

New global consultancy

A South African communication consultancy and an Indian communication group are becoming the administrative, project management and technology support centres for a new worldwide communication management consultancy, Baird's Communications Management Consultancy, launched on August 4.

"This is the first development of what could become a new trend in the Consulting and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO)," said Mark Chataway, the British partner of the new company, Baird's CMC.

He said that 15 senior communication and management consultants in five different countries who have a combined experience of over 300 years, came together to set up a new consulting business. They decided to outsource administration, accounting and project management support to a competent South African communication agency, Baird's Renaissance, whose chairman, Francois Baird, is also a partner in Baird's CMC.

"Using South Africa as the base for administrative, accounting and project management support makes hard business sense to us," he said. The company will also outsource research, software, development and technology support services to its Indian partners.

The American partner, Isabelle Claxton, says that the company has a high regard for South African professional services and that the cost of using South African professional resources provides Baird's CMC with a business advantage over its competitors.

"It enabled us to improve the value for money we offer clients and consultants because we don't have to spend so much money on big bosses, lavish offices and costly support functions that don't add value, either for the client or the consultants who do the work. This way our overheads are low, the support services are world class and the consultants can focus on what they do best - servicing clients," she said.

She said that the partners have so much faith in South Africa, that they even agreed that South African law will apply in case of business disputes. "We trust the South African legal system as much as that of the USA, UK or Europe."

Baird's CMC is the first worldwide communications and management consultancy servicing the global business community. Baird's CMC consultants work from their own country base. Highly qualified professional staff in cost-effective centres in South Africa and India provide administrative and back-up services. Baird's Renaissance, an established 15-year entrepreneurial communication management consultancy in South Africa, acts as an administrative and support hub, while small bases in the UK and the USA are available to consultants who otherwise operate from 'virtual desks'.

The consultants specialise in a diverse range of complementary disciplines and industries.

"This is more of a movement than a traditional agency, in fact we operate almost like a cooperative," explains Lisa ter Haar from the UK, an expert in issue marketing and high impact media campaigns. "We each work from our country base; we have no incentives to offer our clients anything but the greatest value in intellectual capital."

Baird's CMC consultants provide three categories of communication services: integrated strategy development; integration management and risk assessment; and specialist counsel based on specific areas of expertise.

"In our view the best solution is to employ really top class senior specialists to help develop the communication strategy, with a single-minded focus on enabling the achievement of business objectives," says Francois Baird, the South African partner.

Baird's CMC provides strategic communications management counsel in three core areas: integrated strategy development; integration management and risk assessment; and specialized counsel based on required areas of expertise. Depending on the client's needs, Baird's CMC consultants can also assist in evaluating which skills and resources are necessary to carry forward a strategic plan and help manage implementation.

Unlike traditional consultancies, Baird's CMC's focus is only on providing those strategic services that fully support a client's bottom line. Along with a streamlined operational structure, Baird's CMC adds transparency by shifting to a simple fee-for-service billing. Clients pay only a standard hourly rate and at-cost expenses. No retainers or long-term commitments are required.

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