

Winning Business in Germany, Austria & Switzerland

WORKSHOP

A round table session on the unique business cultures, opportunities and strategies associated with and required in Europe's German-speaking markets

Wednesday, 30th April 2008 8.30am –12pm

Enterprise Ireland, Merrion Hall, Strand Road, Sandymount, Dublin 4

This workshop, facilitated by Enterprise Ireland with support from IBC Academy and the Ariston Group, two German based consultancy companies, and TWC, based in Austria (see attached biographies), has been designed to bring Irish companies quickly up to speed with the key characteristics of Europe's German-speaking markets.

Topic covered include:

- Cultural intelligence – the pitfalls of Germany, Austria and Switzerland
- Navigating German organisation structures
- Aligning sales strategies and pitches to meet German, Austrian and Swiss buyer expectations

Round table

The format of the session will be round-table, chaired by Enterprise Ireland, with each discussion topic being introduced by presentations by the experts for that field. Fast-paced and information rich, drawing from real-world examples, the aim is to generate an exchange of information amongst all participants, going beyond a simple Q&A session with the experts.

Background

Traditionally the German-speaking markets have been overlooked by Irish companies, as they have been overshadowed by more familiar and seemingly more accessible marketplaces. However with the right approach, resources and commitment there is enormous potential in these markets. In particular now with the economic turnaround of Germany, the veritable "power house" of Europe, the time is right for Irish companies to carry out a real assessment of the opportunities in the region.

Going forward

While the workshop will cover a general overview of approaching the German market, there is also the opportunity to work further with any of the experts present in a one-to-one capacity on any areas not touched upon within the three hours, and we would invite all participants to seriously consider this. If you have any questions or special needs, the Enterprise Ireland Düsseldorf office will be more than happy to assist you with your next move in the German, Austrian and Swiss Markets, and we look forward to hearing from you.

The workshop is free of charge to invited client companies. Please complete the attached form and return it by email to confirm participation.

Contributors

Aristoteles Kabarganos is Managing Partner of Ariston group, a consulting firm that provides performance improvement solutions to corporations and non-profit organizations. He consults regularly with executives from a variety of fields to help create effective and efficient solutions to human performance-impacting problems.

Aristoteles Kabarganos is also a senior performance consultant for Wilson Learning, a global provider of human performance improvement solutions.

Prior to his current position, he was general manager Central and Eastern Europe for Eontec, a leading global banking and CRM software company with headquarters in Ireland.

Aristoteles Kabarganos has also served as senior VP for British Telecom's global mobile internet division, Genie Internet, where he established the company's presence in Germany, and was responsible for the development of sales and marketing operations in the region. He has also held senior management roles at Globeset Inc., a US provider of secure payment infrastructure solutions and at German banking software house Brokat Information Systems.

Aristoteles Kabarganos studied economics with subjects in international marketing and management of information systems at the University of Hohenheim.

Stephanie Doyle is CEO of International Business Communication (IBC Academy – www.ibcweb.de), a consulting company established in 2001 focusing on international management development, in the areas of managing the organisation, managing people, global communications skills and financial services training. Prior to this she was Head of Office, Learning & Development at Deutsche Bank for 10 years, with the brief to set up a Centre of Competence for International Business Communication. In 2002, Deutsche Bank outsourced her former department to IBC Academy.

In 2005, she set up a second company – International Language Training (ILT)- www.iltweb.de which provides foreign language training based on the Common European Framework.

Her clients include both global companies as well as SMEs which understand the importance of training to support their cross border/global business development strategies. Many of her clients deliver services to the largest German financial institution which due to its changing business needs, is a permanent challenge. She has also expanded her business into south-eastern Europe and China.

Having set up her own business in Germany, Stephanie has overcome many challenges Irish companies may face when setting up in Germany, particularly related to bureaucracy, legal issues and dealing with the Inland Revenue.

Stephanie Doyle was born in Ireland and has been living in Germany for over 17 years. She studied in Ireland and completed her MBA at Henley Management College in the United Kingdom. Her MBA dissertation focussed on the topic of Cultural Integration in Cross-Border Mergers & Acquisitions.

Thomas Wedl is an independent consultant working in the Austrian telecommunications field and has over 15 years experience in the sector, having held numerous management positions in a number of leading telecoms firms.

Having started his career in 1993 with Siemens AG Österreich in telecommunications systems development, he subsequently played a key role in setting up an international training and consulting centre for Siemens. Following on from this he was responsible for worldwide training and consultancy for Siemens AG Österreich became key responsibilities of his.

In 1998 Thomas Wedl switched from being product manager for business products with Siemens to fixed line operator Citykom Austria. Following the merger of Citykom with tele.ring he took over responsibility for the product management department in tele.ring. In this role he was responsible for the introduction of many mobile products. Beyond this, he was responsible in 2001 and 2002 for technical application development. In 2002 Thomas Wedl was appointed Product Marketing Manager. From 2005 to 2007 he was Marketing Director for tele.ring in Austria.

Agenda

08.30 Tea / Coffee

Introduction: Germany, Austria and Switzerland

08:45 Introducing the speakers and the companies involved

DISCUSSION: Initial impressions – what can the DACH countries (Germany, Austria, Switzerland) offer? What challenges do they present for you?

Cultural Intelligence

09:15 Knowing our own culture – how Irish companies come across in a German business environment

09:25 The Well-oiled Machine: A “Germanic” Business Culture

DISCUSSION: Combating another business culture. Pitfalls of a German setting? Have you experience of doing business in Germany?

09:55 Austrian Business Culture as compared to that of Germany: Key Characteristics

10:05 Doing Business in Switzerland

DISCUSSION: The three markets in overview

10:25 **Break**

Thinking Strategically: Approaching the Market

10:35 Navigating the Organisation Structures, making the right initial approach

10:45 Aligning sales pitches and strategies to meet DACH buyer expectations

DISCUSSION: What are the expectations? Why are they different? Experiences pitching to German, Austrian and Swiss Companies

11:15 A Telecoms Perspective

DISCUSSION: Don't the international norms of the telecoms sector and other sectors prevail?

11:35 **Soup and Sandwiches**