A Supportive and Collaborative Internal Culture

Simpson Healthcare Executives is a global leader in biopharmaceutical consulting dedicated to driving therapeutic innovations forward. We caught up with Danielle Gallagher to learn more about the firm and discover the secrets behind its phenomenal success.

Editor’s Comment

Welcome to the April 2017 edition of AI magazine, which features a whole host of varied and interesting content, from recruitment to intellectual property, as well as investment and our popular Prominent Women in Business series too.

In recent news, confectionery powerhouse Innovative Bites on 12th April 2017, acquired Hancock's Holdings, the UK's leading supplier of wholesale sweets, from H2 Equity Partners and management.

We find out that both the volume and value of M&A deals announced worldwide declined in the first quarter of 2017, according to Zephyr, the M&A database published by Bureau van Dijk. In all, there were 22,093 deals worth $1,100,655 million announced during the three months, down from the $1,467,778 million injected across 25,172 deals in Q4 2016.

I hope you enjoy reading and digesting the contents of this edition.

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Innovative Bites Acquires Hancocks

Confectionery powerhouse Innovative Bites on 12th April 2017, acquired Hancocks Holdings, the UK’s leading supplier of wholesale sweets, from H2 Equity Partners and management.

This is the second major acquisition for the Dunstable-based confectionery importer and wholesaler in the last 12 months. In April 2016, Innovative Bites purchased Bonds of London, one of the UK’s oldest confectionery businesses, and has since doubled its annual turnover.

The acquisition of Hancocks marks a major move for Innovative Bites and its largest acquisition to date. The combined group will boast a sales team of over 150, serving to over 40,000 customers and offering more than 7,000 confectionery products.

Founder and owner of Innovative Bites, Vishal Madhu, said, “our acquisition of Hancocks aligns with our aspirations to significantly grow Innovative Bites’ scale in the UK and across Europe. Our businesses are highly complementary and differentiated in our products, geography and approach, so we are hugely excited about our combined potential.”

He added, “the transaction allows Innovative Bites to combine our best-in-class manufacturing and high-quality confectionery range with Hancocks unparalleled route to market.”

Mark Watson, Hancocks exiting Chairman said that this was a great acquisition for both businesses. He commented, “Hancocks adds to IB a successful management team that have developed a strong product and customer base. Combine this with IB’s American range and Bonds of London’s flexible packaging facility, and it will be a unique proposition in the confectionery category.”

Specialising in the wholesale of confectionery to independent retailers and other businesses, Hancocks offers in excess of 5,000 branded and own label products across 20 UK sites, stretching from Dundee to Portsmouth.

Since launching in the UK 2008, Innovative Bites has expanded its business rapidly and now boasts over 3,500 products, 7,000 retail customers and several top-selling house brands, including Bonds of London and Baking Buddy ‘Mega Marshmallows’ - as well as exclusive distribution brands like Twinkies, Warheads and Trolli.

Innovative Bites was advised on the transaction by Houlihan Lokey (M&A and debt adviser), Addleshaw Goddard and BDO.
Compare Cover Empowers Customers with Insurance Acceptance Rates

With 31% of Brits declaring that sorting out money and finances is causing them stress*, Compare Cover has continued its drive to help educate consumers about the importance of life insurance and how it

As well as displaying the levels of cover provided, life insurance comparison website Compare Cover now publishes acceptance rates for each provider and is the only comparison website that provides these rates for life insurance.

Compare Cover’s Business Development Director, Mike Preston said, “buying life insurance is not like buying any other financial or insurance product. Typically, an average consumer will only buy life insurance a few times during their lifetime, so the understanding of what the process is and how providers view applications will be understandably unfamiliar”.

Preston continued, “customers will often not appreciate that life insurance companies have their own philosophy as to the type of risks they wish to attract, and as such, customers who initially receive a quotation can then find themselves ‘declined’ having selected their insurance company and provided further medical history and personal details.

“This can lead to customers believing that they are ‘uninsurable’ when in many cases, this is not the case and simply a result of the selected insurance company having less tolerance for considering the risk for a particular medical or lifestyle position. This varied underwriting approach between insurance companies is important to understand when selecting your provider.”

He added, “when a customer starts the quote process for life insurance, they are generally asked a very limited number of question about their health, often just whether they are a smoker or not. Put simply, at this stage, insurance companies assume that all customers are in good health, which clearly is often not the case. It’s not until a customer clicks through to the insurance company to apply for the cover, that more questions about the health of the individual are asked including height and weight, personal medical history and whether they have any other underlying health issues.

“It is after the answers to these more in-depth questions, that insurance companies will consider the risk presented and for some companies with a lesser appetite for underwriting risks may decline to offer cover.”

This is why Compare Cover has introduced the ‘acceptance rates’ in order to help customers identify those insurance companies who historically have achieved a greater percentage of acceptance, usually as a result of having a greater appetite and determination for underwriting. Compare Cover suggest that customers who are declined at this stage shouldn’t necessarily give up on getting life protection and instead, go back to the initial quotes presented, examine the different providers’ acceptance rates and try again.

Mike Preston reiterated that being ‘declined’ for life insurance at this stage doesn’t automatically mean that a customer is uninsurable, simply that they may not fit into the profile of a certain insurance company’s target market. He explained: “Clearly for some customers with certain medical histories and conditions, it can be difficult to obtain cover from any insurer. However, we want our customers to realise that not all insurers apply the same parameters when considering risks and to reiterate that consumers shouldn’t necessarily be deterred by a rejection for life insurance. Be aware of and consider the acceptance rates when comparing your quotations”.

*Between 8th April and 15th April 2016 One Poll conducted an online survey among 2,000 randomly selected British adults.
Record Funding to UK Businesses, Reports MarketInvoice

On 10th April, MarketInvoice, the world's largest peer-to-peer online invoice finance marketplace, observed its best quarter and record month (March) of invoice finance funding since starting in 2011.

Invoices worth £54.7m were funded from UK businesses last month, providing them with critical working capital. Q1 2017 has proved to be a record period for MarketInvoice as it scales towards its goal of providing funding against £2b of invoices. The value of invoices funded is up 150% from £31.1m (Q1 2016) to £128.6m (Q1 2017), and the current cumulative value of invoices funded stands at £1.2b.

MarketInvoice Pro, a confidential invoice discounting facility, was launched in February 2017 and, has in large part, driven the growth. The facility, which offers businesses an open funding line against their outstanding invoices, was the first new service launch by MarketInvoice since it was established in 2011.

Anil Stocker, CEO and co-founder of MarketInvoice commented, “this achievement is testament to our customer focused approach and the talented team members who work tirelessly to secure the right funding options and risk assessments for businesses and investors alike on our platform. Our tech advantage using innovative AI and Machine Learning capabilities means we are able to sync information faster and our analysts are able to make better, more qualified decisions quicker for businesses.”

“We’ve seen a healthy take-up of MarketInvoice Pro, our first working capital solution for businesses wishing to finance all of their invoices. This gives businesses across the country the means to address priorities such as hiring more staff, launching new products and paying their suppliers.”

MarketInvoice’s main strategic ambition is to broaden its reach to be able to support a wider range of businesses, from start-ups to larger businesses looking to scale up. The company aims to help even more companies get paid faster by financing their invoices, so business owners can save time and focus on running their business.

www.marketinvoice.com
Coffin Mew Completes Merger with Charles Lucas & Marshall

Leading regional law firm Coffin Mew has on March 31st completed its merger with Charles Lucas & Marshall (CL&M), creating a £15m legal business across eight locations with more than 220 employees.

The merger positions Coffin Mew as one of the largest law firms in the central South region, with a 30% increase in turnover and close to 40% increase in staffing levels.

The deal will significantly bolster the firm’s Private Client offering, with circa 58% of the combined firm’s work dedicated to Private Client, including a weighty focus on Wills, Trusts and Probate and Wealth Management.

Recognising CL&M’s experience in the Rural Land and Landed Estates sector, this merger signals not only the growth of Coffin Mew in real terms, but the expansion of the firm’s expertise and service provision.

CL&M is expected to continue trading as CL&M for the time being, with no plans to close offices or make redundancies. Existing clients of both firms will have the same staff working on their files, as part of the strengthened combined team, following a full TUPE consultation.

Miles Brown, CEO of Coffin Mew commented, “we have made no secret of the fact that Coffin Mew is an ambitious firm. We aim to be a £20m turnover company by 2020, and this merger is a big step towards achieving that goal.

“The addition of CL&M’s staff and expertise complements Coffin Mew’s services across the board. Our teams are already working well together, and I look forward to this being the first of many deals as Coffin Mew continues its expansion in the South, building its presence as one of the region’s leading law firms.”

Managing Partner of CL&M, Hemant Amin added, “in merging with Coffin Mew, we have cemented our ability to offer the highest standards of client services across an increased number of sectors.

“The integration of CL&M staff has been my key focus and I have been delighted with how seamless the process has been. The combined firm’s talents, expertise and experience will certainly make it a legal force to be reckoned with in the South.”

For more information, please visit: www.coffinmew.co.uk or www.clmlaw.co.uk.

Avis Budget Group Completes Transaction to Operate Budget in Poland

Avis Budget Group, Inc., a leading global provider of vehicle rental services, on April 10th announced the completion of a transaction that will allow the Company to operate the Budget brand in Poland directly and to expand its presence in the Polish market.

Prior to the transaction, the Budget brand had been operated in Poland by a third-party licensee since 1990. Avis Budget Group had previously acquired its Avis licensees in Poland in November 2015.

The transaction affirms Avis Budget Group’s commitment to the fast-growing Central European markets, further increasing its ability to serve commercial and leisure customers there. The transaction will add more than 300 vehicles to the Avis Budget Group fleet and seven airport rental locations, including Warsaw, Krakow and Gdansk.

Mark Servodillo, President, International, Avis Budget Group, said, “we’re excited to announce this transaction. Managing both the Avis and Budget operations in Poland will enable us to drive synergies in the business as well as accelerate the enhancements to the customer experience that our licensee partner has supported for a number of years.”

Terms of the transaction were not disclosed. For more information, visit www.avisbudgetgroup.com.
Best Scientific Communications Agency - Connecticut

Simpson Healthcare Executives is a global leader in biopharmaceutical consulting dedicated to driving therapeutic innovations forward. We caught up with Danielle Gallagher to learn more about the firm and discover the secrets behind its phenomenal success.

Since its inception in 1998 Simpson Healthcare has been dedicated to expanding medical conversations and proliferating scientific information worldwide. Danielle discusses how far the firm has come over the years and how it has worked to change the medical industry for the better.

“During the past 20 years, Simpson Healthcare have had the opportunity to work with great clients, and experience much internal growth and success. We have embraced our strengths, but also found many opportunities to learn and grow both as individuals and as an organization, while developing deep and enduring relationships with clients. Our commitment to a supportive, collaborative environment encourages continuous learning and innovation that facilitates the creation and implementation of scientific communications platforms that support our clients’ breakthrough therapeutic brands throughout their entire brand lifecycles.”

Founded by Kelly Simpson-Angelini, CEO, Simpson Healthcare has become a global leader in biopharmaceutical consulting thanks to her hard work and determination to succeed. During the past 19 years, her transformational leadership has driven many breakthrough brands forward for our major pharmaceutical and biotechnology clients. She began her scientific career at Pfizer as a Research Scientist for several years before moving into the fields of sales, marketing, and scientific communications over the next 10 years. It was during this time that she realized her passion and vision for scientific communications and she went on to start her own scientific communications agency, Simpson Healthcare Executives. Danielle is proud of her leader and keen to showcase the achievements she and the firm have made over the years.

“In 2016, our founder was designated as a Women of Innovation Honoree by the CT Technology Council for her entrepreneurial vision and leadership. In addition to her role at Simpson Healthcare Executives, she is also Chairperson of the national non-profit organization, ‘Can Do Multiple Sclerosis.’ Her passion for greatness in healthcare and her desire to be the change that she wants to see in the world carries into every aspect of her as a person as she activates leadership teams, brings people together, and drives healthcare forward. She is committed to Simpson Healthcare Executives’ purpose to develop the scientific stories of therapeutic brands, in collaboration with our clients, and to sharing those stories with key influencers and stakeholders in the industry using a broad array of communications platforms and channels.”

As CEO, Kelly has an active role as founder of her organization in mentoring and coaching women, both internally and externally, in their careers and lives. She values the importance of developing and discovering their strengths and understanding what drives them forward in life. As the most senior leader in our organization, she really takes the time to get to know her people. She is a role model for all women who come to know her and believes that there is nothing that we cannot create, discover, learn, and build together. Her passion for
empowering women to reach for their dreams and achieve them is inspiring and contagious. Kelly’s commitment to the career development of women has engaged and challenged many talented women to become better people every day and to never stop making a difference in the world, and healthcare, that they were born to make. She has built an inclusive, diverse culture at Simpson Healthcare that is supportive of women, where we can collaborate with each other, pursue our dreams, achieve work-life balance, and accomplish goals with all resources necessary for success.

As such, the senior leadership team of Simpson Healthcare has been designed as a dynamic, transformational leadership team of senior members who are highly collaborative, engaging, and serve as some of the most elite business and scientific mentors in the development of the people within our diverse, scientific agency. This leadership believes in building a culture of learning, innovation, and science that is centered around employee and client happiness.

“At Simpson Healthcare, our leadership team is a highly approachable, strategically-minded, self-aware group of people who believe in the philosophy that “if we take care of our employees, they will take care of their clients.” The leadership team lives by the values that they have created as we experience growth as an organization. Our values have become solidified in our corporate foundation and reside in every employee. It is inspiring to employees to have this support from leadership as they challenge each person to become better, to research, design, and create to make brands come alive. Our leaders invest in management of people, they are always offering feedback to employees and challenging them to be better. They are some of the brightest individuals in their field and some of the most open-minded, objective, and reflective team members who really value their role as a mentor and coach, as they drive learning, science, and innovation within our organization.

“In order to build a successful learning culture, it is important for leadership to reinforce our cultural beliefs and dynamics to ensure that our practices of independent and collaborative thinking are systemic
within our organization. We have great clients with a 100% client retention rate, and we have brought our clients much success during the years, as we manage their breakthrough therapeutic brands across a broad variety of therapeutic areas. We are driven to continue to build upon our clients' current success and disruptively drive forward their future therapeutic endeavors. Our leadership team has demonstrated during the past 20 years that this commitment to who we are as an award-winning, scientific agency across the board is a main driver, as all team members are united in living our purpose to support our clients to share the scientific story of the diseases they touch and the therapies they discover for all in need.

“Our diverse, scientific agency thrives on our culture of accountability and find that in our culture of learning, holding ourselves and each other accountable both horizontally and vertically in our organization leads to higher performance and is a main driver of our program excellence. We believe that in order to successfully establish a culture of accountability, everyone must have clear expectations of what success should look like for our agency and for our clients. This clarity of expectations builds trust and transparency between employees, our leadership team, and our clients, as we communicate with each other to build strategic solutions with the most impactful results. In this way, each employee understands what it means to improve, as we have regular feedback on all projects, weekly company-wide project updates provided by each Senior Client Services Director at our weekly Company Snapshot Meeting facilitated by the Vice President of Client Services. We celebrate performance monthly with our Monthly Celebrations Event Program, hosted monthly by our EVP of People+Events, through awards and recognition at both a local and national level, as well as offering bonuses. We are a highly collaborative, transparent team and provide each other feedback on a one-on-one basis regularly in addition to holding formalized performance reviews throughout the year.”

This commitment to ensuring a supportive, collaborative internal culture ensures that Simpson Healthcare’s clients receive the very best support and service from all staff at all times, which is particularly vital when working in such a crucial market as healthcare, where some projects could potentially be the difference between success and failure. In order to ensure complete client satisfaction, the firm’s client-focused approach starts right from the beginning of any new project, as Danielle is eager to highlight.

“The philosophy behind our client services experience when we take on a new client or begin a new project is that through collaboration with our clients, with our key contributors and internal team, we come together to provide exceptional program excellence. At the start of a new project, our internal team will align with our client on strategic vision, project management details, and the long-term value that will be added to the healthcare field throughout the entire therapeutic brand lifecycle. Most importantly, we want to understand and develop the story the client needs to tell. We ensure we have the right members on the team, and this means pulling through the experience of the organization with previous similar challenges. We engage our own best practices, but also acknowledge that every client is different and brings their needs, opportunities, and challenges. After working with the client to clearly define the problem or opportunity, we outline the objectives and timelines. We believe everyone on the team should know the client’s goals and how our story will support it. Internally, we collaborate to drive disruptive innovative solutions using a wide array of lenses and perspectives.

“In addition to being highly collaborative, our process encourages independent thinking and team members will pause for individual ideation before returning to share for team feedback. We have formal best practices that we share internally with our teams that we have found to drive efficiency and produce the best possible outcomes that we want to achieve for our clients. We also believe in the discovery and sharing of new best practices, which are often discovered through direct experience. To maintain internal alignment on projects and their progression, we hold a weekly organization-wide meeting, ‘Company Snapshot’, facilitated by Senior Vice President of Client Services, Fenna Calder, where all project managers provide updates on deliverables across all client accounts. This practice has driven openness and transparency within our organization and effectively ensures program excellence/quality for our clients.”

Looking to the future, Danielle is confident that the firm can continue to offer its clients the very highest standard of care.

“Going forward, in order to expand on our commitment to program excellence for our clients, we have used our passion for healthcare and disruptive innovation to build and customize specialized service offerings that provide long-term value to their business and to the healthcare field. Through the collaborations of talented members of our team, and our CEO and Chief Strategy Officer, Kelly Simpson-Angelini’s strategic guidance on the purpose and intent of disruptive innovation, Simpson Healthcare has developed, and successfully implemented, a new line of Futures work. The value in looking ahead cannot be overstated, as it allows conversation about potential "Future States" to take us beyond current assumptions. During this process, we envision potential Best and Worst Futures, without any reference to present day. We imagine what could be, without current constraints. The value is in the perspective generated from the exercise, which creates a different conversation around decisions we must make in the present day.

“Once the Futures have been imagined, the drivers to reach those Futures are identified, which help identify opportunities to shape a “Desired Future,” or avoid impact from an undesirable one. Throughout, we gather and analyze global datasets, policies, practices, and other influential variables that could
influence or disrupt key markets in healthcare across the longer 10–20-year vision for the future. These inventories are a starting point for change based on the identified opportunities from this process. We are proud to unite to support our clients and shape the future of healthcare so that the best therapeutic treatments may be available to provide a brighter health outlook for those in need.”

Overall, Danielle is proud of the success that Simpson Healthcare has achieved so far and is excited that it can continue to build upon this and support even more clients over the months and years to come.

“Ultimately, we are honored for this prestigious award and look forward to further success of Simpson Healthcare Executives, but also to a bright future for scientific communications more broadly. The world can be volatile, and in the age of ubiquitous information, we strive to lead through sound, scientifically based information presented in a manner that resonates and can create meaningful change for our clients. Our key strengths are the ability to tell the right story, and our commitment to program excellence in client service. We understand the role of the disease or product is one piece of a larger story that includes the patient and their caregivers, the healthcare providers, the health system that must be navigated, and the client’s strategic intent. Like our clients, we keep the patient firmly in our sights as the center of the story. Our offerings include traditional medical and scientific communications, but the diversity and experience within our organization allows us to bring to bear the larger context of healthcare that facilitates high-level strategic consulting as an important part of what our company delivers for every project we work on.

“As such, moving forward we will continue to aim to provide an exceptional client experience by providing strategic insights, as well as on-time, on-budget program excellence in all of our projects. At Simpson Healthcare, we embrace our core values: maintain passion about making a difference by pushing the boundaries to deliver unique strategic value for our company, our clients, and our community; keep it real by developing strong, authentic relationships internally and externally with our clients; look to the future by never losing sight of the larger context and bigger opportunity; know we are better together and dedicated to collaborative teamwork to ensure the highest quality work product; and finally, we bring our best selves to work every day, which means we are committed to achieving personal balance and strength, both at work, and in our own lives.”
Investing in Industry

a2e's operations closely resemble those of a traditional London Merchant Bank, but with an entrepreneurial perspective and a distinctive focus and ethos. We invest in or acquire underperforming mid-market industrial companies. We were pleased to win 2016's Leading Investment Expert award for the United Kingdom, so following this we write more about our expertise in investment.

Our aim is to affect a transformation of the key fundamentals of the businesses, thus 'enabling/revitalising' the corporates and empowering the managers to prosper in the global marketplace. An inspirational and sustainable investment model, fit for the 21st Century, applied with passion and integrity.

The three prongs of the transformative process are:

- An astute strategic assessment of a business's competencies/competitive environment;
- An entrepreneurial deployment of our own funds and;
- A robust alignment of our execution/management capabilities and respective interests.

“We can ‘unlock’ the potential, preserve and enhance wealth by deploying a2e’s entrepreneurial flair, as augmented by a high level of expertise and involvement.”

Since inception in 2001, a2e has distinctly ‘embraced’ investing in or acquiring mid-market industrial/manufacturing businesses, in special situations such as turnarounds, stagnant businesses, shareholder conflicts or exits, financial distress and businesses poised for substantial growth.

We see great opportunity in this challenging and contrarian niche, in which only very few others dare to get involved. We can ‘unlock’ the potential, preserve and enhance wealth by deploying a2e’s entrepreneurial flair, as augmented by a high level of expertise and involvement.

Our potent expertise, ‘enabling’ ethos and sharing of the rewards with all stakeholders brings together the three “pillars” of success, i.e. strategic expertise, funds to invest and execution capability in a co-ordinated fashion. Our ability to act decisively, effectively and speedily, significantly differentiates us from others.

a2e’s impressive progress and track record is due to this all-encompassing approach and our entrepreneurial perspective to creating value/wealth for Mid-market businesses and shareholders. Our Academy of Executives, consisting of ‘seasoned’ and successful industrialists/CEO’s is a source of inspiration and sound/creative advice to a2e’s portfolio company managers.

The anatomy of a2e’s operations, fundamentally distinguishes us from others. In addition, the following characteristics enhance our unique proposition. We mainly invest on a selective basis, in businesses with a neglected industrial brand and/or in special situations. We are a long-term value investor with no predetermined parameter or exit timetable. We inspire the people within the business and help them develop a shared strategic vision and a road map to wealth creation, tailored to the business’s strengths.

Wealth is created by empowering the managers to invest in/upgrade the business fundamentals and to create sustainable competitive edges fit for the global marketplace.

We create alignment of objectives with the managers and other stakeholders by sharing the rewards and we are cognisant of preserving the best features of a business including the loyalty of the people.

a2e is unrivalled because it has an ‘enabling’ ethos, deploying the key pillars of successful investing (see below) in Mid-market businesses.

Wealth creation strategy

Uniquely we focus on ‘shareholder strategy’ first and foremost. This would naturally determine the investment parameters, risk appetite and at the outset, a clear path to enhancing value. The vision for the business and the corporate strategy is then determined firmly within this context. A key attribute of a2e is its vast experience and expertise in evaluating, determining and implementing appropriate shareholder and corporate strategies.

Funding solution

We deploy our own funds to invest as equity and debt in mid-market companies. The ability to commit
funds quickly is a most effective way to invest in/ acquire underperforming/hyper-growth businesses and a major differentiating feature of a2e. In many such circumstances, raising funds from third parties is time consuming and is often futile.

Achieving results
As businesses grow and develop complex operations and need to cope with challenging market conditions, the ability to implement a chosen shareholder or corporate strategy is paramount in achieving the desired results.

At a2e, our in-house expertise is augmented by an Academy of Executives – effectively a panel of Industry Experts together with an ‘advisory board’. We believe this is a ‘potent’ force to reck with, as our track record demonstrates.

Investments / deals in the last 15 years
In the past 10 years or so, a2e has invested in 28 companies and has exited from 10 investments creating wealth with an Internal Rate of Return (IRR) of 96% per annum. IRR is the Industry Standard for measuring returns and the average BVCA returns for the same period for Mid-market deals is circa 8% - 13% per annum! Six of the acquired businesses were merged with the existing portfolio.

A few examples of a2e investments and exit values achieved are noted below:

**Thomas French Limited Value**
- When acquired - £1k
- On exit - £0.8m

**SB Limited Value**
- When acquired - £30k
- On exit - £5m

**Spiro Gills Limited Value**
- When acquired - £100k
- On exit - £5.7m

**Conrad Heat Transfer Ltd/Serck Value**
- When acquired - £1.7m
- On exit - £15.8m
Future Proofing your Roofing

Mick Ellis of Ellis Roofing and ASBESTOSAFE® tells us more about the firm and its innovative product in the wake of winning a 2017 Business Elite Award from the UK.

Based in Rickmansworth, Ellis Roofing has been specialising in all types of roofing within Watford for more than 40 years. Run by Mick Ellis, the firm provides a truly professional and reliable service with a smile, which has not only been noted by its customers that number in the hundreds, but also by fellow competitors.

Not only is the firm a renowned roofing company within Watford, but it also provides a roofing service wherein quality and experience are second-to-none.

Whether it be a roof installation or roofing repairs, Mick and his team are able to provide a stand-out to allow clients the best possible outcome for their roofs, for complete peace of mind. The firm uses the latest scientific techniques and technologies to bring the best solution for customers’ roofing needs.

"We always endeavour for perfection in every job we do."

Ellis Roofing is an environmentally friendly and dependable roofing company, where the customer is the number one priority. Mick provides a steadfast and highly skilled, professional roofing team who assess and install a roof with great efficiency and care. The experience and quality of Ellis’ roofers precedes the company’s reputation.

"We always endeavour for perfection in every job we do," explains Mick. "Our workmen relentlessly strive to uphold not only maintaining and honing in on the skills of installing a roof or making repairs, but also to that of customer service - after all, you are the priority!"

In conjunction with Ellis Roofing, Mick launched a sister company called ASBESTOSAFE® and the firm is currently the only supplier of this product in the UK.

ASBESTOSAFE® is a system for encapsulating/overlaying/waterproofing existing asbestos/cement corrugated profiled roofing sheets. Most profiles can be overlaid and the standard profiles (6 & 3) are readily available, other profiles are subject to manufacture, most at no extra cost. ASBESTOSAFE® provide a full service to all of mainland UK and has, to date, installed the length and breadth of the country, as far as Aberdeen, Scotland and Bude in Cornwall.

Mick tells us a little more about the product and how it is installed.

"The average top side thickness of ASBESTOSAFE® is 35mm/1 inch which provides stability and strength and as a rule, cuts out the need for further costly reinforcement inside. Once an ASBESTOSAFE® system has been applied, the top surface of the asbestos roof becomes completely encased and rendered safe and stronger. The finished flat insulated surface of the ASBESTOSAFE® system is then waterproofed with a high performance felt roofing system. The colour of the finished surface is a charcoal grey mineralised slate. There is a choice of 10 or 20 year fully-guaranteed systems."

Clients for the ASBESTOSAFE® product tend to be 55-years old and over, normally of early retirement, as Mick states that this is when they become fully aware of that garage with the dilapidated asbestos corrugated roof and tarpaulin-covered interior and basically seek help as well as advice as to the future of their roof.

"More than 90% of our clients come to ASBESTOSAFE® because of search engines where we are high up on the rankings, especially Google. All of the enquiries received are not only replied to in the same day, but most will be sent our standard reply that requests certain information in order to further their enquiry, from their first enquiry to ASBESTOSAFE® providing two firm quotations, (subject to the client providing the required information), is within one working week, all of which can be carried out over the internet with no expensive site visits. ASBESTOSAFE® is not only unique, it is the only system available throughout the UK of its kind and as already stated not only strives to provide a reliable, upgradable, credible, affordable solution to this world-wide problem of asbestos corrugated roofing but here at ASBESTOSAFE® the motto is "Re-use not land fill abuse."

The success of the ASBESTOSAFE® brand and product is down to many factors, first and foremost its reliability, promptness, honesty, uniqueness, communication, cost and the fact it does what it says on the can.
“Here at ASBESTOSAFE®, we not only strive to provide a near-perfect system but also to put the client’s mind at rest when it comes to the scaremongering associated with this type of roofing sheet and especially the associated ‘sharp intake of breath’ comments that are given from those without our expert knowledge. With regard to client testimonials, ASBESTOSAFE® has a very up-to-date, mobile, Google-friendly website, found at www.asbestosafe.co.uk, which is updated continuously. This site displays just a small selection of the vast amount of positive customer testimonials received from nearly every client that we have installed an ASBESTOSAFE® roofing system for. I’d like to assure all future clients that all of our testimonials are genuine and have been submitted by the clients of their own freewill. We also run an ASBESTOSAFE blog spot to keep customers up-to-date with the latest news and developments within the industry.”

Currently, ASBESTOSAFE® is a family-run firm and Mike explains that it intends to remain so.

“Regarding the future, our vision is to licence our ASBESTOSAFE® roofing system country-wide and possibly beyond, but all future operatives would be vetted and must be able to maintain not only our high standard of politeness, reliability and promptness, but most of all possess the ability and knowledge that a top-class felt roofer should have - this is a must when installing an ASBESTOSAFE® roofing system.

“At this time ASBESTOSAFE® is a niche system but it solves a very common problem, it really is a system waiting to be discovered and become synonymous with the solution to the asbestos corrugated roofing problem. Although still a relatively young company, the ASBESTOSAFE® roofing system to date has been awarded five prestigious relevant awards the latest being Best Innovative award.”
Sowing the Seeds of Success

In the wake of winning the 2016 Most Innovative Accountancy Firm – USA, Theodore ‘Ted’ Dudek tells us more about Smolin Lupin and what it is that makes the firm so successful.

Smolin Lupin is an award-winning, full-service accounting firm in Essex County (Northern NJ), and has become an industry leader in accounting.

For almost 70 years, Smolin Lupin has dedicated itself to developing long-lasting client relationships and can provide financial and accounting services designed to meet the needs of clients and deliver proven results. This personal attention and guidance has helped it become the successful and respected CPA firm it is today.

Smolin Lupin is an Independent Member of the BDO Alliance USA, one of the NJBIZ Top 20 Public Accounting Firms in New Jersey and one of the top 200 Firms in the United States as reported by Inside Public Accounting.

“In all of our prior surveys we have always scored high in client satisfaction. We continue our dedication to the quality of our services and our clients’ financial successes.”

Theodore J. Dudek is the President and Managing Member of the Firm. He is a licensed Certified Public Accountant in New Jersey and has more than 35 years’ experience in public accounting.

Ted, as he is known, manages the firm by directing its strategic planning and business decision-making. Ted services clients in the bankruptcy, leasing, manufacturing and wholesale industries. He has provided these companies and their owners with accounting, tax, succession planning, and management consulting services.

Ted has served as an expert witness before Federal Bankruptcy Court. He is a former member of the Eastern Association of Equipment Lessors, the American Association of Equipment Lessors, the Bankruptcy Committee and the Cooperation with Bankers Resource Group committees of the New Jersey Society of Certified Public Accountants.

As a graduate of William Paterson University with a B.S. in Accounting, Ted practices out of the firm’s Fairfield, New Jersey office.

Ted goes further into detail about the various areas that the firm specialises in.

“Professionals of Smolin Lupin bring to the table many areas of expertise and experience; they have education, skills and knowledge in tax, accounting, business valuations, business consulting and forensic accounting. They serve clients in Biotech, Construction, Distribution, Hospitality, Transportation, Real Estate, and High-tech. Smolin Lupin audit teams have also expertise in auditing Non-profits, Schools and ERISA plans. An affiliate, Smolin Wealth Advisors, is a tailored wealth management solution that meets the specific objectives and needs of a wealthy client.”

Smolin Lupin continues on its path of organic growth, which has been its hallmark for 70 years. In addition, Smolin Lupin is looking for strategic mergers, acquisitions and business partners the objective of which is to enhance the quality and depth of offered services and deliverables. Ted gives us an example of one of the firm’s recent successes.

“During an examination of a client’s records by a state agency, we noticed a conflict between the sales and use statute and regulations. The conflict in the law offered a significant tax saving opportunities to the client. We were able to obtain a letter ruling from the legal department of the state agency, the terms of which caused the state to refund hundreds of thousands of dollars of previously paid use tax, and provided the client with a safe harbour to continue savings of millions of dollars into the future.”

Smolin Lupin takes great pride in staying progressive and cutting edge and it also takes great pride in its team of hardworking, dedicated employees.

“We invest in the youth of our firm and advanced technologies,” comments Ted. “We promote leadership and skills training and empower our younger professionals to use technological tools that enhance the quality of our services.”

“Our young professionals are our future leaders. Smolin Lupin actively recruits talented tax specialist, accountants and auditors. We invest time and resources in continuous training of our professionals so that each individual is continually improving to better serve our clients.”

“Hiring and retaining talented professionals who are continuously trained and empowered, combined with a cutting edge technological support seems a proven path to success.”
“In all of our prior surveys we have always scored high in client satisfaction. We continue our dedication to the quality of our services and our clients’ financial successes.”

Today’s accounting profession is ever-changing. The regulatory overload combined with the cyclical workload compression makes it difficult for firms to plan and staff. Ted tells us more about such a challenge.

“We do not foresee much of an adjustment in the current challenging circumstances. We mitigate it with advanced technologies and talented staff. Cutting edge technology helps us with faster delivery of services. Our professionals work hard at building and maintaining strong relationships with clients and referral resources.”

Having been in business for 70 years as a CPA firm, Smolin Lupin’s leaders and professionals have discovered many proven business strategies that have yielded successful results for us and for our clients.

“We work hard with our clients to help them maintain and grow healthy business organizations,” enthusiastic Ted. “We love when they succeed!”
Safety First

Safety Vision is an innovative road safety technology specialist that represents the leading edge of mobile video innovation. We invited founder and CEO Bruce Smith to talk us through the firm and the secrets behind its success.

Drawing on over 25 years’ experience in providing revolutionary road and vehicle safety technology, Safety Vision has grown since inception into one of the most recognized vendors of mobile video surveillance products in North America. The firm supports some of the largest vehicle fleets in the United States, meeting all their road safety needs by providing cameras and recorders that, when combined with the firm’s revolutionary software and communications technology, create solutions that meet the demanding needs of fleet administrators and vehicle operators in both the US and internationally. Bruce outlines how the company works hard to ensure that its solutions are at the forefront of emerging market developments, as well as being uniquely tailored to meet the needs of each individual client.

Within the road safety market, Safety Vision prides itself on expertise across five core verticals: mass transit, pupil transportation, law enforcement, trucking, and first responders. Bruce is eager to emphasize the firm’s focus on building strong relationships, both internally and externally, in order to provide the very best solutions to its clients across this vast marketplace.

“Although our work is ostensibly about cameras, digital recording, and software, fundamentally it is really about people and relationships.”

“Here at Safety Vision, we have been working with government agencies and anticipating market trends for over two decades in order to provide our corporate clients with the most cutting edge road safety solutions on the market. Over that time, we have built a solid foundation in the mobile marketplace and are aware of the unique challenges that face our customers as they deal with outside economic factors. We are confident that we have the ability to offer anyone a solution that best fits not only the physical requirements, but fiscal as well.

“Recently, in order to meet the ever evolving needs of our clients, we have introduced two innovative programs, Evergreen and Warranty PLUS, that provide new and unique budgetary planning options to fleet administrators that ensures they receive the benefits of our products over many years without having to change their system. In our experience every client and vehicle is unique; often their needs are not met exactly by off-the-shelf solutions. Our approach revolves around listening carefully to our client’s specific concerns, evaluating their environment, and then recommending the most effective custom solution which will meet their needs and exceed their expectations.”

Among the firm’s latest innovations is the RoadRecorder® 8000, a truly revolutionary system that represents the most advanced generation of Safety Vision’s flagship network video recorders. Every agency is mandated with unique responsibilities that are often not covered by off-the-shelf solutions. The RoadRecorder 8000 provides an open architecture that allows integration with any VMS platform to combine stationary cameras and mobile cameras, all in one application. Agencies can view and manage video from all surveillance cameras that can then be unified to form a seamless visual narrative. With up to 4TB of storage, the RoadRecorder 8000 can record up to 36 IP cameras to deliver the highest level of security needed. Bruce is effusive in his praise for this pioneering technology which will change the market for the better, as he proudly explains.

“Safety Vision is pleased to lead the industry in introducing our newest digital video recorder, the RoadRecorder® 8000. This is the next generation of recorders, as it provides an open architecture that can integrate up to 36 high definition IP cameras with a city’s video management system so they can view both their stationary and mobile cameras in one application.”

Ultimately, road safety is becoming increasingly global as new markets emerge and local companies gain increasing market share from their American competitors, and as such Safety Vision has big plans to grow into the Latin American market, as well as exploring new areas to move into. Bruce concludes by expressing his pride in the firm’s success so far and outlining how it will build upon this through its global expansion plans.
“Moving forward, I am incredibly excited about our aggressive international expansion plans. Safety Vision Latin America already has clients taking advantage of our technology in both Panama and Nicaragua. Safety Vision Mexico has just opened, which will expand our supply chain of quality products to customers there. While we continue to be successful in the United States, we have identified a need for our solutions world-wide and we are ready to apply our technology in many more countries and provide an even wider client base with our creative and vital solutions.

“In addition, we are also expanding into other markets that are in desperate need of the security and safety our solutions can provide, such as valuable transportation and tow and recovery trucks. Our quarter of a century’s worth of experience and breadth of knowledge means there are few problems we have not seen, and we enjoy challenging ourselves with new opportunities.”
Driving Force

Incepted by Mahmood Fazal, Carworld Car Supermarket is now the biggest in East Anglia. In this interview, he tells us the secrets behind the firm’s overwhelming success.

Carworld Car Supermarket, based in Peterborough, is the largest car supermarket in East Anglia. Operating for almost three decades, Carworld has grown in every way possible, having started with a humble stock size of 50 cars today it has more than 1000 cars, for all 36 brands, available on a single eight-acre site.

Carworld was one of the first used car supermarkets to be set-up in the country. It was founded by Mahmood Fazal in 2005, Carworld was his first step into car retailing proprietorship, although he has previously been involved in the independent motor trade for a number of years. Born and bred in Peterborough, he saw the need and local demand for a used car supermarket focusing on low mileage family cars and small-to-medium MPVs. Stock is mostly sourced from fleet remarketers and auction houses.

With the current state of the fluctuating markets, due to a number of factors including Brexit and the USA presidency, Mahmood embellishes on how the company continues to thrive in such challenging times.

“Being connected and available for your customer is really the key to survival in any of these market conditions,” he states. “At Carworld we are constantly looking to engage with our customers on on-going bases. Our customers can contact us 24 hrs a day through live chat and Facebook. We have a stock page on Facebook which enables our customers to stay on Facebook and browse for their dream car in the same environment.

“There are a number of other factors one has to bear in mind to ensure you don’t get caught out and that’s where our leadership team has demonstrated great capability to foresee and adapt to change before they arrive.”

The automotive industry is at the cusp of huge transformation. Billions are being invested in innovation to find alternative solutions for mobility on one hand and dramatically changing the way in which companies such as Carworld operate. Mahmood tells us more about the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

“Carworld will always be driven by what is best for our customers, as buying a car is the second most expensive purchase to a house! Some of our customers have purchased over 15 times from us. That’s shows the confidence they have in our organisation. Change is always difficult and we will ensure that our customers continue to feel secure through this process by providing an ample choice to choose from. Thus, we are making them comfortable at every stage of their journey.”

Recently, Carworld Car Supermarket received a 2017 Business Elite award, and Mahmood comments on what this accolade means for the firm and its staff.

“Carworld Car Supermarket is proud to receive this recognition and would like to thank all our customers for their support over the years that have made this possible.

“Being recognised outside the industry is always very valuable. This award is recognition of the support we have received from our customers and we are grateful to each of them for making this happen. We are confident that our customer too in turn would be delighted with this recognition.”

Carworld Car Supermarket is proud to receive this recognition and would like to thank all our customers for their support over the years that have made this possible.”

Mahmood tells us more about the firm and what sets it apart from competitors.

“Carworld’s strength lies in its unique approach to understand our customer needs and get the business to adapt to fulfil them,” he begins. “We are constantly being innovative in our approach to drive the business and the best example is moving from offering our customers a choice of ‘same day drive away’ to ‘drive away in an hour’ - a service not many dealership of our size are able to cope with.

“What are customers really appreciate is our hassle free approach to car selection and buying. All customer are welcome to browse through a stock of over 1000s cars at their pace and in the absence of anyone rushing them around to make a decision. We follow a strict no obligation free test drive policy which enables them to decide if the car of their choice is right before they proceed to make a purchase.

“At Carworld car supermarket we pride ourselves in being able to provide a car for every budget and choice. Our price ranges from £3000 up to £150K plus. If you don’t find what you looking for we will source it for you!”
Team Work makes the Dream Work

Chris Rowbotham, founder and MD of Clement May, explains more about the firm and emphasises the fact that its success is very much down to a joint team effort. This article celebrates the firm’s receiving of the 2017 UK Recruitment Awards - London And South East accolade.

Clement May is an international IT recruitment consultancy, headquartered in the city of London with offices in Johannesburg and Kuala Lumpur. The firm specialises in ERP, Project Management and Architecture and works with several FTSE50 multinationals, placing professionals globally.

Mr. Chris Rowbotham serves as Partner at Clement May. Chris has more than six years of Executive Search experience, focusing on Technology, Financial Services and the Industrial Sectors. He specialises in the delivery across a range of Senior Management assignments predominantly at Chief Financial Officer, Chief Technology Officer, Managing Director level. Chris was consultant in the Executive Search division of Robert Walters Plc. prior to this he ran the search and selection practise of the Robert Walters Technology division.

Chris tells us more about Clement May and its accomplishments since inception.

"We are always looking out for ways to improve our service and because we have a small team, new policies and practices can be adopted and delivered in an agile and efficient manner.

"We pride ourselves in treating our clients with the utmost respect. All too often, in my experience, recruiters are quick to tell their clients how to work – however, this is not our mantra."

The recruitment industry is competitive and, in order to survive, recruiters must adapt to new roles and expectations from their clients. At Clement May, rather than giving consultants defined roles, the firm emphasises client and candidate satisfaction via a supportive and knowledgeable team.

"International recruitment can be exceptionally complicated but our role is to make the hiring process as simple and successful as possible for all parties," comments Chris. “We will always provide a single point of contact for our clients, again this is an essential part of the Clement May experience.”

Over the last seven years, Clement May’s team has expanded significantly and has an exceptional understanding of the fast-evolving world of technology in the global market. Chris is quick to sing the praises of his team of dedicated, hardworking employees.

"My management team are dedicated to providing a professional, world-class recruitment service," he enthuses.

"Clement May’s staff are essential to the success of Clement May. Our consultants and support staff bring their unique expertise, skills and personalities to the company. Clement May is a multi-national, multi-lingual team who work with global clients and candidates. The team has been built to reflect the global business environment; highly qualified, highly skilled, and highly experienced. Without them, Clement May would be nowhere!"

"I also believe in the continuous improvement and training of staff and this is certainly something we are looking to build upon into 2017."

Indeed, Clement May’s ethos is to build niche specialist teams that build strong, long-lasting client relationships and consultants are regularly invited to advise clients on their hiring strategies, demonstrating the depth of the business relationships the firm has built over the years.

"I have been extremely impressed by Clement May & their Architecture Delivery. They have certainly made a dramatic difference to the whole resourcing process"
"We believe the success of an individual consultant is a success for the team and encourage a balance of support and competitiveness between staff. While this is always a challenging balance to manage, I feel it’s a key part of my role and one I take great pride in. Also worthy of note is we openly have no sales KPIs for any of our consultants."

Chris’s time at larger firms has taught him that competitiveness between consultants is great for getting business through the door. However, maintaining relationships with clients and candidates is what drives the business forward and that requires a joint effort," he states. "We focus on qualitative rather than quantitative delivery knowing that positive feedback results in repeat business. I passionately believe recruitment should be judged on results & service, not slick presentations."

Chris goes on to explain the extent to which he believes recruitment agencies are playing an increasingly prominent role in the hiring process, for both job-seekers and hiring firms alike.

"The nature of the sectors and functions in which we operate has commanded a very personalised interaction with both clients and candidates. We typically target a very small pool of international experts. This aspect of our work has altered little since we started Clement May, however more recently our clients are requesting increased input in the post-application process.

"I believe it’s also worth noting that we are increasingly consulting to our clients before the hiring process begins. We typically advise our clients on a role up to a month before it’s released. Being clear on your target hire before you begin the search is an essential part of the Clement May experience."

Recently, Chris and the team at Clement May were awarded the title of Most Innovative Employment & Recruitment Agency for London and South East in the 2017 UK Recruitment Awards. Chris tells us exactly what this award means for him and the firm.

"We are very proud to be part of the 2017 UK Recruitment Awards. Feedback from candidates and clients demonstrates on a daily basis that we are providing a crucial service but it’s also important to receive industry support. To be part of the Recruitment Awards has given us that moment of reflection, to review the accomplishments of the company as a whole and of the individuals who make it work. Involvement in the 2017 UK Recruitment Awards marks a milestone in the growth of the business and I’d like to take the time to credit my hard working staff for making this possible."

With regards to the future, Chris has aspiration to launch a new team, as well as to expand the business even further across the globe.

"This year we are working to develop a specialist cyber-security team. Reflecting the increasing demand for security professionals we feel that a dedicated department, operating globally, would provide improved expertise for our clients."

"We are hoping to open an office to supply the Latin American region to assist existing clients with their operations overseas and develop a new client base in exciting emerging markets."

"I am also looking to bolster our internal HR team with Learning & Development specialists. I believe that internal training and development of the Clement May Team is key to our continued success."

**Client Testimonials**

Clement May are very engaging, very knowledgeable & very thorough in their work. They have a highly structured approach and are clearly working hard to meet our needs & it certainly makes a difference that we have them on site. This allows stronger collaboration, there is no sign of any sales pitch – something I am very happy about."

"I have been extremely impressed by Clement May & their Architecture Delivery. They have certainly made a dramatic difference to the whole resourcing process"
Excellence in Immigration Law

2017 European Legal Elite – Spain winner, Legalcity is a law firm specialised in Immigration law, Criminal law, Civil law and Labour law.

We offer a complete litigation service and an exceptional legal representation to our clients, either before the courts and tribunals, the Immigration Office, the government or the police. Our ability to find creative solutions to complex legal situations in the field of immigration law has been the hallmark of our firm since its inception.

Humanity is in constant movement, and an essential part of its composition are the migratory flows that in this 21st century have modified the social, economic and legal reality of the whole European Union, and specially of Spain.

Legalcity already has combined experience since 2004 in immigration law, reason why we are ready to take on any immigration case, no matter how complex it might be.

Concerning this area, we have questions about citizens of the European Union and their families, non-European Union citizens, Spanish citizenship, residence and work permits, visas, effective entry into national territory, and permanence in the territory of the European Union. Also, issues on access to the labour market, acquisition of housing, establishment of a company and renewals of visas and appeal of denials, sanction procedures or approval of academic titles, among others.

In Legalcity we are aware of the importance that a criminal matter has for a foreigner. Criminal law covers penalties and sanctions that can cause serious alterations in the life of a human being, such as imprisonment or expulsion from Spain and therefore from the European Union. That is why we provide careful advice and legal assistance to individuals and companies, exercising both the defence and prosecution in all types of criminal proceedings and instances.

Our advice also includes the defence of the interests of our clients in previous phases of investigation before the Public Prosecutor’s Office and Security Corps. We also assist on issues like complaints, denounces, trials, detainee assistance 24 hours, traffic accidents, no license, DUI, attacks against the authority and much more.

Civil law is the third area that we cover in Legalcity with a complete service of guidance and advice in matters arising from personal or patrimonial relationships, whether natural or legal persons.

We assist on issues such as verbal, ordinary procedures and civil execution procedures. We also assist family law as separation, divorce, civil partnership, alimony, custody, use of the family home, visitation rights, liquidation of matrimonial property, litigation and mutual agreement procedures, among others.

Labour law is the fourth area of Legalcity. Foreign citizens are often treated unfairly in workplaces. They are dismissed improperly, are paid less than the established in agreement, among other irregularities.

In our office, you can find a complete service of guidance and advice in matters arising from labour relations assisting on individual and collective dismissals, claims of payment, sanctions, job classification, mobility, harassment, business failure, declaratory actions, procedural representation before the social courts, appeals to higher courts, executive procedures, procedures at FOGASA, and procedures before the Labour Inspectorate.

In recent years, the immutable legal industry has begun to change. Customers are demanding more control. Companies are looking to be more efficient. Immigration from many countries to Spain, in a globalised world, is a reality that has changed even the legal system and the way of practicing law. With the digitalisation, the whole market is calling for progress, and this call has become real. This changes everything.

Legalcity aims to ensure the satisfaction of its clients providing high quality legal advice. The key to a successful practice is to be able to develop individual approach to each client and their needs. We have more than twelve years of experience during which our services have received more than 21,000 people from 102 different nationalities.

“Our mission is to achieve, ‘Excellence in Immigration Law.’ This does not mean knowing and being only experts on foreigners and ‘papers for foreigners’. It is much more.”
Bienvenidos
Benvinguts
Welcome

Our customers are our main assets. Therefore, as expert lawyers in immigration law, it is our duty and commitment to provide the highest degree of satisfaction by advising and helping our customers on their most important issues. I believe that our successful cases define our good work and professionalism.

Our mission is to achieve, ‘Excellence in Immigration Law.’ This does not mean knowing and being only experts on foreigners and ‘papers for foreigners’. It is much more.

It is to find the right solution taking into account the complexity of being a foreigner in Spain, applying in depth different branches of law. That is why Legalcity has received many distinctions and awards along these years as recognition to the Excellence of its service. Also in 2017, we will continue to grow and above all establish the base to internationalisation.
Olimpic Standards

CEO of Olimpic International Turism, George Sorin Nicolescu, speaks to AI magazine about the company and what winning the prestigious accolade of CEO of the Month – Romania means for him and the firm.

Olimpic International Turism, founded in 1990, is a well-known professional conferences, meetings and incentives organizer, tour operator and first class business travel agency. It is also a member of the following bodies:
• ANAT - The National Association of Travel Agencies since the founding of the association in 1991;
• ASTA - American Society of Travel Agents;
• IATA - International Air Transport Association Accredited Agent;
• CCIB - Bucharest Chamber of Commerce and Industry;
• AOAR – The Businessmen's Association of Romania;
• OMTR – Romanian Organization for Marketing in Tourism;
• AJTR – Romanian Association of Travel Journalists and Writers;
• ANEIR –National Association of Exporters and Importers of Romania.

"Being a CEO is a continuous effort of combined hard work, responsibility, quality of decision and solid financial knowledge, all leading to having the satisfaction for great economic results," he explains. "Both opportunities and challenges come from trying to develop the online sales, and aligning the company to the present online trend."

George has been CEO of Olimpic International Turism, as well as two other companies from the tourism field, for the past 27 years. Prior to that, as a young man, George was managing the company and national guide.

"I had a great satisfaction managing my own companies, but I also felt plenty of responsibility for such a position."

The staff at Olimpic are of utmost importance to ensure that efficient running of the firm, and George tells us more.

"The staff in every company is very important in order to obtain success. They must be certified professionals, innovative and motivated, so we can achieve the highest management of our company and get the best results."

Recently, George was awarded the title of CEO of the Month – Romania, an accolade of which he is very proud.

"Being awarded CEO of the Month – Romania feels amazing, as receiving an important international recognition after 27 years of working in tourism field is a great accomplishment."

Olimpic International Turism is far one of the most reliable and innovative travel companies in Romania with customized services for special requirements providing a total portfolio of services for its guests' convenience and comfort.

The firm has years of experience co-operating with all major hotels and conference centers in Romania. Olimpic's experienced staff take care of all arrangements down to the smallest details, ensuring the events run smoothly, able to coordinate conferences long before arrival until the last departure, whether it's a large conference requiring accommodation and transportation for several hundreds, or an informal conference requiring more personal facilities.

George Sorin Nicolescu is Chief Executive Officer of Olimpic and he tells us a little more about what he enjoys most about his position.

"This award comes as an important step in recognizing the importance of the top management of our company, Olimpic International Turism, awarded in the past by the Romanian Government and other International Organizations."
The Right Truck for the Right Job

2017 UK Business Elite Awards winner is Armill Lift Trucks, a company that started in 1991 as a family business with Peter and Ann Millar servicing and repairing forklift trucks, who we invited to tell us more about their story following their recent achievement of the UK Business Elite in the Business Sector award (2017 UK Business Elite Awards).

In 1995 Gary Millar joined in the role of salesperson and the company took off, primarily selling used forklifts and offering short and long term hire of the same. After a number of dealerships over the years, Armill moved twice into large premises then in 2014 were appointed the prestigious Jungheinrich partnership. Year on year Armill have been the number one partner - hitting every target set and being awarded Partner of the Year for 2015 and 2016.

Being awarded the 2017 UK Business Elite Award is a great feeling to be recognised. The recognition illustrates to all of Armill staff that we are doing something right and are being rewarded for it.

Armill specialises in the area of new and used forklift trucks, being the dealer partner for the Jungheinrich range of forklifts. Whether if it is an outright purchase or short and long term hire, we offer the full package. In addition – Armill operate a fleet of mobile service engineers to carry out servicing and repairs - to all makes and models of forklift truck and material handling equipment.

The reason I think Armill is successful is we offer our customers unbiased advice and supply the right truck for the right job. Quite often in our industry, the sales person offers the customer an exact replacement or what the customer thinks they require, however often after a full site survey and discussion where there is more than one option available.

We also offer our customers a fast response and direct contact with the owners and directors of the company who can make instant decisions. Armills customer base is very diverse from one truck to multi truck users, indeed we offer the new range of Jungheinrich forklift trucks as well as some of the best refurbished forklift trucks in the industry. We obtain our custom via word of mouth, referrals and by direct marketing.

Armill's team of sales, service and admin staff all contribute to our success, indeed we all work as a team supporting each other and picking up any slack. It is not uncommon for senior staff members to muck in and assist in the workshop during our busy periods. When structuring new presentations for prospective customers, each department has an input to make sure we offer our customers the full package and ensure a smooth-running contract.

Armill's future plans are to continue our growth with Jungheinrich and increase our new truck portfolio. The challenges we face today is recruiting new engineers, as the industry has a lack of young trainees coming through, however this is being addressed with apprenticeship schemes and training programmes.

Also, quality used equipment is proving harder to locate, but this in turn is forcing a company like Armill to upgrade their own trucks earlier to new, so in turn releasing our own trucks into our used truck programme.
The ‘Gold Standard’

2017 USA Consultancy Awards - Most Innovative Business Management Consulting Firm winner Rakesh Kishan, Managing Principal, Trascent Management Consulting imparts his thoughts on winning this award and the niche market the firm serves.

Trascent Management Consulting (Trascent) focuses on Corporate Real Estate and Facilities Management (CRE/FM), estimated to be a $400 billion market in the US. Within this niche, Trascent provides market intelligence, benchmarking, functional and technology strategies, business transformation and outsourcing implementation services (RFP, organisation, technology, HR, transition, and governance) to leading global Fortune 500 corporations.

With the ability to serve globally through Trascent offices in the US, Switzerland and Singapore, Trascent helps clients implement global CRE/FM strategies that create shareholder value through a broad range of consulting services. Trascent is the only management consulting firm in the world to hold three conferences on CRE/FM annually in the US, EU, and APAC. These conferences have been attended by about 150 Fortune 500 companies, representing billions in CRE/FM budgets.

"We specialise in functional improvement strategies in CRE/FM, benchmarking, business transformation (shift to shared services CRE/FM structures and processes) and CRE/FM outsourcing implementation globally. Our unique strength is the applicability of our consulting services to a broad range of client portfolios – from data centres, to R&D labs, manufacturing factories, and office and retail space.

"As an example, in the last 2 years alone, Trascent has supported FM improvement initiatives across 1,000 manufacturing plants worldwide. Our unique differentiation is that we address all key aspects of the CRE/FM transformation – which include organisation design, CRE/FM technology strategy, HR employee transfer terms across all global regions, contract pricing and negotiations, supplier market assessments, transition, governance and turn-arounds of troubled supplier relationships."

Kishan then impresses upon us how the firm has demonstrated high levels of excellence in their work, saying that these have been consistent over the last 15 years across a number of areas. The firm created the first consortium analytical benchmarking program for facilities management that compared unit cost and service levels in a normalised cost basis. In addition, Trascent pioneered CRE/FM outsourcing best practices in areas, such as outcomes based RFPs, incentive based pricing methods, and collaborative sourcing approaches that consistently deliver high-performing outsourcing relationships.

"Our methods are recognised as the ‘gold standard’ by clients and leading industry suppliers.

Most Innovative Business Management Consulting Firm – USA

On winning the Most Innovative Business Management Consulting Firm – USA, Kishan says that he and the firm are excited to be a part of the 2017 USA Consultancy Awards, as it represents an achievement for Trascent Management Consulting. It reflects their client commitment to continuously evolve and provide effective and innovative solutions to the rapidly changing CRE/FM industry.

Kishan proceeds to outline his own role as a consultant and the consulting services the firm specialises in.

"My role as a consultant involves ensuring high quality consulting deliverables for our clients, engaging with senior executives on CRE and FM strategy and overseeing the quality of our benchmarking, organisation, transformation and outsourcing initiatives. I am responsible for thought leadership, aligning our solutions with client needs and adapting to supplier market developments. I am part of the Trascent leadership team that develops our staff skills, knowledge and tools to ensure high value client solutions.

"Our multi-lingual consulting colleagues (who speak Mandarin, English, French, Spanish for example) are the backbone of our firm and are responsible for our success. Our colleagues are some of the most talented and client focused consultants in the industry. They are key to our delivery and play a broad range of roles – from developing analytical business cases for CRE/FM change - to leading and helping implement transformation services, to negotiating and implementing outsourcing deals.

"Our methods are recognised as the ‘gold standard’ by clients and leading industry suppliers. We implement far more outsourcing initiatives and have more deal experience (number of deals implemented per year) in each region of the world as compared to any other consulting firm", Kishan goes on to say before telling us more about the firm’s team of advisors.
"An advisor’s work can be highly analytical where they develop financial models and conduct scenario analyses, to sourcing work where they develop RFPs for supplier responses, to deal structuring (contract negotiations) and operational implementation (plant and site level operational solutions)."

On the opportunities and challenges for Trascent Management Consulting in 2017 and beyond, Kishan stresses that as they are a global firm with an in-region market intelligence and presence, they continue to have opportunities to leverage their presence to help clients implement global initiatives.

"These global initiatives can start at any one of our market regions and span world-wide. We see significant opportunity through the digitisation of the CRE/FM industry. The growth and consolidation in the CRE/FM outsourcing industry will create opportunities for us. Our challenges are focused on attracting and retaining talent", Kishan concludes.
A Bird in the Hand

Nestled in the green hills of South Sligo, Ireland's largest sanctuary for raptors and owls, the Irish raptor research centre (eagles flying) is situated on more than 27 hectares of mature parklands near Ballymote. We invited managing director Lothar F. Muschketat to write about this major tourist attraction in the northern half of Ireland, following their success in winning the 2017 Business Elite Awards for Ireland.

Currently the Irish Raptor Research Centre is home to more than 100 eagles, hawks, owls, falcons and vultures. Altogether there are more than 450 birds and animals out of nearly 100 different species in the centre.

Established in 1999 as an institution for research on birds of prey, parts of the area were opened to the public in 2003. Now it is one of the major tourist attractions in the northern half of Ireland. Thousands of visitors flock to see the spectacular bird shows with eagles, hawks, falcons, vultures and owls. Amongst many other awards, Eagles Flying was awarded the Certificate of Excellence by TripAdvisor in 2015 and 2016, getting 5 out of 5 points during both of those years.

Scientists train these birds twice each day for visitors and give information about the biology of these magnificent creatures. During the interactive bird shows, visitors can experience different types of raptors flying right over their head or landing next to them. Some of the birds have a wingspan of up to three metres. It is also possible to touch some of the animals and some members of the audience may even have one flying on to their own hand.

Eagles Flying have developed a very special, friendly way of working with raptors and other animals and there is no risk whatsoever for any member of the audience. The shows are unique - you have never been that close to raptors! Even rain cannot spoil this experience, as the shows can be presented indoors.

During the shows - commencing at 11 am and 3 pm every day and lasting for approximately one hour - the birds are presented in their natural environment. Before and after the show, visitors can walk the parklands and enjoy the birds displayed in aviaries or on perches close to the walking path. Staff are always on hand to provide information on the birds and answer questions.

For the ones who prefer something cuddlier; there is also a large supervised petting-zoo. Here, visitors can get hands-on with guinea-pigs, pigs, rabbits, lambs, goats, donkeys, ferrets and many more. Rosie the 350-kg pig gives kids a proper piggy-back ride, Grizzly, the raccoon, is a gifted pickpocket. Tui and Allan, the tame foxes make perfect (live) fur collars for fashion conscious ladies and Monty, the 4-meter python, even makes a perfect scarf for at least 6 people at a time.
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Customer First

Eddy Sakr, co-founding partner at Sarkis Sakr & Partners, tells us more about the company following being awarded the title of Most Innovative Accountancy Firm 2017 – Lebanon.

Sarkis Sakr & Partners is an Independent Member of Geneva Group International. Since its inauguration, it has been considered one of the fastest growing audit, tax and advisory practices in Lebanon mainly due to consistently offering timely and insightful advice.

Sarkis Sakr & Partners specializes in full range of audit, tax consulting, management consulting and financial advisory services. Co-founder, Eddy Sakr, tells us more about the firm and these areas of specialization.

“Our approach deals with any audit, small or large, simple or complex, while ensuring that all audits (internal or external) are carried out to a consistently high standard. Taxation is one of our core services as we manage and mitigate risk during our effective reviews of tax areas. We also have a particularly strong team of tax experts, able to advice on corporate and international tax structuring, tax on transactions, transfer pricing, indirect taxes, tax risk management, tax valuations and tax investigations.”

The firm has a diverse portfolio of clients such as leading Lebanese banks, conglomerates, insurance companies and local business of International Groups. However, Eddy explains that the team is also dedicated to assist startup SMEs by providing them with the sufficient information needed and the training essential for their right kick off.

“We develop strategies aimed at particular groups of firms or industries which begin in the field of economic development for less developing industries.

“Fulfilling our reputation in delivering highly efficient services, the Sarkis Sakr & Partners is led by a team of experts in accounting and tax who possess multidisciplinary know-how and who are dedicated to achieving excellence in every task undertaken and tackle any challenge using fast, groundbreaking and innovative solutions."

“Through our continued commitment to our clients, we were congratulated on being on the cutting edge of all the latest financial changes in the market and on providing our clients with the latest insights into such changes.”

Sarkis Sakr & Partners encompasses one of the best and most talented groups of professionals. Sarkis Sakr & Partners is comprised of a team of Certified Public Accountants and other professionals encompassing partners, managers, senior and associates.

“The methods applied and our success depends on all partners and staff drawing on the Firm’s knowledge and experience,” explains Eddy. “Our professionals have a breadth and depth of experiences which allows us to understand organisations’ unique areas of concern and then develop solutions tailored to meet those specific concerns.”

With regards to the next 12 months, Eddy has definite plans for the firm’s continued success.

“Throughout 2017, at Sarkis Sakr & Partners, we have begun evaluating our business processes to improve any inefficient and ineffective method, which in turn will allow us to serve our clients with greater accuracy, quality and time efficiency.”
Intellectually Stimulating

Ones to Watch in Intellectual Property, Italy award winner Studio Legale Sutti (SLS) details the adventurous journey they have taken since their inception in 1953 to the present day.

Studio Legale Sutti was founded in 1953 by Dr. Angelo Sutti, Knight of the Italian Republic, as an Italian law firm with a strong focus on company commercial law, intellectual property and competition law. From the outset, the firm’s intention was to offer its legal services to businesses and entrepreneurs. In the late 1970s, the firm began an uninterrupted growth cycle, eventually becoming one of the largest Italian law multi-professional practices.

In the mid-1980s, SLS’s practice became increasingly involved in the international arena, and began interviewing foreign candidates in the firm’s recruitment operations. This also led the firm to establish its two representation offices abroad in 1992, namely in London and Tokyo. This ensured that the firm’s services were offered to the local markets, and it enabled them to participate actively in the life of a number of foreign chambers of commerce and trade associations in Italy.

The domestic operation of SLS, already included two regional offices serving Northern Italy, respectively situated in the area of Bergamo and Brescia (in Trescore Balneario), as well as in Pavia and in the southern Milanese province (in Abbiategrasso). This was significantly reinforced in 1993 - when the firm merged with Monti & Partners - another well-known Milan-based law firm active since 1927 in international investments and trade matters as well as banking and financial law.

At this point, we moved our head office to the current prestigious premises in Milan, via Montenapoleone 8. In addition, new Italian offices were established in the same period, respectively in Rome; Monza and Genoa, where SLS was honoured to be joined by the esteemed partners and associates of the firm Studio Pennisi.

Meanwhile, SLS had become both a multidisciplinary and an international firm, having welcomed patent attorneys and tax advisors (‘commercialisti’) to its ranks and established the single largest practice of South-Eastern Europe (in terms of human resources, territorial coverage and turnover). In particular, further to the firm’s mergers with local leading players, we started operating our own offices in Bulgaria, Yugoslavia (now Serbia), Romania, Croatia. In this respect, we were increasingly representing a point of reference concerning investment and trade in that part of the world.

In terms of my own background, I was born in Abbiategrasso, in 1962. I graduated at Università degli Studi di Milano in 1985, with a thesis in Copyright Law. Since 2015, I have been teaching intellectual property at Politecnico di Milano and since 2016, at Università Statale di Milano as well.

In addition to my respected academic and research activities, I have worked at Studio Legale Sutti in Milan where I became partner during my 30s, and this is where I headed up the firm’s intellectual property law and competition department.
Globally Speaking

TPA Global group is an independent and specialist provider of expert transfer pricing, tax valuation and customs services. Recently, tipped as One to Watch in Dispute Resolution 2017, CEO Steef Huibregtse tells us more about the firm.

TPA Global is an independent professional service and solutions partner that serves its clients globally through a network of Members and Alliance Partners in more than 80 countries. The firm’s solutions range from international tax related services such as Tax Governance, Transfer Pricing and Indirect Taxes, to Merger and Acquisitions support to Operational Performance enhancement services like location selection and supply chain optimization.

Steef Huibregtse is Chief Executive Officer and Managing Partner at TPA Global. With more than 30 years’ experience in the area of value chain analysis, transfer pricing strategy, risk management, design, documentation and implementation, Steef has recently been acting as expert witness and is heavily involved in presentations to management boards.

With a degree in fiscal economics from the University of Rotterdam, his previous experience includes two of the ‘Big 4’ where he worked as a transfer pricing partner on global projects. He has worked in Washington DC, London, Frankfurt and Amsterdam, his current location. Steef also frequently lectures and publishes articles on value chain analysis and transfer pricing.

Steef comments: "We are the leading specialist in reconciling differences across value chain analysis, and aligning different perspectives among accounting, tax and transfer pricing issues. Our unique approach to value chain analysis is based on the premise that any value chain must be synced with specific transfer pricing and tax implications in each jurisdiction.”

Global Markets are resulting in companies operating cross border with multiple product lines, multiple governance and business models. It is in this complex environment that TPA Global thrives.

“We understand the complex requirements of multinationals operating in this market,” Steef says. “We like to coordinate our project efforts through centrally managing our mandates via our central services platform always operational led by one of our Senior Partners. This Platform manages cross-border and cross-disciplinary teams of professionals and delivers and implements pragmatic solutions for our clients.”
Unique – Patent Attorney and Industry Analyst

LifeTech IP // Spies & Behrndt Patent Attorneys recently received the European Business Award 2016 in the category ‘IP Law Firm 2016 – Germany’. In the following interview, one of the founders, Ruediger Spies, shares his views about new opportunities through digitisation and the management of IP as an enterprise asset in times of intensive innovation activities and changing business models.

Numerous reports show that many IP departments are managed as cost centres, or eventually as protection centres. Only a small minority of companies manage their IP portfolios as profit or asset centre, that is as a business of its own embedded into an enterprise strategy. This is not only true for large enterprises, but also for many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

“In order to organise our client-oriented services efficiently, we have adapted a Silicon Valley type of approach in order to eliminate organisational friction.”

On the other hand, society is on the edge of moving into the knowledge economy Ruediger is convinced. He adds that humans not only generate increasing value from know-how, services and insights instead of simply producing products, but also from machines. This is mainly driven by computers and software, but also by active systems such as robots. These contribute to increased economic value Ruediger tells us, before explaining this point in more detail.

“In other words, the world has reached an inflection point. Some of the press headlines used are: Digitalisation, Internet of Things, Industry 4.0, Digital Twins, Cloud Computing, 1:1 Individual Drugs, Digital Farming and so on. Business decisions are increasingly based on technologies such as business intelligence, predictive analysis and ‘big data’ applied to data lakes. I believe that a critical mass of these technologies has now been reached and cannot be ignored any longer.

“On the other hand, we also have the slow-moving constituents as part of the development of industry and society. One of them is the legal system, which has had difficulties adapting to today’s fast-moving technology advancements such as self-driving cars. In this context, the important question is how companies should address the required protection of IP. Unfortunately, most enterprises have what is termed as ‘relative distance’ between product development, product management, product marketing, sales and business strategies on one hand, but on the other hand, IP departments are not really changing at the required pace.

“Often, IP department members only speak with the technologists if absolutely required; such as for a new disclosure based on which an idea should be protected or, if there is a case of IP infringement. Thus, typically only operational contacts occur between the IP departments and the remaining parts of the enterprise. IP strategies are only in selected cases, completely interwoven into the enterprise business strategy.”

Looking over the fence, IT departments know quite well how to apply an IT architecture development process Ruediger says. He then suggests – in short – to mirror that process for a development of an ‘IP architecture’, that is to start this with the annual report, continue with IP value architecture and then go on with the development of an IP process architecture. Doing this, implements an IP technology architecture and allows an active IP portfolio management, instead of saying, ‘oh, we file every good idea’.

So, what is needed? Enterprises should adopt a strategy and value based IP process Ruediger underlines. It should reflect and support the general business strategy, instead of being an afterthought to the product development process. Ruediger then expands on this point.

“For this, it is required to understand the industry trends and developments not only from a legal perspective, but also from a broader technology perspective — not only for one vertical industry but across industries, business models and requirement changes in society.
"This is the basis our firm has chosen when we collaborate with our clients. The firm's consultative approach is based on our broad technology background and deep insights into emerging technologies and industry trends, as well as an understanding of the broader financial and value aspects of IP protection.

"That this approach is successful and was proven when we received the 2016 European Business Award 2016 by CV magazine in the category 'IP Law Firm 2016 — Germany'. Articulating actual patent descriptions and claims, as well as having the aforementioned future developments in mind, helps us to increase the granting of the patent and their potential economic value."

Industry Analyst and Patent Attorney = Unique Advantage

LifeTech IP's deep understanding of technology trends, as well as the required technical expertise, is based on decades of experience in research institutes, the industry and industry analyst companies Ruediger explains. In particular, a background as industry analyst is instrumental in bridging the gap between excellent technical details of a new idea and a commercialisation via product management, marketing and sales Ruediger says. Admittedly, the profession of an industry analyst is not well understood.

Worldwide, there are roughly about 2000 serious industry analysts. They work with executives of the global 2000 enterprises, as well as IT companies and IT service providers of every size. As one example, also a management consulting form like McKinsey could well be a customer of an industry analyst firm. Currently, Ruediger also works with the CXP Group as Vice President Enterprise Software (more details can be found at www.paco-online.com/users/spies pac-onlinecom or www.ruediger-spies.de).

"For this, we are currently focusing on the high-tech industry, namely computer implemented inventions (hardware, software, e.g., machine learning, cognitive computing), semiconductors (incl. Internet of Things), communications (e.g., mobile technologies), automotive (incl. e-cars, autonomous cars, battery/energy management), robotics, nano-technologies, broader electro-techniques, physics, optical-electronics, radar systems, renewable energy (incl. solar cells) and related technologies.

"However, also technical areas, traditionally attributed as 'low-tech', like farming, are coming more and more into our focus area. This is driven by the digitalisation and Industry 4.0 approaches (i.e., the usage of sensors and actuators in every part of the industry) in every production and every service process, as well as along the consumer value chain. Thus, we are also working in technical fields like digital farming which may serve here as one example for industries traditionally understood as low-tech.

"In these fields, we design and file patent applications, help defining asset-based IP strategies, perform freedom to operate (FTO) analysis, perform IP valuation projects and represent national and international clients at the German patent office and the European patent office. Additionally, we help our national clients to protect their inventions worldwide by collaborating with a broad network of partner law firms. Thus, based on the knowledge of the industry analyst community (CXPgroup), we go as patent law firm far beyond the classical low level approach of simply writing a patent application and file it."

LifeTech IP see in their client base, a growing demand to address cross-functional dependencies of IP protection for the development of new business models. Hence, innovation at all levels — not only in terms of products — but also in terms of the way customers are addressed and supported, business processes are designed, as well as business models, is required Ruediger underlines. Clearly, those who do not innovate may sooner or later lose the competitive game he adds.

"In some industries, it is currently discussed to not charge for a product but only for the usage of a product. This is a complete change if compared to the era of mass marketing with millions of completely identical products. Today, products and services are individualised (very often by software) and customers may pay as they use the product.

"As an example, a coffee machine may soon cost close to nothing, may operate for free, e.g., the first 100 cups of coffee, and then charge the customer automatically for every additional cup of coffee brewed. This example can be extended to almost every consumer and professionally used article — indeed a car may be paid by the number of kilometers driven, a smart phone by the number call being made, a TV set by the hour it is switched on, an electrical razor by number of times it was used for shaving, etc.

"This fundamental change of charging for a product/service — enabled by networked Internet of Things devices — requires a new and innovative approach to product/service development, IP protection, as well as to the underlying business models. The digitalisation opens a new window of innovation. However, the shorter and shorter product cycles increase the requirement to protect these mainly digital assets in order to get the return from performed research and development efforts."

The double role of Ruediger Spies — one of the founders of the IP law firm LifeTech IP // Spies & Behrndt Patent Attorneys and senior partner — and in parallel as industry analyst with CXP Group is worldwide unique. On the one hand, he is — as industry analyst — involved in discovering, researching and defining the upcoming industry trends. On the other hand, it allows discussing at eye height technical issues of upcoming technologies with the inventors. Thus, both parties — the broader enterprise as well as the individual developer — benefit from this duality of skills. The additional role as advisor in the sub-committee for software-based innovations of the German patent bar (as well completes the skill profile).

"In order to organise our client-oriented services efficiently, we have adapted a Silicon Valley type of approach in order to eliminate organisational friction. The working atmosphere is based on trust and self-organisation with distributed responsibilities and a sense of urgency. Our clients experience this through a very competitive fee structure and effective and efficient personal interactions.

"Based on this set up, LifeTech IP feels confident to address the growth challenges over the next couple of years. However — as in many other cases — the objective to hire the right people continues to be a bottleneck. For us, the question is not only, "can the candidate perform the task at hand?", but "can he/she perform his/her job here, in our environment?"

The team approach requires not only technical and legal expertise but also good soft skills as well as the ability to be a successful in direct client-facing activities."

The bottom line is that LifeTech IP is proud of having received the European Business Award 2016. The firm is bridging the gaps between excellent ideas, industry trends, a solid IP strategy and enterprise success, "with our unique combination of industry analyst and patent attorney skills and we are looking forward to having fun in one of the most innovation driven industries" Ruediger concludes.
Empowering Women Everywhere

Ines Poeschel, recipient of the Women in Business Awards – Zurich, tells us about the firm she works for and what she attributes her successful career to.

Kellerhals Carrard is one of the top five Swiss business law firm, operating throughout Switzerland, whilst maintaining very strong local roots, advising clients nationally and abroad.

Ines Poeschel is a partner at Kellerhals Carrard Zurich. She tells us more about the firm’s areas of expertise and what it offers clients.

“We have a very entrepreneurial spirit,” she begins. “We advise and represent companies and entrepreneurs from all industries and economic sectors, public authorities, national and international organisations and private individuals before all judicial and administrative bodies, nationally and abroad, in practically all areas of the law. Our clients know that we will go the extra mile together with them, and that they get full attention of the partner(s) in charge.

“I thrive to be a solution-oriented, hands-on type of trusted advisor, providing the necessary support to allow my clients to take fact based and efficient decisions.”

Recently, Ines was awarded a Women in Business accolade by AI magazine, something which she states she was “very honoured and grateful to receive.” Ines shares her thoughts on women’s empowerment for the future.

“Especially in Switzerland, we will have to continue our efforts a) encouraging women to follow their career plans and business cases and b) increase possibilities to organise family support in an adequate way and societal acceptance thereof, both not yet the case.”

Indeed, Ines believes there is still work to be done in terms of achieving a sustainable pipeline of decision-making women.

“We still have a long way to go, especially on (current and future) management level, but looking at young women, I am very impressed by their business sense and power I often notice and I excitedly look forward to seeing them all grow through the so-called glass ceilings. Wherever I see a possibility, I do and will keep supporting rising stars”

Further, Ines tells us that the firm relies on its experienced team of dedicated staff, in order to ensure its continued success.

“Without our top professional team of staff, we are simply not able to do our work properly vis-à-vis our clients. Our younger team members are also key for our future development as a law firm and they get our full support and encouragement to make it into the partnership and not only allow sustainable organic growth, but also ensure that we keep up our pace and stay up to date. Currently, we see an impressive group of young digitals, two of them just became partners and one (woman partner) will be announced in the coming weeks!”

“I wish to thank all clients and my partners and the team at Kellerhals Carrard!”
A Strong Sense of Service

GRUIA DUFUAT is a full-service law firm having two offices in Paris (France) and Bucharest (Romania), which cover all business legal areas, with particular emphasis on corporate, M&A, real estate, employment, public procurement transactions and dispute resolution. Following their recent success in achieving the 2017 Leaders in Law Awards – Romania award, we invited them to profile the work of their firm.

Since 1991 GRUIA DUFUAT has been advising and assisting foreign investors in entering the Romanian market, during negotiations and commercial transactions, in their daily operations or during all stages of their investment and development projects. The law firm also has a team of litigators, who represent and defend clients' interests before any Romanian or European court.

We often handle complex cases, regardless of the business sector: industry, infrastructure, agriculture, real-estate, telecom, IT&c, automotive, large distribution, energy, pharma, etc.

Our activity is guided by three principles and it aims at offering best quality legal services, tailored to the business needs of each client:

- Excellence: Our constant priority is providing our clients with excellent services. Clients are at the heart of our interests.
- Creativity: Creativity is taught, encouraged and developed at the GRUIA DUFUAT Law Firm. We promptly develop innovative solutions to complex legal issues, taking into account our clients' objectives and using our legal know-how to their best interests. At GRUIA DUFUAT, searching for pragmatic, rigorous and business orientated solutions for each client is indisputable.
- Integrity: We are committed to hold consistent moral and ethical standards in all our operations.

“Our Law Firm was founded with the strong belief that our expertise can contribute to the development of strong partnerships and to our clients’ growth. We always work for preserving and perpetuating this vision. We placed our team and high professional and ethical values at the center of our focus. This is how we built, over the years, a law firm with a strong sense of service, reflected in the quality of our relations with our clients and partners, but also in the management of our own resources for the future”, underlined Mrs. Dana GRUIA DUFUAT, Managing Partner.
Waiting Patently

Dr. Árpád PETHŐ talks to us about the increasing interests in Intellectual Property matters in Hungary for Danubia Patent & Law Office LLC in 2016 and the associated challenges, following their awarding of the Ones to Watch in IP accolade.

Based in Budapest, Hungary Danubia is the oldest and largest Intellectual Property law firm in the country established in 1949 and operating as a private partnership since 1990 and has qualified Hungarian and European Patent attorneys with qualifications covering all fields of technology. As a result of a large number of patent, trademark and design cases (both prosecution and enforcement) represented and completed to the satisfaction of its domestic and foreign clients a high domestic and international reputation has been developed.

Enforcement work is often carried out together with a closely cooperating law firm Sar & Partners Attorneys at Law.

With Hungary’s membership to the EU and the EPC, the work has gradually become more and more focused to European IP cases and clients use the firm for obtaining protection for their inventions and trademarks all over the world.

Main areas of practice:

**Patents:**
- Prosecution and enforcement of Hungarian patent cases for clients all over the world, validating European patents in Hungary, preparing, filing and prosecuting International (PCT) and European patent applications including oppositions before the EPO.
- Providing pre-litigation advice to clients and fighting against infringers.
- Providing subject searches and giving freedom to operate opinions. The listed services include utility models as well.
- Providing services in the field of concluding license agreements and registering licenses.
- Operating a reliable maintenance payment system.

**Trademarks:**
- Filing and prosecuting trademark applications and oppositions in Hungary, before EUIPO and with associates all over the world.
- Assisting clients in enforcing their trademark rights that include counseling, warning potential infringers, filing lawsuits and concluding license agreements.
- Carrying out trademark searches and giving opinions in the case of collisions.

**Domain names:**
- Registering domain names and representing clients in domain-name related disputes like ADR proceedings.

**Designs:**
- Filing national, international and European Design applications, and representing clients in all design-related matters.

**Special characteristics of the firm:**
- It is a specialty of the firm’s practice that in Hungary in addition to the national routes one can obtain valid patent, trademark and design rights also through European patents, European trademarks and Registered Community Designs, therefore the practice integrates work with the EPO and EUIPO. The firm’s services are widely used by Hungarian applicants in obtaining and defending their IP rights worldwide where they are represented directly before the EPO and EUIPO and through associates in other territories. Furthermore, an interesting and increasing segment of the services provided mainly for overseas clients in obtaining their IP rights in Europe and in certain cases worldwide.

The representation of the clients in litigation before competent courts and authorities is limited mostly to Hungary but the professional staff often advises clients in litigations in other countries where local lawyers or IP practitioners are involved.

Concerning the patent maintenance services, the firm’s annuity and renewal payment system is substantial, over 10,000 payments are made each year.

In the last 12 months, the firm has validated 45% of all granted European Patent of foreign origin validated in Hungary, and the firm has filed the most EP and PCT patent applications from Hungary and the activities in filing trademarks, initiating and defending oppositions and cancellations of national trademarks is substantial, and our involvement in local patent and trademark litigation proceedings is also high.

**Ones to Watch in IP**
- Perhaps because the significant role that Danubia plays in the field of Intellectual Property and the continuity of high quality services this activity
has caught the attention of the researchers of the Magazine, and Danubia is proud to have been chosen and will do its best to preserve the present high level of services also in the future amid a more challenging IP environment.

The basic tendencies for intangible assets in the recent period
If we have to summarize this in short, the appropriate term is: “growth and increase”. This means that in spite of the gossips that modern societies do not need privileges and IP protection as the internet has provided and open society for each stakeholder and information is available free for everyone, the numbers contradict to these statements. The number of patent and trademark applications has increased both in Europe and in Hungary, and so did the number of IP enforcement fights that cross over the borders.

Major patent infringement and invalidity lawsuits have taken place in the country both concerning patents and trademarks, and the decisions made by the courts have confirmed that in Hungary there is a stable and correct IP enforcement system.

The lawsuits take place in all possible combinations, i.e. between Hungarian and foreign enterprises just as between foreign enterprises and there are lawsuits which concern only domestic parties. The most significant disputes concern the Pharma industry where the volumes and the numbers are high.

Of the recent changes, we can list the establishment and starting its operation of the Visegrád Patent Office which acts as international PCT Searching and Preliminary Examination Authority for a number of CEE countries with a headquarter in Budapest, and provides its work with reasonable charges.

As the work of the European Patent Office has become faster, this is increased the number of granted European Patents, hence the activity in national validations has also increased.

A further interesting feature is the service offered by the Hungarian Intellectual Property Office that provides an expedited search and written opinion on patentability on each domestic patent application against as low price as around EUR 100 in 6 months for the filing of the request and against EUR 200 in 2-3 months from the date of the request. In this way applicants can have a correct and reliable search result and opinion well before the expiration of the 12 months priority year and can decide with a higher degree of certainty whether there will be chance for the acceptance of the case. There is no comparable service with such prices anywhere within that short period of time.

In the field of trademarks, the significance of obtaining national protection has increased, as the EU trademarks, although providing a large geographic protection over the whole EU make the applications vulnerable against the existence of earlier rights. There are several small and medium enterprises whose activities do not cover the whole EU and for them a conflict with an earlier right in a remote country causes problem if they seek EU wide rights, while such earlier right do not count when they seek national protection.

Together with the increasing number of national trademark applications in an interesting way, the number of the filed EU trademark and design applications has also increased, as the mentioned problems do not affect other applicants, and the possibilities of well-defined searches of earlier rights can screen such conflicts.

The new name of the European Intellectual Property Office with the increased quality of the services (e.g. TM View and TM Class and the taxonomy) and the timely and good work must have contributed to such increase. The updating of the guidelines and the recently changed legislation provides also immense assistance to stakeholders who wish to enjoy EU wide protection to their trademarks and designs.

Stating all the above, the forthcoming enactment of the UPP-UPC system raises both expectations and fears. It is not yet known how owners of right will like this new system and everyone in this profession tries to learn the laws and rules and to get prepared for what to do when the Agreement enters in force. The starting period will be difficult for everyone, and there will be both winners and losers of the system. As far as enforcement is concerned, for Hungarian enterprises this will result in a substantial increase of costs.

Coping with such challenges
Under the above outlined circumstances the most difficult job is to follow the recent changes, and to increase the co-operation with the clients, to learn their needs and preferences and to provide valuable advice when such is needed.

In spite of the increasing number of cases the client should not feel that the attorney has other works to do and the service must be fast and thorough. It is also important that only substantial questions should be raised to the clients because one has to learn that the client’s time is valuable.

The secret behind a good service is permanent education, practice and increased use of modern technology and a balance with team work and sharing practice within the firm. In this way high level services with reasonable prices can be provided that affect clients from all over the world.

Danubia is proud to state that its European Patent and Trademark services are used not only by domestic clients but in increased numbers from overseas, mainly from China and Korea but there is an increase in the number of cases coming from the US and Canada.

Significance in participating in the work of the international IP organizations
Meeting clients and using the skill of the partners makes it imperative that the partners take part in the work of international organizations like AIPPI, INTA, ECTA, LES and in the profession through being council and committee members in the work of epo, the European Patent Institute.

This kind of work takes time and effort and has costs, however, in this way we can contribute in forming the future legislations, discussing new problems and meeting associates and clients all over the world. Personal contacts and presence is inevitable in building up international contacts and reputation.

Challenges and opportunities in 2017 and beyond
The forthcoming entering into force of the UPP-UPC system is with no doubt the greatest challenge, and we have to build up a strong professional background in litigating European patents outside Hungary and outside the EPO, where we have already established a practice in opposition proceedings.

It is yet to be seen whether Hungary ratifies the agreement and when, and what number of clients will use the UPP system or continue using the traditional EPHU route by national validations.

In the meantime, elaborating new patent applications in Hungary and before the EPO is a challenging job, and the work has shifted from the Hungarian language to English even for domestic clients.

In everyday practice we think that our pre-trial counselling and general advising activity will increase in volume. In the trademark and design field we will have to protect the interests of our clients after the Brexit, and even in current activity we have to warn clients not to forget about the UK when seeking rights there.

Facts and figures
Number of partners: 18
Number of patent attorneys: 21
Working languages: Hungarian, English
A Successful Year and Outlook

Trivitron Healthcare, Best of the Best in HR & Training – USA award winner, is a medical technology company providing healthcare products & solutions to hospitals, individual healthcare providers, independent clinics and laboratories, extended care facilities and all other roofs providing healthcare solutions.

With 9 USFDA, CE certified manufacturing facilities, supported by several R&D tie-ups with global leaders, Trivitron spearheads innovation in the fields of new born screening, in-vitro diagnostics, imaging & radiology, radiation protection, critical care and operating room solutions, thus, engraving its name as a holistic healthcare provider.

Trivitron started its business operations in 1997 and is headquartered at Chennai, India. We operate directly through our offices located at New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bangalore, Pune, Cochin, Pondicherry, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Helsinki, Ankara and through 1200+ channel partners across the globe.

Successful intervention in the form of training programmes on a group level achieved coverage of 81% with a satisfaction score of over 90%. The senior management were introduced to the concept of one-on-one mentoring. Each participant was given an option to select their own mentor from the selected pool who can further help and guide them on their current assignment and future career plans.

The new joinee induction & orientation programme was structured further, so that new employees and their ability can be successfully integrated into the workplace. On recruitment, front the competency based interviewing techniques has been introduced which is further integrated with the competency matrix of the organisation. In addition, a corporate volunteer programme that encourages and enables employees to volunteer in their communities has been introduced.

What sets us apart from others is:

- Our culture and our values which keep us grounded;
- Our leadership team motivates us to dream BIG;
- Our team effort helps us to achieve and;
- Trivitron is a success because we all speak the same language of trust, belonging, unity and a positive mind-set.

The role of innovation

We at Trivitron, firmly believe in continuous research & development to innovate the product portfolios available in the industry. Recently, we launched our Labsystems’ NeoMass Kit for Newborn screening which can detect 50+ disorders in a new-born. Our radiology brand Kiran has recently launched state-of-the-art Ultrasys, a digital radiography system. We have been focusing extensively on research and development to develop smart-practical products that offer incredible clinical functionality at an affordable cost.

The role of people

I have a handpicked team who understand my way of working and my goals for the organisation.

Best of the Best in HR & Training – USA

The team has been very creative and innovative in engaging and developing the workforce, who in turn has increased their productivity multi-fold. It’s massively rewarding for the entire team who have put in their efforts in building the processes, culture and environment of the organisation. It will be a moral boost for the team to perform better.

This award will definitely boost and help us in creating a stand out image in an increasingly difficult and changing market, and sets us apart from competitors and differentiates the quality of our achievements from others.

Highlights from 2016

2016 has been a great year for all of us in Trivitron. We started with a fool proof training needs assessment, with all new and unique approach. The behavioural competency matrix of the group has been integrated with a psychometric tool post successful validation of the scores and the results in order to gauge the current competency levels of the individuals.
Hopes and plans for 2017 and beyond

I believe most of HR best practices are in place and 2017 will see my team taking a bigger and stronger role in being a strategic business partner for our revenue generating teams. My team will work with business executives and contribute in deciding the tactics required for managing talent to achieve business goals. The team has a unique perspective of the entire organisation and can offer the best ideas, involving all departments and divisions.

From a HR perspective, an increasingly diversified workforce, looming skill shortages, attracting, hiring and retaining the best talent will be the biggest challenge for us and the wider industry. On the contrary, this is the opportunity also, as organisations compete on a global scale, there is the growing necessity to employ diverse talents in order to understand the various niches of each market. There’s a great value in employing a mix of talent from diverse cultural backgrounds, genders and ages, in order to respond efficiently and creatively to new business opportunities.

The efficiency of human resource department is a key to the success of any organisation. It does not only manage the employee operations, rather for HR it's critical to develop effectiveness and efficiencies on technical aspects of human resources. The next step is to develop an understanding of the core business and use our combined knowledge of HR technical competencies, the business and its employees to influence the business direction, its goals and ability to perform.
Heart of Gold

Barrick Gold Corporation is committed to building, operating and closing mines in a responsible manner, and is pleased to be a part of our popular Prominent Women in Business series of case studies.

headquartered in Toronto, Canada, Barrick is the world’s leading gold mining company, with mines and projects on five continents.

Barrick was founded in 1983 by Canadian entrepreneur and philanthropist Peter Munk, and is headquartered in Toronto. The Company's shares trade on the New York Stock Exchange and the Toronto Stock Exchange under the symbol ABX.

The firm’s vision is the generation of wealth through responsible mining - wealth for its owners, its people, and the countries and communities with which it partners.

“I wouldn’t be where I am today if it wasn’t for the assistance I received,”

In 2016, Barrick produced 5.52 million ounces of gold at a cost of sales of $798 per ounce, and all-in sustaining costs of $730 per ounce. More than 75% of the organisation’s gold production comes from the Americas region, including Argentina, Canada, Dominican Republic, Peru and the United States. The company also has mining operations and projects in Australia, Chile, Papua New Guinea, Saudi Arabia, and Zambia. At the end of 2016, Barrick had proven and probable gold reserves of 85.9 million ounces (2.0 billion tonnes, grading 1.33 grams per tonne).

Barrick aims to cultivate a high-performance culture defined by the following principles: a deep commitment to partnership, consistent execution, operational excellence, disciplined capital allocation, and continual self-improvement. The firm is obsessed with talent, and seeks out fresh perspectives from other industries, challenging ourselves to think differently as we transform Barrick into a leading 21st century company.

One of the company’s many success stories is Rhonda Maio, who today is one of only two Porgeran women to hold a university degree and currently holds the position of Project Accountant at Barrick Gold Corporation.

Rhonda, a native of the remote Pulumani Clan village, was accepted to study Business and Accounting at the Pacific Adventist University in 2001. A year later, she found herself struggling financially and applied for assistance from the mine. The company awarded her a sponsorship package that included funding for tuition, boarding, textbooks and even pocket money. Rhonda was also given the opportunity to work at the mine during her school holidays. “I wouldn’t be where I am today if it wasn’t for the assistance I received,” she said.

Rhonda tells us more about the firm’s approach to responsible mining.

“Our commitment to responsible mining is supported by a robust governance framework, setting out the company’s approach to and expectations of employees, suppliers, and contractors, in the conduct of their daily work,” she explains.

At the core of this framework is the Code of Business Conduct and Ethics and supporting management systems, programs and policies. These provide a common standard by which all sites are expected to operate—from community, health, environmental, safety, security, human rights, and ethical perspectives, and help bring Barrick’s Vision and Values to life.

“The Code and supporting systems and programs are complemented by Board- and executive-level oversight, as well as expert advice from our external CSR Advisory Board, to ensure we are staying true to our commitment to mining in a responsible manner.”

Barrick’s Board of Directors is responsible for the stewardship of the company and for oversight of the management of its business affairs, while the senior management is responsible for the management and day-to-day operation of the company. The firm’s obligations, expectations and intentions are codified in its Vision and Values and the Code of Business Conduct and Ethics, and they are reinforced regularly at all levels of the company.

Barrick’s ultimate objective is to grow its free cash flow per share over the long term. It aims to do so by: maintaining and growing industry-leading margins, increasingly driven by innovation and digital transformation; managing its portfolio and allocating capital with discipline and rigor; and leveraging its distinctive partnership culture as a competitive advantage.

Barrick is guided by John Templeton’s words: “If you want superior performance, you must be different.” It is part of Barrick’s DNA to be intentionally different. Today the firm is embodying that DNA in a way that is all the more relevant by embracing innovation and making the best use of technology and data,
embedding it into every fibre of the business. This will make the firm faster, safer, and more efficient, and will allow it to be more transparent with its partners than ever before. In the end, Barrick wants to be among the very best 21st century companies, not just in its industry, but in any industry.

For 2017, Barrick expects to produce 5.6-5.9 million ounces of gold at a cost of sales of $780-$820 per ounce, and all-in sustaining costs1 of $720-$770 per ounce. Copper production guidance is 400-450 million pounds, at a cost of sales of $1.50-$1.70 per pound, and all-in sustaining costs2 of $2.10-$2.40 per pound.
Eurofins Product Testing is a laboratory that takes complex products that need to be tested in accordance with legislative requirements, before it can be sold on the market Kim Holm Baekgaard explains in a revealing interview.

In terms of testing disinfectant, we have to check that it is safe to use but that is also kills the bacteria that the producer promises. We also test toys, because they are for children there is much legislation and regulation around that, so we help in terms of consultancy to navigate around it and carry out all the testing required.”

“My role in the firm is to direct sales across Europe, I have a team that are stationed in a number of countries including France, Italy, Sweden Germany as well as the Benelux countries. I ensure that sales are performing the way we want them to meet the market demands, that is what kind of tests we should be performing in our labs so that we stay ahead of the competition.”

Kim adds that he has been in his current position for two years, having had a position previously as a sales manager in Denmark, the firm’s largest sales region. Before that, Kim had 12 years of sales experience in a totally different business area, but he was brought into Eurofins Product Testing to try and make it a more commercial.

While the firm used to have technical staff that would go out and talk to customers about testing, they had no knowledge of sales techniques and getting the prices right for the customer. The plan when Kim joined the firm was to align all the European labs, and to ensure that everybody was working on the same CRM system. Today, the technical staff are sitting behind the scenes as experts and technical consultants, and can be brought into meetings when necessary.

“The staff here have an extremely important role, and everyone in this business is equally important. When you are doing business in the laboratory world, everything needs to be well documented and very precise. You are not stronger than your weakest link, so those who are performing the tests on a regular basis need to work without mistakes so that we can be known in the market as a firm who offers great quality control, so that you can believe in all that we produce.”

“The back-office functions where we have all our expertise, they are the ones who need to show the market we know what we are talking about. The sales staff in the front end of the business do not need to be experts, but they just need to know what we can do and then start communicating on a level where decisions can be made. Once that
has happened, things get more technical and that is when we would bring in the experts, so in this sense all of the staff here are equally important and they are the face of the firm.”

“Much of what we do is keeping up with technology trends, but it is becoming hard to keep up with them all including new legislation and regulations in the countries we are working in. We have to be up-to-date with these all the time, as well as ensuring that we have state-of-the-art equipment so that we are better than the competition. We do this by attending a number of seminars and fairs, being where the customers are and listening to them, as well as what governments are putting out. We then ensure that we gather the information when we get home, and look into investing into new equipment that will take us into whatever direction the market is going.”

In terms of the future, Kim says that they want to carry on being the preferred third party laboratory, for all the businesses we serve. While some of the firm’s customers have their own testing facilities, they still tend to use Eurofins Product Testing, because when they come with their own test report, it is always better to get a third-party report that looks at a product critically.

“We also want to keep our service level as high as possible and measuring what the customers think about. We try to be better all the time, so we are not satisfied with being the number one in our field. We always want to challenge the status quo and improve, in order to stay ahead of the competition.”
Keeping the Peace

Tamara Jaberu of Peace Recruitment tells us about the firm and why it’s clients will always come first, following the firm’s success in winning the 2017 UK Recruitment Awards for Scotland.

Peace Recruitment is a dedicated team of recruitment professionals specialising in the placement of trades and labour operatives along with plant operatives. The firm also has a division specialising in the recruitment of technical and professional staff for the construction industry and works within all aspects of construction, house building, civil projects, road and building maintenance across Scotland.

Tamara Jaberu of Peace Recruitment tells us more about the firm’s offerings and its reputation for excellent customer service.

“We work in a transparent manner with both our clients and candidates so that both parties can trust us to service their needs. We strive to build on our reputation as a reputable, compliant and forward thinking recruitment business."

Peave Recruitment was the first recruitment business to join the Institute of Customer Service in the UK. Tamara explains why this is of utmost importance to the firm.

“We are a customer service not sales lead recruitment business. We want to offer our clients and candidates a consultative service regarding their recruitment or employment needs that adds value to them as an individual or organisation.”

The firm is currently expanding as a business and is constantly looking for the right recruits to add to its dedicated and growing team.
Banc Roche is a Singaporean private equity firm, a wholly owned division of www.houseoflouis.net. Together with its extensive UHNW Asian partners, it invests in Hotels, Commercial Properties, Green Energy projects and Crypto-currencies.

Banc Roche’s long term joint ventures with the Preferred Hotel Group has been particularly successful.

Providing bridging facilities for large corporate service contracts are an increasing new speciality for the Banc Roche team.

It is launching its own Crypto-Currency coin and its own Crypto-Currency exchange in 2017.
Never Wait for Someone Else to Do Something Someday

Raw Foundation is a consumer-facing organisation, targeting plastic pollution, through research, education and the raising of public awareness. It acts as the interface to encourage and facilitate collaboration between manufacturers, retailers, governments, NGOs and other communities and organisations. As part of our Prominent Women in Business series, Melinda Watson tells us more about the aims and values of the organisation.

The Mission of Raw Foundation is to educate, engage and empower young people to identify and accelerate a shift towards sustainable consumption and production. As the root cause of climate change and environmental degradation, they focus on over-consumption and the hidden consequence of everyday stuff.

They provide a range of learning programmes, together with campaigning and collaborating on priority waste streams and behaviour change. Everything they do is systems-focused, solution-oriented and change driven. Raw Foundation’s key aims are to:

- Reduce the amount of plastic used and thrown away;
- Promote sustainable re-use solutions;
- Recycle what cannot be re-used and improve recycling practices;
- Keep plastics out of our oceans and;
- Work towards eliminating single-use plastic items by 2030.

The organisation’s manifesto is guided by their six core values:

- Realisation: of the gaps between their vision and reality;
- Reconnection: to the ecological networks of which we are part;
- Reverence: of all life on earth having intrinsic value;
- Relationships: systems thinking, information sharing and networking;
- Reflection: of the inner and outer place from which they operate and;
- Resilience: whilst reorganising and undergoing change.

Raw Foundation’s manifesto includes:

- Promoting repair, re-use and ‘for hire’ in preference to ‘brand new’ and ‘ownership’;
- Focusing on and helping to change the public’s thinking about the throw-away culture and the way in which products are designed purely for their disposability and;
- Encouraging plastic industries to ‘clean up’ by championing clean materials and circular economy practices.

To achieve the aims within their manifesto, Raw Foundation are:

- Raising awareness of all issues relating to plastic, most importantly single-use plastic items;
- Providing preventative education materials for individuals, schools, colleges, universities and other organisations;
- Championing the provision of tap water and water fountains in public places and;
- Urging EVERY one, EVERY where to take a plastic pledge #myplastipledge to drastically reduce the amount of plastic waste they generate and make plastic-free part of EVERY day!

In terms of the issues that concern Melinda at the moment, she believes that nothing better illustrates our throwaway lifestyle and waste problems than plastic.
"It is everywhere. It has become one of the most serious environmental and human health problems facing us today. Plastic pollution has reached a crisis point, especially in our oceans. Despite a growing awareness of the problem, the flow of plastic waste continues to increase exponentially across the world. The vast majority of this originates from the land - from sewage and storm drains, rivers and estuaries, beach and coastal litter, as well as illegal dumping, industrial activities and landfill sites.

"This is contaminating precious water systems, threatening marine life, passing up the food chain, and affecting human health, infiltrating other cultures, impacting wildlife and encouraging a throwaway consumer culture across the world.

"At long last, the crisis of plastic pollution is rising high on the environmental agenda. It was highlighted by the award-winning documentary 'Trashed', leading scientists and NGOs, including our own Foundation. The message has been reinforced by UN Environment in February, when it launched its #CleanUp campaign at the Economist World Ocean Summit in Bali and by Sky's 'Ocean Rescue'. Organisations like the Prince of Wales International Sustainability Unit, The Ellen MacArthur Foundation, the RSA and other organisations including our own Foundation are now focusing their efforts on getting the solutions message out there."

Melinda then goes on to say that the UN is urging governments to pass plastic reduction policies, targeting industry to minimise plastic packaging, and calling upon consumers to change their throwaway habits before irreversible damage is done to our seas. And yet business and government continue to drag their feet, leaving consumers frustrated and bewildered Melinda adds before explaining the latest research on plastics production.

"Plastics production has soared over the past 50 years, from 15 million tonnes in 1964 to 311 million tonnes in 2014. This figure is expected to double over the next 20 years and almost quadruple by 2050. Estimates suggest that at least 8 million tonnes of plastics leak from land to sea every year and that there are over 150 million tonnes of plastics in the ocean today."

"If the projected growth of plastic production and business-as-usual trends continue, warnings indicate the oceans will contain more plastic (by weight) than fish by 2050. By that time, the production of this plastic will account for 20% of the world's total oil consumption and will represent 15% of the global annual carbon budget.

"Frustratingly, most of this waste is single-use plastic and packaging. Not only is this dangerous and damaging to our marine environment, human health and the way of life of a large percentage of the world's population, it makes absolutely no sense economically. Approximately $80 - 120 billion is lost to the world economy every year - that is purely because 95% of all single-use plastic is thrown away every year."

Melinda then explains it is not hard to see that this is an issue that affects everyone and that we should all be addressing before it is too late. Plastic pollution has been described as 'the apocalyptic twin of climate change' and in her opinion, that is no exaggeration.

"The way forward must be to completely rethink plastic production methods with a view to completely eliminating the use of single-use plastic items within a relatively short timescale. We have already seen that governments worldwide are simply dragging their feet when they should be introducing legislation to help combat the issue, so we must continue to work from the bottom upwards.

"That means educating and changing the habits of consumers, communities, retailers, manufacturers and governments, as well as providing platforms and lines of communication for sharing information and innovations."

Recent projects
Raw Foundation launched and published their first Plastic-Free Festival Guide, in partnership with Kambe Events, a sustainable event management consultancy. The guide, showcased at the Green Events and Innovations Conference 2014 has been adopted by Glastonbury Festival, Shambala Festival and others continue to follow suit worldwide.

At the Glastonbury Festival 2014/15/16, a reduction in single-use plastics was achieved, by initiating collaboration and providing re-useable 100% stainless steel water bottles and free water refill kiosks on site, with Glastonbury Festival and WaterAid.

Raw Foundation were responsible for a Plastic-Free Festival-Goer Guide and City, Beach, Lifestyle and Sector Guides for Bristol 2015, the National Trust 'Coast Campaign' 2015, eXpedition, CityToSea, Go Green, Bristol and Turkey in collaboration with WWF and the Turkey towards a 'Sustainable Tourism' plan.

"Most recently, I led the first study to track the world's plastic footprint the length of Africa, in some of the most remote areas of the African continent. The key purpose of the Raw in Africa trip was to find out more about how plastic finds its way into the ocean and the real effects it has on people's lives and the environment. Melinda adds before telling us about the types and quantities of plastic waste there, where they originated from as well as the impacts and what is being done about it.

"We drove 17,000 km from Cairo to Cape Town, bush-camping all the way. We (literally) dived into dangerous rubbish dumps, located landfill sites and surveyed source-to-sea debris. We opened government official doors, met waste ministers and reviewed re-use and recycling initiatives. We carried out beach cleans, probed pristine environments and tapped into tribal wisdom. Most importantly, we collaborated with local communities and created lasting links.

"One of our key aims was to analyse the plastic rubbish and find out where it originated from. To achieve this, we stopped every 100 km to record and take samples of the rubbish found within a one metre quadrat exactly one metre from either side of the road or track. The data is so detailed that we have even been able to identify the extent of the impact of individual items and global brands, which collectively form the major source of the plastic waste items.

"The information collected from our Africa expedition illustrates the urgent need to shine a spotlight on the sheer scale of the problem and transboundary nature of plastic pollution. Our use of plastic in the West is even affecting communities in these remote areas of Africa - they don't want it and, worst of all, they have no way of getting rid of it.

"The African communities are not alone. I recently received a Facebook message from Puerto Nariño, located on the shore of the Amazon River in one of the most remote parts of the Amazon region. The majority of the residents are indigenous peoples, unique for their sustainable living model.

"Having never used plastics themselves traditionally, the tribes are now encountering growing volumes of plastic waste. Coupled with inadequate treatment of water, people are reduced to having to buy bottled water. I find that idea deeply disturbing and truly terrifying, but I am sorry to say I don't find it surprising."

Melinda's role in the Raw Foundation is director, education campaign and project founder, research analyst, lead, lead, speaker, on-the-ground campaigner and designer when she has time. In terms of the staff there, apart from a small core team, they rely heavily on the generosity of their multitalented volunteers. They are currently searching for core funding. Melinda then outlines her vision for the future of The Raw Foundation.

"Time is pressing. We are faced on the one hand by climate change, over-consumption and resource scarcity and on the other by pollution and social and ecological injustice. It is my hope that we continue to inspire others by providing a platform, such as Raw Talks: Plastic for raising awareness and learning. A clear message for compelling change that engages people's imaginations and emotions, creates connections and collaboration, showcases sustainable solutions and catalyses action. Above all, that we spark hope and a clear picture of a brighter future. In short, never wait for someone else to do something someday."

Melinda concludes by saying that her professional work, combined with her deep personal African roots, requires passion, drive, resolve and a steadfast commitment and belief that we are capable of radical change for all our children's sake. "It can be a lonely space sometimes that necessitates a Wishbone (VISION of how things could be), a backbone (bravery and determination) and a funny bone (to keep going!)" she says.

3 Stemming the Tide: Land-based strategies for a plastic-free ocean.
A Strong Hands-On Approach

FRANZlegal recently received two prestigious awards simultaneously, as winner of the Most Innovative Business Law Firm - Germany award and the Award for Excellence in M&A Law. We got in touch with FRANZlegal to find out more about this firm.

FRANZlegal is a firm of 20 attorneys based in Düsseldorf, Germany. Focusing on efficient, high-end legal advice, they advise foreign and domestic clients in all aspects of business on. With twelve partners, the team’s focus is not leverage but dedication and experience.

Building on their background in some of the most prestigious international law firms, FRANZlegal combines entrepreneurial spirit with a strong hands-on approach – while ensuring that clients benefit from the commitment and availability that a small team of dedicated professionals can offer.

Innovation is paramount for succeeding in today’s globalized economy – for clients as well as for law firms. According to Christoph Neven, one of the firm’s partners, the innovation award honours both, the firm’s contribution to the success of its innovative clients as well as its innovative advisory concepts.

As advisor to founders, (VC-) investors and start-ups, the firm’s attorneys are passionate about tech-related and high-growth businesses and supporting them in succeeding. Just recently, the firm advised Spanish venture capital fund Seaya in its investment in the social selling community PippaJean.

FRANZlegal’s partner Antonio Calderón and his team advise founders on an ongoing basis – from the formation of a legal entity to the setting up and expansion of business operations – as well as the participation of investors up to the potential exit of the founder.

However, at FRANZlegal innovation is not limited to the businesses advised by the firm, but also plays an important role in the firm itself and its approach of advising clients. For a law firm, innovation requires very close attention to the way that clients do business, now and in the future.

Instead of offering piecemeal advice, FRANZlegal serves as one-stop-shop for the day-to-day business operations of corporates combining all relevant fields of legal expertise, from trade and contracts, over antitrust law issues to IP. This day-to-day advice is mainly provided by FRANZlegal’s practice group commercial, which forms the second pillar of the firm’s business practice besides corporate and M&A. Not only large international clients appreciate this approach, but also medium and smaller businesses benefit from the efficiency and focus that it offers.

In addition to excellence in legal advice, one of the keys to the firm’s success is its thorough understanding of how the client’s internal organizations work – and how legal input must look and feel to be beneficial within these organizations. This ‘inside understanding’ is ensured by the fact that FRANZlegal’s team also includes former in-house counsel. Commercial partner Karsten Korrat, who worked in the legal department of one of Germany’s leading pharma and chemicals blue chips for several years, is a good example for this.

As businesses have an increasingly global reach, clients need legal counsel to understand as well as to be able to explain different settings, approaches and experiences in different jurisdictions. Based on their experience abroad, the team of FRANZlegal also offers outstanding expertise in this regard.

With more than half of their business coming from non-German clients or involving non-German or multinational matters, all members of FRANZlegal’s team feel at home in international and national settings.

"While our clients praise our support in their most complex M&A-deals, it feels good to get some outside feedback on our work," describes Patrick Vogt, one of the firm’s M&A partners. At’s M&A award to the firm. Led by five senior attorneys with longstanding experience in the industry, FRANZlegal advises domestic and foreign clients to get their M&A deal done.

The firm prides itself in understanding the individual characteristics of each client and each transaction to find bespoke solutions and achieve optimum results instead of templates and boiler-plate. Key to this is a good sense of proportion.

FRANZlegal focuses on small and mid-cap M&A transactions and has an outstanding track-record of international and cross-border deals. The firm’s strength lies in bespoke solutions that fit the specific requirements of the transaction combined with a deep sense of proportion of what the deal really needs.

The fact that FRANZlegal’s M&A attorneys achieve optimum results for their clients is also a consequence of their industry-specific know-how, for example in pharma/life sciences, chemicals, automotive, coatings and furniture and many others. Clients appreciate the firm’s approach to fees that reflect the risks and opportunities of a transaction.
Citizenship by Investment is the go-to publication for investors considering their citizenship options. Containing a wealth of information surrounding relevant immigration issues and entertaining features, CBI offers its readership an in-depth perspective of the industry.

In a world full of possibilities, Citizenship by Investment can help you and your family towards your dream citizenship – guarantee the security and prosperity of your family by picking up a copy of CBI today.
Incoming Message

The company (and brand) that Samantha van Putten represents is BulkSMS.com, founded in a garage in Cape Town, South Africa, in the year 2000. It was one of the first SMS messaging platforms started in the early days of SMS marketing. In this Prominent Women in Business series, Samantha tells us about her own career and the growing strength of the BulkSMS.com brand.

BulkSMS.com has grown from strength to strength over the last 17 years and now offers SMS delivery to over 800 mobile networks in more than 200 countries. They started by offering a very basic web to SMS service, where customers could log on to the website and send SMS messages directly from the web platform. They very soon created an SMS API, which gave their customers the ability to SMS enable their own websites or applications. In 2005, they developed their very own desktop application (now available on Windows and Mac), which naturally led to the creation of their BulkSMS iPhone App. Samantha then explains in more detail what the firm offers.

“We provide, offer and support application-to-person (A2P) messaging services to large and small businesses, public benefit organisations and individuals. The types of messages being sent through our SMS gateway range from automated machine to machine communications, two factor authentication or verification codes, transactional SMS messages, enhanced marketing and sales campaigns to simple appointment reminders.”

“BulkSMS has a direct presence in over 120 countries and we have helped facilitate over 50 million messages per day with our platform.”

“If we look at the Instant Messaging space, it is constantly changing, and in 5 years might look very different to today.”

“SMS is available on all mobile handsets (there are currently over 4 billion mobile phone users worldwide, expected to exceed 5 billion before July this year), making it an ideal channel for short and important business communications.”

**Current job role and career path**

Samantha started off her career doing software support for a financial services software provider. One of Samantha’s clients hired her to do their administration work, and from there she was approached internally to become a personal assistant to one of the company’s directors. It was at this stage that she was encouraged to study. It took her 5 years, and 3 role changes to complete her BCom, through part time studies. She then tells us more about what her next career steps were.

“Each role I entered into during this time added to my marketing exposure, aiding me in my studies and life experiences. For the most part, I worked as a marketing assistant at a joint venture (MTN Banking) between one of South Africa’s mobile network providers (MTN) and one of the big four South African banks (Standard Bank).”

“I was tasked with ensuring the corporate brand identity of the network provider was upheld, as well as making certain that the financial regulations were adhered to when it came to the advertising of a financial product. It is a tricky task ensuring adherence to two major brands, from very different perspectives, but I believe it gave me a very solid understanding of the importance of brand identity and brand consistency. These are lessons that I continue to draw from in my daily role.”

“In 2008, as a fresh graduate, I joined BulkSMS.com. Initially as a copywriter, but with the branding experience from my marketing role at MTN Banking, I was soon tasked with heading up all of the marketing and communications initiatives for the BulkSMS.com brand, both locally in South Africa and worldwide. Within two years of joining BulkSMS, I was responsible for the full marketing budget.”

Samantha adds that over the last 9 years, she has built and grown the existing brand, including an extensive rebrand in early 2010. She has been responsible for two iterations of the firm’s website, (as she believes it is important to stay up to date with current web trends). Her current responsibilities cover everything from brand, marketing and communications strategy creation to the implementation of all things brand and marketing related.

“My role and responsibilities at BulkSMS.com continue to grow as the company does, and the challenges faced each year, as we understand more about our customers and as the market changes, can, at times, be very daunting but we have always managed to exceed our own expectations of what is possible” Samantha continues. She then tells us about the role of the employees at BulkSMS.com, saying that they play a very important role indeed.

“Without the support, knowledge and enthusiasm they contain, our company would not run as smoothly as it does. Our staff turnover rate is incredibly low, therefore the innate understanding of our products and processes becomes second nature to our staff” she explains.
Customer feedback
The feedback from the firm’s customer base varies, depending on the product they use and the industry they are in and the reason they have for choosing SMS as a communications channel. Samantha then goes on to develop this interesting point.

“We have various products through which our customers can send SMS messages. We have our Web platform, which our customers can access from any internet enabled device. This is our flagship product, and still the most used for the sending of ad hoc SMS messages. Our customers enjoy the simplicity of being able to send their SMS messages from where ever they are from a stable and reliable platform.

“Our SMS API is (according to our customers) very easy to implement and gives them the ability to SMS enable their website or application. We are currently upgrading the APIs and integrations we have available, for example, we have recently released the BulkSMS Gateway for Marketo, and are busy working on a SalesForce integration.

“Our desktop products (the BulkSMS Text Messenger), are very easy to install and use, and our customers enjoy testing any new features we might add. The extended personalisation offered on these products is one of the key features used and appreciated by our customers.

According to Yvonne Turner, Communications Director of The Castle Triathlon Series (the UK’s largest triathlon series with events taking place at a selection of iconic castles across the UK, Ireland and France), the competitors rely hugely on the personalised SMS messages containing their race details.

She says that, “not only do the text messages contain vital race information but they also ensure that the registration process is quick and hassle free.” She goes on to comment that, “taking part in a triathlon is a big personal achievement and one worth celebrating. We are told the text message post-race which includes a competitor’s race results listed and a congratulations is kept for a long time as they enjoy the post-race exhilaration. The results are widely available online and shared within email, but we like the personal touch and immediacy SMS delivers to our community.”

Sarah Warries, project manager at Shark Spotters, a unique beach safety and shark conservation programme running in Cape Town, South Africa, says that “with BulkSMS we can ensure the messages gets directly to the people we need it to, notifying them on their phones instantly rather than relying on them to check social media or email accounts.” An important attribute when escalating emergency protocols quickly and efficiently in response to a shark threat or shark attack.

The future of instant messaging applications
As recently as 5 years ago, industry experts predicted that A2P SMS would follow the decline in P2P messaging due to the rise in instant messaging apps. They couldn’t have been more wrong. According to recent reports on Mobile Marketing Watch, industry analysts are suggesting that SMS is set to grow from a $55.49 billion to $71.60 billion industry by 2021. Samantha elaborates on this.

“We at BulkSMS.com are confident that A2P SMS will continue to grow despite the increased use of instant messaging applications. SMS messaging has become an increasingly popular tool for business communication, particularly for business to consumer (B2C) communication.”

“Despite the popularity of instant messaging (IM) applications (like WhatsApp, Facebook messenger or Viber), it is not suited for B2C communication. Most consumers prefer to use IM applications purely for social purposes. SMS is such a useful tool because it has more reach than an online message, is not reliant on Internet connectivity or credit to be received, and therefore has considerably higher ‘opening’ and ‘sale conversion’ rates than Email or IM marketing. A2P experiences greater success than online alternatives as, unlike ‘spam’ emails, the service requires an individual customer to opt in” Samantha explains.

“If we look at the Instant Messaging space, it is constantly changing, and in 5 years might look very different to today. We believe that SMS, on the other hand, will remain a reliable and stable platform for years to come - it has been around for almost 25 years, a veteran in the technical space.”

A question BulkSMS.com has been asked is, how does SMS remain so relevant despite the ever-changing use of communication platforms? They believe that firstly, SMS has a lower risk of spam due to its relatively high cost. The low cost of instant messaging increases the risk of spam and the measures taken by IM providers to combat spam, inadvertently blocks most types of messages that businesses are likely to send. Some of these measures include:

• Not providing an API for A2P messaging;
• Limiting message group sizes;
• Limiting communication to those initiated by consumers and;
• Limiting the number of people that can be messaged that do not have the senders contact number in their own contact list.

Samantha adds that, “Another reason we believe SMS will stay relevant for business communications is that SMS doesn’t rely on data coverage or internet access while IM applications do. SMS is also supported on all mobile phones where the IM space is very fragmented with a wider variety of IM applications available. SMS is ubiquitous, while no single IM application is.”

“SMS is accessible, it eliminates the need for redundant apps and it’s familiar and available on every single mobile phone. Most importantly, the stable nature of SMS as a technology justifies the integration of SMS into third party applications.”

“SMS continues to grow globally as more industries adopt SMS messaging as a stable and reliable messaging tool. One example of a growing industry adopting SMS messaging is the ‘sharing industry’. This industry was put on the map by services such as Uber and Airbnb. This proliferation of global ‘sharing’ services across multiple industries, are already benefiting from an SMS messaging component.”
A Manufacturing ‘One-Stop-Shop’

Xellia Pharmaceuticals is a world leader in the development, manufacture and supply of fermented anti-infectives sold as active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) and finished dosage forms (FDNs) to the global pharmaceutical market. As part of our Prominent Women in Business series, we caught up with the company’s Andrea Dahle-Morville to find out more about her own role and the company she works for.

The company’s product range covers anti-infectives, treating certain serious and life-threatening bacterial and fungal infections; Xellia being the world leading supplier of vancomycin and colistimethate sodium (CMS). The business is built to meet both immediate and long term requirements of their customers. During 2016, they focused strongly on customer service levels and worked in close collaboration with their customers to meet and exceed their expectations.

"In 2016, we supported our customers with the launch of new generic anti-infectives in different geographical markets which contributed positively to our growth in revenue for the year. We also experienced increasing competition in certain markets, in particular from manufacturers operating in Asia, which highlights the importance of our continued emphasis on delivery performance and cost competitiveness” Andrea tells us before going on to expand this interesting point further.

“Looking at the comments received from our customers; product quality, on-time delivery and service are the three most frequently mentioned in positive feedback we receive. Overall, from the feedback received, customers find the service we deliver to be one of our greatest assets. Securing solid relationships with customers, by delivering excellent customer service with a great product, is crucial for positive customer experiences with Xellia and towards our promising future.

“Our vertical integration strategy enables us to supply our customers with multiple product forms, improve supply security leveraging multiple manufacturing sites and provide a ‘one-stop-shop’, offering both the API and the FDF. The transition to the supply of FDNs enables us to help simplify and streamline the supply chain for our customers by providing the final product.

“As a global business, our customers include branded, specialty and generic pharmaceutical companies in more than 70 countries around the world. Over recent years, we have increased our focus on expanding in the US market and in 2016, more than 50% of our total sales were generated in the US.”

To remain a leading business in the global generic anti-infectives market, Xellia is committed to, delivering excellence in the execution of our manufacturing and innovation processes and maintaining their compliance track record with the various regulators in the pharmaceutical industry.

In 2016, they continued the focus on increasing delivery performance across their manufacturing network for both APIs and FDNs. Xellia were able to meet most of their key performance indicators for the year, and successfully passed a total of seven inspections by different regulatory authorities across their five global manufacturing sites.

“In the pharmaceutical industry, we are very focused on the patient, we need to integrate internally and externally with our business partners, be transparent and driven by excellence. We need to move from reactive to proactive to predictive” Andrea goes on to say, before offering her thoughts on how the company fared during 2016.

“2016 has also been a year in which awareness of the threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) has continued to grow internationally as the world attempts to address this growing crisis. We develop treatments in a niche area of anti-infectives - developing last-resort antibiotics. As the need increases globally for our products, so does our commitment to society of ensuring a stable and reliable supply of our products.

“Given the increasing challenges of AMR globally, we are more acutely aware than ever before of our responsibility in this area. Supplying the much-needed products is seen as a great opportunity for Xellia, as we continue to expand our manufacturing capabilities. The challenge lies within the threat of AMR and its fast pace growth which increases the demand at a very fast rate.”

Andrea then goes on to outline her own job role and how she has been successful in her career. As head of quality for the finished products at Xellia Copenhagen site, she takes ownership of all quality assurance responsibilities, building and growing the quality assurance teams and providing leadership of the same, ensuring Xellia’s product quality.
"Fresh from engineering university, I stepped into Novo Nordisk A/S’ production in Denmark with an interest in problem-solving and production. I started as a team leader and pretty quickly learned that becoming a leader involves much more than being put in a leadership role; acquiring new skills, and adapting one’s style to the requirements of that role. It involves a fundamental identity shift. It’s a never-ending training session that I love and that has brought me to the position I am in today.

"It has been intense at times - but I am very passionate about my job. I aim to influence the quality culture of our company in a positive way, by embracing advances in the quality system and improving how we communicate and by being transparent. This journey is all driven by leadership and I believe that this creates the culture of quality by its actions. This applies to the questions of gender diversity as well. We should expect change in everything – and also in culture. We need to get our people to act because it drives value - because quality is a value - and gender diversity is too. I believe this is how we win in the long run."

Andrea then focusses her thoughts on the extent to which women today are joining boardrooms in Denmark and beyond each year. The number of women sitting at the table in corporate boardrooms across the countries of the world is rising very slowly, but at least it’s rising. Andrea says, going on to develop this point in more detail, followed by her thoughts on gender diversity in the workplace.

“In the Xella Board of Directors, we have one woman out of six members in total. Several studies conclude that companies with at least one female on the board tend to have higher stock returns and better corporate performance than companies with all-male boards. Many European countries are maintaining a focus on diversity in the boardroom, especially from a gender perspective, so it’s not only a question of fairness. The presence of women in the leadership of a country, a region or a business is a question of good governance.

“Basically, it makes bottom-line business sense to have gender diversity in the workplace today. Men and women have different viewpoints, ideas, and market insights, which enables better problem solving. Women are as talented as men, so leaving women out of top leadership just means you are missing 50% of talent. It is a challenge of diversity that we all need to recognise is very real. I believe that for women, the subtle gender bias that persists in organisations and in society disrupts the learning cycle at the heart of becoming a leader. Companies need to be very proactive in managing the shift in gender balance as it definitely doesn’t happen by default.”

In terms of the company’s own staff, Andrea believes very strongly that the people make Xella what it is. They aim to attract the most talented, productive employees in their industry and to earn their loyalty and commitment as Andrea explains in greater detail.

“We support and protect our employees through comprehensive processes, ensuring that every employee is treated fairly and has a voice which is listened to and valued” Andrea goes on to say before offering additional thoughts on the company’s workforce and the value she places on them.
Long and Continued Success

ACE Staffing Unlimited, Inc. was hatched in 2000 by two women who worked in the field of temporary construction staffing and wanted to do it better. As part of our Prominent Women in Business series, Tanya Meyer shares the firm’s passion for getting every man and woman who want to work into a job, but in a dignified way.

any of the employees ACE Staffing Unlimited, Inc worked with in the past were down on their luck and therefore treated in an unsavoury manner by many. That was so frustrating for the firm. Without these men, there would be no business. So, Tanya explains that they started their own company and decided that from the outset they were going to treat all of the employees equally and with respect.

Tanya goes on to explain why this approach has ensured the firm’s continued success and strength 17 years on and more about the clients and employees they work with.

“We find a big part of our success is due to the relationships we’ve built with the employees and clients alike.”

“That decision is a big part of the reason we’re still strong 17 years later. Some of our men, who started off working as an unskilled general labour on a construction site 17 years ago, are still working for us. Having said that, they have moved up working for us, to skilled trade positions making $24/hr instead of the $6/hr they started making with us. It’s been a true blessing to work side by side with many of the men and women that were at one time overlooked by regular employers. The loyalty goes both ways with our men and it’s very rewarding working with the thousands of men and women we have found jobs for with us.”

“Our company provides skilled trades workers to clients on commercial construction projects. We operate and have projects and workers in every single county in Florida and have worked on projects in the recent past in Louisiana, Georgia and Alabama. Our clients are loyal because of our devotion to providing them the men they need to get their jobs done and our continued attention throughout the job.

“We find a big part of our success is due to the relationships we’ve built with the employees and clients alike. ACE Staffing Unlimited’s clients and on site workers see our faces on site a minimum of once a week thereby earning their trust and respect. We are super safety conscious and always walking the jobs to ensure there are no hazards that we see could hurt our employees. Sometimes it’s better to take the time to build the relationships and hold off on building the client base so you have a solid foundation and that’s exactly what we did.”

Tanya then underlines that the firm intentionally have surrounded themselves with family to work with in their corporate office. At first, it’s very difficult to work with family she says, but in this business so much money passes through hands that the firm had to be able to trust their full time in house staff, so they went with family.

“We find a big part of our success is due to the relationships we’ve built with the employees and clients alike.”

“To this day, we have the same family members working here running ACE Staffing Unlimited’s corporate office. My own mum and daughter work right here with me and have for years and years. This truly is a family run business and that’s exactly what we were looking to do” Tanya goes on to explain.

“The whole atmosphere of ACE was meant to feel more intimate like family from the beginning and we feel we have really accomplished that with everyone from ACE Staffing Unlimited’s staff and clients of 17 years and even our insurance agents, accountants and lawyers. It takes a team to run this company and this team really is family whether related or not.”

Through the years, ACE Staffing Unlimited, Inc. have earned so many prestigious awards from different organisations. Tanya underlines how they feel so lucky to be honoured publicly for their efforts to reduce unemployment issues. In addition, the firm spends countless hours helping the community and the animal community. Tanya has personally looked after over 60 rescued animals on her own personal property, and adds that she is so blessed to have been able to create a successful business that allows her to care for so many people and so many of God’s creatures. In spite of difficulties in the US economy, the firm’s outlook is a very positive one as Tanya concludes.

“We employed more workers in 2016 than we have since the economy crash. It felt amazing to be able to have more jobs than men last year, for the first
time in many years. Listening to an employee that is laid off beg for a job, because he has a family to care for, is excruciating. This economy turn has been so exciting getting everyone back to work! 2017 has already started off even stronger than 2016 and I foresee it continuing on that path with our current government. I don’t foresee any layoffs this year and if I’m right that will be fantastic.”

“There’s no other job in the world I was meant for. I was meant to make sure men and women alike have jobs that want to work regardless of their previous hardships. It’s a true pleasure and honour to own ACE Staffing Unlimited, Inc.”
Nothing but Stellar Customer Service

In our popular Prominent Women in Business series, we turn the spotlight onto President and CEO Julie Ritter Southern of Spiralinks, based in California. This is a firm that has designed, installed, and hosted secure web-based systems and websites for human resources, compensation, marketing and finance teams for more than 20 years.

With this deep understanding of compensation and performance management needs, Spiralinks created their top-class compensation and performance management planning suite, FocalReview®. They are the leader in compensation management software for companies in the US, UK and beyond - and can be tailored to what works for a particular business. Indeed, they can partner with their customers to include the specific features they need for their Total Rewards planning. In addition, the solutions of Spiralinks can be installed on-premise or in-the-cloud (SaaS).

“The creation of our flagship product FocalReview® has been rewarding – bringing it thru 8 versions so far, growing alongside the Web’s growth and sophistication – taking its place as a business systems platform” Julie adds.

Turning to Julie’s own job role, she is impressively the Head of Spiralinks – also known as President, CEO, Chairman, Strategist and Chief Dishwasher. She tells us that her transition to the role of President has been varied, yet steady. This story begins when Julie started out in Computer Science, writing machine level code for mainframe computers, then moving to software programming for business applications for client service technology and implementing major ERP systems integrating across multiple technologies. Julie then moved onto various jobs in the Web world.

Julie then tells us about this woman owned company and the diversity of the staff who work there.

“As a woman owned company, we participate in numerous organisations and events that focus on the importance of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics). We are GSA certified and small business certified, attending government and supplier events to regularly evangelise our products and services.

“Our team is diverse in race, age, sex and religion. We embrace the creativity and experience each diversity brings to the table, to produce an excellent web solution and stellar customer service. In today’s global economy, the variety is needed and wanted. Our three office locations (US, UK and India) provide a follow-the-sun approach to software development and support - something that gives business, the economy and minorities an opportunity not normally granted to them in traditional business circles.

“I would like to add that Spiralinks staff are fantastic – they are smart, curious, dedicated, and customer centric. We encourage constant career growth, research of new technology trends and the impact on our business. We want to be the leader in our field, and to do that, we need to work as a team to be successful in what we do.”

One of our key differentiators with other companies is Spiralinks unwavering focus on customer service Julie goes on to say. “We want our customers to be self-sufficient when we turnover products and services to them. We are always available, but an informed client is a happy client”

2017 and beyond provide challenges and opportunities, not unlike the last 10, 20 and 30 years in technology. These go hand-in-hand” Julie explains before outlining her vision for the future of the industry and Spiralinks.

“Technology changes at a pace most company technology departments have a hard time keeping up with. As a small company, we are agile and can take some of the burden off these groups and partner with them to excel our client expectations. Partnering with our clients is key to our success. Building a working environment for each project, in person and remote, where we can work together as a team is the way forward.”
A Room with a View

Hotel Solutions Partnership is a global network of over 40 consultants and hands-on professionals who are strategic thinkers and domain experts. They provide advisory, acquisition and investment, and short-term management solutions to international hotel and resort owners, operators, developers, investors and entrepreneurs. We caught up with CEO, Katrina Craig, to learn more about the hospitality industry, Hotel Solutions Partnership and the services it offers.

Setting the scene, Katrina tells us about BREXIT and how it has positively impacted the hotel industry in the UK. In short, the price of travelling to the UK has dropped, but Brits are finding it is cheaper to stay at home rather than travel abroad. Currency fluctuations have meant the price of hotel property in the UK is relatively more affordable for investors, as evidenced by the recent and significant example of Qatar’s sovereign welfare fund upping their investment into the UK by £5 billion over the next three to four years.

“One of the things we do here is to support investors. We have an acquisitions business where we look for and source property for hotel investors. We take them through the process, which includes looking for properties, evaluating them and preparing site-specific business plans for them and making recommendations such as adding a spa or room refurbishments and upgrades. We can put the architects and construction team together, and provide a full support team that will deliver a completed hotel.”

“Here at Hotel Solutions Partnership, we truly improve results, maximising product, people, process and profit for our clients. Our focus is always on finding and unlocking hidden strategic advantage.”

“The other side of the coin is that those who work in the hotel industry traditionally come from European countries, so we step in with human resources recruitment and development to train workers. We also write standard training manuals, so hotels can easily impart the way things should be done to any incoming staff.”

“In addition, with the rise of companies in Asia and The Middle East, many are finding that they can launch their own brands in light of the growing tourism market. We have a client in The Middle East who is solely focused on travel to Saudi Arabia, where there is forecasted to be 10 million people visiting there each year. The local hotel groups are therefore really ramping up their capabilities and perhaps most importantly their capacities in order to meet with this increase demand.

Katrina says that Hotel Solutions Partnership can help these local hotel groups repackage their offerings to key regional and international source markets. More broadly speaking, Katrina adds that hotel operators such as Marriott, Hilton and IHG have many sub brands within them to provide the full spectrum of lodgings from limited select service to luxury.

There are clearly a number of changes in the global hotel brand world, with the growth of independent boutique hotels offering very bespoke, niche and individualised products.

Other significant changes in business models are as witnessed by the growth of Air B&B, answering travellers’ needs for a home away from home, as opposed to a regular hotel room. That in itself is a challenge to the traditional hotel operators and is currently being addressed.

“Much of our work is sitting with these entrepreneurs and having these envisioning workshops, helping them to see how they perceive their brands and whether, their business is responding to these changes and what can they do to make both tactical and strategic improvements. We assist clients to meet their goals by providing both tactical and strategic direction, in a structured way by providing branding or bringing new designers to the table and even finding them partners to assist.”

Established in 2003, Hotel Solutions Partnership began as a network of strategic thinkers and domain experts in the global hotel industry. Today the firm have over 40 consultants and hands-on professionals around the world. Katrina explains the firm’s service offering and how it works as a turnkey solution to ensure that clients receive the entire range of services they need.

The firm’s services include:
• Corporate and Development strategy;
• Brand development;
• Writing operating and technical design manuals;
• International hotel operator search;
• Feasibility studies;
• Operational support;
• Recruitment and training;
• Hotel property acquisition, due diligence and asset management.

“Hotel Solutions Partnership works with hotel owners, hotel operators and developers, investors, and those wishing to become involved in the hotel and hospitality industry, providing them with specialist hotel consultancy services. We are often engaged to undertake feasibility studies for new hotels or integrated resort developments in new destinations. We also help entrepreneurs develop their own hotel brand and can support the roll-out of a new brand or concept internationally.”
“Besides this, we have provided experts for complex assignments ranging from organisational change, distressed asset turnaround plans, IT audits, creating technical standards and design guidelines, to negotiating and contracting operators and third-party partners. Our advisors have over 20 years’ experience of working with the large hotel brands, and having reached a senior level, many of them decided to start consulting work having worked in a multitude of different countries.”

“We have also undertaken strategic and cost reviews for some well-established hotel companies prior to a merger, acquisition or public listing. This vast array of services ensures that we are able to meet the diverse needs of our hotel customers. Our current assignments include clientele in the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Spain, United Kingdom, Australia and the US.”

Examples of brands that HSP have been associated with include:
- Kempinski;
- Bespoke Hotels
- Premier Inn
- Nikki Beach;
- Beach Republic;
- Movenpick;
- Radisson;
- One and Only;
- Hilton;
- Banyan Tree;
- Centara;
- SwissBel Hotels.

Hospitality consultancy has become increasingly popular over recent years as an increase in global mobility has led to a growth in the hospitality space itself. As such, “staying ahead of the curve” is crucial to the success of any firm looking to mark itself out as the best possible option for hotels and resorts seeking to maximise their potential and cope with this ever-increasing demand. Katrina discusses how the firm marks itself out as a leader in this increasingly competitive global market.

“Here at Hotel Solutions Partnership, we truly improve results, maximising profit, people, process and profit for our clients. Our focus is always on finding and unlocking the hidden strategic advantage in each client. We serve hotel owners, operators, management companies, developers and investors. We provide support in every phase of a hotel company’s (or hotel’s) life. From a dream on a sketch to working through a bankruptcy, rebranding or closing, we offer end-to-end seamless service.

“What distinguishes us from other consultancies is that each Hotel Solutions Partnership member has had at least 10 years of experience at the property or corporate level in hotel management, distribution and development companies and most served as senior vice presidents or managing directors in their executive careers before becoming consultants. Because we focus purely on hotels, our knowledge and expertise in making hotels and resorts successful cannot be matched elsewhere. Collectively, our team of over 40 consultants has over 600 years of experience leading hotel companies and hotels around the world.”

Prior to establishing her consultancy, Katrina worked in hotel and resort development and hotel brand franchising in Asia. In her last executive position as CEO of Accor Asia Pacific Hotels and Resorts Philippines, she oversaw the re-branding and refurbishment of 5 hotels totaling 1,120 keys to the Sofitel, Novotel and Mercure brands.

Previous to this, she was VP for Projects at the Grand Hotels and Resorts Group where she was responsible for the development and marketing of some 400 resort residential units, renovated a 18-hole championship golf course and launched a marina and yacht club. Katrina discusses how she draws on this vast industry expertise to support her clients.

In addition, the Hotel Solutions Partnership regularly attend the following international trade shows:
- World Travel Market London;
- International Hotel Investment Forum Berlin;
- Arabian Travel Market Dubai;
- Hotel Investment Conference Asia Pacific Hong Kong;
- Hotel Operations Conference, London;
- Americas Lodging Investment Summit, Las Vegas;

“Over the past fourteen years Hotel Solutions Partnership have become known for delivering complex multi-disciplinary advisory assignments that have allowed businesses to achieve their full potential. Our consultants, as individuals or as members of this team, have work experience in well over a hundred countries worldwide for businesses in all sectors of the hotel industry, with varying degrees of complexity, and each of us draws on our vast experience in the hospitality space to ensure that we offer clients the support and solutions that they need to succeed.

“I draw on our vast expertise in a variety of businesses across the hospitality space to ensure that my team and I work efficiently and effectively, supporting our clients with whatever they need. Developing hotel and resort brands is my area of expertise and as such I understand the market and am able to share my knowledge and understanding with my staff.”

As an independent firm, Hotel Solutions Partnership offers truly unbiased advice that ensures success for its clients. Among the firm’s additional core acquisition and development opportunities to putting the right management team in place, the offer solutions designed specifically for individual clients’ needs, and moving forward its ongoing focus will be on continuing to provide the most innovative, cutting edge support and services to its clients, as Katrina concludes.

“Looking ahead, Hotel Solutions Partnership remains committed to supporting its clients in the ever-changing hospitality market. We are constantly visiting the latest trade shows and industry forums, in order to remain at the forefront of the latest industry developments, as well as leveraging our international network of contacts throughout the market to ensure that when people work with us they receive the up-to-the-minute advice and support possible. It is this commitment to excellence that has led us to the success we enjoy to today, and we will continue to build upon this and grow even further over the months and years ahead.”

“From a dream on a sketch to working through a bankruptcy, rebranding or closing, we offer end-to-end seamless service.”
A Beacon of Hope

2017 Business Elite Awards award winner is Daniamant Ltd, a Danish owned company with manufacturing facilities in both Denmark and the UK (Portsmouth). We invited them to write about their innovative products and their reflections on receiving this prestigious award.

Daniamant proudly manufacture Survivor Location Lights for the marine, military, civil and aviation markets. Bridge Navigation Watch Alarm Systems, Salinometers, Oil Level Alarms and a number of other innovative products. Our products are categorised under safe people, safe systems and safe sailing.

Daniamant are committed to developing high quality, innovative products and continually expanding into new markets. We sell to more than 50 countries worldwide through a network of carefully selected distributors. Our products are used if a disaster occurs at sea; when all else fails, they have to work.

In these uncertain times, innovation is key to driving your business forward and not remaining stagnant. Daniamant has to adapt to survive and that means always looking at different ways to carry out business; new products, new methods of working, new markets and new customers. Daniamant remains a competitive but high quality manufacturer in all of our chosen product offerings and markets.

Daniamant is committed to growth organically or via acquisitions and the Odeo Flare is an ideal example of this commitment. A new product that challenges current legislation and manufacturing methods, providing a new solution that reduces transport costs, disposal costs and at the same time increases the safety aspect.

This 2017 Business Elite award endorses Daniamant's continued commitment to quality and innovation, giving our customers the confidence to build long term relationships based on trust and respect. It is important that the skills and quality in European manufacturing gets the recognition it deserves and these awards help demonstrate the ambition, creativity and innovation that's evident across our industry.
Partner with us!
By becoming a TV Broadcaster Franchisee.

An exclusive opportunity to enter the broadcasting Industry will open early in 2017.

A LICENSE TO OPERATE THE TELEVISION CHANNEL FRANCHISE, WHICH PROVIDES A CORE OPERATIONS TEAM, A NAMED & NUMBERED SKY EPG, BROADCAST LICENSE, A CHANNEL MANAGEMENT CONTRACT, 12 WEEKS OF PROGRAMS ALREADY SCHEDULED, PROGRAM CONTENT ACCOUNT, CHANNEL MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE & SALES PORTAL, OPERATIONS MANUAL, WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR INTERESTED MEDIA BUYERS TO INSPECT, BEFORE SUBMITTING BIDS TO PURCHASE.

The spectacular Franchise model pre-disposes 75% of all workflow tasks to be assigned by contract to professionals.

Therefore the buyer need only provide an admin team, an accountant and three program schedulers in order to qualify to win the operations license.

5 Star Film Co. Ltd

FRANCHISE OFFER SUMMARY: [20% EQUITY STAKE]
The TV Channel will be Operated by ‘Information TV’ & will Playout on the SKY Showcase 3 Channel. Our Company have a qualified team, broadcast license & 12 weeks of programmes already scheduled, so we are eager for an investor to come on board as soon as possible.

We hold the World’s only TV Channel Franchise. A leading Broadcasting TV Channel is capable of earning several billions per annum, and what makes our Franchise offer unique is the fact that we not only organise the broadcast management for the franchisee, but also supply the operations team at our own expense. The franchisee is only responsible for a minimal portion of duties which will include website management P.R, Press releases, customer services & accounting. The Franchise license will be open to bid offers during 2017, and bids will start at £96,000.

The other qualifying requirements are as follows.
1. A minimum of six personnel must be deployed for 8 hrs per day 5 days per week, three program schedulers need to be included.
2. The Prospector that offers the highest bid will win the license.
3. Should only one bid be offered then the Franchise shall go for the lowest offering which is £96,000. It should be considered that when the ITV Southern Television Franchise went to auction during the 1980s, Meridian TV won the License with a highest bid of £163,000,000.

The Chairman of Scottish Television once quoted when he took the post, that “Television Broadcasting is the equivalent of owning a license to print money.”

Compare the Southern Television Franchise sale to Meridian TV with the One World Television Channels Franchise value.

Southern Television [Regional]
Average peak Viewers: 82,000
Franchise Cost: £163,000,000
Broadcast time before profit was made: (4 years 2 months)

One World Television Channel [All U.K & Europe]
Forecast average peak viewer based upon Program contents past performances: 990,000
[Forecasted daily viewers for the first year]
[85,000 - 2,500,000] [Average earning per advert per 1000 viewers - £34]
Average volume of Ads per week - 960
Franchise cost: £96,000
Broadcast time before profit is made: (one day)

Begin the TV Channel Franchise Investigation!
Switched on Staff

At Ozkan Law, we are honoured to be named the Most Outstanding for Renewable Energy Law, 2016. We are an Istanbul-based full-service law firm, providing integrated legal advice with the goals of assisting the clients to clearly understand the legal variables affecting their business decisions, and turning efficient legal structures into a competitive advantage.

Ozkan Law’s practice focuses on a wide range of areas, including corporate, mergers and acquisitions, banking and finance, project finance, capital markets, competition, real estate, construction, labour, litigation and arbitration, regulatory and public law, intellectual property, data protection and telecommunications and specialises in the sectors of energy, natural resources and infrastructure.

From multinational household names, through to private individuals, our clients come from a wide range of sectors. Key clients of the firm include reputable energy companies (renewable, natural gas generators and developers), banks and financial institutions (including investment banks and funds), agriculture companies, manufacturers and retail-chains.

Each assignment is led by an individual partner, and we take every effort to keep our clients well-informed and up-to-date. Our lawyers are accustomed to working international hours and are fluent in Turkish, English, French, German and Russian.

In terms of being solution oriented, we have:

- A strong commitment and dedication by partners in projects;
- A ‘hands on’ mentality during the entire transaction process;
- Business minded legal counselling – stringer, proactive management throughout the entire transaction process;
- A partnership based approach – open access to local business networks in all industry areas and;
- Smooth dialogue with administrative and judicial bodies.

Regarding our cross-border expertise, we can offer:

- An international network and a global presence: with strong market know-how and local access through international network Bridge Alliance partner offices.

Bridge Alliance, a network of distinguished independent law firms, provides our clients access to top-tier lawyers across Europe, North America and Middle East. Each is delivering the on-the-ground market expertise and indigenous insight which the clients need in order to meet, manage and overcome their business challenges around the globe.

In closing, we also offer:

- Cross-border transaction experience and expertise;
- An outstanding network of individuals, ambassadors, senior experts, advisors and business partners and;
- A strong international client portfolio.

“We work only with the most skilled lawyers and we are proud of our ability to combine the talent of attorneys across different disciplines to meet our clients’ needs.”

Ozkan Law also represents and advises a diverse client portfolio of Turkish and multinational clients in the banking and finance, corporate, real estate, retail, automotive, maritime and information technology sectors.

Due to the fact that project finance, mergers and acquisitions, joint venture transactions and dispute resolution projects in the energy sectors require specific industry and regulatory knowledge, Ozkan Law intensely focuses on these aforementioned areas in order to provide its clients with high quality services.

Ozkan Law has a team which consists of 12 attorneys. We work only with the most skilled lawyers and we are proud of our ability to combine the talent of attorneys across different disciplines to meet our clients’ needs. Each team member brings his or her individual expertise and insights to the projects. Using their knowledge of a client’s business, our attorneys strive to satisfy the client’s needs in a manner consistent with its long term strategic objectives.
People at the Heart of Recruitment

Love Success, winner of the Best Female Owned & Operated Recruitment Agency 2017 - South East England award, is the leading specialist recruitment agency in London, providing a comprehensive range of candidate and client services for businesses and individuals all over the UK. We spoke to the firm’s co-owners, Jane Atherton and Julia Vassie, about the secret to their incredible success, including formal recognition from the Prime Minister.

Launched in 2010, Love Success was wholly funded by Jane and Julia with no backers involved. Today, they are an award-winning agency and formally recognised by the Prime Minister with a personal congratulatory letter for the Fortuna 50 Index, which features the fastest growing female-led businesses, and Love Success came in the top 25. They are in the Who’s Who of Britain’s Business Elite, and are on target to turn over £8 million in 2017.

Jane explains: “We are 90% female in terms of our workforce, and 40% are part-time including mothers, carers and even dancers and actors. We have beautiful offices with the best view in London overlooking the Thames, the London Eye and Big Ben, which we use as our office clock! Julia and I have worked together for over 20 years. We are regularly referred to as the “Ant and Dec of recruitment.” We have a very safe client base, billing in excess of 200 clients a week.

Julia adds that the business mix is made up of 75% temporary/contingent staff with 25% being permanent introductions, and that Love Success mainly supply PA/EA, Office Support, Compliance, Marketing and HR staff to their clients. Salaries start at £20,000 and go up as high as £175,000. She adds that the firm has many consultants who are renowned recruitment specialists.

Following this excellent introduction, we asked Jane and Julia to offer their thoughts on the extent to which an ever-increasing number of women are joining boardrooms across the country every year. Jane adds that they would like the figure to be higher, but says that, “recruitment in the commercial arena is generally female-led due to the nature of the jobs we fulfil, such as PAs and EAs, which tend to attract more females. Whereas in financial services and IT recruitment, the jobs tend to be filled by a higher percentage of males.”

Bucking the trend
Julia adds that in terms of women in the boardroom, it goes back to the old adage that a woman starts a family, so they are not seen as leaders in business. In this regard, Julia feels that something definitely needs to change and explains that she started her first business when her daughter was 9 months old and believes that “anybody who has the will and the get up and go can do the same, but unfortunately the opportunities and acceptance of working mothers is still not as widely recognised as it should be in the UK. I am an advocate for encouraging all, whether female or male, to obtain greater achievements in promotion to manager and director level positions.”

Bringing the balance in to recruitment
As many businesses in the UK are seeing the benefit of having a more balanced workforce, Julia adds that converse to this, there is a UK-wide trend for recently launched firms to take on self-employed contractors – reaping terrible results for the contractor. A recently launched delivery firm that was investigated by an undercover journalist in February this year uncovered that the firm was promising £15 an hour. However, when the undercover journalist went to work for them, his findings showed that the contractor’s pay worked out to be just under the minimum wage because the firm doesn’t pay for holidays, breaks or sickness.

“There have been several companies that have launched in the UK offering ‘flexible working/ self employed’ positions, when in reality they are not paying their staff or their taxes. I believe that anybody who sets up a company in the UK and takes on staff should pay their workers a standard rate of pay, and they should be looked after when they are sick and enjoy paid holidays. Our company
makes sure that our temporary/flexible work force are paid a fair wage, and we also pay all legislative costs relating to NI contributions, tax, pension and holiday pay, but it seems that other firms are getting away under the ‘flexible working/self employed’ banner without contributing to the UK. Therefore, we are seeing a notable change in the balance of the workforce which is not helping the UK flourish as it should.”

Prior to launching Love Success, Julia and Jane were two of the original founding directors of Huntress that launched in 2000 and they grew the business to over 400 staff. Jane and Julia remained on the board for 9 years before undertaking a management buyout. The firm had 22 offices and turnover in excess of £100 million when it was sold for £40 million.

In terms of the staff that work for them now, Julia says they are amazing and that 40% of their staff have been working with them for several years and followed them from their previous companies. This is testament to their leadership and a massive vote of confidence to them both as these staff walked away from fantastic salaries and bonuses to work with Jane and Julia on their brand new start up and all the risks that entail with new companies. Jane adds that what they do at Love Success is not seen as the norm in recruitment, she explains, “We do offer truly flexible working without compromising on bonus earnings for our staff. We are able to offer this in return for long-term commitment. We have been through several births, marriages and divorces and we care greatly about our staff providing support whenever they need it.”

“We know that in everyone’s lives there will be times, when they need time off or a reduction in hours to support their families or for a personal situation, and we provide this as we know we get it back tenfold in their commitment to us. Other recruitment agencies we know, don’t allow anything but full-time working, which we believe is incredibly limiting and doesn’t promote commitment or longevity within the talent force.”

**Evolving with technology**

Julia says, “The challenge now is definitely the new way of communication through social media and how to embrace the right ones without affecting your brand. As such we believe the different sites offer their own plus points with Facebook being fun, Twitter for immediate responses, Instagram for visual impact/branding and LinkedIn is for professional networking. But you can’t solely rely on these to build your business. We use them to enhance our offering but it doesn’t deflect from the success we have in relationship building with our clients from visiting them in person. We also ensure that we meet all our applicants before working on their behalf or sending them out tendering.”

“A lot of people try to build better technology to replace recruitment agencies. However technology cannot replace the face-to-face reality in uncovering the real applicant and their strengths and skills on offer. Recruitment companies are people based businesses, so computers cannot convey an applicant’s personality or passion or even persuade a client to see a wildcard person for example. We get to know our candidates and gain their trust, having nurtured advised and supported them throughout the process. It’s from this engagement that we get a true picture and feel of where they would be ideally suited. These very important attributes are never evident via a computerised copy of a CV. Technology is great to enhance but should not be the only tool used” Julia adds.

**Creating History**

Jane concludes that, “anybody who wants to get on in life with a burning desire and ambition will do well. There are so many companies in London and the South East - it’s a great place to be. You don’t always need a first-class degree; it is all about the person, their approach and energy. In a recent survey we compiled we found that 20% of the top PAs had a degree. Therefore, if a client insists on only looking at “degree educated PAs” then they automatically miss out on 80% of very talented PAs! When we inform our clients of this the majority change their mind. We always ask our clients if they want us to supply them with the best CV or the best candidate? There’s a huge difference.”

Jane remarks that from her own personal experience, and her experience in employing recruitment consultants, that becoming a recruitment consultant is not generally the first choice as a career when finishing college or university. “I don’t know anybody that has planned to be a recruiter from day one. For me, the idea was actually sold to me by a temp who worked in my office. I called a very well known agency in London and they refused to see me initially because I “had no sales experience.” I challenged them on this point, adding that if I was willing to drive all the way from Manchester to London for an interview to try to convince them otherwise, then they should really see me. They did and the rest is history!”

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**Envisable Breadth of Clients in London**

Turning to clients, Love Success works with thousands of different clients every year from every business sector, 70% of which are repeat customers, which is proof that people believe in and rely on the service the firm provides. Jane adds that they do regular surveys to ensure that the service being provided is always at optimum quality, for all of their clients, and that they visit their clients on a regular basis to ensure that they are maintaining the level of service.

In terms of the future, even following BREXIT, things have got much busier for Love Success and they have been inundated. Jane says that they were nervous when the BREXIT result came out and of the impact this could have on London companies, professional services and banking in particular.

“However, we have seen that office rental rates in the city have taken a dip which is a slight indication of the concern within the City businesses. Also, immediately after the decision was made our high salaried positions (£150K plus) were put on hold for a month or so. Other than these two indicators,
The ‘Tech-Legate’

The honour of the Indonesian Best Recommended Technology Media & Telecommunications Lawyer of 2017 was recently awarded to Mika Isac Kriyasa of Hanafiah Ponggawa & Partners (HPRP). Being a young and dynamic Indonesian lawyer, with a user-friendly legal services approach has made him being renowned among client as the ‘Tech-Legate’.

Mika’s expertise as a business lawyer has served global market players entering Indonesian soil with contentment and praise to the ‘Tech-Legate’. ‘He always has a game face at the time of negotiation, but when you know him like I do, he always smiles and make other people do the same outside the battlefield’, said one of his clients, who happens to be the head of in-house council of one of the largest Indonesian notebook market leaders.

In terms of being recognised as the Best Recommended Technology Media & Telecommunications Lawyer of 2017, Mika said, “thank you. I am pleased, deeply honoured and humbled to receive this award. To be recognised and acknowledged by an international organisation such as yours, for work on something that I have done daily as a career. This recognition serves in encouraging me immensely for my efforts.

• Acer Indonesia as the Indonesian notebook market leader and TCL as one of China’s biggest multinational electronic company, which also one of the top three largest television manufacturers, numerous e-commerce and fintech companies.
• assisting Bank Syariah Mandiri as the largest sharia bank in Indonesia in their core banking system transformation and assisting Rp 1 trillion syndicated loan financing project between 15 banks, for one of the largest satellite and terrestrial network provider in Indonesia, with combination financing scheme between sharia and conventional.

In a rapidly evolving, technical field where no single person can be an expert in all specialities, Mika worked for one of the prominent intellectual property law firms at the start of his career in 2004. Throughout his tenure, he has learned and practiced intellectual property related matters and served clients who are involved in entertainment, multimedia, movies and wholesale businesses.

Mika also worked for a firm who supported the legal work for the Indonesian Bank Restructuring Agency (known as Badan Penyehatan Perbankan Nasional or IBRA) after he graduated from University of Indonesia in 2002. The IBRA no longer exist, indeed it was dissolved in 2004. It was established to reorganise the banking industry, by selling and restructuring the unfavourable assets of some unhealthy Indonesian banks.

Such work has prepared his fundamental legal skill in meeting the most crucial challenge in business, which is the financing and structuring of a deal. The opportunity has made him see the entire structuring scheme which was made by each debtor of such banks, under different industries, and he has learnt much from this.

Mika has deep roots in the telecommunication and tech business, indeed one of his career paths was working for satellite pay-tv media industries, having served as in-house counsel in Astro TV investment project in Indonesia around 2005 to 2008. This opportunity opened his eyes to international tech, media and telecoms Industry.

Lauded by Acquisition International in 2016 as Most Innovative Lawyer in his jurisdiction, Mika has represented Tech Media and Telecoms Company, through his work for HPRP Lawyers. This year Mika has done it again, as the award winner for the Best Recommended Technology Media & Telecommunications Lawyer of 2017.

“Thank you. I am pleased, deeply honoured and humbled to receive this award. To be recognised and acknowledged by an international organisation such as yours, for work on something that I have done daily as a career.”

“Also, it gives a feeling that my work is meaningful and of worth. I shall work towards my own goals and those of my clients with a renewed vigour” he said, through his mobile, meanwhile his client called him back couple of times, to be back for the meeting for a software acquisition transaction.

Mika Isac Kriyasa has nearly 15 years’ experience as a business lawyer representing technology, media and telecommunication companies, financial institutions, inventors, entrepreneurs and investors in a wide range of corporate, commercial and investment matters.

He has worked for Hanafiah Ponggawa and Partners (HPRP Lawyers) for more than 8 years, served clients such as:
• Bank Indonesia (Indonesian Central Bank) for their technology transformation projects,
• Indonesian Capital Investment Coordinating Board for drafting the Indonesian Bilateral Investment Treaty Template
• IBM as top player in cloud services in coordination with Jones Day Germany Office
Investing in the Future

Global investment management firm, GMO, believes that valuation-driven investing with a long horizon will achieve the best risk-adjusted returns. We tell you more about the company and its strong customer focussed strategy, to celebrate their success in winning the Best Global Multi-Asset Class Portfolio Manager 2017 and Best Systematic Futures Fund (Since Inception): GMO Systematic Global Macro awards.

GMO is a global investment management firm committed to providing sophisticated clients with superior asset management solutions. The firm’s sole business is investment management and, as a private partnership, it is accountable only to its clients and itself. GMO forges strong partnerships with clients, managing their money as if it were the firm’s own and offering them honest counsel. GMO’s deep and talented investment teams are highly experienced and forward-thinking, investing with focused expertise in a wide range of asset classes.

"The firm was founded in 1977 by Jeremy Grantham, Richard Mayo and Eyk Van Otterloo, initially managing US equity portfolios.”

Jeremy Grantham is a member of GMO’s Asset Allocation team, serving as the firm’s chief investment strategist. Prior to GMO’s founding, Mr. Grantham was co-founder of BatteryMarch Financial Management in 1969 where he recommended commercial indexing in 1971, one of several claims to being first. He began his investment career as an economist with Royal Dutch Shell. He is a member of the GMO Board of Directors and has also served on the investment boards of several non-profit organizations. He earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Sheffield (U.K.) and an MBA from Harvard Business School.

Mission Statement
The firm’s mission is as follows, in order of importance:
1. To deliver superior investment performance and advice to clients.
2. To provide a collegial and productive work environment that embodies an affirmative set of work and personal values.
3. To manage the firm in an effective and coordinated way that achieves a level of profitability sufficient to achieve the firm’s mission.
4. To always put clients’ interests before its own, and to provide clients with the best service possible consistent with achieving their investment goals.
5. To develop a broad array of superior investment products.
6. To grow as fast as is consistent with its ability to perform in a superior way as an investment and professional organization.
7. To enjoy its work.

Investor Information
The minimum investment for a mutual fund account is $10 million or $5 million for a tax-managed account. GMO also offers several privately-managed products (hedge funds) that carry minimums of $5 million or more per fund. There are several additional investor qualifications in order to participate in these private offerings. GMO offers separately managed accounts to investors who meet minimum investment size guidelines that vary by investment strategy, and range from $25 million to $500 million.
M&A Deals
Q1 Round-Up

Both the volume and value of M&A deals announced worldwide declined in the first quarter of 2017, according to Zephyr, the M&A database published by Bureau van Dijk. In all there were 22,093 deals worth $1,100,655 million announced during the three months, down from the $1,467,778 million injected across 25,172 deals in Q4 2016.

More promisingly, value actually improved on the same quarter in 2016, climbing 10% from $1,030,342 million to $1,100,655 million year-on-year, despite the fact that volume was down over the same timeframe. The declines recorded worldwide are not exactly encouraging, but the situation may appear worse than it is at first glance. Despite the downturn in deal making levels, plenty of sizeable transactions are still being signed off, as evidenced by the fact that all of the quarter’s top ten deals by value were worth in excess of $10,000 million. The largest of all came in at $49,400 million and involved a US target as British American Tobacco agreed to up its stake in US cigarettes maker Reynolds American in January. This was followed by the $30,055 million purchase of Swiss biopharmaceuticals manufacturer Actelion by domestic peer Cigal Holding, which was also announced in January. In all four deals broke the $20,000 million barrier, with the other deals featuring a Chinese and a Swiss target, respectively. The US was targeted in four of the top ten deals for the quarter, while no other country featured more than once; others to have attracted investment in these deals include the Netherlands, Italy and the UK.

Given the US’s prevalence in the year’s top ten deals to date, it is not surprising to see North America lead the volume and value rankings by region as $394,719 million was injected across 6,329 transactions. Western Europe placed second on both fronts with 6,133 transactions worth $302,375 million, while the Far East and Central Asia was third with 5,946 deals and $284,321 million. Despite the high levels of investment attracted by these regions, all three declined both quarter-on-quarter and year-on-year in terms of volume and value.

By contrast, the less frequently targeted regions, like Oceania, Eastern Europe, Africa and Middle East, all posted increases. Oceania and Eastern Europe both improved on Q1 2016, while the Middle East climbed from Q4 2016 and Africa was higher both year-on-year and quarter-on-quarter. This suggests that, rather than an overall global decline in deal making levels, what we are seeing is a drop-in investment into the traditional regions, while others appear to be going from strength to strength.

In terms of the sectors being targeted, the banking, insurance and financial services industry has attracted the most investment in 2017 to date with $199,496 million across 3,307 deals. It was followed by personal, leisure and business services, which featured in 4,235 deals worth $190,199 million, while mining and extraction (1,364 transactions at $164,265 million) placed third. The largest deal in the banking, insurance and financial services sector did not feature in the quarter’s top 10; it took the form of a $13,990 million rights issue by Italian banking player UniCredit.

In conclusion, at first glance the results for Q1 2017 appear to be fairly disappointing, given the declines in value and amount witnessed across the board over the three months. However, upon closer inspection we can see that a number of countries continue to attract strong levels of investment, but overall results have been hamstrung somewhat by a drop in the value of deals being announced in regions which are traditionally the most frequently targeted, including North America, Western Europe and the Far East and Central Asia. As such, the fact that M&A activity remains high in other regions, which are less likely to hit the headlines, leaves plenty to be positive about as we move into the second quarter.
## Industrials M&A activity

In keeping with the overall pattern detected across global M&A activity in Q1 2017, both the volume and value of deals targeting companies in the industrials sector declined over the three months. According to Zephyr, the M&A database published by Bureau van Dijk, there were 4,823 such deals worth $226,782 million announced over the course of the quarter.

In terms of value, the result represents a 37% decline on the $361,688 million invested in Q4 2016, while value dropped at the slower rate of 26% from $306,374 million in Q1 2016. Volume was also down from 5,694 and 6,128, respectively, over the same timeframes. The quarter has proven to be the sector’s slowest for some time; the last time value plumbed such depths was in Q3 2014, when deals worth $201,340 million were announced. Volume has not been so low since the 4,733 transactions signed off in Q2 2014. The disappointing showing comes despite a few significant deals being signed off in the sector over the three months, the largest of which was a US Dollars 21,825 million investment in Chinese semiconductor maker Tsinghua Unigroup by China Development Bank and Sino-IC Capital.

Given the aforementioned deal, as well as the fact that 10 of the year’s top 25 deals in the sector featured targets based there, it is no surprise to see the Far East and Central Asia top the regional rankings by volume and value with 1,700 deals worth $106,370 million. It placed well ahead of second-placed Western Europe ($71,980 million across 1,358 deals) on both fronts, while North America was third with 1,087 transactions worth $34,008 million.
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2016 Most Innovative Law Firms – USA
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2017 Ones to Watch in IP
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2017 Business Executive Awards
CEO of the Year - the USA
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Most Innovative Business Management Consulting Firm - USA
2017 USA Consultancy Awards
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Best Business Accountancy Advisory Firm - Isle of Man
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