

Feature

HLB Germany: National cohesion, international success

Page 07

Client case study

HLB Magnin Gecors, Servicing winter sports and their champions

Page 18

Interview

Raymond Cheng, HLB Hodgson Impey Cheng

Page 19



Recruitment, our profession's biggest challenge

Our profession faces numerous challenges, each presenting opportunities for those firms staying ahead of the pack. The global economic situation, a challenge to both accounting firms and their clients, saw well-prepared firms extend “recession-proof” service lines to assist clients in dealing with economic pressures. Other challenges include fee pressure, the rise of quality assurance standards, increased regulation and a greater focus on government authorities to develop and enforce tax regulations.

I believe the biggest challenge of all, however, is recruiting high-quality, globally-thinking staff who are vital to help us face the challenges of the profession. We need to devote sufficient attention to attracting and retaining those staff to meet our increasing quality standards and global involvement, with outside and inside hiring pressure and aggressive recruiting practices making it a real competitive challenge.

It's the profession's obligation to make the accounting profession a top choice and to make it interesting for young staff. We need to show them how they can really make a difference in the profession and have a very rewarding career. HLB member firms offer tremendous opportunities to contribute at high-level, on a faster track, with an international reach. As an internationally-minded network we have programmes in place such as our Winning International Business “international tenders” training session and our international staff exchange programme.

I recently had an opportunity to present to students at INTI International University in Kuala Lumpur. INTI takes an innovative approach to various aspects of its curriculum and takes pride in its job placement statistics. The presentation focused on the importance of taking smart risks, innovation and change management — including a wide range of strategic actions impacting processes, technology and firm policies.

Prior to the presentation I asked the Human Resource heads of various HLB members to describe attributes they seek in hiring recent university graduates — beyond technical capabilities. I shared a number of the responses including the following: Questioning skills and ability to problem solve; Persuade and influence; Demonstrate listening and questioning skills to gain a full understanding of issues; Generate ideas or help in creation of end product/design; Focus on client needs and excellent service; Flexible and adaptable; Bright & inquisitive; Energetic, creative & innovative; Not afraid to take risks; Think outside the box as innovation is key to future growth.

A candidate's knowledge of accounting and audit standards or tax regulations certainly matters when hiring; however, I would encourage firms to pay attention to the above attributes as well. The success of your firm and the profession is relying on the inspired talents of the next generation of professionals.

Rob Tautges - CEO



18 Servicing winter sports and their champions



15 International perspectives in agriculture



07 HLB Top 8 in Germany: National cohesion, international success

W> — What's happening

HLB new members with the latest additions to the network

Page 04

Appointment of HLB professionals to national and international representative bodies of the profession

Page 04

L> — Latest News

The network's latest news and achievements from around the world. In this issue from the US, Bulgaria, Russia, Vietnam, Spain, India and Mauritius

Page 05

P> — Perspectives

Agriculture, international opportunities in a promising business

Page 15

Switzerland still flourishing despite changes in banking and tax regulation

Page 16

A unified market system for East Asia?

Page 16

HLB UK's Beever and Struthers, helping charities raise vital funds

Page 17

C> — Case Study

Magnin Gecors, HLB France, servicing winter sports and their champions — including special interview with ski-cross elite athlete Enak Gavaggio

Page 18

I> — Interview

Raymond Cheng, HLB Hodgson Impey Cheng, on his firm, his involvement in the profession and wider political responsibilities in Hong Kong and PR China. HLB Hodgson Impey Cheng is a modern, successful firm directly competing with the Big Four on listed companies work

Page 19

T> — Tech Side

Real-time referrals tracking: the tool of a truly international network with this new online solution developed and implemented by HLB

Page 20

I> — Initiatives

The network's sustainability and corporate and social responsibility initiatives from Malaysia, Denmark, Taiwan, South Africa, Bulgaria and the Philippines

Page 21

A> — Awards & Events

HLB professionals and member firms honoured in Denmark, Australia and Germany

Page 23

Forthcoming international, regional and technical conferences

Page 23



12 Bayern - Barça: playing Champions League

F> — Feature

HLB Germany: national cohesion, international success

Page 7

Germany's 8th - ranked international audit & accounting network lives up to the highest standards of cohesion, synergy and international-mindedness, making the most of the country's good economic resilience and dynamic exports in times of global economic crisis.

Page 19

Ensuring strong cohesion through exemplary organisation

Page 9

The German Mittelstand: companies "made in Germany"

Page 10

Sustainable energy on the agenda

Page 21

Broetje-Automation Group: a successful composition

Page 11

Bayern - Barça: playing Champions League

Page 12

HLB tax experts advise the Bundestag's Finance Committee

Page 14

New members



1 Sayma Consultores & Charman Auditores
- Spain (Bilbao, San Sebastian, Vitoria)

2 Expat Norway & Dataplan AS
- Norway (Stavanger)

3 PAA Tax Legal Consulting
- Moldova (Chisinau)

4 Mekonsult
- Tanzania (Dar Es-Salaam)

5 Studio IFF Inturri Frangipane Ferrandi
- Italy (Brescia)

6 AMH Audit
- Armenia (Yerevan)

7 Certified Master Auditors Inc.
- South Africa (Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town)

8 Parissi PSC CPA
- Puerto Rico (San Juan)

9 Fadnis & Gupte
- India (Indore)

10 Safwat Ebeid & Co
- Egypt (Cairo)

11 Rokembach + Lahm, Villanova, Gais & Cia Auditores
- Brazil (Porto Alegre)

12 Fiduciaire Internationale
- Luxembourg

13 Trinity Financial Services
- British Virgin Islands

14 McKeogh Gallagher Ryan
- Ireland (Limerick)

15 French Duncan,
- UK (Scotland)

Appointments

Edelfried Schneider

Board Member of HLB Germany and Managing Partner of HLB Dr. Dienst & Partner GmbH & Co. KG, was appointed Vice-President, Board member of the Federation of European Accountants (FEE) (p.10).

Mousa Sindaha

Managing Partner of HLB Michel Sindaha & Co, Jordan, was appointed to the Compliance Advisory Panel of IFAC. Mousa Sindaha is currently the Honorary Treasurer of the Jordan Association of Certified Public Accountants where he served as a board member from 2001 to 2005, acting as liaison officer with international professional organisations.

Manoj Fadnis

Partner of Fadnis & Gupte, India, has been elected Vice President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI). He is planned to become ICAI's President in 2015.

Kader Kaneye

Managing Partner of HLB KMC West Africa, has been elected First Vice President of ONECCA, Niger's association for auditors and CPAs. This election makes Kader Kaneye the youngest Board member of ONECCA.

Happy birthday to

WithumSmith+Brown

United States 40 years



HLB Ukraine

Ukraine 20 years



HLB Samir B. Sahhar CPAs

Gaza & West Bank 10 years



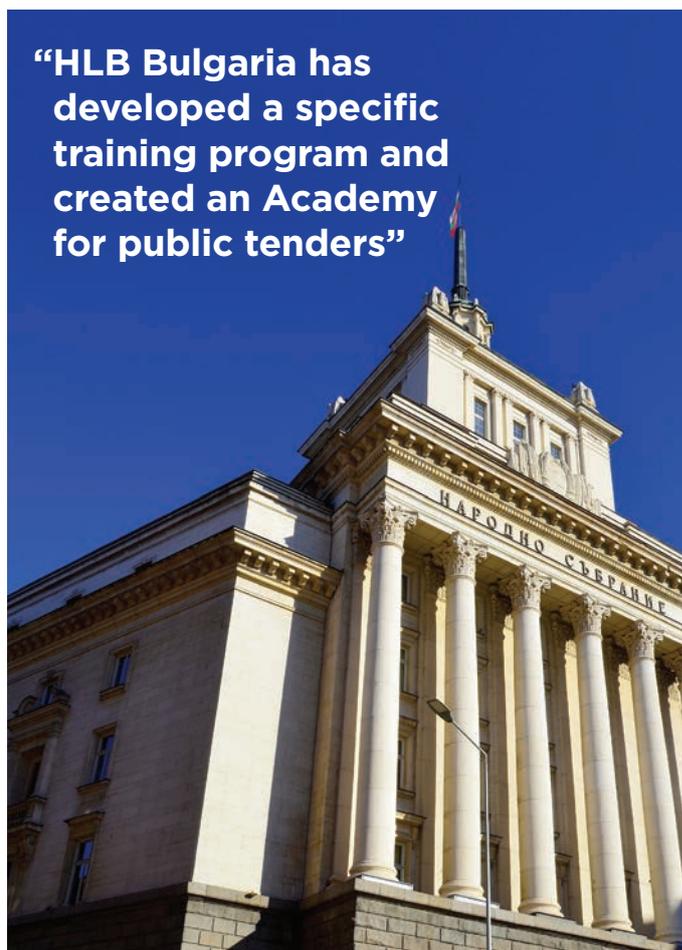
HLB Bulgaria organises a forum on public tendering with Deputy Prime Minister's participation

In partnership with the Higher School of Insurance and Finance, HLB Bulgaria organised last January a discussion forum on the changes in Bulgaria's Public Procurement Act. The forum was opened by the country's Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Development, who shared with participants a draft law on amendments and additions to the Public Procurement Act. Representatives of enforcement authorities in the field of public tender (Bulgarian National Audit Office, Agency for State Financial Inspection and Commission for Protection of Competition) also presented their views.

HLB Bulgaria's Managing Partner Jan Skvaril shared the findings of an analysis on public reports and studies of non-governmental organisations, identifying three main causes to disorders in the field of public procurement: relatively frequent changes in legislation; non-compliance with the law and corruption practices; and most importantly, the lack of qualification of the persons engaged in the planning, procurement and execution of contracts.

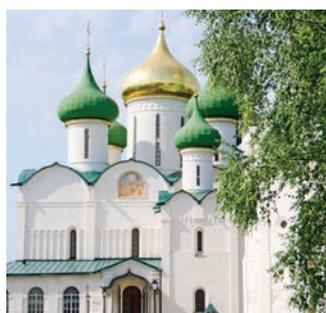
Together with the Higher School of Insurance and Finance, HLB Bulgaria has developed a specific training program and created an "Academy for public procurement", providing the opportunity to acquire knowledge and qualification to all persons involved in implementing the law in public tender processes.

"HLB Bulgaria has developed a specific training program and created an Academy for public tenders"



Russia - HLB International ranks first non-Big Four network

HLB International now ranks first non-Big Four international network in Russia according to the *International Accounting Bulletin's* latest survey, now ranking 5th in the country thanks to the recent addition of Energy Consulting Group.



India - HLB member chairs latest Forum of Firms event

Nilesh Vikamsey, Senior Partner of HLB Indian member Khimji Kunverji & Co, chaired the Forum of Firms' latest roundtable event last December in Mumbai. The event, attended by 19 of the 20 international networks with representation in India, was dedicated to "Audit Quality - The Challenges due to Audit Rotation".

HLB Experts' recent publications

Zurab Chechelashvili, co-founder of FMG Legal LLC, the partner law company of HLB International's member in Georgia FMG, authored an *Introduction to the Georgian Business Law*. This book, published with the support of the German society for international cooperation, is the first ever publication on Georgian business law written in English, thus remedying a long-time deficiency for international business. Zurab Chechelashvili is a Professor in the International Black Sea University in Tbilisi.

Maurizio Di Salvo, from HLB Italian member Studio CD Tax and Law, contributed to *Limits to tax planning* published under the supervision of the International Tax Institute of the Vienna University. Di Salvo's contribution, entitled "Exchange of tax information as an instrument to counter the abuse", provides a comparative and updated analysis of the scope and methods, the limits and the procedure of the exchange of information and mutual assistance in the field of the international tax cooperation under the different types of legal framework.

"This book published with the support of the German society for international cooperation is the first ever publication on Georgian business law written in English"

Mauritius - HLB Appavoo & Associates celebrates Silver Jubilee

HLB Appavoo & Associates, HLB International's member in Mauritius, recently celebrated its Silver Jubilee. For the occasion a special magazine recounting the history of the company was published, including managers, clients and staff's testimonies and expressing the dynamic and modern identity of the firm.

The position of Mauritius as a gateway to Africa takes on its full meaning with HLB International's present vision towards the development of the continent: in the past two years the network has recruited members in Niger (also covering the rest of French-speaking West Africa with Senegal,

Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Benin, Mali, Togo & Guinea-Bissau), Eritrea, Tanzania and South Africa. HLB Appavoo & Associates was therefore chosen to host HLB International's next Middle East & Africa Conference in Mauritius.

“The position of Mauritius as a gateway to Africa takes on its full meaning with HLB International's present vision towards the development of the continent”



US - WithumSmith+Brown hosts Global Summit in New York

HLB USA member WithumSmith+Brown (WS+B) recently hosted a Global Summit event open to clients, bankers, lawyers and business channel developers, with the participation of HLB members from France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and the UK as well as HLB International's CEO Rob Tautges. The day provided insights into global economic and industry trends and was organised along two panel discussions: while in

the morning session HLB professionals discussed the international impact and response to the financial crisis, the afternoon panel included WS+B's own industry experts representing technology, real estate, manufacturing and life sciences who discussed paving the path to recovery after the financial crisis.

Pleased with the success of this first Global Summit, WS+B plans to hold it again in 2014.

Vietnam - AASC establishes Japan Desk

AASC, HLB's Vietnamese member, who ranks first non-Big Four audit company in the country, has created a Japanese Desk with a dedicated Japanese Practice Manager working on Japan-related leads and

projects in Vietnam. Given the strong trend of Japanese FDI in the country this desk will certainly build a competitive edge and bring additional value to AASC and to HLB member firms in Japan.

Spain - HLB Bové Montero organises successful seminar with Barcelona's French Chamber of Commerce

Over 90 people attended the seminar presented by HLB's Spanish member HLB Bové Montero y Asociados at the French Chamber of Commerce in Barcelona mid-February - on the topic of new audit, accounting, tax and labour legislation and issues for 2014.

HLB Bové Montero y Asociados will host HLB's 2014 International Conference next October.



HLB Germany National cohesion, international success

HLB Germany, Germany's 8th - ranked international audit & accounting network, lives up to the highest standards of cohesion, synergy and international-mindedness, making the most of the country's good economic resilience and dynamic exports in times of global economic crisis. HLB's German Federation sends out over 30% of HLB International's global business referrals and reflects Germany's "world export champion" status, serving clients such as Siemens, BASF or Foot Locker as well as dynamic, innovative and international Mittelstand companies.

HLB Germany, with \$198 million fee income in 2013, is the 8th - ranked international audit & accounting network in Germany, 4th after the Big Four, with some 33 locations including the country's main cities and economic centres, and approximately 1,400 staff including 200 partners. The Federation, which serves clients such as Siemens, the BASF group or Foot Locker to quote a few, is a reference in terms of cohesion, synergy and international-mindedness, making the most of Germany's good economic resilience and dynamic exports in times of global economic crisis.

While HLB Germany receives approximately 10% of HLB International's total referrals worldwide, it sends out over 30% of that same total, reflecting Germany's "world export champion" status: the country is G7's most open economy and the third largest exporting country worldwide -an increasing

tendency over the past years. Exports total 52% of Germany's GDP, a figure well above that of other developed countries. Trade surplus in 2013 was of €198.9 billion, the country's highest value ever recorded.

These international macroeconomic tendencies are similarly reflected within HLB, with Germany referring three times more work than it receives and working mainly with its HLB counterparts in the Netherlands, France, the US, Spain, Switzerland, Denmark, Austria and the UK. With 30% of HLB's outbound referrals originating from HLB Germany, the Federation clearly has an impact on the network's prosperity while making smart use of HLB's international resources with a number of initiatives such as bilateral country desks, close cooperation with neighbouring countries and capitalisation on the network's language capacities such as German speakers worldwide.

The strength of the German exporting model -and of HLB Germany- rests upon one of the country's specificities: Mittelstand companies. Mittelstand, which usually have no equivalents abroad, are mid-to large-size-some of its most famous representatives are actually worldwide-known companies such as Bosch or Miele for instance- characterised by a spirit of dynamism, innovation and international openness. They successfully represent Germany and Germany's expertise in the worldwide market especially on high-value or niche segments, and account in a large part for Germany's economic resilience, productivity and relatively high employment.

Here again, the macroeconomic strength of Germany is the strength of HLB Germany, whose clients are for many of them part of this very successful and unique, international oriented Mittelstand tier.

The German Federation, ensuring strong cohesion through exemplary organisation

HLB Germany members are a reference in terms of "working together", showing strong cohesion thanks to the high organisation and coordination standards developed in the Federation.

Close cooperation at national level leads to numerous synergy effects, for instance in the field of joint development work on specific business lines, easy access to expertise sharing with seven national working groups, common training with the HLB Germany Academy, staff exchange and joint marketing activities. In some areas, purchase are managed in common in order to save costs, for example in the area of audit software. The exchange of best-practice solutions, the use of a standard organisation manual and a common

knowledge management all ensure the highest quality standards are met and are of direct benefit to clients.

Coordination of the Federation is carried out by a four-member Executive Board and a Central Secretariat based in Düsseldorf. The Central Secretariat organises conferences and seminars (with two national conventions every year and thematic workshops), supports working groups, develops, coordinates and monitors joint projects such as quality assurance, marketing, education or training. The Central Secretariat also plays an interface role between HLB International and the German member companies and performs tasks of network monitoring, analysis and development in Germany.

HLB Germany, a history of 40 years

HLB Germany recently celebrated 40 years of existence -the Federation was founded in 1972, only three years after HLB International was established in 1969, to answer clients' growing needs both nationally and internationally. Those 40 years saw the successful development of a network of considerable size, now ranking 8th nationally, with strong cohesion and identity and a strategy of quality.

Did you know...

That HLB Germany and its members were quoted more than 120 times in local, regional and national press between August 2013 and January 2014.

The German Federation seen from other HLB countries

Fredy Fritzinger, Managing Partner, HLB Groupe Cofimé, HLB France:

"We have been working with the German Federation for more than ten years now, with some 80% of our inbound referrals coming from HLB Germany. Our geographic location close to the German border in the East of France, our knowledge of Germany, of its business culture and, for a number of our staff, of its language as well, all represent of course great assets for us.

While inbound referrals from Germany have traditionally concerned all industry sectors and types of services, we increasingly receive negotiation and due diligence work for M&As and recently obtained a due diligence contract which is probably one of the largest referrals ever made in the HLB network and a kind of operation that would usually be conducted by the Big Four.

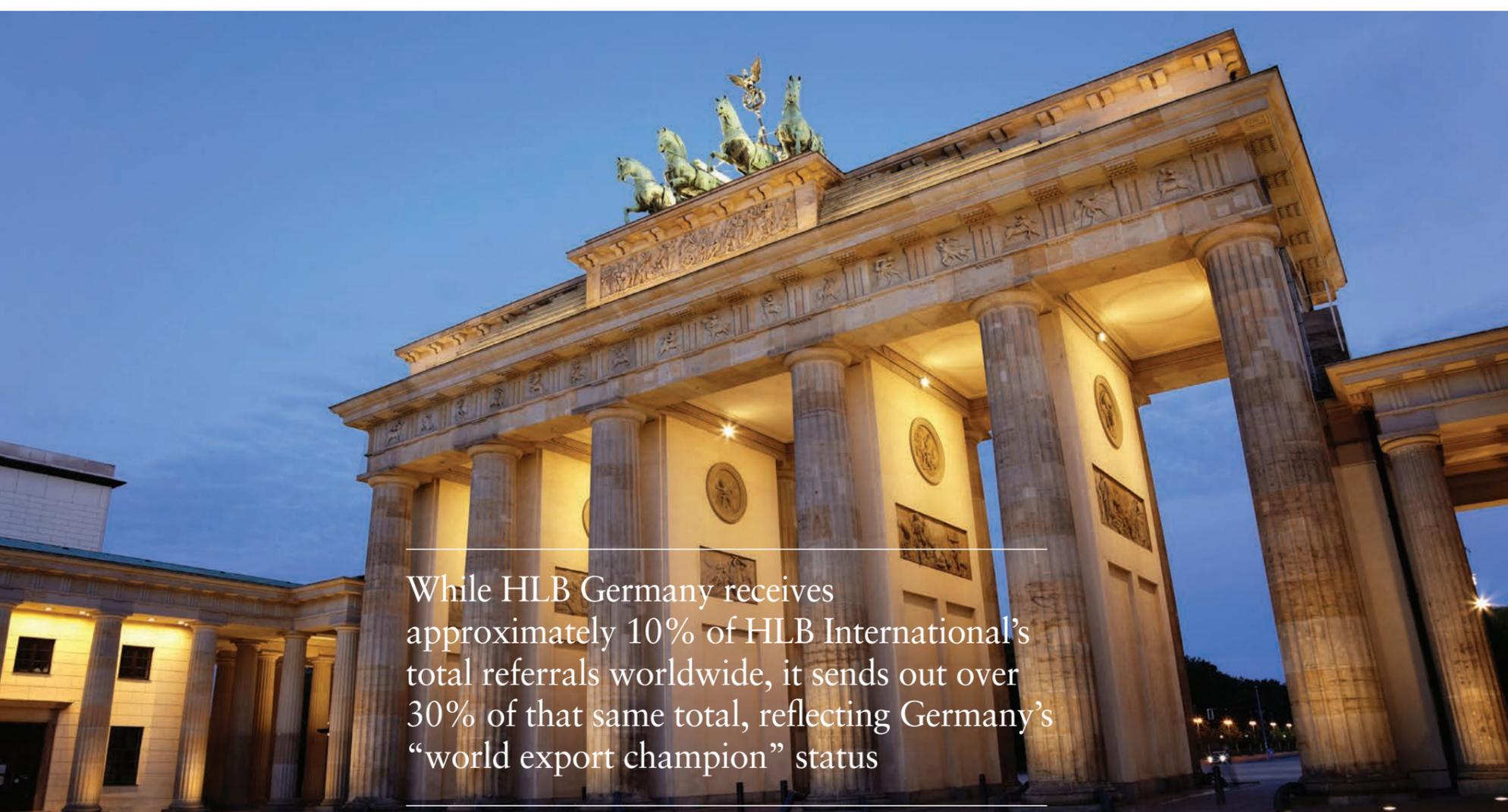
From our point of view the HLB Germany Federation works very well. We attend every two to three years one of their two annual national conferences, and feel HLB German firms show excellent attendance and

cohesion. The German Federation also seems to function efficiently thanks to the absence of noticeable disparities in the size of member firms, and to the work of the general secretariat which ensures support functions such as administration, IT and marketing are covered at national level.

Whenever we work with our German counterparts we are impressed by how well they know their client and are involved in the job -with time, attention and technical involvement all contributing to finding the best solution for the client. HLB German members are extremely professional and aware, as we are, that personal knowledge between HLB members is key to successful referrals. As an example, on the due diligence work I mentioned the German firm came to meet us in France prior to any work in order to better know us and make sure everything would go smoothly for their client".

HLB Germany's latest additions

*HLB Treuhand Oldenburg, Oldenburg
Abstoß & Wolters, Mönchengladbach*



While HLB Germany receives approximately 10% of HLB International's total referrals worldwide, it sends out over 30% of that same total, reflecting Germany's "world export champion" status

The German Mittelstand: companies “made in Germany”

The German economic model seems to be faring quite well, showing good resilience in times of global crisis and arousing other countries' interest —and envy. The German Mittelstand, in particular, is regarded as the recipe for success for high employment and productivity —so much so that the term has found its way into Anglo-Saxon vocabulary, raising two questions: what is German Mittelstand? What makes it so successful? Gertraude Kuscholke, Partner at Emde & Partner, HLB Germany, tells us more about this dynamic, highly innovative and export-oriented segment specific to Germany's economy.

First and foremost, a distinction must be made between German Mittelstand companies and small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) as defined by the European Union. Mittelstand are not SMEs. There is no standard size-based definition, and while the German Ministry of Economy defines Mittelstand as companies with up to 500 employees and 50 million

euros annual turnover, other studies include companies with 20 million to one billion euros turnover. Mittelstand companies as defined by the Ministry of Economy represent over 99% of German companies, generate around 37% their total turnover and contribute nearly 52% of Germany's economic output, with exports turnover of €195.2 billion.

This variety of criteria bears witness to the fact that no quantitative definition can really capture the spirit of German Mittelstand. Almost all Mittelstand companies are family businesses, predominantly run by their owners. Often developed for over 100 years, they are based on business practices focusing on the long term, stable customer relations, steady human resources policies and strong financing models. One prominent representative of the German Mittelstand describes the philosophy as “practicing entrepreneurial responsibility with your own wallet.” The Mittelstand includes highly innovative, quickly growing companies,

which once their successful products and services have allowed them to grow beyond the traditional size parameters —and the German borders— stay true to the Mittelstand spirit. That specific spirit is precisely the secret behind the German Mittelstand with many well-known examples —large family companies with global reputations, yet rooted in the German provinces: Miele in Guetersloh, Boehringer in Ingelheim or Bosch in Gerlingen.

Germany is also particularly proud of its high number of Mittelstand global “hidden champions” in many sectors of the world economy, with globalisation creating numerous opportunities for Mittelstand's highly innovative products. This accounts for strong focus on exports as a key feature of Mittelstand firms.

“Often developed for over 100 years, Mittelstand companies are based on business practices focusing on the long term, stable customer relations, steady human resources policies and strong financing models”

Edelfried Schneider Board Member of HLB Germany and Managing Partner of HLB Dr. Dienst & Partner GmbH & Co. KG, was appointed Vice-President, Board member of the Federation of European Accountants (FEE). Based in Brussels, FEE represents 48 institutes of professional accountants and auditors from 36 European countries, including all European Union member states. FEE has a combined membership of more than 800,000 professional accountants. Edelfried Schneider commented he was “looking forward to representing the interests of the profession at the European level”,



HLB member firms in Germany are familiar with the spirit and demands of their many Mittelstand clients, accompanying them into foreign markets with the support of HLB International's skilled advisers worldwide, while offering comprehensive knowledge on the often decentralized, splintered structures of German politics and administration to foreign companies.



Broetje-Automation Group: a successful composition

From the Northwest of Germany, Broetje -Automation Group has become the world's leading expert in specialised production processes in the aviation and aerospace industry, servicing all major aircraft manufacturers around the world. Since the first major acquisition in 2007, Broetje has relied on transaction advisory services rendered by HLB International affiliates. Meanwhile, its operations include presence in the US, the UK, France, Russia and China. Major projects concern not only the delivery of individual equipment items, but the set-up and commissioning of whole production sites.

In the course of this growth process, HLB member firms from several countries under the lead of HLB Stückmann, Bielefeld, Germany, have helped to successfully acquire local suppliers and distributors, implement efficient distribution vehicles and a tax efficient intra-group cooperation strategy. As Ingo Körner, CFO of the Broetje-Automation Group and, therefore, responsible for the contact with HLB, points out: “What we do appreciate with HLB International is the fact that we know, value and trust our contact partners. The worldwide network cooperates to design pragmatic and convenient solutions to support our growth”.

HLB's approach has involved member firms and lead to direct contacts at local level in a well-coordinated manner. To date, a team of ten professionals located in Bielefeld covers and coordinates the services in the fields of tax compliance, international taxation, transfer pricing, staff secondment, corporate restructuring, M&A and legal services, mainly concerning contractual structuring.

It is the intra-disciplinary approach covering accounting, tax advisory and legal services, all coordinated to suit the operative and strategic needs of Broetje-Automation, which manifests the success of the mutual cooperation. “The strong individual relationships between the responsible client partners in the relevant jurisdictions —Germany, US, UK, Russia, China and Japan— based on years of international cooperation, professional experiences and personal relationships developed at HLB's international conferences, tested in mutual client servicing, allow for this outstanding performance in a world of international players” comments Arnold Stange, Partner at HLB Stückmann.

Nick Farmer — Partner, Menzies, HLB UK “Menzies have advised Broetje in the UK at the GmbH level and also with the set-up of a new UK company. In relation to both entities we

have had to coordinate the UK position with HLB Stückmann in order to ensure that the advice has been understood and consistent in both countries. Throughout this process we have developed closer working relationships and a greater appreciation of the cross border implications for German companies doing business in the UK. It is this type of strong relationships and the constant sharing of knowledge throughout the HLB International network that provides us with the ability to confidently service our international clients.”

Kimberlee Phelan — Partner, Withum Smith+Brown, HLB USA “During the past few years, WithumSmith+Brown assisted Broetje through two major transitions: moving their US headquarters from Omaha, Nebraska to Buffalo, New York, as well as a change in personnel in the finance & accounting department which occurred as part of the move of headquarters. Currently, WS+B assists Broetje USA with their year-end income tax provision, in addition to handling their US tax compliance filings. WS+B works closely with the Broetje team to minimise the tax liability on the myriad of US tax filings. WS+B is also working with Broetje Automation (Germany) regarding prior-year state income tax filings required despite the German entity not having a Permanent Establishment in the US.”

Fredy Fritzing — Managing Partner, HLB Groupe Cofimé, HLB France “The Broetje project in France started in the summer of 2011 with negotiations conducted together with HLB Stückmann to acquire a majority stake in the capital of a French company located in South France. Since that time, Broetje as well as HLB Stückmann have regularly contacted us for tax, social and legal issues encountered by Broetje. This joint work has strengthened our network and common relationship.”

Christine Cai — Partner, HLB ThinkBridge, China “We have worked together with HLB Stückmann to support Broetje's understanding of the taxes incurred in China for their projects, helped with the Chinese company setup in Shanghai and provided continuous accounting service, tax filing and financial reporting service to Broetje Shanghai on whom we performed both statutory and group audit. HLB ThinkBridge has continuously communicated and coordinated with HLB Stückmann on Broetje, with mutual updates on a responsive and regular basis ensuring the success of this project.”

“What we do appreciate with HLB International is the fact that we know, value and trust our contact partners. The worldwide network cooperates to design pragmatic and convenient solutions to support our growth”
— Ingo Körner, Broetje-Automation Group, CFO

Sustainable energy on the agenda

HLB Germany's Autumn Meeting, held in Hamburg, was dedicated this year to tax, audit and legal issues in the renewable energy sector. Close to 100 participants from HLB Germany as well as fellow guests from HLB International in Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Luxemburg and Switzerland attended the conference and had the opportunity to listen to

high-profile speakers from the National Bank of Baden Württemberg and renowned companies in the field of green energy. HLB Germany, who considers the many opportunities offered in the field of sustainable energy, does not content itself with words on the topic: HLB Dr. Dienst & Partner's new office in Koblenz is a green building whose grand opening will take place in May, under the theme: “Designing a sustainable future”.

Bayern – Barça

playing Champions League



Barcelona and Munich, two inspiring cities for football fans, are also headquarters to HLB members LKC in Munich* and Bové Montero in Barcelona, who interact closely on thriving German-Spanish cross-border business with dedicated international desks.

Barcelona and Munich - cities that inspire every football fan, both represent decades of quality and innovation in European football. These days head coach of Bayern Munich Pep Guardiola and Spanish players Thiago and Javi Martinez show once more how successfully the Spanish and Germans work together.

Barcelona and Munich - both cities are also the headquarters of two HLB member firms, who interact closely in order to raise the economic potential between the two cities, regions and countries. Both Bové Montero in Spain and LKC in Germany have the technical and cultural experience as well as the adequate set of language skills to serve German-speaking clients in Spain and Spanish-speaking clients in Germany. These dedicated international desks are coordinated by Ilídio Ferreira in Barcelona and Malte Thalemann in Munich.

Bavaria, a well-known holiday destination with privileged location on the edge of the Alps, picturesque towns and lakes and famous specialties such

as Oktoberfest and Lederhosen, is also one of the world's leading industrial regions. The Bavarian economy is just as versatile as the state itself. World-famous flagships of the German economy such as Adidas, Audi, Allianz, BMW, EADS, MAN, PUMA or Siemens are based here. Global players from other countries and many other renowned market leaders have also found the ideal location for their German and European business in Bavaria.

The strength of the Bavarian economy is the mid-sized sector and family-owned business ("Mittelstand"), which shapes the state's economic structure with excellent innovative capacity. Germany's Mittelstand is made of very dynamic, innovative and international companies, export-oriented with high-value manufactured products and sometimes positioned on worldwide niche markets.

Mittelstand constitute a very important part of the German economy, accounting for about 40% of the annual economic performance and over 50% of annual investment. "Because of their specific core competences, many of these firms have become "global hidden champions" in their respective segments", explains Matthias Schwierz, M&A Partner at LKC.

**HLB Germany is also represented in Munich by member HLB Linn Goppold Treuband*

Having created more than 1.5 million new jobs in the past three years, Germany has become a very attractive place to work and live for qualified people especially from the Southern countries of the European Union. The interest is mutual, and many Mittelstand companies are establishing new businesses in countries like Spain.

Northern Spain in particular, with its strong industrial and technology-oriented basis, has become a very attractive location for German investors. Barcelona is the second largest city in Spain and one of the world's leading touristic, economic, and cultural centres. Spain as a whole attracts over nine million German tourists every year. Germany is now Spain's first import, and second export partner.

Trade between the two countries concerns mainly the automotive, chemical, machinery and electronics industries. Over 1,000 German firms - representing around 300,000 jobs - currently have subsidiaries

in Spain, constituting a significant factor in the Spanish economy.

German companies see Spain - as well Portugal - not only as a market and investment destination but also as a bridge towards more distant regions, a situation that will become increasingly relevant in the near future. Indeed, around 70% of German subsidiaries in Spain and Portugal have a bridging function for Latin America and Africa's emerging markets where Spanish and Portuguese are the business languages as well as the underlying business culture.

Bové Montero and LKC's next project is now to organise a joint event for current and prospective clients in Munich, addressing tax and accounting specific features German companies are likely to meet in Spain and Latin America, and vice versa. To avoid any conflict of interest this event will probably take place after the Champions League Final in Lisbon in May.

“Both Bové Montero in Spain and LKC in Germany have the technical and cultural experience as well as the adequate set of language skills to serve German-speaking clients in Spain and Spanish-speaking clients in Germany with dedicated international desks”





HLB tax experts advise the Bundestag's Finance Committee – report on a yearly session

Regular, annual, meetings have taken place for now five years between HLB Germany's tax working group and the Finance Committee of the Bundestag, the lower house of the German Parliament. The latest of these meetings, on March 20th, was attended by prominent members of the Bundestag's Finance Committee including Committee Chairman Mrs Arndt-Brauer, all financial policy speakers of the Bundestag's political parties along with further Committee members.

The main objective of these sessions is to provide constructive background discussions on current tax developments and, for HLB Germany, to share their views on tax issues, especially

on those potentially impacting Mittelstand companies. HLB Germany came up with concrete recommendations leading, according to the Bundestag's Finance Committee who asked for further proposals on law changes to be transmitted in writing, to "a fruitful and productive discussion". Given the positive impression made by this bilateral discussion on both sides, it was decided to pursue the collaboration further and organise a similar session next year.

"HLB came up with concrete recommendations leading, according to the Bundestag's Finance Committee, to a fruitful and productive discussion"

The HLB Germany Academy: sharing costs and expertise in a competitive market

For more than 20 years, HLB Germany has actively supported the professional expertise of member firms' partners and staff under a common frame: the HLB Germany Academy. With national working groups and common training, the HLB Germany Academy is a great opportunity to share expertise, ensure consistently high quality standards in the German Federation and build close relationships between members –while sharing costs and developing synergies.

The HLB Germany Academy offers basic and advanced audit training based on the network's audit software tools and therefore highly practical. Beside audit training classes which have been very successful for years, a new focus has recently been introduced on audit of IT systems and IT auditing tools for data analysis and data mining.

Soft skills training includes management and communications skills as well as sales training –with workshops on specific topics such as recently on social media. Regular experience sharing is ensured through several working groups meeting at

least once a year –in the areas of audit, tax, IT, human resources, marketing, local accounting and public interest regulations.

In 2014 over 600 partners and staff will attend 13 training courses located in Düsseldorf, where the Federation's national secretariat is based, and in HLB offices in Bielefeld, Oldenburg, Koblenz and Munich. All training documents such as presentations or case studies are filed on the National Communication System where they are free to use for all member firms.

The HLB Germany Academy is a great opportunity to share expertise and bring network relationships between member firms to a new level. It also has remarkable human resources and quality impact: as members of the Federation use common audit software and quality tools, the ability to efficiently exchange staff on a high quality level is further enhanced, while in a competitive recruiting market the HLB Germany Academy offers younger staff an excellent perspective to build up and maintain top-quality professional expertise.

International Fiscal Association: HLB members create regional branch in Germany

Companies' growing internationalisation means they face increasingly complex tax issues, highlighting the vital importance of regular exchange of information in the field of international tax law and the need to create and use corresponding networks and institutions as forums of discussion.

With the aim to support tax communication, HLB Dr. Schumacher & Partner (Muenster, Germany) through international law experts Christian Jahndorf and Till Zech has established IFA Westfalen, a regional branch for the International Fiscal Association (IFA). IFA itself was established in 1938 and headquartered in the Netherlands, today comprising over 12,000 members in 110 countries through national representations such as IFA Germany.

IFA Westfalen holds lectures, seminars and panel discussions on international tax law. The main object of these events is to regularly exchange expert knowledge with tax specialists from the legal, scientific, financial, industrial and trade sectors. International colleagues of HLB Dr. Schumacher & Partner can in turn profitably apply this knowledge and network when serving their own clients.

Agriculture International perspectives in a promising business

Agriculture is the largest industry specialism within Lovewell Blake, a member of HLB UK based on the Eastern side of the UK where it covers counties with strong rural community. The firm deals with over 400 clients in the agricultural sector and comprises a dedicated team of specialists.

Contrary to pre-conceived ideas, agriculture is much more than just “dealing with farms”. For Douglas Young, Head of Lovewell Blake’s Agricultural Department and Managing Partner, “it is one of the most interesting and challenging specialisms that we have within the firm”. Lovewell Blake deals with a wide range of businesses, from small tenant farmers through to niche meat and vegetable producers or to large diverse estates with several thousand hectares of land farmed both in hand and let to tenants, for sporting activities such as shooting and hunting and investment properties with cottages, houses and leisure activities including hotels and visitor attractions.

The firm advises clients on a number of issues including profitable use of their land, investment diversification

projects which at present include a number of renewable energy investments including solar panels, wind turbines and anaerobic digestion units, complex taxes including income tax mitigation, capital tax planning on succession and inheritance, preparation of budgets and business plans, assistance with dealing with banks and other financial institutions and suitability and operation of bespoke accounting software for the sector.

Also, “we have close links with our specialism in food and drink as a number of the agricultural businesses integrate vertically with the food and drink sector in supplying breweries, cheese producers, crisp manufacturers, butchery and meat processing and vegetable and fruit suppliers” Douglas Young comments.

The sector is a growing one for Lovewell Blake with good fee generation and a lot of interest from investors who see farm land as a secure home for their capital. It is also an increasingly international one: overseas investors view the UK as a safe haven for their capital with a fairly benign capital tax environment and land values that have steadily grown over recent years. They see farm land in particular as an area where there are very sound business management skills available for investors to buy land and have it farmed by third parties providing them with a secure return and maintaining the value of their capital.

Other firms within HLB International provide similar services –such as HLB Van Daal’s Agri Business Group in the Netherlands with considerable experience in international agriculture business- showing that agriculture is indeed a global, promising activity.

“Agriculture is one of the most interesting and challenging specialisms we have”

Douglas Young - Managing Partner, Lovewell Blake

Interview

Switzerland still flourishing despite changes in banking and tax regulation



What services does Beau HLB offer?

We provide legal (one fourth of our staff are legal experts or lawyers), tax, accounting & audit services, wealth planning, M&A consulting, trust services, and administrative management outsourcing among other. In short, we offer the whole gamut of services to corporate and private clients, which is rather unique in Geneva.

Any core expertise in particular?

Our core businesses are wealth management on the one hand, trading companies, mainly in the oil & gas sector, on the other. We also have good international M&A expertise, with in recent years an increasing number of acquisitions of Swiss societies

Switzerland remains one of the most attractive financial centres globally despite recent changes, explains Ronald Beau, Managing Partner of HLB member in French-speaking Switzerland Beau HLB. Here are a few insights on the firm's very international business, its core expertise in energy trading companies and the impact of regulation changes on the Swiss economy.

in which case we operate due diligence. We also do business with more traditional industry sectors such as watch making and real estate.

How international are you?

60 to 70% of our clients come from abroad and we have many subsidiaries of foreign companies in our client base. While historically our clientele comes mainly from France, the UK, the US and Russia, we are more and more looking into other markets – such as China for instance. We have recently worked for a Chinese client in the watch making industry –on buying and merging several Swiss brands into a single brand. Since we have joined HLB International we have had frequent contacts with our HLB colleagues in other countries.

What is your analysis on the recent changes in bank secrecy regulation?

A number of conventions involving bank secrecy as well as bilateral agreements have been revised in recent years, so that bank secrecy as such doesn't exist in Switzerland anymore. The whole banking environment in Switzerland is undergoing deep change: banking institutions even go beyond what is required

of them, so much so that opening a bank account in Switzerland has become a long and difficult process –probably more than elsewhere.

How will those changes affect Switzerland's economy... and your firm?

Banking in Switzerland has always been very much orientated towards wealth management and it will from now on need to adopt a more technical approach to finance... the question is whether Switzerland will still be the best in that field. At Beau HLB we might suffer marginally from those changes as less wealth managers will come to Geneva. However this is not our biggest risk as we deal mainly with trading companies and are not deeply involved in this environment.

Is pressure on fiscal advantages more likely to have an impact?

Our biggest uncertainty is on the fiscal problematic, with EU countries pressuring Switzerland to increase tax rates. This is where our main risk lies: if the specific status Switzerland offers to trading companies is put into question then centres such as Dubai or Singapore will become

more attractive in comparison –especially Dubai, with 0% tax rate and only a few hours' time difference. Switzerland feels that this pressure is not justified as other EU countries may have similar tax regimes for trading companies, albeit with different structures... we will see how Switzerland reacts and in the meanwhile stay confident given our diverse range of activities.

Do all those regulation changes threaten Switzerland as a global financial centre?

Switzerland is one of the greatest financial centres worldwide and offers undeniable advantages: safety -Switzerland as a banking centre has existed for hundreds of years and has been a commodity trading centre for more than 50 years; extremely stable political and legislative environment; highly-qualified workforce and remarkable professional expertise in trade of commodities, banking & insurance and specialised legal services; and, finally, an excellent quality of life. We are confident that Switzerland as a financial centre will continue to flourish and attract worldwide business.

A unified market system for East Asia?

Although East Asian countries have been working together for a long time, the region doesn't have a standardised market system yet in place. Ler Cheng Chye, Senior Partner of HLB's Malaysian member HLB Ler Lum, indicated he is in favour of an Eastern-Asia unified market on the occasion of the launch of a handbook for investors in Malaysia and Greater China. "Such a system would help investors better understand the practices of the different countries and pave the way for their investments in the region" he commented, stressing the fact that due to the lack of timely and accurate

information some businesses investing overseas suffer losses or are put in a non-profitable situation.

In the meanwhile, the *Investment in Malaysia & Greater China Handbook*, written in collaboration between HLB Ler Lum, INTI International University and the industry, will assist in fostering common understanding of the economic factors between Malaysia and Greater China (PR China, Hong Kong & Taiwan) for cross-border investors, and help them create better awareness and insights into regional investments.



HLB UK's Beever and Struthers, helping charities raise vital funds

From small charities to large public sector organisations, Beever and Struthers has helped many charities and not for profit or public sector organisations secure substantial grant funding for a variety of purposes.

As Head of Fundraising John Jones points out, "generating funding is a massive challenge for charitable organisations in the current economic climate where there is intense competition for limited finance, but we have the experience and expertise to help them, offering a flexible range of services to provide strategic and fundraising solutions."

Beever and Struthers already has a strong reputation as one of the UK's leading providers of audit and accounting services to the not for profit sector and the development of the fundraising service was a natural extension for the firm. Recent successes have included writing and supporting grant applications for a Manchester-based charity which resulted in a threefold increase in funding to grow the organisation.

"We are delighted to be working with such worthy causes" John Jones commented "and as news of each success spreads we are attracting

a diverse range of new clients to the firm, such as AirRescue 24, the UK's first multi-agency search and rescue service and humanitarian aid provider Al-Imdaad Foundation UK".

AirRescue 24 uses rapid response aircraft and land-based vehicles to get doctors, fire-fighters and search and rescue specialists to accidents and emergencies throughout the North West of England. The fundraising specialists at B&S are helping raise funds for an emergency search and rescue helicopter.

Paul West, AirRescue 24's CEO, said: "I've worked with B&S for a number of years, through which the firm has shown its commitment to a professional and dedicated service. We have now enlisted additional services from B&S to help raise much needed funds for this new and exciting initiative. This is a massive undertaking, but I'm convinced that B&S will pull out all the stops to ensure this service succeeds."

Beever and Struthers is also providing fundraising and audit services to Al-Imdaad Foundation UK, a global charitable organisation with offices in 60 countries worldwide. The main purpose of Al-Imdaad Foundation is to provide humanitarian

aid throughout the world particularly in countries affected by war or natural disasters. Its current project aims to build the first containerised village in Syria complete with a medical centre, school, kitchens and living quarters for refugees.

Abdul Samad Mulla, Country Director of Al-Imdaad UK, commented: "We wanted to work with B&S because of its strong reputation as a market leader in the charity sector and its depth of services. We have so far been extremely impressed with the professionalism and knowledge of the audit staff we have been involved with. This is truly a partner-led service."

As John Jones concluded, "there is a diverse range of organisations benefitting from the experience Beever and Struthers has in the not for profit sector. We recognise the passion and enterprise endemic in a sector where the need is to be creative and inventive in meeting beneficiary need whilst being constantly challenged for resources."

"We recognise the passion and enterprise in a sector where the need is to be creative in meeting beneficiary need whilst being constantly challenged for resources"

John Jones - Head of Fundraising, Beever and Struthers



Magnin Gecors, servicing winter sports and their champions



Magnin Gecors, a member of HLB France based in the Alps Mountains, is a mountain expert with many clients closely related to winter tourism, winter sports and ski resort's activities – an expertise that is both local and international with resorts' increasingly global clientele and Switzerland and Italy less than 40 miles away. Among this "mountain-related" client base is a special case: ski champions, whom the firms accompanies with talent in their worldwide, high-level sport career, and later in their career-change projects. One of these world-class champions, ski cross athlete Enak Gavaggio, agreed to speak to *HLB Insight* about the support he receives from Magnin Gecors.

"What I really appreciate with Magnin Gecors is their availability, and the fact that they always explain everything very well – that's something I'm particularly demanding on. They provide me with a clear view on things which enables me to make good decisions. When you have as many different companies as I have it's easy to be lost. Thanks to them I can do what I like, be where I should and do my job.

As an elite athlete I used to get permanent support, with trainers and coaches who helped me reach the top and would support me when I had any doubts. It is the same now with Magnin Gecors: for me my main contact at Magnin Gecors is a fiscal coach, an adviser who enables me to make choices, take risks and push my projects forward. I'm not interested in a mere

accountant, this is not someone I will place my trust and money with: I need an advisor, someone with vision.

I love my adviser at Magnin Gecors. He has a real client relationship and I feel close because we have so many things in common: he's a sportsman... and he likes skiing."

Called the "dark lord" by the ski profession, Enak Gavaggio is a freestyle skier, ski cross champion, winner of bronze and silver medals in the 2001 and 2007 World Championships. While still skiing free ride, Enak put a stop to his international ski cross career in 2010 and launched a number of businesses and projects to prepare for his career change and next stage in professional life. Among those projects: real estate and property buying with "Flocon bleu" ("Blue snowflake"), event organisation with the "Gavaggio Monster Cross" ski race for children, the launch of headwear brand, "Edit Headwear", and "Miam Corner" ("Yum Corner"), a snack-bar on the tracks. In addition to these initiatives Enak manages his continuing ski career, ski races and contests organisation and participation in films and articles realisation from which he obtains copyrights.

Needless to say, with so many and widely different projects Enak needs a professional services provider whose expertise and complete range of accounting and tax services he can fully rely on.

"As an elite athlete I used to get permanent support, with trainers and coaches who helped me reach the top. It is the same now with Magnin Gecors, my fiscal coach"



Interview

Raymond Cheng, HLB Hodgson Impey Cheng



“Hong Kong professionals, and particularly accountants, have a very important role helping Chinese companies go out. We also help foreign companies settle into China, offering them a traditional English legal system, low tax, free flow of capital and English-speaking staff with good understanding of Western culture”

HLB International’s Hong Kong member HLB Hodgson Impey Cheng is a modern, successful firm directly competing with the Big Four on listed companies work. Managing Partner Raymond Cheng tells *HLB Insight* about his firm, his involvement in the audit & accounting profession and wider political responsibilities, and how he proudly carries and extends the HLB name in Hong Kong’s dynamic business environment and PR China.

HLB Hodgson Impey Cheng is a highly recognised name in Hong Kong: what is your recipe for success?

The firm has undergone radical transformation over the past 15 years: we changed from a small, local tax-oriented business into an international 400-staff-strong company with a young and modern corporate culture. We now focus on financial services, audit of listed companies and IPOs where we are directly competing with the Big Four and are a recognised name in Hong Kong.

Our firm is very young (the average age of partners is late thirties). Coming back from the UK where I graduated and spent 12 years at Coopers & Lybrand, I introduced a different culture, promoting young partners and rewarding staff according to performance rather than on their length of service. This has resulted in a more proactive and energetic culture to which I attribute a great part of our success.

Your involvement in the profession and political responsibilities contribute to HLB International’s visibility in Hong Kong and PR China.

I was elected last year a Council member of the Hong Kong Institute of CPAs, where I have been elected deputy chairman of the Ethics Committee and chairman of the SMP Leadership Panel as well, on a programme promoting transparency — a must for members as we

are currently negotiating the introduction of an independent regulator for the audit profession. I am working on these negotiations and have spent a lot of time discussing with the government on this topic. I was also appointed Committee Member of CPPCC Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Committee (ed. note: CPPCC is the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, a political advisory body with role and powers similar to an advisory legislative upper house). Approximately 1,000 people from Hong Kong are allocated as official advisors to the Chinese government and local authorities, advising on China’s development in their respective fields of expertise.

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Hong Kong has a unique position in the world, acting as a hub to and from China: can you tell us more about this specific business environment?

Until 1997 Hong Kong was a British colony and under a common law system, which has remained unchanged. We are a very business-oriented market and home to the world’s third stock exchange. As the Yuan can’t be freely converted Chinese

businesses use offshore centres to facilitate trade settlements. Hong Kong is the largest of them, attracting the flow of inbound and outbound investment to and from China.

Hong Kong professionals, and particularly accountants, have a very important role helping Chinese companies go out: they help them list on Hong Kong and worldwide stock exchanges so that they become international companies and can raise funds. Hong Kong has always used international accounting and auditing standards and can support mainland China, who uses them since 2007 only, in implementing them. We also help foreign companies settle into China, offering them a traditional English legal system, low tax, free flow of capital and English-speaking staff with good understanding of Western culture.

Hodgson, a common DNA

In 1983 UK firm Hodgson Impey and Hong Kong firm Cheng & Co partnered together, giving birth to HLB Hodgson Impey Cheng. Ever wondered where the HLB name comes from? It’s from “Hodgson Landau Brands”, with history dating back to the 19th century in the UK. So that rooted in HLB Hodgson Impey Cheng and HLB International’s DNA is the same name: Hodgson.

HLB Hodgson Impey Cheng is a recognised name in audit of listed companies and IPOs:

the firm ranks number six in Hong Kong for audit of listed companies, number three for IPOs where it competes directly with the Big Four. The firm audits more than 90 listed companies, and including M&A and consultancy work counts over 150 listed clients.

Real-time referrals tracking: the tool of a truly international network

An internationally-minded global network, HLB International considers referrals of cross-border business between its member firms a primary focus. This is why the organisation has launched an online referrals management system, newly developed and implemented since last autumn. The new system, which will be integrated in the network's intranet, allows members to monitor all their inbound and outbound referrals with real-time data.

“While a clear technological progress, the new referrals system is also an essential strategic tool for globally-minded HLB with the possibility to build direct, real-time analytics based on it”

“The new system gives a dashboard view showing the total amount of work received and referred in the billing year with real-time billing information and referrals history by client” explains HLB International's IT Manager Abu Bakkar. “The database allocates a unique code to each referral that can be used to track the

referral throughout its life irrespective of changes in lead partner. It is also possible to have multiple partners to be responsible for a referral made in cases of joint ventures for instance.”

The system includes additional features such as detailed client information with the possibility to upload supporting documents and store information and comments, direct email notifications to involved parties, while all historical data is recorded on the HLB database. A series of short video tutorials has been devised to familiarise member firms with the various features of the new system, giving an insight on how to fully benefit from its capabilities.

Easily accessible, real-time data on the one hand, interactivity on the other: the two key aspects of this new referrals system are also those of the new intranet website it will be a part of. Indeed, for its new intranet website currently under development, HLB has put the accent on data improvement with both more developed databases and easy access to data for members, and interactivity with direct interaction between members including open discussion forums.

While a clear technological progress, the new referrals system is also an essential strategic tool for globally-minded HLB explains Marco Donzelli, HLB's Head of Strategic Network Development: “most international networks don't dedicate as much attention on tracking international referrals as we do. This new system is very important for us because we can better understand how to improve in different countries, implement national and regional plans and see where it is possible to generate more cross-border business for our member firms - all that with real-time information. We have the possibility to build direct, real-time analytics based on this system.”

“The two key aspects of this new referrals system: easily accessible, real-time data on the one hand, interactivity on the other”



Become the CEO of your life: HLB CEO Rob Tautges talks to university students in Malaysia

HLB CEO Rob Tautges recently addressed students at INTI International University in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, as part of INTI International University's Leadership Series. This was made possible thanks to the strong partnership between INTI International University, a member of Laureate, the world's largest private education network, and HLB Malaysian member HLB Ler Lum.

Rob Tautges shared his experience with students in a presentation entitled "Entrepreneurship, the Key for Success", and motivated students to aspire to be someone: the "CEO of their lives".

From enrolment to employment, from the classroom to the boardroom, necessary attributes are maybe more intangible than technical: students need to take charge of who they want to be and HLB International's CEO shared his life journey with them, making it relevant to Generation Y and their own specific challenges.



HLB Candor Taiwan CPA organises coastal cleanup operation

Over 70 of HLB Candor Taiwan CPA's staff participated in a day of coastal cleanup at Baisha Bay beach, collecting a total weight of 55 kg of unbiodegradable garbage. The team set to work

enthusiastically and as Chairman Vincent Chang pointed out, "despite the fact that nobody likes the sight of garbage on that day we all got very excited whenever spotting any garbage to pick up". Honorary Chairman Michael Chu also came to the event in person.



HLB International extends assistance to Typhoon Haiyan victims in the Philippines

Early November 2013 Typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines. It was the country's deadliest typhoon, affecting about 11 million people, many of whom were left homeless. The cost of damage was placed at US\$814 million on infrastructure and agriculture, requiring a long-term rebuilding effort to restore people's lives.

HLB International's Philippines member Diaz Murillo Dalupan and Company joined the thousands of people in the relief drive and fundraising on the aftermath of the typhoon. The Head Office in Makati - Manila initiated the collection of

usable clothes, canned food items, toiletries, medicines, and bottled drinking water from its staff. These goods were sent to the victims while cash donations poured in from the Partners and staff members and were given to the Philippines' Red Cross. Officers and staff members also volunteered in the re-packing and loading of relief goods at the Disaster Relief Drop-off Centers in Manila.

Funds and cash donations were raised for the seven staff members whose families live in the affected areas, and through CEO Rob Tautges HLB International also contributed to the disaster fund intended for the victims of Typhoon Haiyan.



HLB Bulgaria serves environmental protection

HLB Bulgaria recently won a major audit project for PUDOOS, a company dedicated to the management of environment protection activities. The €434,000 contract will see HLB Bulgaria audit 48 municipalities throughout the country on a 24-month period on the following project: "Implementation of activities concerning closure and recultivation of municipal waste landfills", funded by the European operational programme "Environment".

HLB Bulgaria won the project despite strong competition among the five leading audit companies in the country - the second and third place went to KPMG Bulgaria and Deloitte Bulgaria. The proposal of HLB Bulgaria was assessed with the highest score, 70% of which was based on the technical proposal and 30% on the price.

"HLB Bulgaria won the project despite strong competition: the 2nd and 3rd places went to KPMG and Deloitte".

Building a personalised network with international staff exchange

As a global network HLB International is aware of the crucial importance of having internationally-minded staff to rely on. One way to achieve this is the network's international staff exchange programme, through which HLB member firms welcome staff from other countries as part of their team for a few months. *HLB Insight* interviewed Filip Vestergaard Lindevall, Auditor at HLB's Danish member Beierholm, who spent four months in Johannesburg, South Africa with HLB Barnett Chown. Filip tells us more about HLB's "personalised network" as he experienced it.

"After four years' professional experience I wanted to make a break, go abroad and discover something new. I love new challenges. I was told at Beierholm that HLB International offers this international staff exchange opportunity. I had a great time with HLB Barnett Chown. I met clients from the first day on, including large clients in the manufacturing, mining, farming and technology industries. I primarily worked on audit but did a little

tax returns as well. This was quite exciting and I had real responsibilities. I received great support from the firm's staff and managers.

I came back to Beierholm a changed person. I was more outgoing and confident which had a great impact on my relations to clients: how to grasp their problematics, ask the right questions, really help and understand them. It is important to go out of your usual environment, put yourself at risk: seeing different ways of working leads to improvement. It helps you develop both professionally and personally.

I was given to feel I was part of HLB Barnett Chown, part of the family and this was the thing I enjoyed most about this experience. The staff really took great care of me even outside of the office which made it a whole experience, discovering South Africa, its great culture and people. I learned a lot from them... and I hope they learned a little from me too!"

"It is important to go out of your usual environment, put yourself at risk: seeing different ways of working leads to improvement"



International Women's Day: One question... several answers

On the occasion of the International Women's Day on 8th March, some HLB female leaders provided *HLB Insight* with their thoughts on the following question: "Do you support boardroom quotas as a way of increasing gender diversity at the top?" "Yes", "no" and "in a way" were some of the answers we received for this difficult, yet very topical debate.



Du Juan, Chairman of Sichuan Zhongfa Group, China

"I believe quotas are effective to contribute to diversity in the boardroom. They make it necessary for firms' management to put an effective strategy into place to grow female leaders. It makes not only the firm but also the accounting profession as a whole spend more time and energy to look into the matter of female accountants' career development."

Marianne Smits, Owner & Partner at HLB Van Daal, Netherlands

"In a way I do support this... but of course on a "right person for the right job" principle."

Christine Cai, Partner at HLB ThinkBridge, China

"I don't support this policy. I think the policy itself is discriminatory towards women. Also, a forced election might have a negative impact on the whole organisation. Capable people, no matter if they're man or woman, should have equal chances."

Sun Weichang, Managing Partner and President of HLB Liaoning Zhongheng CPAs Co, China

"I do not support this. I don't think using gender as a protection to segregate a particular group of people in the workplace is wise. It highlights the vulnerability of the protected people and can also create an inferiority complex among them. To obtain respect and recognition, self-strengthening is a must."

A> Awards

Arnold Stange, HLB Germany, awarded the Deal Maker of the Year Awards

Arnold Stange, Partner at German member HLB Dr. Stueckmann und Partner, was awarded the Finance Monthly Deal Maker of the Year Awards for the following case: "Tenova acquires Technometal GmbH".



Arnold Stange advised the seller both legally and taxwise, helping minimise risks within the entity, coordinate the due diligence process and negotiate the contract, improving the sales price conditions substantially. The purchaser, an Italian group, was advised by Norton Rose and PwC.

A worldwide competition, the Finance Monthly Deal Maker Awards recognises M&A expertise in the corporate, private equity, investment banking and legal fields. Arnold Stange was one of the seven professionals rewarded in Germany.

HLB Mann Judd named Best Accountancy Firm... again!

Australian member HLB Mann Judd has been named Best Accountancy Firm in the 2014 BRW Client Choice Awards for the second year in a row (revenue between \$50 million and \$500 million).

This award based exclusively on client feedback is once again a testament to HLB Mann Judd's long-standing focus on providing the best client service.

HLB International ranks 11th in Australia, with the HLB Mann Judd Association covering Australia and New Zealand.



HLB's Beierholm the 2nd Great Place to Work in Denmark

Beierholm, HLB International's member firm in Denmark and a Top Six audit, accounting, tax and advisory company in the country, has ranked 2nd in the "Great Place to Work" national competition - in the category 500+ employees.

The competition, based on companies' own staff surveys, involved this year 29,000 employees from 136 Danish companies. The first prize was awarded to McDonalds.

Forthcoming Events and Conferences

North American Regional Conference

St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands
14-17 May 2014

Australasian Conference

Canberra
12-13 June 2014

Asia Pacific Regional Conference

Chengdu
20-24 June 2014

Audit & Tax Conference

Washington DC
9-12 July 2014

International Conference

Barcelona
22-26 October 2014

European Conference

Vienna
16 January 2015

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