



STAYING AFLOAT WHEN THE 'BLACK SWAN' ARRIVES!

Dear JWA Clients and Friends,

I think it goes without saying that this has been a very strange year, with a lot of changes and surprises for all of our businesses. Given the current market conditions, uncertainty is the most common feature in offices across the world but, despite this, we can still happily say that, overall, 2008 has been a great year and we're not slowing down... yet!

During the course of this last year, JWA has gained quite a few new clients and strengthened its relationships with existing ones. Our partnership with Financial Dynamics has blossomed and is continuing to strengthen our services and open doors to new clients and relationships and, of course, the biggest triumph has been the success of the International Business Forum. This time

last year, I was in a complete state of shock resulting from the events at the British Chamber of Commerce, and the BBF (or IBF as it is now) was just an idea that was being thrown around amongst a very few of us. Now, one year later, the IBF has grown into an association of nearly 120 members from leading companies throughout the Czech Republic and is an established force to be reckoned with.

To everyone, therefore, that has supported me and JWA this year, thank you. I wish you all a very happy holidays and look forward to seeing you in the New Year!



IN THE LAST QUARTER, JWA WON SEVERAL NEW ACCOUNTS, INCLUDING:



Goodman

Since October, JWA has been working with Goodman, a property group that owns, develops and manages industrial and business space throughout Europe and Asia. The two companies were introduced by the Brussels office of JWA's partner Financial Dynamics and in just three short months, JWA has already organized a successful press conference in Slovakia, distributed a press release and is currently busy preparing a PR and marketing plan for next year. JWA will handle the PR for Goodman in the Czech and Slovak Republics and oversee it in Romania, Poland and Hungary.

DOUGLAS | WALLACE | HOWITT

Douglas Wallace Howitt

Douglas Wallace Howitt, a design, architecture and project management firm, was recently formed in Prague through the acquisition of Prague-based architecture firm SH Architects by the Irish company Douglas Wallace. JWA and DWH are working together on all of the PR and marketing needs of DWH including the preparation of branding materials such as the Czech website, brochure and other literature as well as the organisation of an ongoing PR campaign throughout the Czech and Slovak Republics.

schönherr

Schoenherr

JWA has recently started providing PR services to Schoenherr, a leading European law firm that has taken over the law offices of Gleiss Lutz in Prague and Warsaw and is opening a completely new office in Bratislava. Schoenherr is another company introduced by JWA's partner FD, this time from its Vienna offices, and since winning the contract just a few weeks ago, JWA has already organized a press conference in Prague and plans to hold a press briefing in Bratislava after the New Year.



SOME OF OUR RECENT EVENTS!



■ **IBF** – JWA organized the International Business Forum’s first annual Christmas Spectacular, which was held in the beautiful Mandarin Oriental Prague and attracted 150 members of the association and their guests. The event included welcome drinks and canapés, a full four-course gala dinner, a charity auction and raffle and dancing through the night. Given a few unexpected changes in the organization, this wonderful party was thrown together in a very short amount of time, but ask anyone who attended and they’ll tell you it was a huge success!



■ **SCHOENHERR** – December 4th, JWA organized Schoenherr’s first press briefing in the Czech Republic at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel. Journalists and Schoenherr’s senior partners management joined to discuss the latter’s entrance into the Czech Republic, Slovak Republic and Poland.

■ **GOODMAN** – JWA recently organized a press conference for Goodman in Slovakia to announce the completion of the first phase of the company’s new logistics center near Bratislava. The conference was very successful, having a great turn-out of journalists and very positive ongoing media coverage.

CASE STUDY

In our last newsletter, we included a ‘case study’ to give an example of what a PR agency really does! From the feedback that we have had, this has been a popular idea, so, bearing in mind the work that is keeping us busy at the moment, and the financial crisis that we are all pre-occupied with, we thought we would include another case study in this issue, this time relating to crisis management. Unfortunately, and needless to say, we cannot say who the company is...

The situation: The company is in the middle of a major financial crisis and could collapse at any time. The media are jumping on any story that has a negative impact, the senior management is being bombarded with calls from the media, its customers and partners, and the employees are believing everything they are reading, and thinking about deserting what they feel is soon to be a sinking ship.

JWA’ role: First and foremost, the agency’s role was to take the pressure off the management by having everyone in the office briefed to redirect all media calls and correspondence to us. This meant that a lot of the managers’ time was saved, and, also, gave us the opportunity to put up a wall between the company and the media. We also sent out a warning to the media that they should be careful what they are reporting – some of the stories that they were publishing were being

replicated from stories printed elsewhere in Europe with, on many occasions, a certain amount of misrepresentation. Since we work with the media all the time, they are generally more likely to accept a warning from us than from a company that they are attacking – if only to call and check the facts first.

A lot of work, too, was in regard to ‘internal’ PR; we prepared ‘comforting’ letters for the employees, letters to key customers, prepared text for the website and, generally, ensured that whatever messages were being put out, they were giving the same, positive, report, irrespective of the recipient.

When the time was right, we started to send out our own press releases; these were also posted on the website as well as circulated in a letter format to employees and customers. Our own view in this particular situation was that it was better to get positive messages out to the media before they had the chance to jump on something and turn it into a negative. Sometimes this is called ‘spin’. Sometimes it is facing the fact that there are two ways of looking at any story, and it is our job to ensure that any client’s story is looked at in a positive light – journalists, quite often, will ensure the opposite point of view (apologies to any journalists reading this!)

The end result: the company is by no means safe. But at least, now, it has a chance to survive; the employees and customers are staying put and the media has moved on to another target. Who knows, maybe one day we will tell you who it is...



TIP: LOOK AT YOUR COMPANY THROUGH THE EYES OF AN OUTSIDER

After working for a long time in one company, you often don’t realize how the company is viewed from the outside and it is easy to forget that not everyone understands the intricacies of your business in the same way as you. When it comes to your own marketing and PR materials, therefore, it is easy to get bogged down in industry specific detail, which is not always the best way to sell your company to an outsider. A PR agency can help you to see yourself from the eyes of an outsider, which can only help to strengthen your company’s relationship with clients, shareholders and the media. If, however, you choose not to work with an agency and instead handle your own PR and marketing, before preparing a press release, or drafting your brochure, try to put yourself in the position of an outsider as this will help you to communicate efficiently and effectively.

