mr Otten, adding that the independence of the affiliated firms and international cooperation at a high professional level means "our choice nowadays would be AGN again!"

Mr Otten details how the firm has assisted French AGN colleagues with a complicated affair and how a German AGN member referred an international mail order company client and a energy company to the firm.

Rietveld Rosenberg Otten delivers highly specialised services by highly qualified staff. Due to the Dutch firm's exceptional quality, it has been granted a license to perform statutory audits by the AFM (The Netherlands' Authority for the Financial Markets). The licence elevates the firm to a select group of accounting firms in the country.

FROM JANUARY 2009 THE FIRM HAS DOUBLED ITS SIZE BY MERGING WITH ANOTHER FIRM LOCATED WITHIN THE HAGUE AND ROTTERDAM REGION

From January 2009 the firm has doubled its size by merging with another firm located within The Hague and Rotterdam region and will continue under the name Rosenberg van der Does & Partners. "Our firm will be able, even more than in the past, to offer a wide range of services to our current clients and will be a perfect alternative accounting firm for the medium sized companies which are till now clients of the bigger firms," said Mr Rosenberg. The firm's AGN participation has been an indispensable part of this development. "On one hand we indeed have helped our clients with their international questions, and on the other hand we receive from our fellow AGN member very interesting referral work," concludes Mr. Otten.

BW Corporate Services provides accounting, personnel and payroll services, as well as financial and tax consulting. The main office is located in the centre of Warsaw, but its coverage encompasses the whole of Poland. The company is over ten years old and has 28 permanent employees, most of which are at least bilingual and have a University degree. The staff members includes three full time auditors, two tax advisers and a score of licensed accountants, which means the group is well positioned to provide global assistance to its clients.

The BW group consists of 4 companies. Firstly, BW Corporate Services is registered in Warsaw and provides accounting, personnel and payroll services outsourcing, tax compliance and consulting, and auditing. BW Global Services S.A., also registered in Warsaw, provides financial and paralegal consulting, assistance in privatisation, purchase, sale and merger of companies, as well as all other services that other licensed auditors may not provide. BW Global Services also handles registration of non EU expatriates.

NordCom Sp. z o.o, registered in Gdynia, provides services similar to BW Corporate Services in northern Poland. Lastly, the Documents Bank Company Sp. Z o.o. provides documents storage services.

The bulk of BW Corporate's clients are small and medium Polish subsidiaries of foreign groups, according to Pierre Wautelet. "They are active in businesses such as distribution, real estate development, construction related services, pharmaceutical product development, industrial production and software development."

Mr Wautelet notes that Poland certainly qualifies for a position as one of the most difficult markets "in terms of administrative duties and for the intricacies of its legislation." BW Corporate's qualified auditors and tax advisers combined with the varied and long experience of its partners provides the group with unique capabilities to deal with the many problems of its clients. This has been augmented further through participation in AGN, which Mr Wautelet explains "has provided us access to source of information, essential to resolve issues, which have a multinational aspect."

For 2009, the firm plans establish positions in Torun (centre of Poland) and Katowice, develop its Wroclaw office while reinforcing its presence in Gdynia. "We are also gearing up to provide online integration of our outsourcing services with clients operations," reveals Mr Wautelet.

Bostina Accounting & Fiscal Consulting joined AGN International in September 2008 because "we wanted international recognition and development," according to Bogdan Popa. The Romanian accountants chose membership in the association because "AGN is the biggest and representative network in the world."





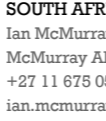





Bostina & Associate's entry into AGN International makes for a good fit for both organisation and firm. Bostina & Associates has enjoyed spectacular growth in the last two years and has subsequently become one of Romania's most respected legal consultancy firms. It has 13 offices in each of Romania's most important cities, along with a further three international offices in Austria, Cyprus and Switzerland. It numbers over 130 attorneys and consultants, and enjoyed an annual turnover of €14 million in 2007. Although the firm is a relatively new entry into AGN International's ranks, Mr Popa states that they are quietly confident the advantages gained will be great. "We are convinced that the benefits of participation on meetings and conferences organised by AGN are important," he states, but adds that "due to the short time since we joined AGN, we could not participate in these conferences and consequently we can not pronounced on the benefits."

Commenting on common accounting and auditing issues encountered in Romania, Mr Popa states that the tax optimisation of their client's economic activities is often essential, along with increasing their business's funding operation through tax control assistance, especially regarding the VAT refund from the state budget paid by our clients. Help in non-residence assistance in order to carry out economic activities on Romanian territory is also often needed.

Bostina & Associates assists its clients in overcoming these common issues by analysing documents placed at its disposal, drafting legal opinions regarding VAT refund, tax optimisation, intra-community acquisitions, formalities among the state authorities regarding the tax registration of non-residences and due diligence reports on the risks that may result from the company activities.

In 2009, Mr Popa states that "we plan to increase our turnover by 20% by attracting new clients and elaborating on a long time strategy regarding a territorial development which will be followed by opening new points of work in the largest cities in the country and, once, with adherence to AGN an international recognition and development."



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Dr Tawfiq Al-Swailem states that Al Swailem Consulting Group originally joined AGN International to become "part of an international body of repute & global standing."

"We wanted make use of the international network to support our clients," he states, adding that forging "new and stronger strategic partnerships" was also highly attractive. The Saudi Arabian firm has been providing financial and business advisory consultancy services since 1983, with its head office based in Riyadh, with further branches in Jeddah & Al Khobar. "We specialise in providing financial and economic consultancy as well as management audit & business development," details Dr Al-Swailem. The firm works closely with all its clients to help achieve their business objectives. "Our clients rely, not only on our skills, experience and resource, but also on our professionalism."

As a member of AGN International, Al Swailem Consulting Group has always strived to achieve client satisfaction and providing high quality work and improved performance for client's satisfaction. Since their entry into the association, they have gained "the reputation of representing and being a part of an international body." The firm also utilises the extensive social networking opportunities provided by AGN International to "share business ideas and opportunities."

Dr Al-Swailem reveals that his firm offers professional services in auditing, accounting and financial advisory fields. "We recognise that our success depends entirely on how well we serve our clients, and nothing takes precedence over our commitment to meet each client's continuing need for effective, proactive and responsive professional service."

Al Swailem Consulting Group's auditing is conducted by professional consultants, who are totally responsive, effective, and focused on relationships. The firm works hands-on to produce for its client high quality, which includes external and internal auditing, forensic and management due diligence, accounting, business management systems, business valuation, corporate restructuring and taxation. According to Dr Al-Swailem, there are no major legal complexities in Saudi Arabia, since the country's taxation system - ZAKAT - is simple. To ensure its clients don't stumble across potential pitfalls, the firm also employs a specialised legal team in order to assist their clients in areas of ZAKAT, taxation, company formation and M&A. "We are licensed and entitled to act as Arbitrators in financial disputes," adds Mr Al-Swailem.

GS Consultatio D.O.O. has been associated with AGN International since 2002 and a full member since 2007. Ms Barišič states that the Slovenian firm chose to join AGN because its controlling company was a member.

According to Ms Barišič, the main advantages acquired through AGN membership are more international business contacts, easier access to understanding other countries' legislation, better and completer business offer and services to clients, cooperation in international projects and the possibility to gain bigger international projects.

"The tendency of increased volumes of business as direct result of entry into AGN is not shown," reveals Ms Barišič. Instead, she explains that "indirectly the growth of revenues is shown because of better business offer, and ability to perform more and more complex services to our clients on the base of our international experience." Ms Barišič comments that benefits from attending the AGN-organised conferences and meetings are shown mainly in "sharing the experiences, in meeting new people and sharing the knowledge with them and meeting possible new business partners."

According to Ms Barišič, the main accounting and auditing issues concerned with Slovenia is to do with the language barrier, as well as local legislation and knowledge about how local authorities perform their work.

GS Consultatio D.O.O. offers complete support for clients operating in Slovenia. "We offer administrative, tax, accountancy assistant and consultancy in all needed fields," states Ms Barišič. One of the firm's main services is auditing, and it is specialised in auditing production companies, trade companies and service companies (except public limited companies). It also prepares balance of accounts and financial statements, calculation of salaries, along with tax and business consultancy. "We have a lot of outsourcing partners for different business fields," details Ms Barišič, adding that "our main advantage is our quick response to inquiries and clients needs, and also offering full and quick support to our contractual clients."

For 2009, GS Consultatio D.O.O.'s main goal will be to improve its knowledge and services, along with investing in its staff's professional development. Existing service offerings will also be analysed and improved, such as due diligence, forensic accountancy, consolidation, merger and company splits.

The ability to gain international exposure and offer cross border abilities to its client was what prompted McMurray Aldum to look closely at AGN International. The firm had already participated in another smaller group but after deciding it didn't offer the correct support, turned to AGN. "After five months of review we decided that AGN best supported our needs," states Ian McMurray, "and in May 2008 we joined accordingly." The association's general ethos and professional approach as well as the fact that it fully represents the international market were the key factors.

Mr McMurray regards AGN-sponsored meetings highly. He said "the highlight of membership within an organisation such as AGN is that the exposure to skills that you obtain at a conference is far greater than any technical manual." He notes that as AGN holds regional conferences in West Asia, the Middle East and Africa as well as in the USA and Europe, members are exposed a complete array of international issues.

South Africa is a well established market with clear and defined operating processes and standards, according to Mr McMurray. He notes that the underlying legal principles are based on sound legal precedent, but adds "we have challenging legislation with regard to Economic Empowerment and labour issues." The country's most pertinent consulting issues relate to expansion and survival funding against a backdrop of conservative lending, and its lack of international trade. "We have a specialised consulting business that addresses these unique problems within our economy and assist companies in developing sustainable business models that comply with the unique legislation," states Mr McMurray.

McMurray Aldum's ethic and approach ensures that it offers services and products comparable to those of large service companies, but at a more cost-effective price. The firm is geared towards the accounting and service industry for small and medium size businesses, and has a strong auditing and taxation department. "Our company is on a growth plan," affirms Mr McMurray. "We will be increasing the number of partners over the next two years; we also plan to offer our expertise to the international audit market due the fact that our relative cost of skills is very low."

The firm is also looking across borders for more opportunities. With the appointment of a new Zimbabwean government, it plans to explore the possibility of establishing a presence in the country and also creating a training and skills development programme.

Global Consulting has been a member firm of AGN International since 2007. Vladimir Muraviov states that entry into the organisation has improved the respect and confidence that clients have for Global Consulting's accounting and auditing services. Furthermore, affiliation with AGN International has given a positive boost to Global Consulting's marketing efforts, allowing it to promote itself internationally.

"The membership in AGN International increases the competitive ability of our organisation in the Ukrainian marketplace," confirms Mr Muraviov. He states that the strength of AGN International is renowned throughout the accounting field, and acknowledged by the June 2008 issue of Accountancy Magazine where AGN International was recognised as the world's largest professional body of accounting and auditing firms. The same issue also ranked AGN International an impressive 19th.

The Ukrainian firm's affiliation with AGN International has also helped it secure new clients and business. Mr Muraviov reveals that "for some of our clients, the membership in the international association is one of the important criteria of their choice. It is especially significant for the non-resident businesses, their representative offices and daughter enterprises."

Although it has not participated in any AGN organised meetings or events, Mr Muraviov is quietly confident over the benefits of attending them. "We think that such meetings will enable us to get acquainted with the principles of accountancy in other countries, as well as tie up business contacts and offer our services worldwide."

Clients of Global Consulting enjoy a high degree of professionalism from specialists, who are familiar and knowledgeable over Ukraine's peculiarities. With over ten years' experience in accounting and auditing consultancy, clients are safely guided through the various issues that can befall a business operation. Mr Muraviov details some examples: "corruption, incomprehensible and complicated taxation systems, and the mentality of Ukrainian officials who do not facilitate the development of business but request the fulfilment of formal procedures are among the difficulties which our clients have to face."

Global Consulting has established several key goals for 2009. The firm plans increase its growth rate whilst simultaneously enlarging its market share. "We will also seek to find and implement new market opportunities under the conditions of the current economic crisis, implement new services and adapt the old ones to market conditions, expand the regional network and provide our clients with the effective assistance in tackling the consequences of the economic crisis."

Just & Fair Consulting Group is a multi-disciplinary practice mainly focused towards industrial, business and management consulting. According to Mago Singh, Just & Fair was started in 1980 in central India and today has spread its presence over all major economic continents with multiple offices in Australia, Africa, India, Japan, Middle East and the USA.

Just & Fair is a concept whereby large number of consultants from the different fields of industry, business and technology are pooled under a consortium to provide within a single company an all encompassing industrial & manufacturing, management and corporate finance solution for clients.

Just & Fair is headquartered at Dubai, UAE. Furthermore, since 2008, it has also been an independent member of AGN International. Even before its entry into the professional association, Mr Singh states that the firm was enjoying a fruitful relationship with AGN International as an associate entity with AGN Mak Group in place of which now JFC is a full member.

JFC has set very high target for the next five years in the consulting business despite worsening economic conditions around the world. Mr Singh is confident that its association with AGN will benefit to help Just & Fair achieve the higher growth in the industrial and manufacturing consulting assignment as a global player. Attaining such goals will also be helped by the quality of staff at the firm. For example, besides being Just & Fair's managing principal, Mr Singh is a fellow of India's Institute of Chartered Accountants and also the Canadian Institute of Certified Financial Consultants. His experience in the accounting field is supplemented by an academic degree in the areas of business administration, corporate finance, corporate law and engineering.

Mr Singh highlights one particularly captivating benefit gained by accountants who become an affiliate. In the past 10 years that Just & Fair has been associated with AGN International as an associate of a former AGN member firm, Mr Singh states that "we have gained from the huge mileage of an international organization and its brand." He goes onto to explain that in the Middle East and especially in the UAE, "the AGN brand is very popular and well known for the quality of its services."

The AGN-organised conferences and events are also hugely beneficial, according to Mr Singh. "It definitely provides huge mileage in terms of brand value and media coverage besides adding to the knowledge of managing partners and members of the teams of the consulting group," affirms Mr Singh.





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According to Ahmed Maqtari, Al Maqtari Auditing joined AGN in October 2008 for “the purpose of joining an international organisation aiming to grow, develop, cross exchange experiences and be identified as part of a global organisation in an environment of global relationships, common interests and unified standards.”

As the AGN organisation is one of the largest associations worldwide with a deep understanding and respect of cross cultural differences, the decision to join was easily made. Though the firm is a new member and has yet to gain any referrals, Mr Maqtari reveals that the firm has “already participated in a regional conference and came to a closer knowledge and understanding of colleagues in the region and participated in recommendations that will benefit the group.” Mr Maqtari states that the events and conferences organised by AGN help facilitate the “exchange of experiences, updating information on new developments in the profession, finding and promoting cross-country work referrals, gaining new acquaintances and developing and/or assisting in promoting AGN.”

Mr Maqtari reveals that pertinent auditing and accounting issues include the “compliance with company laws, with international accounting standards and dealing with a multiplicity of nationalities.” Such difficulties do not faze Al Maqtari Auditing however, as the firm ensures that “it always keeps abreast of new developments locally and internationally” as well as “maintaining full understanding of cross cultural differences.” However, diversified experience of staff is always a priority.

THE FIRM HAS CLOSE AND EXTENSIVE PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS ACROSS THE ENTIRE MIDDLE EAST

“Our plans are to use our membership of AGN as one of the strong elements to expand our business and market share by arranging direct visits to entities in the UAE,” explains Mr Maqtari. He also notes that participation in AGN International allows the firm to introduce itself as part of an international group and promote the availability of its services and expertise worldwide. “Social functions will be arranged and short presentations will be resorted to as far as practicable,” he adds.

Al Maqtari Auditing has a main office in the UAE’s capital Abu Dhabi and branches in the main cities of Dubai and Sharjah, thus providing its clients a widespread geographical coverage. The firm has close and extensive professional relationships across the entire Middle East.

Professional business advisers Shipleys LLP is an active and longstanding member of AGN International in the UK. The firm has 18 principals and approximately 150 staff, based at its offices in London, Godalming and Saffron Walden. Principal Steven Jeffcott is a former president of AGN. Mike Luckett commented “as business becomes ever more international it is important to maintain and develop contacts overseas. We need to ensure that we are able to help our clients do business wherever they wish.”

Membership of the AGN association makes a significant contribution to Shipleys’ business. Work with international aspects accounts for around 10% of the turnover, with fees from clients referred by other AGN members amounting to approximately €1 million annually. The UK is a natural springboard for US enterprises looking to do business either in or with Europe and the wider region - Shipleys enjoys extensive experience in this type of work. It has also seen rapid growth in our work with AGN members from other areas, both within the European region and elsewhere. “We typically help other AGN members’ clients with both planning and compliance,” says Mr Luckett.

Businesses setting up and individuals relocating here can achieve long term benefits if the right structure is put in place from the start, with savings not just in corporate taxes, income and payroll taxes (for both the employer and employees) and VAT, but also compliance and internal administration costs. A key objective is to avoid unexpected surprises for those who are not so familiar with the UK regime here, so our help with compliance is also very important. A lot of our overseas clients really value our ability to flag when wider issues may need addressing and appreciate our willingness to introduce other professionals. Examples might include advice on UK employment contracts or a lease on premises here.

Mr Luckett added “our continued association with AGN International enables us to do much more. You need to invest to get a return.” Principal Nancy Cruickshanks is chair of AGN’s taxation task force which amongst other things produces the well known annual taxation surveys. Business development director Stuart Dey sits on AGN’s business development committee. Shipleys has a long record of exchanging staff with other AGN members. AGN is now ranked by accountancy magazine as the largest international accountants association which should contribute to an increase in international business amongst the members.

David Nelson notes that Dixon Wilson a founding partner of TEG, a European association of independent firms, which eventually merged with a similar US-based association called TAG. When TAG combined with AGN, Dixon Wilson became a member of the latter.

He also adds that although there have been increases in the amount of international work received by Dixon Wilson in both its London and Paris offices, the main advantage of being a member has been the access to local accounting expertise in jurisdictions around the world. “The benefit of having access to that expertise lets us better serve our clients,” he said. “This helps us to retain clients and also to attract those clients which have international interests.”

WE ARE LOOKING TO BUILD UPON OUR CROSS-

BORDER CORPORATE AND PRIVATE CLIENT WORK

Since its entry in AGN, the firm has enjoyed an increase in the volume of international work with referrals tending to be tax related and concern inward investment into the UK and France. Mr Nelson notes that work done over recent months includes advice on the choice of entity for a new business, VAT, payroll, accounting and reliefs available under UK double tax treaties.

Attendance at AGN International’s meeting affords Dixon Wilson “the opportunity to meet with contacts from around the world, in a more relaxed air,” reveals Mr Nelson. “Meeting people face to face is vital to ensure that we are able to establish trust with contacts around the world. Secondly, it provides us with the opportunity to promote Dixon Wilson to those who might have clients wishing to do business in the UK or France.”

Dixon Wilson is able to quickly assess the key aspects of a client’s requirements and make a firm recommendation of the most appropriate structure which they should be used to operate their UK or French business. The firm works closely with other professionals to assist clients in developing a complete solution to all their requirements. It is also planning for 2009 to assist clients with interesting challenges. “Despite the current economic climate, there are many opportunities for those with the resources to invest,” affirms Mr Nelson. “From investing in the UK to buying properties at discounted prices overseas, we see enormous potential. With this in mind we are looking to build upon our cross-border corporate and private client work.”

As one of the largest certified public accounting firms in Western New York State, Lumsden & McCormick, LLP often serves clientele with multinational business interests. Therefore, the firm needed to provide and sustain a high quality international accounting and auditing service. Its membership in AGN International fulfils this demand, and affords the CPA firm an unrivalled cross border capability. Mark Janulewicz, CPA, Partner explains the advantages of entry into the association. “The advantage includes the global network of firms with membership in AGN. We have partnered with/shared resources with AGN firms in Canada, the United Kingdom, China, South Africa and Mexico.” Now, the firm’s clientele includes closely held and publicly held businesses, individuals, non profit organisations, governmental entities and municipalities.

According to Mr Janulewicz, Lumsden & McCormick joined AGN as a result of the latter’s merger with TAG International. “Originally, Lumsden & McCormick was a founding member of TAG International,” explains Mr Janulewicz. Since its entry into AGN however, the firm has enjoyed business with “large international clients with subsidiaries all over the world.” Consequently, Lumsden & McCormick’s billings from clients referred by AGN have reached \$100,000.

Business referrals are not the only benefits Lumsden & McCormick has gained as an affiliate of AGN International. The firm has participated in numerous conferences and events organised by the association, allowing it to form personal relationships with members from jurisdictions around the world. The meetings are also advantageous in that they allow firms to “talk with others about dealing with clients in similar situations.” Such sharing of knowledge and best practices is essential when accounting and auditing principles can vary wildly from country to country. According to Mr Janulewicz, the main factors that affect US operations are empire zones, ITCs, transfer pricing and cost sharing. With a history dating back to 1952, Lumsden & McCormick has plenty of relevant experience in handling matters in these areas and others. “We act as our client’s business partner both in business related and personal financial matters,” states Mr Janulewicz, adding that “we pride ourselves on identifying issues, proper planning and regular and consistent communication with clients.”

Robert R. Redwitz & Co., An Accounting and Consulting Corporation, was founded in 1975. With offices in Orange County, San Diego County and the San Francisco Bay Area, we are able to service clients throughout the State of California. Furthermore, through our association with AGN, we have the capability to service clients throughout North America and internationally. We are able to augment our existing strengths through collaboration with the foremost authorities in accounting, taxation, audit and business management services from a wide variety of industries from around the globe.

For the past 34 years, we have maintained a strong client base in non-profit organisations, real estate, retail, management training, communications, distribution, legal, publishing and manufacturing industries. We have assisted clients with establishing foreign subsidiaries, negotiating product distribution agreements and foreign taxation issues. Our professional staff is dedicated to providing best practice and innovative advisory services that are personalised to meet our clients’ ever-changing and expanding needs.

What sets Robert R. Redwitz & Co. apart from other accounting and consulting firms is our unique complement of services and internal intellectual capital offered through our five affiliated firms. Our objective is to provide our clients with a “Total Business Solutions” approach to service their ever changing needs.

Robert R. Redwitz & Co. offers traditional accounting, audit, financial statement services, tax and fraud detection; as well as, outsourced CFO services and business strategy consulting services for all stages of enterprise development from start-up companies to expansion, merger or sale.

The GDR Group provides outsourced computer support & help desk services, website design, proactive server management, custom programming, computer network and infrastructure design, backup and disaster recovery services for small businesses to large corporate international companies.

The Diamond Group facilitates alliances between public-private partnerships. The Diamond Group specialises in corporate strategic planning and government relations.

Redwitz Wealth Management Group core services are retirement and estate planning, insurance planning, investment and long-term care management.

Learning Communications, LLC is a human resource media training company. Learning Communications offers a full-range of human resource training materials in harassment prevention, diversity/inclusion training, employee recruiting, interviewing & retention law, management and employee development, sales training & safety training.

Rothstein Kass, a premier public accounting firm to privately held and publicly traded companies, individuals, and families will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2009.

Integrated offerings include core audit and tax services, strategic business counseling, regulatory compliance and SEC advisory services, insurance and risk management consulting, and family office services. The firm’s status as a “best place to work” in all markets of operation has supported the ability to attract, develop and retain skilled professionals nationwide. The culture of sophistication and collaboration has helped to establish Rothstein Kass as the dominant brand in the alternative investment sector, providing a platform for the firm’s growth in interrelated areas including private equity, real estate and clean energy technology.

Rothstein Kass joined AGN International in 1995, in recognition of the organization’s reputation for developing deep and lasting relationships and its commitment to its members. Since that time, Rothstein Kass has frequently leveraged AGN resources in promoting awareness of the firm’s unique capabilities and unmatched expertise. Rothstein Kass regularly participates in the AGN International events designed to strengthen industry relationships and enhance expertise through review of best practices. These conferences encourage active examination of industry standards among sector luminaries. Co-Managing Principal Steve Kass served Chair of AGN International from 2001-2003. During this period, he worked closely in conjunction with AGN International to support awareness of the organization’s international scope and benefits to member firms.

Rothstein Kass’ sophisticated approach and keen sector understanding enable its professionals to provide actionable insight into the challenges that lie ahead. Many of these issues raise implications that extend beyond the financial services sector. As the marketplace continues to absorb the lessons of the credit market collapse, transparency issues will be pushed to the forefront of discussions. FASB 157, for example, provides enhanced guidelines for determining the value of underlying balance sheet positions, segmenting assets by liquidity. Proposed implementation of new international financial reporting standards also stands to drive demand for Rothstein Kass professionals in the year ahead as U.S. and foreign entities seek qualified assistance in comprehending the nuanced and evolving guidelines for convergence.