Global scale

Personal touch

An investor services group that brings together that rare combination of global expertise with a deep understanding of the needs of our clients.

Our expertise
• Fund services
• Private Wealth services
• Corporate services

To find out more about our services in Luxembourg, contact:

Christian Heinen
christian.heinen@iqeq.com
+352 466111 2728

www.iqeq.com

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www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com

Published by Hickory Editions
Luxembourg
ISBN 978-2-9199455-8-0
Copyright © 360Crossmedia
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Project Manager: Johann Herz
Coordination: 360Crossmedia
Distribution: 360Crossmedia
Design: 360Crossmedia/F.W.

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com
www.360crossmedia.com

Price: 20€
Investment Funds
Survey 2021

93 CEOs agreed to answer our questions.

Question 1: Regulation
How do you currently view the increase in regulation in Luxembourg?

- A necessary evil: 44.8%
- An opportunity: 55.4%

Question 2: Employment
In 2019, do you expect your company’s workforce to?

- Increase: 67.7%
- Remain stable: 26.9%
- Decrease: 5.4%

Question 3: Sustainability
How is your company likely to use Luxembourg in the future?

- It depends on costs: 11.8%
- It depends on available talents: 22.6%
- 100% here to stay: 85.6%

Question 4: Recruitment
How would you assess the recruitment process in 2019?

- Easy: I find all the people I need: 18.5%
- Hard: I have to search abroad for specific profiles: 76.1%
- Impossible: I can’t attract the right people to Luxembourg: 5.4%

Question 5: Challenge
What is the main challenge of your industry today?

- “The talent war couples to a very high level of competition.”
- “Slight tendency towards over-regulation.”
- “Tense labour market.”
- “Slow procurement processes.”
- “Gaining new assets while facing ongoing regulatory burden.”
LUXEMBOURG
INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

NET ASSETS OF UCIs
Situation as at 28 February 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low, Legal Part/Form (in Billion EUR)</th>
<th>FCP</th>
<th>SICAV</th>
<th>Other OPC/FIS</th>
<th>SICAR</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part I (2010 Law)</td>
<td>656.918</td>
<td>3,611.675</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>4,288.593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part II (2010 Law)</td>
<td>46.997</td>
<td>102.448</td>
<td>0.497</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>149.492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIS</td>
<td>192.606</td>
<td>394.219</td>
<td>29.999</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>616.824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SICAR</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>55.416</td>
<td>55.416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>896.521</td>
<td>4,108.342</td>
<td>30.496</td>
<td>55.416</td>
<td>5,090.775</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ECONOMIC DATAS
Population: 634,730 inhabitants
Annual inflation 2020: 2.0%

634 730
inhabitants

Source: Statec

GDP evolution:

Luxembourg has the leading European share of responsible investment funds

45%
of all net sales in Europe

Source: ALFI

FUND INDUSTRY
15,937
fund members

50%
Increase in Private Equity Funds in AuM in 2019

Source: CSSF

39% Luxembourg has the leading European share of responsible investment funds

Source: UN SDS

NET ASSETS OF UCIs
Situation as at 28 February 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breakdown by investment policy</th>
<th>Net assets (in bn €)</th>
<th>Number of fund units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fixed-Income Transferable Securities</td>
<td>1,414.422</td>
<td>3,227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable-Yield Transferable Securities</td>
<td>1,727.087</td>
<td>4,063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Transferable Securities</td>
<td>976.830</td>
<td>3,615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funds of Funds</td>
<td>293.078</td>
<td>2,134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money Market Instruments and Other Short-Term Securities</td>
<td>383.100</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>8,399</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venture Capital</td>
<td>49,742</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate</td>
<td>3,019</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Futures and/or Options</td>
<td>95,859</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Assets</td>
<td>12,760</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public-to-Private</td>
<td>0.123</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mezzanine</td>
<td>11,91</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venture Capital (SICAR)</td>
<td>820,5</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Equity (SICAR)</td>
<td>45,897</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5,090.775</td>
<td>14,573</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LUXEMBOURG
INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

ORIGIN OF UCI INITIATORS IN LUXEMBOURG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Net assets (in bn €)</th>
<th>in %</th>
<th>Number of UCIs</th>
<th>in %</th>
<th>Number of fund units</th>
<th>in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>1,047.824</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>1,136</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB</td>
<td>868.218</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>1,641</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH</td>
<td>734.304</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>2,715</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>701.571</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>1,165</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
<td>2,440</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>507.485</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>1,543</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>338.492</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>1,243</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE</td>
<td>223.882</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>857</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU</td>
<td>171.316</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>792</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
<td>116.072</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td>107.609</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>274.002</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>1,745</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5,090.775</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>3,570</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>14,573</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DECISIONMAKERS

Luxembourg 2021
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Sean O’Driscoll
The Silent Champion
Niccolo Polli
Launching the ESG2 initiative
Susanne Schartz
A journey to connected data
Daniel Siepmann
A sporting life
Van Ta
Taking prime financial software into the Cloud
Martin Vogel
A fast thinker
Robert van Kerkhoff
Making the difference with data and expertise
Denise Voess
Seal for sustainability
Pierre Weimerskirch
The virtues of combination
Revel Wood & Steve Bernat
Two become ONE
Marco Zwick
How Risks and Solutions Evolved in the Covid Crisis
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Jean-Noël Lequeue
Boards of Directors adapt to Compliance
Pierre Reuter
Young achiever with a zest for new challenges
More key players...

PRIVATE EQUITY
Isabelle Azoulai Amiel
Access to Resilience
Philippe Barthélémy
Promoting real estate investment
Daniel Grossmann
Learning the Legacy of Avant-Garde Investing
Julien Kinic
A stable base for investing in a frantic world
Claude Mansfeldt
Private Equity Stronghold
Matteo Novelli
From laRinascente to train stations
Pascal Rapolino
Private Equity for UNHWI comes to Luxembourg
Alain Rodermann
Genes of exponentiality
Adrien Rollé
Private Equity in all its forms
Hans-Jürgen Schmitz
After Skype, Wix!
Mark Tluscz
Investing in people and vision
Jérôme Wittamer
Private Equity at the heart of the economy

TREASURY
Benjamin Defays
The treasury market failure
Damien Degros
Cross-fertilization
François Masquelier
Treasury Transformation
INTRODUCTION
BY SERGE KRANCENBLUM

Decision Makers as a publication plays a pivotal role in helping to shine a spotlight on Luxembourg as the heart of the funds industry within Europe. Now in its 13th edition, we are pleased to once again lend our support to the title and to play our own part in promoting Luxembourg as the modern funds industry center of excellence.

IQ-EQ is a multi-award winning investor services group that brings together a rare combination of global technical expertise and deep understanding of client needs. Our highly experienced team of 3,400+ employees support our fund clients across each of the world’s key financial centres – Europe, The Americas and Asia - and work with six of the top 10 global private equity firms worldwide. We are proud to have the know-how and the know you that allows us to provide a comprehensive range of compliance, administration, asset and advisory services to fund managers, multinational companies, family offices and private clients operating worldwide.

We have a long heritage here in Luxembourg where our business has continued to grow and are committed to promoting the country as the innovative and highly experienced center of fund expertise that we know it to be. We hope that this latest edition of Decision Makers will prove to be just as valuable to our industry as the previous issues have been.

Serge Krancenblum
Group Executive Chairman, IQ-EQ
NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

21 YEARS

Over the last 21 years, our company has enjoyed the privilege of interacting with decision-makers from the financial industry at events organised by the LPEA, ATEL, IRE, L3A, ALFI, ALCO, LAFA, LAFO and more. The 13th edition of Decision Makers marks our continued efforts to support thought leaders and to share their message.

In addition to investment funds, private equity and insurance, this edition includes a treasury chapter, introducing key players in the field and showcasing the Grand Duchy’s dynamism.

We hope that you’ll enjoy the 13th edition of Decision Makers.

Best regards

Jérôme Bloch
Chief Executive Officer
360Crossmedia
jbloch@360crossmedia.com
Order the book  
**The Game of Numbers** on:  
www.360Crossmedia.com

---

**Luxembourg**

at glance

**TOP 5 Largest employers**  
Post Luxembourg 4650  
CFL 4510  
Cactus 4420  
Dussmann Luxembourg 4280  
Groupe ArcelorMittal 3900  
(Source: Statec)

**TOP 5 Banks per Country of Origin**  
Germany 24  
China 14  
France 14  
Switzerland 13  
Luxembourg 8  
(Source: CSSF)

**Miscellaneous**  
Area: 2,586 km²  
Official languages: Luxembourgish, French, German  
Motto: “we want to remain what we are”  
Politics: constitutional monarchy  
Head of State: S.A.R. Le Grand-Duc Henri  
Internet: .lu  
Phone: +352

---

Download *Illusion of Simplicity* on  
www.360crossmedia
9 people you should know

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Chairman of ALFI
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Pierre Gramegna
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Yves Maas
Chief Executive Officer of ABBL
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www.abbl.lu
FUNDS IN THE AGE OF ULTRA-SPECIALIZATION

FOR JEREMY ALBRECHT, HEAD OF GLOBAL CLIENT COVERAGE LUXEMBOURG AT RBC INVESTOR & TREASURY SERVICES, FUNDS PLAYERS SPECIALIZE IN FOCUSING ON VALUE-ADDED SERVICES, ESPECIALLY AROUND DATA. INTERVIEW.

Which trends are you seeing in the industry?
Allocations to alternative funds continue to rise. RBC I&TS’ Private Capital Services (PCS) product manages the activities of Private Equity, Real Estate, Debt and Infrastructure and we believe there to be three factors which differentiate our offering. Firstly, we are a bank which allows us to offer Capital call Financing, but also the security of a firm supervised by the CSSF and the ECB, which is very important in terms of governance. Secondly, we benefit by offering depositary services independent from the management company. Finally, our PCS team of over 140 people is dedicated to supporting these client segments requirements and provides end to end servicing which includes domiciliation, board meetings, capital calls, financial reporting, consolidation, NAV.

What role does data play in your business?
In this changing environment, custodians need to reinvent themselves and find new ways to create value for asset managers. In my opinion, our status as one of the largest transfer agents in the Luxembourg market and our ability to make data intelligible mean that we are in a unique position to help clients oversee their operations, provide insights into the distribution of their funds, improve their investment and risk portfolios and support innovation. Data strategy has become a big point of discussion with our largest asset management and institutional investor clients. We’re spending more time immersed in their worlds to understand what they do with the information that we provide and we’re investing significantly in developing talent, technology and products in this area. You have to know how to make the investments today to actively prepare for the future.

How are you managing the transformation of your business?
Digital transformation comes first and foremost through human transformation. We are committed to supporting our employees to be resilient, continually learn and stay relevant to the evolving industry. And at the same time we are recruiting specialists to help us to comply with new regulations, anticipate future trends and develop new products. Changes in regulation, global trends and scrutiny from regulators means that we are seeing more and more importance placed on roles in areas such as control, risk management, AML, KYC and cyber security. I no longer expect people to perform the same roles for 30 or 40 years, but it remains possible to have a long career at a company punctuated by regular changes.
JEREMY ALBRECHT

FACTS & FIGURES

Birthday: 01/02/1978
Place of Birth: Creutzwald (France)
Nationality: French
Children: 1 son born in 2008
Languages: French and English
Hobbies: Tennis, mountain and road bike

MY FAVOURITE
Cities: Milan, New York and Marseille
Places: A beach somewhere in Corsica
Book: Any book from Frederic Beigbeder
Restaurants: Le 83 in Metz
Music: Any of Ed Sheeran or Vianney’ song
Artist: Thomas Labarthe, Philippe Pasqua, Jonone, Robert Combas, Fat and Poes

COMPANY
RBC Investor & Treasury Services

POSITION
Head of Continental Europe, Client Coverage

OTHER POSITIONS
• Member of the Continental Europe & Offshore Operating Committee at RBC I&TS
• Member of the RBC IS Belgium, board of Directors

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/jeremyalbrecht
www.rbcits.com
ALAIN BASTIN

A LIFE IN HARMONY

THE FINANCIAL WORLD CAN SOMETIMES BE DISSONANT. BUT ALAIN BASTIN DRAWS ON HIS PASSION FOR MUSIC TO CREATE HARMONY THROUGH HIS APPROPRIATELY-TITLED ROLE AS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF BIL MANAGE INVEST S.A.

Finding meter in métier
Alain Bastin has always had a creative streak; he played in bands from the age of 14. Had he not found his métier in finance, he admits he would have been happy to apply his artistic aptitude to working with wood or with food. Looking back Alain wishes he had exploited his creative facets earlier in his career: "I would have gotten into the business side of my operation sooner – I enjoy the entrepreneurship side of work.

Two sides to his story
At work and in his down time there are clearly two sides to Alain’s persona: the creative, and the “hands on” aspects. At work he began his career in the more constrained and practical “nuts and bolts” of finance by being employed in risk management and audit. Today he has progressed to the more creative and entrepreneurial role as CEO and Conducting Officer of BIL Manage Invest.

When he is relaxing he loves to pick on his Stratocaster Custom guitar to create a sound he describes as “aged and raw”. On the other hand, as an audiophile, he takes huge pleasure, not only listening to one of his favourite musicians, like Eric Clapton, Stevie Ray Vaughan or Mark Knopfler, but also using his sophisticated sound equipment to extract the best technical sound from the record to which he is listening.

Team spirit
Despite admitting to being “difficult to access at first”, Alain is no loner. He stresses in his faith in “team spirit”. The advantage of working in a team was something he gained being part of a band and, later, commanding a group of soldiers while performing his military service. Today that theme chimes not only with his personal creda that, “There nothing can be achieved without a team,” but also with the BIL Manage Invest’s expressed value of “Partnership instead of commercial relationship”. He further engages in collaborative activity as a founder & Board Member of ALRiM, the Luxembourg Association of Risk Managers. Alain believes in turning life’s successes and failures into opportunities. “Both professional and personal failures lead to an open mind and to broadening horizons”, he says. With this in mind, he seeks to use his personal experience and outlook to perpetuate the idea of trusted partnership to the advantage of BIL Manage Invest. He says while he may initially be a bit unapproachable personally this ultimately leads to trusted relationships. Thus he believes that by building trusting and harmonious relationships with clients he can ensure they gain access to the full range of other services the BIL group has to offer.
ALAIN BASTIN
FACTS & FIGURES

Birthday: 13/01/1965
Place of birth: Charleroi, Belgium
Nationality: Belgian
Children: 3
Languages: French, English
Hobbies: Guitar, Blues, Running

MY FAVOURITE
Cities: Barcelona, Singapore
Places: The Royal Albert Hall - Liquid
Restaurant: Ku De Ta (Singapore)
Music: Blues
Artists: Eric Clapton, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Mark Knopfler, Slash

COMPANY
BIL Manage Invest

POSITION
Chief Executive Officer

OTHER
Independent Director in UCITS and AIF structures

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/alainbastian
www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/BILmanageinvest
AN INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK ON LUXEMBOURG’S FUND INDUSTRY

THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE AND CAREER HERMANN BEYTHAN, HAS EMBRACED AN INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK, INCLUDING STUDIES IN THE US AND JAPAN – IDEAL GROUNDING FOR A LEADING ROLE IN THE GRAND DUCHY’S INCREASINGLY GLOBAL FUND INDUSTRY.

Enduring ties
Hermann Beythan has enjoyed what seems in retrospect a perfect grounding for a career in Luxembourg’s investment fund industry. A partner of the Investment Funds Practice Group since 1998, he advises clients on facets of the sector including cross-border financial services regulation, international private placements, structuring of complex alternative funds and outsourcing of investment management functions. A constant thread running through Hermann’s life and career is an international outlook, starting in his teens when, having been born and brought up in Germany, he spent four months at a high school in the US. Soon after, he began what has proved an enduring tie with the grand duchy. “I spent my first year of legal studies in what was then the Centre Universitaire in Luxembourg,” he says, “and would subsequently spend the formative years of my professional career here.”

The wood and the trees
Hermann’s global perspective was to receive a further boost over the course of a subsequent year studying in Tokyo, after which he undertook parallel studies in Germany and France for a French and German law degree. When he began his career in the grand duchy, the country’s cross-border investment fund industry was gaining momentum after the creation of the EU single market and the adoption of the first UCITS Directive. “I have now spent more than 25 years as a lawyer in the investment fund space,” he says, “and I have been involved in the evolution of Luxembourg from a jurisdiction essentially focused on UCITS into a hub for alternative funds as well.” Hermann believes that the fact his practice has taken in other aspects of investment funds as well as regulatory matters has helped him to build a holistic view of the industry. “It’s important not to lose sight of the wood by concentrating on individual trees,” he says.

Active contribution
One of the aspects of the grand duchy that has always appealed to Hermann is its outward-looking character. “Luxembourg caters to my international outlook, and I much appreciate being a partner in an international law firm, which gives me the opportunity to examine how things are done elsewhere, from investors to financial sector players,” he says. “By the nature of the business, practically all my activity involves cross-border work.” However, he is an active member of the country’s professional community, with various roles within ALFI as well as a member of the depositary committee of regulator CSSF. “It’s important not only to receive but to contribute,” he says. “By helping to market the jurisdiction jointly and sharing my knowledge and experience to assist in its further development is a way to give back to this country, which has provided me and my family with every opportunity to thrive. I very much regard Luxembourg as part of me and I aim to be part of it too.”
HERMANN BEYTHAN

FACTS & FIGURES

Birthday: 9 March 1963
Place of birth: Mannheim/Germany
Nationality: Luxembourg
Children: 1 girl
Language: German, French and English
Hobbies: Cycling, art exhibitions

MY FAVOURITE
Cities: London, New York, Paris
Restaurant: Royal Bengal Luxembourg
Places: Black Forest
Books: Woyzeck de Georg Büchner
Music: Beatles, Rolling Stones, Thelonious Monk
Artist: Giacometti, Calder, Kurt Schwitters

COMPANY
Linklaters LLP Luxembourg

POSITION
Partner

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/hermannbeythan
Governance and independence are facing new challenges. What are they?
The definition of best practice has significantly evolved over the last years. “Governance” and “independence” have become indispensable added values to regulated entities and increasingly important for any company wishing to abide by new market standards. However, alongside any change comes challenges. We ask ourselves whether a person who has served a client for many years can still be independent and act as such. Can one maintain an unbiased analytical framework through time, providing the necessary unwavering opinion and value when questioning a company’s short or long-term strategy? We believe that is for shareholders to monitor, as their long-term expectations are essential when defining the role of independent Directors, which clearly goes beyond only attending board meetings. A professional director must first and foremost protect the shareholders’ interest and ensure the long-term viability of the company by demonstrating professionalism, responsibility and commitment to adding value throughout the company’s lifecycle.

What adjustments need to be made?
If Luxembourg wants to be a leader in terms of independent professional governance, the country must look to strengthen the new profession of independent directors. Luxembourg is at a crossroad. The industry must decide which model is to become market standard. Experts signing on their behalf, or entities on behalf of their experts? The latter model broadens the range of expertise on boards by calling upon several experts on a per need basis. This model is borrowed from law firms or statutory auditors. While approved statutory auditors are not a priori limited in the number of mandates, professional ethics require that they devote the necessary time to each of them. This makes it possible to manage files in a cross-functional manner while remaining competitive in terms of costs. It is no coincidence that Eric Van de Kerkhove, former audit partner at Deloitte, sits on the board of directors of mebs. There is a parallelism between the approach of the statutory auditors and that of the independent directors. Independent directors should be remunerated at the level of professionalism and added value they bring to the board they sit on.

What return on investment can the profession expect?
I can’t speak for the profession, but I do believe our approach at mebs, is the best proof of return on investment. Case in point, our client retention rate is above 95% over the last 5 years. Our three pillars: Professionalism, Responsibility and Commitment have made our clients our best ambassadors. Since our inception in 2008, mebs has been increasingly involved in multiple large-scale projects across various companies and their value chain, not just in the boardroom. For example, we regularly participate in successful due diligence audits with investors. We have also been chosen to advise business owners on business turnarounds and support the complete rehabilitation of a major French historical monument. The satisfaction and trust of our clients, fostered by our three-pillar value approach, is our most powerful engine for growth.

VIDEO

PROFESSIONAL CORPORATE GOVERNANCE IS A STRATEGIC BUSINESS IN THE GRAND DUCHY. INTERVIEW WITH ERIC CHINCHON, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD AT MEBS, INSEAD IDP-C & ILA CERTIFIED DIRECTOR.

Governance and independence are facing new challenges. What are they?
The definition of best practice has significantly evolved over the last years. “Governance” and “independence” have become indispensable added values to regulated entities and increasingly important for any company wishing to abide by new market standards. However, alongside any change comes challenges. We ask ourselves whether a person who has served a client for many years can still be independent and act as such. Can one maintain an unbiased analytical framework through time, providing the necessary unwavering opinion and value when questioning a company’s short or long-term strategy? We believe that is for shareholders to monitor, as their long-term expectations are essential when defining the role of independent Directors, which clearly goes beyond only attending board meetings. A professional director must first and foremost protect the shareholders’ interest and ensure the long-term viability of the company by demonstrating professionalism, responsibility and commitment to adding value throughout the company’s lifecycle.

What adjustments need to be made?
If Luxembourg wants to be a leader in terms of independent professional governance, the country must look to strengthen the new profession of independent directors. Luxembourg is at a crossroad. The industry must decide which model is to become market standard. Experts signing on their behalf, or entities on behalf of their experts? The latter model broadens the range of expertise on boards by calling upon several experts on a per need basis. This model is borrowed from law firms or statutory auditors. While approved statutory auditors are not a priori limited in the number of mandates, professional ethics require that they devote the necessary time to each of them. This makes it possible to manage files in a cross-functional manner while remaining competitive in terms of costs. It is no coincidence that Eric Van de Kerkhove, former audit partner at Deloitte, sits on the board of directors of mebs. There is a parallelism between the approach of the statutory auditors and that of the independent directors. Independent directors should be remunerated at the level of professionalism and added value they bring to the board they sit on.

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ERIC CHINCHON

FACTS & FIGURES

Birthday: 22/01/1980
Place of birth: Fontenay-sous-Bois, France
Children: 2
Nationality: French
Languages: English & French
Hobbies: Sports (mainly Tennis & Golf) and cinema

MY FAVOURITE
Cities: Paris, London, Barcelona, and San Francisco
Places: Île de la Cité, Paris, Mayfair in London...
Books: Tom Clancy and Molière
Restaurants: Georges Blanc (Vonas), Bernard Loiseau (Saulieu)
Music: Classic (Vivaldi), pop rock (Muse) and “French classic”
Artist: Leonard de Vinci

COMPANY
mebs

POSITION
Co-founder and partner

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/ericchinchon
www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/mebs
Living life with gusto
Luc Courtois understands how fleeting life is. Thus he lives every day to the fullest measure. Every moment with family and friends, every moment with clients, is too valuable to squander. He is a passionate traveler, seeking out the wildest countrysides as often as the best vineyards. Winemaking still beckons him but dedication to his clients and his work hold him fast to the world of investment. This open-minded and cosmopolitan man cannot be pigeonholed. His tastes are eclectic and multicultural, a trait that allows him to fit comfortably wherever he is, with whomever he encounters and enthusiastically prepared to meet the challenges of the future.

Straddling town and country
Luc Courtois easily moves from the earthy world of his rural roots to the thrilling world of high finance and investing. This native of the Belgian countryside is simultaneously a cosmopolitan, equally at ease in boardrooms of the largest global financial institutions and in vineyards searching for the best grapes. By experience and education he is comfortable in the worlds of both the concrete and the abstract. That is what makes Luc Courtois successful, a Partner and Head of the Investment Funds practice at the Luxembourg office of NautaDutilh. At university Luc spent as much time developing businesses as studying and attending courses. That did not keep him from earning degrees in both law and international affairs and, most important, graduation within the golden “1%” that garnered him a scholarship at the Georgetown University Law Center. With his LLM in hand Luc Courtois returned to Luxembourg and investing. Loyal and available Luc Courtois is more than the sum of his impressive resume: what makes Luc Courtois more than just excellent in his life and his work is his dedication to his family, his friends, and his clients.

Family, friends, and clients are his foundations
Notwithstanding his many accomplishments, his greatest achievements are his family and friends, and the deep confidence of his clients. His dedication to his clients, their needs, their business, is the basis of his success. He places himself in his clients’ shoes, a rare talent. This allows him to produce tailor-made results for them. His legal background serves him well, as do his fertile imagination and his creative instincts: he applies and interprets the law in ways that allow him, and his clients, to find innovative and creative solutions to problems that for others would be intractable.
LUC COURTOIS
FACTS & FIGURES

Birthday: 21/08/1970
Birth place: Bastogne, Belgium
Nationality: Belgian
Children: 2
Languages: French, English, Italian under construction
Hobbies: Outdoors activities, oenology, traveling, diving

MY FAVOURITE
Cities: Siena, Bruges
Places: Wild lands
Book: Historical
Restaurants: Table de Maxime and Taj Mahal
Music: Eclectic
Artist: Der Mönch am Meer by Casper David Friedrich

COMPANY
NautaDutilh Avocats Luxembourg

POSITION
Partner & Head of Investment Funds Practice

OTHER POSITIONS
Lecturer at the Institut de Formation Bancaire Luxembourg
Sitting on various board of directors of investment funds and management companies

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/luccourtois
www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/nautadutilh
Northern Trust established its new EU bank in Luxembourg in March 2019, whilst retaining its EMEA regional headquarters in the UK. “The initiative underscores our strategic growth focus and growth strategy in Continental Europe. Clients have welcomed the opportunity to connect with our new banking headquarters in the EU, while offering linkage to our branch in the UK and other locations,” Steve says.

Reflections on the past 17 years and road ahead

Steve reflects: “From the outset we have built our reputation from listening to our clients’ needs and providing solutions for them. This has helped propel our growth to around 360 employees in Luxembourg supporting approximately 640 Luxembourg funds and providing a full range of asset servicing solutions. Another key milestone has been the acquisition of UBS Asset Management’s fund administration business in Luxembourg and Switzerland in 2017 resulting in additional presence and scale. We are now a top 10 administrator by assets under administration as ranked in the 2020 Monterey Insight Luxembourg Fund Report. 2020 marked yet another milestone as we combined our two Luxembourg offices by relocating to a new office space at Leudelange, south-western Luxembourg. While the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic mean we are yet to fully realise the benefits of the new physical location, it has been purpose built to meet the asset servicing needs of our clients including the enhanced focus on technology and digitisation.”

Can you highlight an important theme for the year ahead?

“In 2021 the Luxembourg funds industry will continue to apply the learning from the pandemic by accelerating the adoption of technology and digitisation to transform core asset servicing processes. From a sector perspective, we continue to see significant potential for Luxembourg to expand its appeal as a jurisdiction for alternative investments alongside its reputation for UCITS funds. With close to two decades of experience in Luxembourg offering asset administration, asset servicing and asset enhancement solutions, Northern Trust is well positioned to help our clients navigate these challenges and opportunities.”

STEVE DAVID

CELEBRATING A NEW CAREER MILESTONE

IN JANUARY 2021 STEVE DAVID ASSUMED THE ROLE OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF NORTHERN TRUST’S LUXEMBOURG-HEADED BANK, NORTHERN TRUST GLOBAL SERVICES SE. THIS IS IN ADDITION TO HIS RESPONSIBILITIES AS COUNTRY HEAD OF NORTHERN TRUST’S LUXEMBOURG GLOBAL FUND SERVICES BUSINESS.

Decision Makers reflects on Steve’s career journey, which started as an audit trainee 27 years ago.

Starting point

Born in Bettembourg, Steve studied economics and finance at the Institut Catholique des Hautes Études Commerciales in Brussels, and in 1994 became an audit trainee at Price Waterhouse in Luxembourg (now PwC). He left four years later to join Chase Manhattan Bank Luxembourg S.A., where he worked in the Quality Assurance and Compliance/Fiduciary departments. In 2000, he took on the position of Compliance Officer at IKANO Advisory Management S.A., a Luxembourg fund management company. “It was important for my career because I was responsible for creating a function from scratch,” Steve says now, “helping me build a strong knowledge of the fund compliance world.”

Joining Northern Trust

In 2004 Northern Trust opened an office in Luxembourg as part of a client-led initiative, resulting in the establishment of Europe’s first tax-transparent pooling investment vehicle. Steve applied for a role and became Northern Trust’s second hire in the Grand Duchy, as Head of Risk and Control as well as Conducting Officer in the group’s Luxembourg Management Company. He became Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer of the Northern Trust Luxembourg Management Company S.A in 2009. He served as Country Head for Northern Trust in Luxembourg between 2012 and March 2019, and as Chief Operating Officer for Northern Trust Global Services SE prior to assuming his new responsibilities.

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Reflections on the past 17 years and road ahead

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STEVE DAVID

FACTS & FIGURES

Place of birth: Luxembourg
Nationality: Luxembourgish
Languages: Luxembourgish, German, French, English, glimpse of Spanish
Hobbies: Sports, Art

MY FAVOURITE
Cities: Luxembourg, Paris, Tokyo (though I have never been there)
Restaurants: Kamakura, Celadon, Oishi (Paris), Matsuhisa (Munich)
Places: Munich, Paris, “Vieille-Ville” of Luxembourg
Books: Tintin, Enki Bilal, Yasunari Kawabata, Charles Bukowski
Music: Jazz-House, Jacques Brel, Leonard Cohen
Artwork: Helmut Newton, Araki, Giraud, Joerg Doering

COMPANY
Northern Trust

POSITION
Chief Executive Officer of Northern Trust’s EU Bank in Luxembourg
Country Head of Northern Trust’s Luxembourg Global Fund Services business

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/stevedavid
www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/northerntrust
Passion for history

Today, Fessmann and his team advise clients on setting up funds, other financial services matters and regulatory issues, with particular expertise in the alternative investment industry. He works with more than 50 other Baker McKenzie partners as a member of the Firm’s global funds steering committee. He has no regrets about his career path, saying he does not see himself as anywhere but the legal profession in a decade’s time, although it must continue to be fun – and he would find time for more legal writing. Outside the office, he is drawn to the Alps, but also big cities like Paris, New York and London (he has a weakness for Indian food). When he is not running, writing or playing ping-pong with his children, Fessmann’s passion is 20th century history – as befits a native of a city emblematic of Europe’s fracture, and healing, over the past 100 years.

FROM CORPORATE LAW TO ALTERNATIVE FUNDS

LAURENT FESSMANN BEGAN HIS CAREER IN STRASBOURG AS AN IN-HOUSE CORPORATE LAWYER. HOWEVER, AN EARLY TASTE OF M&A AND PRIVATE EQUITY TRANSACTIONS LAID THE FOUNDATION FOR HIS EXPERTISE TODAY IN THE ALTERNATIVE FUNDS SECTOR.

A taste of M&A

In the course of his career, Laurent Fessmann has been through a wide range of firm and working environments. Fessmann started out in 1996 as an in-house counsel with bakery equipment manufacturer Bongard in Strasbourg, where he was born and grew up. There, he got his first taste of the private equity industry, working on a leveraged buyout deal with Jersey and Delaware funds and taking part in more than 10 M&A transactions. He also recalls a disastrous business trip in his early days with the firm when he and his boss were stranded in Besançon after Fessmann mistakenly filled up their car with regular petrol, instead of diesel. “I really thought it would be my last day there,” he says today.

Into practice

One of three children (he now has two of his own), Fessmann studied business law at Strasbourg’s Université Robert Schuman. After Strafor Facom, he moved to Seribo/Alsapan, an industrial group specializing in furniture design and manufacture, gaining experience in areas such as patent litigation and labor law. It was at the age of 34 that Fessmann decided to enter legal practice, joining Luxembourg business law firm Noble & Scheidecker. Initially focusing on corporate finance matters for large international companies, he was soon drawn to investment funds and, by 2009, headed the funds team. That September, he and two colleagues left to launch their own firm, Findling Collin Fessmann. However, within six months, they were in discussions with Baker McKenzie to set up the Firm’s Luxembourg practice, where he is now a banking & finance partner specializing in asset management and fund formation.

LAURENT FESSMANN

INVESTMENT FUNDS KEY PLAYERS PRIVATE EQUITY TREASURY INSURANCE
LAURENT FESSMANN

FACTS & FIGURES

Birthday: 9/08/1970
Place of birth: Strasbourg
Children: 2
Nationality: French
Languages: French, German and English
Hobbies: Running and studying 20th century history

MY FAVOURITE
Cities: New-York City and London
Places: Alps - massif des Ecrins or massif du Vercors, in a city Paris, Place de la Contrescarpe or Strasbourg-Krutenau, Place des Orphelins
Books: The Praise of Folly (Erasmus) or Le Monde Comme il Va (Voltaire)
Restaurant: Indian
Music: 90’s rock style with Red Hot Chilly Pepper and FFF or Deep Purple (Lord, Gillan, Paice, Blackmore and Glover)
Artwork: The double spiral staircase by Leonardo da Vinci

COMPANY
Baker & McKenzie

POSITION
Partner – Lawyer

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/laurentfessmann
www.bakermckenzie.com
VIKTOR FISCHER

LEGAL EAGLE TURNS BUSINESS LEADER

VIKTOR’S ASPIRATION WAS ALWAYS TO BECOME A SUCCESSFUL LAWYER. HOWEVER, HIS CAREER PATH WAS RADICALLY ALTERED WHEN ONE OF HIS CLIENTS PEAKED HIS INTEREST IN THE AREA OF ASSET MANAGEMENT.

A Serendipitous Encounter

With his more than 22 years of experience in the Asset Management industry, you wouldn’t have expected his career to start off as a lawyer. Graduating in law from the University of Constance and Copenhagen in 1996, he began his career as a junior lawyer at the Provincial Court in Constance, completing the secondary law examination in 1998. It was during his time at an international management consulting firm in Germany in 1998, that his passion for the financial services sector was ignited. While working alongside leading international banking and insurance clients, an encounter with UBS would radically reshape his future, establishing him as an influential member of the financial services sector.

Loyalty and dedication: keys to success

Appointed head of investment funds in Luxembourg for UBS Global Asset Management in 2000, Viktor was promoted to head of institutional and wholesale business in 2002. He was appointed head of UBS Global Asset Management Luxembourg and key account manager for the Benelux region in 2005, and two years later took on new responsibilities as head of P&S Consulting at UBS Luxembourg S.A. Viktor then became head of business development EMEA for UBS Fund Services in July 2010, and head of asset services sales that October, responsible for the UBS EMEA asset servicing sales acquisition process, where he presided over ongoing profitable growth. In June 2014, he joined the ACOLIN Group, headquartered in Zurich, as General Counsel, Chief Risk Officer and Member of the Group Executive Board. He later transitioned into the role of Group Chief Sales & Marketing Officer whilst remaining a member of the Group Executive Board.

Integrity, Passion and Hard Work

A loving husband and father, Viktor says the birth of his son and his daughter were the most defining days of his life. Teamwork, along with personal and professional integrity, have always been central to his success and he is convinced that durable successful business relations can only be built on trust, moral virtues and loyalty. “Sharing my clients’ passion and success is the fuel that pushes me to my limits day after day,” he says. Discipline, self-motivation and teamwork are cornerstones of Viktor’s work ethic. As a passionate motocross racer, he knows that it takes self-belief, determination and strategic planning to win on the track, but also in the boardroom.
# Viktor Fischer

## Facts & Figures

| **Birthday:** | 30.10. |
| **Place of birth:** | Germany |
| **Nationality:** | German |
| **Languages:** | German, French, English |
| **Hobbies:** | Moto-Cross, Golf and Bike-cycling |

**MY FAVOURITE**

| **City:** | New York |
| **Places:** | Golf Track |
| **Book:** | Elon Musk - from Ashlee Vance |
| **Restaurant:** | BurgerKing |
| **Music:** | EDM |
| **Artwork:** | Pierre Bonnard |

**COMPANY**

ACOLIN

**POSITION**

Group Chief Sales and Marketing Officer, ad interim General Counsel and Chief Risk Officer

**OTHER**

Member of the Group Executive Board of ACOLIN Holding AG, Executive Board of ACOLIN Fund Services AG and ACOLIN Europe AG

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/viktorfischer
www.acolin.com
TIMOTHÉ FUCHS

POETRY IN MOTION

TIMOTHÉ FUCHS’S HIGH-OCTANE ENERGY PUTS HIM FIRMLY IN POLE POSITION IN THE FAST-MOVING WORLD OF FINANCE. BUT THE CEO OF FUCHS ASSET MANAGEMENT S.A. HAS OPENED UP ABOUT A SLOWER, COMPLEMENTARY SIDE OF HIS PERSONALITY THAT CLEARLY CONTRIBUTES TO HIS SKILLS IN WEALTH & ASSET MANAGEMENT.

Unstopable momentum

Even the briefest of encounters with Timothé Fuchs leaves one with the buzzing sensation of having experienced an electric shock. It is not surprising. By his own admission, he is hyperactive and confesses to being impatient. He is clearly a man with momentum, seeing his main quality as “moving forward” and practices what he preaches with his motto: “Believe in yourself and you will be unstoppable”. Even his hobby of motor sport seems to prove he is a man in a hurry.

Endless hours

Yet, he is a man of contrasts. There is nothing on earth that demands greater patience than a new-born child, yet Timothé claims his favourite pastime is spending time with his wife and his two sons, Paul and Bastien. Similarly, the job of an airline pilot, that would have been his chosen career had he not selected finance and wealth management, is a job that involves endless hours of tedious, inactivity punctuated by intense and highly stressful activity taking off and landing aeroplanes. What does one make of this impatient man who counts among his favourite restaurants Le crabe marteau in Brest? Afterall, extracting the optimum flesh from a crustacean (as the very name of the restaurant suggests The Crab Hammer) can only be described as the antithesis of fast food and puts the embodiment of patience, the Biblical figure of Job to the test.

A family connection

A “man in full” acknowledges the part played by others in his achievements as well as his ambitions. Timothé recognises his family’s role in his progress and pays tribute to his father as a mentor and guide in providing him with a grounding in finance. Timothé’s vision suggests continuing the impetus and trajectory that has built his expertise and brought him success in setting up Luxembourg-regulated management companies and funds, marketing, communication, distribution and asset management. He says, “I want to keep on building on the same winning trends”. However, in a way that belies his drive for individualistic entrepreneurship, he adds, “it is important not to forget that we are all human beings and that we can only grow together”. And looking ahead, while he sees the need for the freedom of action that entrepreneurship brings, he limits his personal ambitions within the constraints of family entrepreneurship and the taking into account of the, “common interests to serve clients, partners and employees”.

TIMOTHÉ FUCHS
## TIMOTHE FUCHS

### FACTS & FIGURES

- **Birthday:** 13/04/1984
- **Place of birth:** Luxembourg
- **Nationality:** Luxembourgish & French
- **Children:** 2
- **Languages:** French, English & German
- **Hobbies:** Swimming, Nature, MotorSport

### MY FAVOURITE

- **Cities:** New York, Luxembourg & Paris
- **Restaurants:**
  - Ma Langue Sourit
  - L’Entrecôte (Geneva)
  - Le Crabe Marteau (Brest)
  - Buddakan (New York)

### COMPANY

Fuchs Asset Management S.A

### POSITION

Chief Executive Officer

### OTHER

Director of Fuchs & Associés Finance

- [www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/timothefuchs](http://www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/timothefuchs)
- [www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/fuchs](http://www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/fuchs)
THE 4S APPROACH

SUBSTANCE, SAFETY, SERVICE AND SUSTAINABILITY WILL GUIDE THE GROWTH OF MULTICONCEPT FUND MANAGEMENT S.A., AN INTERVIEW WITH ITS CEO, ILIAS GEORGOPOULOWS.

Can you present MultiConcept Fund Management S.A. in brief?
As a Super ManCo, MultiConcept Fund Management S.A. holds the dual licence for UCITS and AIFM. It is 100% owned by Credit Suisse Group AG, and our activities are supported by a team of over 30 people in total, located mainly in Luxembourg, and also in Ireland, in Poland and of course in Switzerland. We interact with over 150 counterparties and service over 60 asset managers, whose business is equally divided between UCITS and AIFs. Our growth accelerated in 2019 and 2020 with almost €1.0 billion in net new assets. Our growth strategy to support optimally our clients is based on four aspects. Firstly, we provide the full range of services and products necessary for UCITS and AIFs in Luxembourg and Ireland. Secondly, we are highly capitalised and cooperating with multiple regulators like the CSSF in the Grand Duchy, the CBI in Ireland and the FINMA in Switzerland. The third focus is service: our highly qualified employees have an average of more than 15 years of experience in the fund industry and they are supported by a structure, which is tailored to our clients’ needs. Last but not least, our focus on sustainability involves combining ESG criteria, green finance and diversity. These aspects act as our pillars to support sustainably the development of our clients and of course the local financial sector.

How are your clients’ needs evolving?
Our client business is evolving in a holistic way with opportunities at the UCITS level and an accelerated growth in the private assets space, which explains the balanced distribution in our activities between mainstream and alternatives. We are focused on three main types of institutional clients – Asset Managers, Pension Funds, and Financial Institutions – and we have observed a tremendous increase in requests for institutional solutions by family offices and UHNWIs. An increase in regulations has helped the market to mature and has resulted in an on-going consolidation, leading to the increased outsourcing of the role of fund management companies to focused and committed specialists like MultiConcept, with a high quality of services and long-term market vision. We are currently taking full advantage of this consolidation.

What are the challenges and opportunities within the market?
Alternative products are growing rapidly. Further, digitisation and digitalisation also represent an opportunity, for two different reasons. Firstly, the ease of access to information by means of digital media offers a wide range of possibilities for reporting, control and operations optimisation such as subscription/redemption activities in a fund. Secondly, digital innovation will inevitably revolutionise our activities; for example, the tokenisation of investments. I believe that as soon as there is the appropriate regulatory framework in place, players who are used to working with UCITS are in an ideal position to respond to the transformation of these “hard” assets into dematerialised assets, making the activity comparable to stock exchanges. You will be able to buy portions of property like stocks in the near future. Yet, it is important to note that Luxembourg’s success has always been based on its capacity to create products that are seen as prime brands. This was the case due to the efficient regulations that accompany these products and services and of course to the diverse talent that understands them and helps in their evolution. The challenge will lie in maintaining this balance to meet the expectations of institutional investors.
ILIAS GEORGOPOULOS

FACTS & FIGURES

Birthday: 1st July 1967
Place of birth: Athens
Nationality: Greek and Luxembourgish
Children: 2 children: 20 and 15 years old – A boy and a girl
Languages: Greek, French, English, and several European languages but only at "restaurant" level
Hobbies: Producing my own olive oil in the south of Greece named "Margo" and Classic cars

MY FAVOURITE
Cities: Athens (night life), Barcelona (atmosphere), Copenhagen (serenity), NY (paradoxes), Beijing (appearances)
Book: The Odyssey (Homer). So many metaphors and homecoming (team, family, the life voyage, ...). A lifetime inside a book, and every chapter can be a life on its own
Restaurant: Agnostic as long as taste and service are there! My preference is with meat, fresh vegetables with good olive oil and a good Bordeaux wine
Music: All as long as rhythm moves you
Artwork: Painting and architecture. I am impressed with the Louvre. I like when the architecture of the cities meets nature

COMPANY
Credit Suisse - MultiConcept Fund Management S.A.

POSITION
CEO

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/iliasgeorgopoulos
www.credit-suisse.com
PIERRE GRAMEGNA

THE RENAISSANCE MAN

HE COULD HAVE PURSUED HIS CAREER AS AN AMBASSADOR, TRAVELLING ALL OVER THE WORLD. INSTEAD, PIERRE GRAMEGNA CHOSE TO DIVERSIFY HIS CAREER, WHILE MAINTAINING HIS PASSION FOR COMMITMENT AND OPENNESS.

A diplomatic career

Pierre Gramegna studied both law and economics, viewing them as complementary fields. He became a diplomat at the age of 25, setting out to defend Luxembourg’s interests in Paris, San Francisco and Tokyo where he served as Ambassador. He promoted the Grand Duchy wherever he went, enjoying a few pleasant surprises along the way: few career paths provide an opportunity to meet Sharon Stone in the heart of a Californian forest, or to play tennis with the Emperor and Empress of Japan. His best memory is the Grand Duke’s State visit to Japan in 1999, marking the first State visit to the country joined by a major economic delegation. The initiative included some exceptional moments.

Diplomacy rhymes with economy

During the Kyoto Conference in 1997, Luxembourg held the European presidency. As the spokesman for this presidency, Pierre Gramegna, remembers having slept for just four hours in four days, but he did have the satisfaction of contributing towards an agreement, unlike the fiasco of Copenhagen. An admirer of performers who devote themselves entirely to their art, he later decided to leave the diplomatic world to play an active role in the economic development of a rapidly growing Grand Duchy. As the Minister of Finance since 2013, he has been working to promote the internationalisation of local companies, attract investors and take part in ongoing legislative changes.

Return to his roots

A great lover of black-and-white photography – he develops his own photos – Pierre Gramegna looks fondly at the Luxembourg that welcomed his grandfather and which he ended up representing, defending and promoting it all over the world. In the next few years, he could see himself anywhere he can continue to defend the Grand Duchy’s interests using his method: a mixture of commitment and diplomacy, guided by passion. His travels have left him with the conviction that no other country in the world has achieved such harmony in diversity. As for the more distant future, he can imagine being a more frequent visitor to Italy, the country of his roots, while appreciating to work on Kirchberg, the heart of contemporary architecture and of highly productive enterprises, which also happens to be the headquarter of the Chamber of Commerce...

VIDEO

THE RENAISSANCE MAN

HE COULD HAVE PURSUED HIS CAREER AS AN AMBASSADOR, TRAVELLING ALL OVER THE WORLD. INSTEAD, PIERRE GRAMEGNA CHOSE TO DIVERSIFY HIS CAREER, WHILE MAINTAINING HIS PASSION FOR COMMITMENT AND OPENNESS.

A diplomatic career

Pierre Gramegna studied both law and economics, viewing them as complementary fields. He became a diplomat at the age of 25, setting out to defend Luxembourg’s interests in Paris, San Francisco and Tokyo where he served as Ambassador. He promoted the Grand Duchy wherever he went, enjoying a few pleasant surprises along the way: few career paths provide an opportunity to meet Sharon Stone in the heart of a Californian forest, or to play tennis with the Emperor and Empress of Japan. His best memory is the Grand Duke’s State visit to Japan in 1999, marking the first State visit to the country joined by a major economic delegation. The initiative included some exceptional moments.

Diplomacy rhymes with economy

During the Kyoto Conference in 1997, Luxembourg held the European presidency. As the spokesman for this presidency, Pierre Gramegna, remembers having slept for just four hours in four days, but he did have the satisfaction of contributing towards an agreement, unlike the fiasco of Copenhagen. An admirer of performers who devote themselves entirely to their art, he later decided to leave the diplomatic world to play an active role in the economic development of a rapidly growing Grand Duchy. As the Minister of Finance since 2013, he has been working to promote the internationalisation of local companies, attract investors and take part in ongoing legislative changes.

Return to his roots

A great lover of black-and-white photography – he develops his own photos – Pierre Gramegna looks fondly at the Luxembourg that welcomed his grandfather and which he ended up representing, defending and promoting it all over the world. In the next few years, he could see himself anywhere he can continue to defend the Grand Duchy’s interests using his method: a mixture of commitment and diplomacy, guided by passion. His travels have left him with the conviction that no other country in the world has achieved such harmony in diversity. As for the more distant future, he can imagine being a more frequent visitor to Italy, the country of his roots, while appreciating to work on Kirchberg, the heart of contemporary architecture and of highly productive enterprises, which also happens to be the headquarter of the Chamber of Commerce...
PIERRE GRAMEGNA

FACTS & FIGURES

Birthday: 22/04/1958
Place of birth: Esch sur Alzette (Luxembourg)
Nationality: Luxembourger
Children: 2
Languages: French, English, German, Italian, Luxembourgish
Hobbies: Tennis, travelling, photography

POSITION
Minister of Finance of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/pierregramegna
www.mf.public.lu
EDUARDO GRAMUGLIA

SOLVING THE ALPHA CONUNDRUM

HAVING LIVED IN URUGUAY, ITALY, LUXEMBOURG AND LONDON BEFORE RETURNING TO MAKE HIS HOME IN THE GRAND DUCHY, EDUARDO GRAMUGLIA, NOW COUNTRY HEAD AT STATE STREET BANK INTERNATIONAL’S LUXEMBOURG BRANCH, SAYS DEVELOPING A CLOSE AND ENDURING RELATIONSHIP WITH CLIENTS IS CENTRAL TO HELPING THEM FULFIL THEIR STRATEGY.

What are your priorities in your new role?
I focus mostly on people - both colleagues and clients. Internally, I need to make sure that our people are aligned, especially when they interact with our clients. Our company has an extensive footprint all over the world, so it is critical to be able to bring it all together for our clients in a clear way: we have to deliver a single State Street! Our mission statement, which is reflected in our logo of a clipper ship, is to help our clients navigate their own strategy. Luxembourg, new regulations and a fast-changing world. The fund industry remains a people business, and my goal for State Street is to remain a trusted partner, both internally and externally.

How are you clients’ needs evolving?
I identify three main trends. First, many of our clients today have investors who want increased alpha, so they are looking strongly at alternative investments. On the regulatory side, their challenge, like ours, is to make regulators comfortable, so that they can focus on their core business of investments. While we look after their service needs. Finally, data is becoming critical in our industry. It is necessary to achieve more transparency in reporting, whether it is carried out by State Street or directly by the client who receives the data from different sources including us. Data is also a critical factor in ESG to prevent greenwashing, or to obtain a label for your fund. There is a lot going on. In order to grow with our clients, we need to be reactive, agile, and demonstrate a strong entrepreneurial spirit and sense of ownership.

Which opportunities do you identify?
There are many! In the context of growth in Luxembourg, I believe in the virtues of working more closely with our clients and with our staff, both here in the grand-duchy and across the whole State Street network. Despite being acquainted with the topic, not many clients and colleagues can have a meaningful discussion, for example, about Luxembourg in general or the best way to launch a RAIF. An asset manager doesn’t necessarily know all the implications. There is nothing more valuable than being the trusted partner of a client at the start of a new project. Living in South America, Rome, London and here, I discovered something universal about communication: if you want people to understand the true value that we can bring to asset managers, you need to say it, say it again and say it one more time!

How important are sales in the fund industry today?
If you look at my personal journey, I started in operations – talking with brokers, doing cash controls and so on, which allows me today to consider both sides of the business. Later I worked on standardisation, in order to enable clients to control all processes in one place. Then I moved into relationship management. The sales side was the later part of my career, and I happened to enjoy it. To me sales is about creating with your clients a strategy of how to grow and execute on it, while having a deep understanding of the technical aspects of their and our own business. Very often, we come to know them really well, so we are able to explain the external technicalities and where they can find the solution internally. Ultimately this is a key to generate alpha! It certainly requires a long-term vision and commitment, often changing the target operating model, but working at State Street allows us to offer products that are fit for purpose, together with a strong commitment to delivering over the long term. Alpha depends largely on the willingness of our clients to create this partnership.

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EDUARDO GRAMUGLIA

FACTS & FIGURES

Birthday: 18 December 1968
Birthplace: Montevideo, Uruguay
Nationality: Italian
Languages: Spanish, Italian, English, French
Hobbies: Chasing after my son...  

MY FAVOURITE
Cities:
Rome, Buenos Aires, London, HK, Shanghai, Tokyo, Paris, San Vigilio di Marebbe, Montevideo, Boston, Quebec City

Restaurants:
All depending on occasion and mood

Places:
The world

Books:
Lord of the rings (trilogy)

Musics:
Rock, classic (especially large orchestras)

Artwork:
Impressionists

COMPANY
State Street

POSITION
Country Head

OTHERS
Director on different Boards

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/eduardogramugliapallavicino
www.StateStreet.com
CHRISTIAN HEINEN

BRINGING IQ AND EQ TOGETHER

CHRISTIAN HEINEN MOVED FROM LUXEMBOURG TO CHINA IN 2012, THEN RETURNED TO LUXEMBOURG IN 2018 TO BECOME MANAGING DIRECTOR OF IQ-EQ LUXEMBOURG. HE HAS FOUND IN IQ-EQ A MINDSET MATCH: THAT RARE COMBINATION OF TECHNICAL EXPERTISE (IQ) AND PERSONAL APPROACH (EQ).

From Luxembourg to China, and back
Christian Heinen did not foresee spending six years in China and Hong Kong when he started his career in audit with a ‘Big Four’ firm in Luxembourg. Then from one senior role to the next in the fast developing Luxembourg financial industry, he became more eager to discover new horizons and encounter new challenges. Which is why, when the opportunity arose, Christian hopped on a plane to Hong Kong to take on the role of Chief Operating Officer and then Managing Director with a leading fund and corporate services provider, where he was responsible for business and operations in Greater China, including offices in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou. Christian is always keen to share anecdotes about his first days in Hong Kong and the cultural differences that a European expat experiences when settling there. But most importantly, beyond a wealth of experience and cultural discoveries, Christian took back to Europe a strong belief: that a company, no matter where it is in the world, is all about its people and clients and that only an empowered staff can provide high-quality services.

Onto the next challenge: setting up priorities
Upon returning to Luxembourg, Christian Heinen was appointed as jurisdictional MD of the global investor services group, IQ-EQ. At the time, the firm had just entered a period of fast-paced growth involving a number of key acquisitions. As a truly pragmatic and goal-oriented person, Christian began by setting priorities for the Luxembourg business. His first was to ensure that the staff of IQ-EQ Luxembourg would be empowered and motivated to provide a high standard of service capable of meeting clients’ rapidly-evolving needs. How? By listening carefully to his colleagues and understanding what they need and what motivates them. His second priority has been to ensure that IQ-EQ is recognised as a leading provider in Luxembourg’s alternative investment funds space as well as in the private wealth and corporate service spheres. Last but not least, Christian is determined to leverage on the group’s global footprint of talent and offices in 23 jurisdictions, both to attract new clients and offer additional services to existing ones.

The power of duality, linking finance with emotions
IQ-EQ strongly believes in the power of duality and that valuing both IQ and EQ is essential for its people, its clients and its business. Christian is also a firm believer that technical expertise is nothing without truly understanding the needs of clients. This is why he has found IQ-EQ to be a perfect fit, as he strongly believes that emotional understanding of asset managers and investors will remain a differentiating factor for service providers. With emotional finance theory and unconscious investor bias hot topics in the industry right now, recognition of the link between finance and emotions is greater than ever before. Christian finds it particularly true within the alternative investment space, where emotions and emotional intelligence are arguably the most important determinants in the investment decision-making process.
CHRISTIAN HEINEN
FACTS & FIGURES

Birthday: 01 Feb 1976
Birthplace: Malmedy (Belgium)
Nationality: Belgian
Languages: German, English, French and basics in Dutch
Hobbies: Tennis, cycling, football, travelling and geo-politics

MY FAVOURITE
Cities: Hong Kong, Shanghai, Tokyo
Restaurants: “Amber” and “San Xi Lou” in Hong Kong, “Culturando” and “Sherpa” in Luxembourg, “Lost Heaven” in Shanghai
Places: Yunnan Province in China, Bali, US West Coast
Books: 7 years in Tibet by Heinrich Harrer; Good to Great by Jim Collins
Musics: Coldplay and Depeche Mode
Artwork: The Knotted Gun by Fredrik Reuterswärd

COMPANY
IQ-EQ Luxembourg

POSITION
Managing Director IQ-EQ Luxembourg, member of the Group Executive Committee

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/christianheinen
SERGE KRANCENBLUM

THE BRAINSTORMER

FAR FROM BEING MONOTONE AND LIMITED TO JUST BLACK AND WHITE, SERGE KRANCENBLUM SEES THE WORLD IN INFINITE TONES OF GREY, BECAUSE EVERYTHING IN THE WORLD IS COMPLEX, EXCITING AND CONSTANTLY ON THE MOVE, AND EVERYTHING, ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING IS IN AN UNSTABLE EQUILIBRIUM.

Fear does not avoid danger
Daring to move forward, fearing neither falling nor making mistakes sums up Serge Krancenblum. This native of Metz doesn’t see standing still as an option. After studying finance in France and the United States, Serge headed for Luxembourg. Here he co-founded IQ-EQ that he has been the key figure transforming into the world’s fourth-largest, independent investor services firm. Serge says he owes this success to the Grand Duchy: he demonstrates his gratitude for this by being one of its most persuasive ambassadors. He feels Luxembourg added another dimension to his career: alongside being the Executive Chairman of IQ-EQ, he sits on the Haut Comité de la Place Financière and chairs the L3A and LAFO, two Luxembourg professional associations.

Grey is beautiful
While some people may have a black and white view of things and of the world, Serge Krancenblum knows that things are not that simple. He believes his lucidity to be both his main quality and his main fault: but that helps him appreciate the complexity at every level of our planet, making things more attractive and more stimulating. Geopolitics is a puzzle where the pieces are constantly changing shape, making it particularly difficult to put them together. So many parameters to take into account with infinite variables might be torture for some people, but it’s something of a passion for Serge. Just like martial arts, which require constant self-control, discipline and humility to recognize that what you thought was an end is, in fact, just one step on a longer journey.

Marx
Just because he is a knowledgeable financier doesn’t mean that Serge Krancenblum doesn’t quote Marx. Groucho that is, not Karl. Even though he quotes the eldest of the comic quartet, who said “I don’t care to belong to any club that will have me as a member,” Serge has willingly put his energy in professional associations and think tanks. In fact, every facet of a person has equal importance and helps to maintain equilibrium. An equilibrium, that is, which makes it possible to keep moving. An unstable equilibrium.
SERGE KRANCENBLUM

FACTS & FIGURES

Birthday: 8/10/1961
Place of birth: Metz
Nationality: French
Children: 2
Languages: French, English
Hobbies: Geopolitics, Martial arts

MY FAVOURITE
Cities: Paris, New York, Tel Aviv
Restaurants: Ma Langue Sourit, Um Plateau

COMPANY
IQ-EQ Group

POSITION
• Group Executive Chairman of IQ-EQ
• Chairman of the Supervisory Board
• Leading the M&A Strategy
• Responsible for the Corporate Responsibility

OTHERS
• President of the Luxembourg Association for Family Offices “LAFO”
• President of the Luxembourg Alternative Administrators Association (L3A)
• Chairman of Gatsby & White SA
• Chairman of the International Facilitation Forum
• Creator of IQ-EQ Crossroads

AWARDS
European Personality of the Year at the Funds Europe Awards

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/sergekrancenblum
CLAudem:Rer

MARATHON MAN

CLAUDERMER MOVES FROM CHALLENGE TO CHALLENGE WITH THE SPEED OF A SPRINTER: A PACE HE MAINTAINS WITH ENERGY AND ENTHUSIASM.

Balance and faithfulness
For this businessman constantly on the move, a stable environment is the key to his performance. Claude Kremer finds a strong balance in his professional foundations and solid family unit. His wife is a key person and his most loyal supporter, and his three children make his life complete. Between work and personal life, most of his friendships can be traced back to his years in the scout movement. This school of life taught him all about teamwork, resourcefulness and the great outdoors.

Endurance
To an observer, his life appears fast-paced and frenetic. Alongside his legal practice, he teaches at the university centre, has co-authored a book on investment funds (third version published in March 2014), is a member of numerous organisations and sits on countless committees. It is therefore rather surprising to hear him describe his professional life as "a long quiet river". His experience running marathons has no doubt helped him to pace his efforts and handle his countless responsibilities with apparent ease. He became well known as Chairman of ALFI from 2007 to 2011 and President of the European Fund and Management Association (EFAMA) from 2011 to 2013, roles that required unfailing commitment on an international level. In October 2014, he was elected to the Board of Directors of the International Investment Funds Association (IIFA). The achievement he is most proud of remains being a founding partner of Arendt & Medernach.

Experience and teamwork
Far from being satisfied by his personal and professional achievements, Claude Kremer constantly questions himself and puts emphasis on motivating his teams and devoting his energy to delivering the right messages to the right people. Never looking back, he constantly scans the road ahead in search of new opportunities. He confesses that he finds strength in the idea of developing projects for the future. One of those projects could be the opening of an art gallery, a good way to maintain the discussions and culture that have always been important in his life. Perhaps also a way of putting off the moment when the finishing line comes into view - because for this man of action the journey is far more important than the destination.
CLAUDE KREMER
FACTS & FIGURES

Birthday: 27/08/1956
Place of birth: Luxembourg
Nationality: Luxembourger
Children: 3
Languages: French, English, German, Luxembourgish
Hobbies: Running, cooking, mountains, family

MY FAVOURITE
Cities: New York
Restaurant: Mosconi
Places: Provence, Alps
Book: Tintin
Music: Bob Dylan
Artist: Emile Nolde

COMPANY
Arendt & Medernach

POSITION
Founding Partner and Partner Investment Management

OTHERS
• Member of the Board of Directors of IIFA (from 2014 to present)
• Co-Chairman of Arendt & Medernach (from 2017 to 2019)
• President of EFAMA (from 2011 to 2013)
• President of ALFI (from 2007 to 2011)
• Lecturer at the University of Luxembourg
• Co-author of a book on collective investment schemes with Isabelle Lebbe

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/claudekremer
A PEOPLE-DRIVEN INDUSTRY

While technological development is an important factor in remaining competitive, our services are above all about human capabilities and relationships, says Sandra Legrand, Regional Executive Europe at Alter Domus.

How has Alter Domus developed over the years?

Our company was created 18 years ago as a spin-off of one of the big four, and initially employed 80 people providing mostly Corporate Services. Today, we count more than 3,000 employees spread across 20 countries and 36 offices and we offer a wider range of services, dedicated to clients active in the alternative fund industry. Our aim has always been to support our clients’ needs and this is reflected also in Alter Domus’ geographical expansion over the years. The opening of our Australian office is a perfect example. It was initiated as an answer to the needs of one of our largest clients, satisfied with our services in Luxembourg and Jersey, who prompted us to establish a presence in its home market. This does say a lot about our commitment to satisfy our clients, I presume. More recently, our latest acquisitions in the US – IPS Fund Services in Boston and Strata Fund Solutions in Salt Lake City – have really helped us increase our footprint in North America. While Alter Domus remains headquartered in Luxembourg with approximately 900 employees, we are now pleased to count over 900 colleagues in the US and more than 400 in the Asia-Pacific region.

How does your vertical integration strategy operate in practice?

Our vertical integrated model is fairly unique in our industry in the sense that it aims to support all the needs of asset managers, besides advisory functions of course. From investors’ on-boarding, fund domiciliation, depositary and Management Company services, NAV calculation and regulatory reporting, we have the necessary skillsets, experience and people to support all of our clients’ needs from simple to more complex structures, both locally and globally. Our aim is to always add value and enable asset managers to focus on their core functions. This is clearly crucial for our clients, but can only be achieved thanks to our people and the good relations that we are building every day with our clients. This is essential, especially in our industry where human relations play an important role.

What trends do you see emerging in the future?

In Luxembourg, the alternative fund industry is extremely active, with strong demand for new structures in asset classes including real estate, debt, private equity and infrastructure. With the advent of the Brexit, we do believe in the ever-greater attractiveness of jurisdictions such as Luxembourg, Ireland but also France and The Netherlands – countries where Alter Domus does have a strong footprint. In the US, asset managers are slowly starting to outsource the administration of their funds, which has historically often been carried out in-house. We count on our extended footprint in the US to capitalise on this trend. With over 60% of our current clients headquartered in the US, we believe we are well positioned to take advantage of this new trend and eager to bring our 18 years of dedicated alternative industry expertise to the US. While confident for the future, we have to remain watchful. As Regional Executive Europe, I always need to anticipate the possibility of a future downturn and seek ways to secure our business and our employees’ future. Technology? As the others, we are continuously monitoring, assessing and considering new ways or means to remain competitive, but don’t get me wrong – it is people, not technology, who drive everything in our industry.

SANDRA LEGRAND
SANDRA LEGRAND

FACTS & FIGURES

Birthday: 14/09/1974
Place of birth: Bastogne, Belgium
Nationality: Belgian
Children: 2
Languages: French, English
Hobbies: Reading, hiking, gardening, playing with my kids

MY FAVOURITE
Cities: Paris, Chicago, London
Restaurants: Italian and French food (restaurant Ma Langue Sourit)
Places: Corsica, French Alps
Book: Any type of novels
Music: Rock, pop, alternative
Artist: Toma (French painter)

COMPANY
Alter Domus

POSITION
Regional Executive Europe and member of the Group Executive Board

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/sandralegrand
www.alterdomus.com
This has enabled them to learn the things they have in common, i.e. good listening skills, the desire to keep moving and tremendous drive.

**New challenges**

That same drive enables her to bring new solutions onto the Victor Buck Services global platform, expand on new business lines, new jurisdictions. She believes that Luxembourg has a solid position on the international “arena” and loads of experience with the will to share expertise and knowledge to build the future.

**English-German**

Born in Charleroi in May 1968, Edith knew from as young as 8 years old that she would be an interpreter. She wasn’t afraid to make mistakes and focused on the most important thing, namely being understood by the person in front of her. She spoke Hungarian from an early age and eagerly devoured books throughout her time at school. As planned, she began studying English-German translation, then moved on to studying marketing and international commerce at the EPHEC (Practical School of Business), despite the pessimistic predictions of one teacher. Her studies taught her to be open-minded and enabled her to touch on a lot of subjects.

**Twenty-nine years**

At the end of November 1991, Edith went for her first interview with “The Morgan Guarantee Trusty Company of New York”. When she left 9 years later, her manager showed her the notes from that interview: “she has spirit but is not career-oriented”. Her son was born in 1995. She moved to Luxembourg with family in August 2000 to join Fleming Asset Management. A life crisis in February 2001 allowed her to find out who her real friends were and lose herself in her work. She became “Head of Client Services” in 2001, moving on to the post of “Head of Transfer Agency” 3 years later, before becoming “Head of Vendor Management for Continental Europe” in 2006. When she left JP Morgan Asset Management Europe, her business card read “Head of Product Delivery and Fund Vendor Management”.

“I rely on my gut feeling”. Following her instincts, Edith agreed to join ING Investment Management in 2010 for an ambitious project. She wasn’t leaving her colleagues nor the company; she was taking on a new challenge. In May 2012, she joined Victor Buck Services for the same reason. “Nicolas and Renaud hired me after a 10-year probation period,” she jokes, referring to the fact that the trio have worked together a lot over the past decade.
EDITH MAGYARICS

FACTS & FIGURES

Birthday: 2/05/1968
Place of birth: Charleroi (Belgium)
Nationality: Belgian
Children: 1
Languages: French, English, German, Dutch, Spanish

MY FAVOURITE
Restaurant: The Scheltema in Brussels
Places: Le Grund, The Masai Mara, La plage de M’Bour
Music: Dance, Yelawolf, 2Cellos
Artist: Michael Angelo, “The False Mirror” by Magritte

COMPANY
Victor Buck Services

POSITION
Chief Executive Officer

OTHERS
• Member of the Board of Seqvoia S.A.,
• Member of the Board of I-HUB

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/edithmagyarics
EVELYN MAHER

NAVIGATING LIFE’S CONTRASTS

EVELYN MAHER, HEAD OF INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT AT THE LUXEMBOURG LEGAL PARTNERSHIP BONN STEICHEN & PARTNERS, HAS EXPERIENCED MAJOR CONTRASTS AND CHALLENGES IN HER LIFE. BUT SHE HAS TURNED THESE TO HER ADVANTAGE THROUGH THE ART OF COMPROMISE ACQUIRED, NOT LEAST, AS THE ELDEST OF SIX SIBLINGS IN RURAL IRELAND.

Convergence law
Evelyn graduated in Law and European Studies at the University of Limerick and was awarded an LLM at the University College, Cork. She then went to the Law Society of Ireland to train as a solicitor. Having worked as a solicitor in Ireland she moved to Luxembourg in 2001 where she was one of the first ‘Anglo’ lawyers in law firms in the Grand-Duchy. Her colleagues at the time were very open and couldn’t do more to help her adapt. She says they pointed her in the right direction as she faced the challenges of navigating the contrasts between Luxembourg’s civil law system and the common law from her background in Ireland.

Language of compromise
There could not be a greater difference between the escapism represented by Evelyn’s favourite writers and her work at Bonn Steichen & Partners. She enjoys the crime novels of Benjamin Black and Ian Rankin and the Harry Potter fantasy novels by J.K. Rowling that are worlds away from the down-to-earth legal advice she delivers during her working day. Evelyn advises about the promotion and structuring of funds, counselling on the establishment of retail and alternative funds. Once they are up and running, she assists funds with compliance, closings, investments, divestments, liquidation and issues arising throughout the life of the fund. Throughout her professional life Evelyn draws on the experience of her entrepreneurial father who instilled the understanding of one being in charge of one’s own future.

Contrasting country
Compared to the tranquillity and urbanity of Luxembourg, with its sylvan and pastoral surroundings, Evelyn Maher is drawn to the remoteness of Ireland’s west coast. Here, where she has had links since her University days, she and her family spend their summer holidays enjoying the Wild Atlantic Way and in particular the Burren, an exposed and desolate landscape. While Evelyn identifies her main personality trait as openness, she admits to being too direct. However, she counters this with her trait of affability and legacy of compromise: “My childhood, as the oldest of six, prepared me well in terms of working with others, organizational ability and getting on with others.”
EVELYN MAHER

FACTS & FIGURES

Birthday: 08.04.1975
Place of birth: Ireland
Nationality: Irish
Children: 3
Languages: English, French
Hobbies: Swimming, Reading, Baking

MY FAVOURITE
Cities/countries: Kenmare
Restaurants: Bistronome, Wild Honey Inn, Bacchus with the children
Places: Wild Atlantic Way, the Burren
Books: Anything by Ian Rankin and the whole Harry Potter series
Music: Hozier, Cranberries, Stereophonics, Billie Eilish
Artist: Hofesh Schecter

COMPANY
BSP

POSITION
Partner, Head of Investment Management

OTHERS
Member of the Executive Committee at BSP

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/evelynmaher
www.bsp.lu
REGULATORY RIGOUR
AND AN EYE ON THE FUTURE

CLAUDE MARX, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF LUXEMBOURG FINANCIAL REGULATOR CSSF, SAYS THAT APART FROM MONEY-LAUNDERING REQUIREMENTS, MOST FINANCIAL REGULATION HAS NOW REACHED THE STAGE OF EVOLUTION FOLLOWING THE GLOBAL REVOLUTION IN OVERSIGHT PROMPTED BY THE FINANCIAL CRISIS A DECADE AGO.

What are the most important new pieces of regulation to be implemented over the next two years?
Since the financial crisis of 2007-08 we have seen big blocks of regulation put into place, and we are now entering a phase of ongoing review of the existing rules. These rules are complicated and complex enough, so adding a further layer of regulation, control and supervision would not necessarily be productive. Some legislation is still being worked on, such as the CRD V and CRR II measures on capital requirements, for which drafting is now almost complete. The completion of Basel III will likely occur next year. On the banking side, the review of internal models is ongoing, while for funds a review of the efficiency of distribution is underway, and the PRIIPs KID will be extended to UCITS at the end of 2021. In the coming years, anti-money laundering rules will remain a focus point and we are likely to see further evolution there.

How does the CSSF balance compliance with EU requirements with maintaining Luxembourg’s competitiveness?
For banking, the 19 Eurozone member countries are fully integrated under the banking supervision function of the European Central Bank. The rules are the same for all countries, from authorisation to control, supervision and capital transactions. The situation is slightly different for financial markets and funds because there is neither a European regulator nor a fully integrated regulatory system. The European Commission has drafted proposals that envisage the three European supervisory authorities – EIOPA for insurance, ESMA for financial markets and EBA for banking – becoming single European regulators. However, most EU member states have reservation about such a fully integrated system. Against this backdrop, the CSSF has two priorities. The first is to be rigorous. Luxembourg is not always popular with other member states, so we need to be particularly mindful of how we apply rules and regulation. We are viewed as a serious and conscientious regulator, and this played in favour of the grand duchy when large UK, US and Asian institutions visited us to find a new home post-Brexit. The second priority is to remain nimble and fast in decision-making when necessary. The Luxembourg ecosystem has proved to be highly efficient, with the various players engaging with each another – whilst remaining in their respective roles; the government, Luxembourg for Finance and the regulators have regular contact with the industry and are easily accessible. If we move towards EU supervisory convergence, which we fully support, we will have to retain this efficiency.

How do you envision Luxembourg’s financial industry a decade from now?
To face the challenges of digitalisation, some institutions have established research subsidiaries or incubators. Other have drawn up a clear strategy and invested massively in research. They will be better placed to survive in the future. We are therefore carefully analysing the business plans of the institutions we supervise as failures linked to digitalisation could impact other areas of activity and the broader financial ecosystem. Blockchain will permeate back office and fund transfer agency activities, and robo-advisers will have a real impact. ICOs and tokenisation are already here, but many more technological developments are coming our way. Visiting the LHoFT is a great way to take stock of what the future holds.
CLAUDE MARX
FACTS & FIGURES

Birthday: 11 November 1966
Place of birth: Luxembourg
Nationality: Luxembourg
Children: 2
Languages: 4
Hobbies: Travel, Photography, Art

MY FAVOURITE
Cities: Paris, London
Restaurant: Espresso Bar Conter, Mosconi
Books: Urban Express
Music: Dance, Deep house, Electro, Hip hop, Rap
Artist: Contemporary and Modern Art, Photography

COMPANY
CSSF

POSITION
Director General

OTHER POSITIONS
• Member of the Board of Supervisors of the European Securities Market Association
• Member of the Board of the Foundation for Financial Education

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/claudemarx
www.cssf.lu
Could you describe Universal-Investment in a few words?
Universal-Investment was established by German private banks to provide fund administration and management company services in 1968. As one of the industry’s pioneers we launched the first white-label platform for asset managers in 1970 and created the first master fund in the German market in 1992. In 2017 Universal-Investment was acquired by Montagu Private Equity. Throughout the last five decades, we have been growing alongside our long-standing clients’ needs and innovated together with them. This led to the opening of our Luxembourg office 15 years ago. Today, Universal-Investment is the largest third-party ManCo in Luxembourg and largest AIFM according to the 2019 PwC barometer. We employ 70 experts locally - 700 globally - who cover all the functions to support a robust governance model: risk, compliance, portfolio management, central administration, oversight, structuring, tax, innovation and distribution. As of September 2019, our assets under management (AuM) is approximately €60 billion, with €465 billion at group level. Our ambition today is to leverage our expertise and brand to boost our international expansion.

What is your strategy in the next four years?
Our first goal is to pass the €500bn AuM milestone at group level and to be the leading European fund servicing platform for all asset-classes by 2023. Christian Reitz, Head of Digital Transformation alongside with Daniel Andemeskel, our Head of Innovation Management, are running a number of initiatives involving AI and blockchain technologies. Universal-Investment aims to be one of the digital pioneers, launching the first completely digital fund and provide fully digitized platforms for digital assets, currencies and funds. We leverage technology to enhance our distribution platform, assisting our clients by providing them with critical information required to assess and penetrate markets, helping them reach their goals. Clearly, data plays a key role in our business going forward and our teams are working hard on the best way to leverage this data in order to add value for our clients. Ultimately, we have no plans to deviate from our DNA as an infrastructure platform, providing solutions to our clients allowing them to focus on their core business and support their growth ambitions.

What opportunities and challenges have you identified for Universal-Investment and Luxembourg?
I believe there are three main opportunities: firstly, the increasingly complex regulatory environment. Luxembourg is an outsourced market of administration services, so having the right level of expertise and substance puts us in a perfect position to support our clients by managing and navigating the regulatory challenges, allowing them to focus on their core business. It is difficult for some players to meet the increased regulatory requirements such as 18/698, which brings enhanced due diligence, substance and reporting obligations. Secondly, managing our growth potential with the support and financial strength from our institutional shareholders, while leveraging our proven track record, reputation and strong brand. I believe we are well positioned to service our clients and continue to achieve our growth objectives. We continue to investigate opportunities to expand across Europe, as well as the US and Asia. Finally, market disruptions such as Brexit allow us to bring our long-standing capabilities to UK clients providing them continued access to the European market. Many clients are working on revisiting their set-up as result of regulatory requirements, market change and other variables, and we are the right partner to support them. Regarding challenges, I see there are two main elements. First, recruitment: We constantly need to attract very skilled, knowledgeable and experienced resources with specific competencies. We are competing with the industry for ESG, alternative funds, along with risk and compliance experts. I believe it is important that for our clients, both Luxembourg as a location and our firm maintain a highly attractive brand. The other aspect to consider is the international competition. Luxembourg has had an amazing 20-year streak in the funds business, but we all need to keep in focus that the international market is increasingly competitive, and that Luxembourg needs to remain the benchmark in terms of efficiency, pricing and time to market. This will ensure we can handle the pressure that other jurisdictions are putting on Luxembourg - the largest European funds center.
SEAN O’DRISCOLL
FACTS&FIGURES

Birthday: 19 April 1971
Place of birth: Boston Massachusetts
Nationality: American
Children: 4
Languages: English
Hobbies: Ice Hockey, Fitness, Chess, Golf

MY FAVOURITE
Places: Home, sporting events, Tuscany, Ko Samui
Restaurants: Kamakura, Smith & Wollensky, Union Oyster House
Books: Biographies and motivational books
Music: Eclectic (ranging from classical and jazz to country and alternative, and everything in between)
Artist: Picasso, Corneille, Giacometti, Charles Eames, Genevieve Van der Wielen

COMPANY
Universal-Investment Luxembourg

POSITION
Country Head, Member of the Board

OTHER POSITIONS
• Member of the Management Board Universal-Investment Group
• Director of Universal-Investment-Luxembourg Management Company
• Director of multiple UCIT, AIF Boards

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/universalinvestment
www.universal-investment.com
**Niccolo Polli**

**Launching the ESG² Initiative**

As HSBC commits itself to a sustainable future with its “Business Plan for the Planet,” Niccolo Polli, CEO of HSBC Luxembourg discusses his support for the “ESG Financial Square” initiative as one of the ways the bank, its customers and the Grand-Duchy can contribute to their climate change goals.

What motivated you to sponsor the “ESG Financial Square” initiative?
During lockdown I would often take long bike rides through Luxembourg with my kids. It was incredible to see how nature flourished the minute humanity took a collective pause. I realized then that, working together, we can stem climate change and I felt a responsibility both as a parent and a local CEO to “build back greener” and not simply revert to previous habits by default. I also realized it would be difficult to do once the impetus of covid is removed. That is when the idea of ESG Square was born: to try and keep this collective momentum going. Hence the analogy of the Village Square and encouraging everyone to join in: to talk about the issues openly, to share commitments and solutions, to debate the concerns and all in a positive spirit of mitigating climate change together.

What can people expect from this initiative?
There is so much happening in the world of sustainable finance and ESG that it’s not always easy to keep up and understand what really matters. ESG Square provides a one-stop guide to the world of ESG and sustainability in Luxembourg. It looks at the key players and provides relevant content to help identify who is doing what and how these actions fit into the overall rich Luxembourg ESG ecosystem. ESG Square will communicate which commitments have been made by whom; what new initiatives and events are on the horizon; real-world solutions that people or companies can consider and the creation of thought-provoking analysis and opinion pieces to educate and inform about the risks and opportunities emerging.

What is HSBC Luxembourg committing to?
HSBC Group’s “Business Plan for the Planet” sets out our ambition to become a net-zero bank by 2030 with a net-zero portfolio by 2050. In Luxembourg we have committed to reduce our own carbon footprint (on some metrics by over 80%), help employees manage theirs and direct more of our resources to help clients transition to lower carbon solutions. As a large bank we have an important role to play and need to integrate ESG considerations into all facets of our business. My key messages are: that being sustainable is good business and that together we can succeed. I hope many of your readers will join us in the ESG Square and share their stories and their solutions.
**NICCOLO POLLI**  
**FACTS & FIGURES**

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**MY FAVOURITE**

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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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**COMPANY**

HSBC Luxembourg

**POSITION**

CEO

**OTHER POSITIONS**

Executive Director of the Board of HSBC Private Bank Luxembourg, Board Member Stanfald Alumni (Luxembourg), Trustee of Young African Leadership Programme (UK), Founder Benga Riverside International School (Mozambique)

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/niccolopolli
A JOURNEY TO CONNECTED DATA

DATA ORGANISATION IS A CHALLENGE FOR ALL BUSINESSES, SAYS SEQVOIA COO SUSANNE SCHARTZ, BUT ESPECIALLY ASSET MANAGERS, WHO POSSESS A WEALTH OF DATA THAT NEEDS TO BE CENTRALISED, TAKEN OUT OF SILOS, AND MADE AVAILABLE TO CREATE ADDITIONAL CUSTOMER VALUE. AND INNOVATION, SHE ADDS, IS ONLY REAL WHEN PEOPLE BUY IT, OTHERWISE IT’S JUST RESEARCH.

Can you present SEQVOIA and how it originated?
SEQVOIA is a dynamic, client-focused organisation that helps the financial industry deal with information challenges. Our technology creates value inside and outside our users’ companies, especially for their interaction with investors, distributors and regulators. It is a journey that is developing with the evolution of investment products but also adapts to the changing regulatory landscape – this is the age of regulation – and expanding investor expectations. SEQVOIA was created in 2012 as a spin-off of Victor Buck Services with the aim of creating cutting-edge software for the financial industry. To achieve this, we have built a team of 25 industry experts who average 15 years of experience and share a credo of excellence.

In a context of digital transformation, how is your clients’ relationship with their own data evolving?
Digitalisation is not a new challenge for the financial industry; it has been digital, albeit in silos, for many years. An asset manager deals with a wide range of specialised software every day. The challenge is to build bridges between these silos and create a system in which data can be stored once – the golden copy - but shared consistently throughout the organisation. This sounds easy, but it is very complicated. Even small businesses struggle with the challenge of data being stored many times in multiple locations. It is much worse in asset management – replicating the same data over and over again creates costs, risk of errors and reputational damage and might confuse investors or shareholders. Today, data must be consistent for regulatory reasons, which is what drives the move toward data organisation. It’s a difficult task, but partners like SEQVOIA can help achieve it. Our solution brings the data together to create value inside and outside the company. Asset managers possess an immense amount of information, but they need to centralise it in a single source from which it can be output to a large number of diverse users. Maintaining access to this central information creates value and reduces risks.

How is SEQVOIA adapting to these developments?
An important buzzword today is innovation. At SEQVOIA, we look at this in the context of the fast-evolving needs of our clients, the skill-set of our team and the competitive landscape. This drives our constant acquisition of knowledge and new capabilities. When you are standing on a golf course on a hole that calls for a fade, for example, you cannot play it unless you analysed the shot and practised it many times. It is the same in business. What makes SEQVOIA unique is the very high level of expertise and commitment of the entire team, who is prepared to constantly learn, identify opportunities, and deliver solutions that work for our clients. Innovation for us is complete when we send an invoice; without that, it is just research.

At SEQVOIA, we’ve understood that connected data is what the industry needs. So in the last year we went on the innovation journey: We have developed a product management solution that transforms asset managers into data-driven organisations, by digitalizing manual processes, managing product life cycle, and integrating data into the product value chain. It bridges data silos, creates connectivity and allows asset managers to turn data into knowledge. Innovation is a constant process – it takes focus, talent, and hard work - that’s what we do here, that is our journey.
SUSANNE SCHARTZ
FACTS & FIGURES

Birthday: October
Place of birth: Trier
Nationality: German
Languages: German, English, French
Hobbies: Salsa dancing, reading, cooking

MY FAVOURITE
Cities: Lisbon, Vancouver
Places: Anywhere in Portugal
Books: Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters by J.D. Salinger, Loitering with Intent by Muriel Spark, The Lover by Marguerite Duras

Restaurants: Akelarre, Chiche!
Music: Salsa & Bachata music
Artists: Annie Leibovitz, William Turner

COMPANY
SEQVOIA

POSITION
COO

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/seqvoia
www.seqvoia.com
DANIEL SIEPMANN

A SPORTING LIFE

DANIEL SIEPMANN, CEO OF CREDIT SUISSE FUND SERVICES (LUXEMBOURG) S.A., SAYS HIS FAVOURITE PLACE ON WEEKENDS IS ON THE GOLF COURSE – SO MUCH SO THAT HIS AMBITION IS TO FINISH UP RUNNING ONE AFTER RETIREMENT. BUT PERHAPS SOMEWHERE SUNNIER.

Career orientation

Daniel Siepmann has spent nearly a quarter-century in the banking and investment industries in his native Cologne, in Zurich and since 2014 as CEO of Credit Suisse Fund Services (Luxembourg) S.A. But sport has been as important a thread running through his life. As a boy, he says, hockey (and skiing) was “everything” – he was good enough a hockey player to make it to Germany’s first division, but at 19 he realised he would not be a first-choice starter and took up golf instead. At the same time, the young Siepmann was finding his career orientation: he considered architecture – still a keen area of interest – as well as becoming a doctor or an auditor.

Fund expertise

He trained as a banker with Sal. Oppenheim jr. & Cie, where he spent the first seven years of his career, while taking master degrees in business administration and economics at the University of Cologne. He added a doctorate at Fribourg in Switzerland after moving to Zurich to join the local subsidiary of a German bank. Siepmann then spent more than five years as a senior management consultant with BearingPoint, the former Arthur Andersen Business Consulting, then four-and-a-half as head of business technology for Julius Baer’s European asset management business before joining Credit Suisse in 2008. In recent years his involvement with the fund sector and with Luxembourg has grown, including building a fund hub in the Grand Duchy for other Credit Suisse domiciles, now being close to 500 bln CHF assets under administration. In 2012 he joined the board of directors of the Luxembourg subsidiary of Credit Suisse as part of his role as head of fund operations within the bank’s investor services business, where he is CEO since 2014.

Life lessons on the golf course

Siepmann makes the most out of his time outside the office, too, whether travelling (South Africa, New York and Italy are favorite places), reading Thomas Mann, or on the ski slopes. He says: “I like the speed and freedom to choose your direction – there’s nothing better than being up in the mountains, looking far into the distance.” He also goes jogging to keep his mind fresh and creative. And in the far future he sees himself less in the financial sector but running a private business such as a golf club, perhaps in South Africa to escape the grey and foggy European autumn and winter. According to Siepmann, golf offers not only insights into the personalities of one’s playing partners but important life lessons. “You simply have to play the ball as it lies,” he says. “It makes no sense to argue – you just learn from it, adapt your strategy and try again on the next tee.” He is already looking forward to the day he can take his young daughter to the golf course.
Birthday: 30. November 1967
Place of birth: Cologne, Germany
Nationality: German, Swiss and Luxembourgish
Children: 1 daughter (born 2015)
Languages: German, English (and a little bit of French and Lëtzebuergesch)
Hobbies: Golf, Running, Travelling, Design and Architecture

MY FAVOURITE
Cities: Zurich, Lenzerheide, Cologne, New York, Lake Como
Place: A golf course
Book: Thomas Mann
Restaurants: Cantinetta Antinori & Casa Aurelio (Zurich), Trattoria Il Riccio & Brasserie Kirchberg (Luxembourg)
Music: Lounge Music and Mozart’s Piano Concerts
Artists: Mark Rothko, Henry Moore

COMPANY
Credit Suisse Fund Services (Luxembourg) S.A.

POSITION
Chief Executive Officer

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/danielsiepmann
How do you see the company developing over the next five years?
We are clearly building a global leader – I have already done that successfully in the past, so I know what to do and what not to do. We recently onboarded a very large asset management business owned by a bank in Hong Kong for example, and a global focus is clearly the way forward. I am currently focusing my efforts on expanding the team and accelerating our growth. As well as in Geneva and Luxembourg, we now have offices in Hong Kong, Singapore, India and Vietnam.

What is your personal and professional background?
My parents emigrated from Vietnam to Paris in the 1970s. My father, who was an expert in alternative medicine, was not allowed to practice in France, so he rented fields near Paris and became the first person to cultivate Chinese vegetables that he sold to local restaurants. I graduated from HEC Lausanne and started out working in various tech companies, but I wanted to become my own boss. I left Digital in 1987 and worked on my own for six months in a small apartment, coding day and night the software I had dreamed about, which became MultiFonds. My breakthrough came when a newspaper published an article about this new software, after which large global banks approached me and made MultiFonds a huge international success. I sold my stake in the company in 2010.

What prompted you to create SuisseTechPartners?
I founded the firm in 2012 after identifying an important gap in the market. There was a need for Cloud-native software – not an existing system upgraded to be cloud-enabled. At the same time, financial players e.g. asset servicers, asset manager and wealth managers were looking for software providers that could handle all their requirements within a single system. It took me about five years to develop PMplus, working closely together with prospects and industry leaders in co-designing a software to meet all of their needs and aspirations. We officially launched PMplus in 2017, and we have been constantly onboarding new international clients ever since.
VAN TA
FACTS & FIGURES

Place of birth: Vietnam
Nationality: French
Children: 1
Languages: French, English, Vietnamese, Mandarin
Hobbies: Golf & Skiing

MY FAVOURITE
Cities: Geneva
Places: Verbier & Hong Kong
Book: Le meurtre du commandeur de Haruki Murakami
Restaurants: Sen, Geneva (Vietnamese restaurant)
Music: Beethoven
Artist: Gustav Klimt (Austrian artist)

COMPANY
SuisseTechPartners

POSITION
Founder, Owner & CEO

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/vanta
MARTIN VOGEL

A FAST THINKER

MARTIN VOGEL IS NOW CEO EUROPE AT WAYSTONE AND IS A BOARD MEMBER OF THE WAYSTONE HOLDING COMPANY FOLLOWING THE MERGER OF MONTLAKE, MDO AND DMS TO CREATE THE LEADING GLOBAL MANAGEMENT COMPANY AND GOVERNANCE FIRM. PRIOR TO THE MERGER, MARTIN WAS THE CEO OF MDO MANAGEMENT COMPANY. AS WELL AS BEING ACTIVE IN ALL ASPECTS OF THE BUSINESS, MARTIN PROVIDED CLIENTS WITH ADVICE ON PRODUCT STRUCTURING AND DEVELOPMENT, AND CROSS-BORDER DISTRIBUTION. UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP, MDO MANAGEMENT COMPANY DEVELOPED INTO ONE OF LUXEMBOURG’S LEADING INDEPENDENT THIRD-PARTY MANAGEMENT COMPANIES.

MARTIN VOGEL IS A SWISS ATTORNEY-AT-LAW, IS ACTIVE IN FUND ASSOCIATIONS, ADVISES ASSET MANAGERS ON THE THIRD-PARTY MANAGEMENT COMPANY LANDSCAPE AND IS A REGULAR SPEAKER AT INTERNATIONAL FUND CONFERENCES.

Swiss precision
Born in Switzerland to a family of engineers, Martin Vogel graduated as a lawyer. He worked for BP, Swiss Reinsurance and several law firms before joining the Zurich office of Julius Baer in 1996. He stayed there for 16 years, working his way up to Managing Director, pursuing a strong focus on asset management, product management and global custody. Enjoying the kind of freedom that his position allowed, he decided to move into the entrepreneurial side of business. In 2009, Martin invested in MDO, becoming the CEO of MDO Group, which includes MDO Management Company and The Director’s Office.

Loyalty first
At Martin’s wedding, his father gave his new daughter-in-law some advice: “Don’t always listen to Martin if he gives too many orders”. A natural leader, he learned a lot during his national service in the Swiss Army: “It’s a complex process organising and managing a group of people who are forced to do something. I find it much easier in business, where employees are motivated”. Loyalty and respect still feature high on his list of core values. Now enjoying the challenge of further establishing MDO’s position as a leading fund service provider in Luxembourg, the Swiss businessman once flew to Florida to terminate an agreement with a supplier. “I am not the kind of businessman who attends meetings when things are going well and sends emails when times are tough. In addition, you never know what the future will hold.”

Work-life balance
His colleagues know just how quickly their CEO can think and act. “Don’t think too much: leap into new adventures,” he says with a smile. He enjoys skiing and golf, but family life is his top priority. “At the end of the day, nobody says “thank you” for business”. His 2 children give him the energy he needs on a daily basis. He remembers Peter Spaelti, the former CEO of Winterthur, as a man who managed to combine excellence in business with a successful family life. A track record he hopes to replicate.
MARTIN VOGEL

FACTS & FIGURES

Birthday: 29/09/1963
Nationality: Swiss
Children: 2
Languages: English, German native, Italian (a bit of French)
Hobbies: Sports, politics

MY FAVOURITE
Cities: Zurich, Roma
Places: Mountains, Sea
Books: The name of Rose (Eco), Old books of Michener
Restaurants: El Barrio, Monte Carlo: Mas de Provencale,
Zurich: Seerose
Music: Vivaldi, Hit parade 1-10
Artists: Cezanne, Caravaggio

COMPANY
Waystone

POSITION
Chief Executive Officer Europe at Waystone

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/martinvogel
www.waystone.com
MAKING THE DIFFERENCE WITH DATA AND EXPERTISE

ROBERT VAN KERKHoff, THE LUXEMBOURG-BASED HEAD OF BNP PARIBAS SECURITIES SERVICES FOR THE GRAND DUCHY, IRELAND & THE CHANNEL ISLANDS, SAYS IN AN INTERVIEW THAT HIS ROLE IS ABOUT DRIVING GROWTH AND DEVELOPING THE BANK’S OFFERING ACROSS THESE THREE MARKETS.

How would you describe your professional journey?
I started at the options exchange in the Netherlands where I focused on risk management, and a few jobs later, I joined Fortis Bank as Head of Risk in 2002. My wife is Spanish, so I gladly agreed to move to Madrid in 2005 as Deputy C00 and later C00 for Spain and Portugal; it was a very interesting experience in terms of cultural dynamics. After three more years in Spain, I moved to Paris as Deputy Head of Operations for Asset and Funds Services worldwide, a role in which again I enjoyed adapting to a new culture, colleagues and structure. In 2015, I went back to the Netherlands as Head of the Dutch Branch of BNP Paribas Securities Services. Over the next four years, we went from a team of 25 people to 100 and significantly increased our market share thanks to successful business integrations.

What are your main goals?
My first goal is to strengthen our current position in the Luxembourg market by leveraging our global footprint and capabilities. Secondly, we want to invest further in innovation in order to enhance our platform, but also our organisation. We would like to reinforce the active role our firm already plays in local initiatives. I have no doubt that our understanding of the changing market landscape and the intricacies of the securities services industry will enable us to lead the way in the present challenging context. Experience and grasp of the challenges of the future are the keys to success in the modern world and I am convinced this can be achieved thanks to our flexibility, collaboration, a strong sense of ownership and fluent communication throughout the organisation. Our clients will therefore benefit from the connectivity and local knowledge they need to navigate change in a fast-moving world with a partner that can help them achieve their ambitions. BNP Paribas Securities Services’ ambition is to be the leading positive-impact asset servicing provider. Our goal is to embed sustainability in all our daily operational activities. This will have multiple beneficial effects for our clients but most of all it will bolster our positive impact on society and the environment.

What are the most important developments taking place in the fund industry?
The most important element in our industry today is related to data rather than traditional asset servicing – it is where we can make the difference for our clients. The challenge is to make sure that all data remain consistent through the chain and across multiple platforms. We need to be the best at enriching the data and returning it to our clients when and where they need it. We can achieve this as we have a high level of expertise within our teams and are committed to maintaining and developing that level through state-of-the-art up-skilling and re-skilling programmes. My role as CEO is to ensure we always stay true to our DNA.
ROBERT VAN KERKHOFF

FACTS & FIGURES

Birthday: 26-01-1970
Nationality: Dutch
Languages: Dutch, English, Spanish, German and French
Hobbies: Theatre, cinema and sports

MY FAVOURITE

Cities: Amsterdam, Madrid and Grave
Places: On a boat in the Amsterdam channels
Book: My Left Foot (book or movie are both great)
Restaurants: Tapas and Japanese
Music: All kinds of music from Jazz to Flamenco
Artist: Lita Cabellut

COMPANY

BNP Paribas Securities Services Luxembourg

POSITION

CEO

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/robertvankerkhoff
DENISE VOSS

SEAL FOR SUSTAINABILITY

THE LUXEMBOURG FINANCE LABELLING AGENCY (LUXFLAG) IS AN INDEPENDENT AND INTERNATIONAL NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION, FOUNDED IN 2006, WHICH AIDS TO PROMOTE THE RAISING OF CAPITAL FOR THE SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT SECTOR BY AWARDING A RECOGNIZABLE LABEL TO ELIGIBLE INVESTMENT PRODUCTS. INTERVIEW WITH DENISE VOSS, CHAIRWOMAN OF LUXFLAG.

What are the main principles of ESG labelling?
The goal of a label is to reassure investors that what they have bought or are considering buying complies with the label criteria. The tremendous growth in LuxFLAG labels especially over the last two years, e.g. 76% in 2020, has its roots in the regulatory push behind the European Green Deal, but also in growing demand from investors, who increasingly value a label when investing in ESG products. The LuxFLAG label application process is based on transparent criteria for each label, available on LuxFLAG’s website. For each label application the LuxFLAG team follows a strict review and validation process; this process has been ISAE 3000 certified since 2019. Successful applications are presented to an eligibility committee of experts for their review and recommendation to the LuxFLAG Board, which ultimately approves (or not) the awarding of a LuxFLAG label.

What is your opinion on greenwashing and how does LuxFlag help mitigate it?
The EU’s focus on ESG means heightened demand for ESG financial products; increasing the risk of ‘greenwashing’ and increasing the importance of labels. LuxFLAG continues to enhance transparency and the strength of its labels, including alignment of label criteria to the requirements of the EU Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation (SFDR). LuxFLAG awards 5 labels to compliant investment products; the ESG Label, for products that focus on a sustainable transition to ESG goals, and 4 impact or thematic labels: Climate, Environment, Microfinance, Green Bonds. Products with an ESG label must comply with Article 8 of the SFDR, while the 4 impact/thematic labels generally comply with Article 9 of SFDR (or Article 8). Finally, the quality of the label criteria and the label application process is of utmost importance to LuxFLAG and is why LuxFLAG first sought ISAE 3000 certification, the first labelling agency in Europe to do so.

How important is education to the mission of LuxFLAG?
Education is vital to LuxFLAG’s mission to support the financing of sustainable development. Through its Associate Member programme LuxFLAG brings together the community of financial centre actors, where education and sharing of best practices plays a central role. The asset management industry is at various stages of the sustainable finance journey, so raising the level of understanding throughout the ecosystem can help ensure not only that regulatory expectations are met but that the deadlines set out in the Paris Agreement and UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are met as fully as possible. LuxFLAG organizes webinars for further education and its flagship event is the LuxFLAG Sustainable Investment Week (LSIW); giving Associate Members an opportunity to show the community what they are doing and to engage in discussions about how we can all move forward. That is the spirit in which the LSIW has been developed and a reason for its success.

In line with the increasing amount of EU ESG regulation, what opportunities and challenges do you identify in this sector?
The EU legislative initiatives aim at reorienting capital flows towards sustainable finance and foster long termism and transparency. By now we understand that Sustainable Finance is not just another type of investment. It’s a complete mindset shift. This means financial market participants would need to be aware of their own positions and contributions in the development of a sustainable future through their investments. This would lead to more investment opportunities in ESG but also those identified within the framework of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and would pave the path for new investment strategies and products. However, the industry would also need to develop tools to understand and measure the value we seek through such types of investments, as it is imperative that issues such as climate change and social inequalities affect investment portfolios. Asset Managers are required to prepare, use and disclose non-financial information in line with the new regulation leading to both clarity and complexity. However, those who would manage this process well would also enjoy a competitive advantage.
DENISE VOSS

FACTS & FIGURES

Birthday: 28/10/1958
Place of birth: Los Angeles
Nationality: American
Children: 1
Languages: English, French
Hobbies: Family, house, reading

MY FAVOURITE
Restaurants: Mosconi, Toit pour toi
Places: Vista Palace Hotel (Roquebrune Cap Martin), The Venice Beach House (California), Ruisado (New Mexico)
Books: Anything by Jane Austen, M.F.K Fischer
Music: Handel, George Gershwin, Al Jarreau, Bob Marley, Maxime Le Forestier
Artists: Turner, Hogarth, Gainsborough

COMPANY
LuxFLAG

POSITION
Chairwoman

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/denisevoss
PIERRE WEIMERSKIRCH

THE VIRTUES OF COMBINATION

THE ACQUISITION OF LUXEMBOURG INVESTMENT SOLUTIONS (LIS) BY SANNE IN FEBRUARY 2018 AND THE RESULTING EXPANSION OF ITS SERVICES HELPED THE AIFM SERVICE PROVIDER ACHIEVE A RECORD YEAR, SAYS MANAGING DIRECTOR PIERRE WEIMERSKIRCH.

What factors prompted you to join forces with SANNE?
It was an interesting year for LIS in 2018. Having closed the acquisition deal in February, we were very much looking forward to seeing the first fruits of the combination of the two firms in terms of market perception and new business. We were keen to sell our existing AIFM services together with the fund administration and depositary services contributed by SANNE. That was the rationale behind the transaction, which was well received in the market when we announced it in October 2017. Ultimately 70% of our new clients in 2018 opted for integrated services, helping to make it a record year with the addition of more than 40 fund structures.

What has changed for LIS following the deal?
Being part of a listed entity helps when clients are conducting due diligence on us: being a privately-held company raised more questions. Listed status provides many clients, especially institutions such as pension funds, with greater trust thanks to the transparency it entails. We also benefit from SANNE’s footprint in 18 locations throughout the world, having previously had offices only in Luxembourg and Ireland. We have now gained a lot of traction in the US and Asia in particular, so we were quick to see the benefits on the business side. Now, in 2019, we are focusing on the operational benefits. SANNE’s Luxembourg team is joining us in our offices near the airport, and the group’s IT systems are being rolled out to LIS. Working on a common platform will be a great help, but I anticipate further synergies and benefits.

How are your clients’ needs evolving?
Our client base itself is evolving! Our portfolio is more balanced between German-speaking and Anglo-Saxon clients, but we are now seeing a growing volume of business from Asia. In terms of their needs, new developments are underway affecting reporting – pension funds and insurance companies are asking for specific reporting in response to regulatory requirements. The other trend is the increased focus on adherence to environmental, social and governance standards, with the latter being an increasingly important factor. Investors are asking their fund managers how ESG-compliant their funds are, so the managers are now looking for reporting that demonstrates their fulfilment of ESG criteria. Meanwhile demand continues as before for our core AIFM, depositary and fund administration services. Rather than new needs, clients are looking for high quality and shorter time cycles. It is a clear sign that these areas have reached a high level of maturity.
PIERRE WEIMERSKIRCH
FACTS & FIGURES

Birthday: 23/04/1964
Place of Birth: Luxembourg
Nationality: Luxembourg
Children: 2
Languages: Luxembourgish, German, French, English

MY FAVOURITE
Cities: Paris, Chicago
Places: Place des Vosges (Paris), Ocracoke (North Carolina)
Book: "Der Schwarm", Frank Schätzing
Restaurants: Les Jardins d’Anaïs
Music: Royal Deluxe, Twenty One Pilots
Artist: Fernand Bertmes

COMPANY
LIS|SANNE

POSITION
Co-Founder and Managing Director

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/pierreweimerskirch
www.lis-aifm.lu
REVEL WOOD & STEVE BERNAT

TWO BECOME ONE

DESPITE THEIR HIGHLY DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS, STEVE BERNAT AND REVEL WOOD’S INTERESTS CONVERGED OVER A GAME OF PÉTANQUE IN MONACO—WHICH THE FORMIDABLE PAIR WENT ON TO WIN THE TOURNAMENT. THAT ENCOUNTER BLOSSOMED INTO A FRIENDSHIP AND THE FOUNDING OF ONE GROUP SOLUTIONS, THE NEXT GENERATION FUND MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS PROVIDER OFFERING MODULAR THIRD-PARTY MANAGEMENT COMPANY AND AIFM COMPLIANCE CONSULTING, CORPORATE SECRETARY, AND GOVERNANCE TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS TO FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE.

Life with an international perspective
Steve Bernat could have enjoyed, as a Luxembourg national from the south of the country, a secure career in Luxembourg’s Ministry of Education, where he started his professional journey. Instead, he aspired to work in an international environment. Leaving the well-trodden path is a goal that Steve has pursued most of his professional life. After more than 10 years in fund services operations, product and relationship management with Citibank and others, Steve discovered his true niche in business development, as he has always been strong in building relationships with people from around the globe. This move has required him to spend more time abroad than at home in Luxembourg the past 10 years, but it has also allowed him to successfully build two third-party Management Companies to become a leader in their sector within a very short period of time by attracting many asset managers to his home country. While he may be “the best commercial CEO in Luxembourg,” as Revel Wood describes him, he has never forgotten what leads to success — a winning team. For his new venture as founding partner of ONE group solutions, he teams-up with Revel and both have assembled a hand-picked team of experienced industry professionals committed to delivering client excellence.

Leading by example
Revel Wood started his career as an entrepreneur in South Africa, where he was born into a middle-class mining family, before moving into corporate life as an audit manager at PwC. After the military, where he gained the rank of Lieutenant, and an entrepreneurial foray, Revel gained exposure to international markets at PwC working on the listing of two South African mining companies on the LSE and NYSE. He then decided to move to London in search of adventure and international finance experience where he quickly made a name for himself, running middle-office outsourcing operations and product at Bank of New York and Northern Trust. For the last ten years, he has held MD and CEO positions in the Luxembourg fund management industry and has also been appointed to the board of ALFI in 2017. His success in Luxembourg is attributed to building a network and a reputation as a loyal, trusted and results-oriented industry partner. Steve sees Revel as “the relentless visionary with great strategic thinking”, a talent he will certainly use to contribute to the improvement and advancement of the Luxembourg fund industry with ONE’s NextGen solutions.

Strength in diversity
In joining forces to launch ONE group solutions, Steve Bernat and Revel Wood have combined the complementary strengths of their distinctive backgrounds and their experience in the fund industry and have created the NextGen fund management solutions. They are joined, among others, by Tobias Ettlin and Alan Guiney, who will lead the subsidiaries ONE regulatory (offering technology-based compliance solutions), and ONE corporate (offering end-to-end corporate support for the fund industry).
STEVE BERNAT
Birthday: 9/03/1978
Place of birth: Esch-sur-Alzette
Nationality: Luxembourger
Children: One son (Noé)
Languages: Luxembourgish, English, French, German
Hobbies: Traveling, tennis, sailing, golf and skiing

REVEL WOOD
Birthday: 12/01/1969
Place of birth: Bulawayo (Zimbabwe)
Nationality: British/South African
Children: Two
Languages: English, Afrikaans, Sotho (although the latter not practiced for some time)
Hobbies: Theatre, Reading, Cycling, Squash, Golf, Skiing, Scuba-diving,

MY FAVOURITE
Cities:
- Hong Kong
- Cape Town, London, Salzburg, Sydney
- Lohninghof, Five Flies, Ma Langue Sourit, Chutney Mary
- Victoria Falls, Garden Route, and Central Kalahari

Restaurants:
- Owstellgleis (Hostert)
- All Ages & Genre from Classical via Rock, Blues 80s Pop to Bruno Mars

Places:
- Withsunday Islands (Australia), Railay beach (Thailand), Bagan (Myanmar)
- Coldplay

Music:

COMPANY
ONE group solutions

POSITION
Founding Partner

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/onegroupsolutions
HOW RISKS AND SOLUTIONS EVOLVED IN THE COVID CRISIS

MARCO ZWICK, DIRECTOR OF THE COMMISSION DE SURVEILLANCE DU SECTEUR FINANCIER (CSSF) SAYS THAT WHILE LUXEMBOURG’S RISK MODEL PROTECTED THE FINANCIAL SECTOR DURING THE PANDEMIC, PARTICULARLY FROM CYBER AND LIQUIDITY RISKS, THE INDUSTRY MUST EMBRACE NEW WAYS OF WORKING AND RECOGNIZE NEW RISKS.

What are the key risks the financial sector faced during the pandemic?

With the turbulent markets at the start of the pandemic, some companies faced increased financial risks through lost activities, losses incurred or reduced profits. But covid showed the most important risk is human capital risk. Healthy human beings are needed, especially when people outside our organizations are trying to take advantage of weaknesses arising from the crisis. However, the asset management industry has not seen a significant increase in successful cyber-attacks. Funds also confronted another risk as discussions around sustainable finance are giving rise to the risk of greenwashing – misrepresentation and mis-selling of, ostensibly, sustainable products. Fortunately, the pandemic’s impact was mitigated by fund teams implementing good risk management and diversification strategies.

How did the financial sector address the risk of liquidity constraints?

The risk posed by liquidity issues has kept funds busy over the past 12 months. But Luxembourg deployed several liquidity management tools which, with the industry showing a high level of maturity, has ensured resilience. Liquidity mismatches by open-ended and money market funds posed a risk of contamination spreading to the real economy. But we realized that funds were conservatively managed and at no time were funds’ liquidity buffers exceeded. We had the opportunity to test our liquidity management tools, and there was no call for new tools. However, we would like more cooperation on a European level to see whether our liquidity management tools can be deployed collaboratively with other jurisdictions.

How has CSSF’s supervisory role been altered as a result of the pandemic?

As the supervisory authority, CSSF had to find new ways of working. Our agents started working remotely to ensure continuity of financial supervision. We could not perform on-site inspections in a classical sense, so we developed Q&As to address issues including liquidity management and active breaches of net asset value (NAV) calculations. Out of caution we probably overestimated the risks from not being able to supervise in person. But we used screen sharing tools to put us in a position where we operated in the same way we would if we were performing our inspections in your office. Despite these constraints, we covered more than 90% of assets under management daily throughout the pandemic.
MARCO ZWICK

FACTS & FIGURES

Birthday: 17/02/1969
Place of Birth: Pétange
Nationality: Luxembourg
Children: 1
Languages: Luxembourgish, English, French, German
Hobbies: Music, Running

COMPANY
CSSF

POSITION
Director

OTHER POSITIONS
E.G. Member of the board of the Economist Club Luxembourg

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/marcozwick
www.cssf.lu
EUROPEAN ALTERNATIVE INVESTMENT FUNDS LEADER

Keith O’Donnell
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GILLES DUSEMON

STRONG ROOTS

A CHILD OF LUXEMBOURG’S COAL MINING REGION, GILLES DUSEMON HAS SPENT A GREAT DEAL OF HIS LIFE ABROAD. HOWEVER, HIS RETURN TO HIS HOMELAND IN 2001 HAS GIVEN NEW IMPETUS TO HIS CAREER WHILE ALLOWING HIM TO REDISCOVER HIS ROOTS.

Studies
Like many inhabitants of Luxembourg, Gilles Dusemon had an opportunity to study and work abroad at a very young age. After obtaining a diploma in economic law and business law in Nice in 1996, four years later he completed a Masters in Law at the University of New York. Gilles Dusemon speaks English, French, Italian and German both at home and at work.

Independent
Admitted to the Luxembourg bar in 1997, he initially specialised in tax law and company law. In 2000, in the middle of a two-year stay in the United States, where he was combining studying with a position as a legal expert with the global law firm Allen & Overy, he declined an offer from the Association of the Luxembourg Fund Industry, but nevertheless decided to return to Luxembourg to pursue his career. Two years later, he accepted a role with ALFI, while at the same time joining forces with Jean-Pierre Winandy at the Loyens Winandy practice (which became Loyens & Loeff in 2008). Seeking to ‘redress the balance between work and private life’, a year later he decided to focus on his work as a lawyer. He resigned from his post at ALFI, although he has since taken up a role as an external expert. 2010 marked another milestone in his career when he joined Arendt & Merdernach as cohead of private equity.

Here and there
His disciplined approach – as well as his passion for architecture and design, no doubt – has resulted in him managing the swings in the market. From his extensive travels, he still remembers a dinner in Beijing in the presence of Grand Duke Henri and President Ju Hintao. Apart from these occasional assignments abroad, Gilles Dusemon is now strongly attached to his Luxembourg roots, and plans to continue to develop his practice in the Grand Duchy in years to come.

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/gillesdusemon

VIDEO
Thierry Grosjean

Pragmatism and Professionalism

The Conducting Officer of Japan Fund Management Luxembourg, Thierry Grosjean glides through life with the poise of the outstanding skier he is. He says his philosophy involves forging ahead, being inventive while taking measured risks, and knowing how to learn from his mistakes.

From law to fund services
Born in Metz, Thierry Grosjean discovered rock music at the age of four, when he was taken to a private concert by his uncle, and he remains a fan to this day of groups such as the Rolling Stones. While he would have liked to make a life in music, instead he opted to study at his hometown university. Having obtained a master’s degree in law, he entered Luxembourg’s financial industry, spending eight years with a fiduciary firm in the Grand Duchy before becoming CEO in 2008 of Centuria Capital Luxembourg, a financial sector professional entity providing domiciliation services. Last September he was appointed as conducting officer of Japan Fund Management Luxembourg, the Super ManCo business of the Mizuho banking group, with special responsibility for compliance and risk supervision. “I like finding pragmatic solutions adapted to increasingly demanding and sophisticated products,” he says.

A drive to succeed
As a boy, Thierry dreamed of becoming a pilot, but the qualities of precision and rigour that are essential to the job are equally important in his current role. He says he has acquired from the great captains of industry a taste for management and the drive to succeed in business. He says that today the Luxembourg fund industry represents an internationally-recognised label with a reputation for high quality and professionalism that has made the industry a global leader.

Into the wide open spaces
Thierry was elected to a two-year term as chairman of the Luxembourg Association of Compliance Officers in 2015, with the main task of promoting the Grand Duchy as one of the leading jurisdictions for compliance in the EU. Since then, he has been a director of the organisation with responsibility for communication. In a world where the fund industry is subject to higher levels of regulation, he is increasingly focusing on compliance with environmental, social and governance investment criteria. And when he has a chance to escape from the office, Thierry heads for adventure in wide open spaces, whether skiing in Patagonia, diving among great white sharks off Gansbaai in South Africa, or riding a motorbike along California’s Pacific Coast Highway. Even in the heart of Luxembourg’s financial industry, the spirit of rock ’n’ roll lives on.

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/thierrygrosjean
JEAN-NOËL LEQUEUE

BOARDS OF DIRECTORS ADAPT TO COMPLIANCE

JEAN-NOËL LEQUEUE, MANAGING DIRECTOR, OF THE INTERNAL CONTROL CONSULTING FIRM JNL DISCUSSES DEVELOPMENTS AND DECIPHERS THE IMPORTANCE OF COMPLIANCE WITHIN BOARDS OF DIRECTORS. INTERVIEW.

What changes are facing compliance officers?
After several consecutive years of significant regulatory tightening, Claude Marx, Director General of the CSSF, has announced a stabilization. Despite this, Anti-Money Laundering (AML) procedures, as well as the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing, will remain a heavy burden for Compliance Officers (CO). Like the CSSF and the Ministry of Finance, we remain attentive to the arrival of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in Luxembourg. A strengthening of AML regulation seems to be on the agenda. Another new feature is that COs must now comply with the rules laid down in the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) on the use of personal data. These tasks are all the more complex because of the poor consultation between the various national and European institutions responsible for the measures.

How does compliance impact boards of directors?
As boards of directors have more responsibilities, they develop a close relationship with compliance. In this respect, CSSF circulars 12/552 and 18/698 clarify their role in this area. However, this should be pushed further as there are few regulations clearly defining the level of training and obligations of ManCo administrators on the AML issue. Few members of boards of directors are aware that CSSF sanctions against companies apply for life, and should must be mentioned in administrators’ declarations on honour. It remains important to better clarify the role of the board so that it can effectively control the executive committee.

What milestones did jnl mark in 2019?
The sale of part of the jnl operation - formerly ICE - was a new development:

A majority of former employees chose to leave the sold company, and some returned to jnl. After having found legal modus to continue our activity, the company was divided into two parts. jnl, on the one hand, continued its missions of specialized mandates. On the other hand, Phoenix, an entity re-born from its ashes, took over all operational activities: internal audit, compliance, agreement and relations with the CSSF and the Ministry of Finance, coaching and training. I am only a manager at Phoenix to support its development and promote its success. As for jnl, I am more involved in "personal" missions, in particular by focusing on directorships in companies supervised and unsupervised by the CSSF.
PIERRE REUTER

YOUNG ACHIEVER WITH A ZEST FOR NEW CHALLENGES

HAVING ALREADY WORKED WITH SOME OF LUXEMBOURG’S LEADING INVESTMENT FUND SPECIALISTS AND LAUNCHED A NEW FUNDS PRACTICE IN THE GRAND DUCHY, PIERRE REUTER IS HELPING TO BUILD HOGAN LOVELLS INTO A FORCE IN THE COUNTRY’S LEGAL PROFESSION.

Dedication, with a touch of humour

His friends describe Pierre Reuter as a professional who is close to his clients, very involved, direct and pragmatic. To ensure client satisfaction, he devotes himself to his work, but his natural sense of humour still shines through. The importance of family life was instilled in him by his parents, who played a key role in his development by shielding him away from the worries of life and helping him become a well-balanced person. Now with two children of his own, family is a central element of Pierre’s life, and he has become skilled at maintaining a healthy balance between his professional and home life.

A passion for funds

After a year of legal studies in Luxembourg, Pierre completed his master’s degree in Aix-en-Provence. He went on to broaden his expertise with two of the leading Luxembourg lawyers in the investment funds field, who also instilled in him their passion for their field of work. In 2008, a major Dutch law firm asked him to set up an investment funds department for its Luxembourg office, and five years later, Pierre took on his biggest professional challenge so far when joining Hogan Lovells to launch its Luxembourg office. Business and friendship do not have to be incompatible, he says, pointing to his experience in working and managing the Luxembourg office of Hogan Lovells with Gérard Neiens and Marc Elvinger.

After the working day

Out of the office, Pierre likes to relax with a marathon viewing of his favourite TV series. His musical tastes lean toward the likes of Jim Morrison, whom he admires for his creativity. He also respects the work of PETA activists for their commitment to animal welfare. Like many people of his generation, Pierre has always had a keen eye for the latest gadgets, but he also enjoys the simple things in life – a good home-made vegetarian meal, or a walk with his dog.

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/pierrereuter
www.hoganlovells.com
MORE KEY PLAYERS...

Tonika Hirdman
Executive Director
Fondation of Luxembourg
Luxembourg
www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/tonikahirdman

Renaud Jamar De Bolsee
Owner
Seqvoia
Luxembourg
www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/renaudjamardebolsee

Lihong Zhou
General manager
Bank of China
www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/bankofchina

Notes
ACCESS TO RESILIENCE

OUR DAY-TO-DAY DEPENDENCE ON TECHNOLOGY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS DEMONSTRATED THE RESILIENCE OF THE TECH SECTOR SAYS ISABELLE AZOULAI AMIEL, MANAGING PARTNER AT LA MAISON COMPAGNIE D’INVESTISSEMENT. AND SHE EXPLAINS HOW LA MAISON’S MODEL, METHOD AND NETWORKS HELPS SECURE GLOBAL ACCESS TO THIS SECTOR’S MOST SOUGHT-AFTER INVESTMENTS.

Can you describe La Maison in a few words?
The idea for La Maison was not as an investment vehicle - but an investment club founded by Michel Cicurel. We brought 15 families to share deals they couldn’t normally have access to. From the start we told them we didn’t just want their capital but their personal presence and the value they could add. Our first investment vehicle after the evergreen holding was a tech fund investing in Israel with our members helping firms gain access to European markets. We have since created a growth opportunity fund in the Silicon Valley and the same thing in China.

How can institutions invest with La Maison?
The founding members didn’t want to let everyone in as that would dilute the values of the club. So, we let in young family lines with a minimum of €5 million, as associates, not directly, but through limited partnerships of the new funds. We co-opted families that really want to bring value and create something around the ethos of the club. Now, for the first time, the fintech fund will be open to institutions but not families so the ticket is €10 million. We already have three big institutions that have decided that they will join this new club. Looking ahead it’s very open, we might do another Silicon Valley fund in the next year and we are talking to families about another Israeli fund in the next two years.

How would you describe start-ups’ strengths and weaknesses in the US, Europe, Asia and Israel?
The Israeli tech environment is unique: there is no Israeli market. Tech companies are founded and organized to be international from day one.

That contrasts with Silicon Valley with mega-growth venture funds who mentor start-ups. But like in Israel, investments are super hard to access. You have to fight for the best investments bringing something more than just capital. Access in China is even worse. It is essential to partner up and give your trust to others if you want to engage in the tech market. We decided not to invest in international companies, only in companies that focus on China’s huge local market. In the last five years, France has not offered the environment to help tech companies become “unicorns”. There is a lot of early-stage funding and then nothing to help growth. If the good ones weren’t bought by the Americans or the Chinese, they’d stay as mid-level companies or die. But it’s now changing, the French government has launched an initiative to encourage the growth venture industry to start thriving.

How would you analyse the current economic context?
During the worst of Covid-19, tech enabled us to survive, to communicate and to buy food. It created a huge opportunity for the sector. I told my investment committee, “For the first time the tech industry has become a very resilient industry, a very safe area to put investments. That contrasts with people’s past mindset: that tech was always a bubble and always overvalued.” Now if you look at tech companies’ results, they have been growing and growing, a lot of unicorns now have the capital to become profitable which no one thought would happen. If you look at the health or food tech industry, there is a lot to do. This Covid period has changed perceptions that will help the tech sector perform well.

Can you describe La Maison in a few words?
The idea for La Maison was not as an investment vehicle - but an investment club founded by Michel Cicurel. We brought 15 families to share deals they couldn’t normally have access to. From the start we told them we didn’t just want their capital but their personal presence and the value they could add. Our first investment vehicle after the evergreen holding was a tech fund investing in Israel with our members helping firms gain access to European markets. We have since created a growth opportunity fund in the Silicon Valley and the same thing in China.
ALTERNATIVE INVESTMENTS IN REAL ESTATE ARE EXPERIENCING SIGNIFICANT GROWTH. PHILIPPE BARTHÉLÉMY AND HIS PARTNERS PIERRE THOMAS AND JEAN-FRANÇOIS QUEVRAIN (WE INVEST CAPITAL PARTNERS) MAKE THE MOST OF THE SKILL SET OFFERED BY THE FINANCIAL CENTER TO CARRY OUT THEIR PROJECTS.

Can you present your project in a few words?
We have just set up the structure "We Invest Capital Partners", initiator of a real estate fund which will be called Premium Real Estate Fund SICAV-RAIF S.C.A., whose mission is to make premium investments in real estate. The first pillar resides in the selection of locations on the basis of their high visibility and popularity. We have thus identified opportunities in Miami, in the major resorts of the French Alps, in the Monegasque region and in the Île-de-France region. We then choose local partners to deploy projects for development, renovation or acquisition and sale. We are opportunistic in the selection of projects (residential, commercial...), provided that the selected area enjoys good visibility and that the project conveys a strong image.

What advantages does this type of investment offer?
Alternative investments generally have higher profitability profiles than traditional products (stock market, savings accounts, etc.). They attract more and more sophisticated investors, but also institutional clients. We target performance on projects that we select for their ability to generate returns over short periods - from 24 to 42 months. Moreover, backing a superior performance strategy with a real estate counterparty limits the risk to one’s capital.

What role does Luxembourg play in your strategy?
We are launching a specialised operation by integrating all the best practices and know-how of the financial center. We also rely on major players in Luxembourg: custodian banks, fund managers, service providers etc. The pooling of our respective expertise ensures excellent service and transparency for investors. Luxembourg serves as a base for the deployment of our strategy and contributes to the influence of the Luxembourg financial centre on business lines that are less represented there. In addition to the large institutions, it is in the Grand Duchy’s interest to support smaller teams that can benefit from Luxembourg’s know-how, while promoting the country at the same time. Historically, the Grand-Duchy has developed the back and middle office sector. The presence of front office players developing investment strategies in Luxembourg is still too confidential. The next step for the financial centre will be to welcome and structure these businesses. In addition, the world of alternative investments is opening up more and more to family offices and qualified investors. It will therefore be necessary to ensure a more direct dialogue with them and to better manage relationships by proactively developing a competitive advantage in the application of the many regulations governing our industry. And we intend to meet these challenges.

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/philippebarthelemy
www.farad.lu

PHILIPPE BARTHÉLÉMY

PROMOTING REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT

INVESTMENT FUNDS
KEY PLAYERS
PRIVATE EQUITY
TREASURY
INSURANCE
LEARNING THE LEGACY OF AVANT-GARDE INVESTING

INSPIRED BY YEARS INVESTING FOR WEALTHY FAMILIES, WE ADOPTED AN AVANT-GARDE, COLLABORATIVE BUSINESS MODEL, FOCUSED ON BUILDING HUMAN PARTNERSHIPS THAT RELY ON DEEPLY ROOTED FAMILY VALUES, SHARING KNOWLEDGE AND TAKING TIME TO CONTRIBUTE TO A COMPANY’S DEVELOPMENT, SAYS DANIEL GROSSMANN, MANAGING PARTNER AND CO-FOUNDER OF KHARIS CAPITAL.

What is Kharis Capital’s background?
Both my partner, Manuel Roumain, and I have invested on behalf of wealthy families. I previously worked for a prominent Belgian family behind Anheuser-Busch InBev, the world’s largest brewing company. To a certain extent, they were pioneers investing directly, not through funds, which today more commonly is an aspiration of many family offices: it’s a new age in private equity, PE 2.0. What we learned was the benefit of time, when investing in companies; the benefit of taking a long-term view and hence to become a stable partner to grow and develop businesses. Families and long-term investors are indeed not bound by typical boundaries of private equity, such as time constraints, risk diversification and investment allocation. Looking at these changing dynamics in the private equity landscape, Manuel and I decided to join forces and we launched Kharis Capital in 2015.

How would you describe the evolution of your business model?
We wanted to introduce an innovative model which would allow families to invest directly in companies with the same discipline as the top tier PE firm, at a time when the market was still relatively nascent: there were indeed increasing numbers of families looking to deploy capital directly. There were also an increasing number of entrepreneurs or family-owned businesses looking for a different type of partner to accompany them in the future development of their companies. We formed Kharis Capital to drive growth: we support companies in growing domestically and internationally; in their digital transformation journey and in leveraging and pushing their brand assets. We take an entrepreneurial, pragmatic approach when engaging with our companies; we actively and creatively participate in all aspects that drive our equity story, but that requires time; successfully building deploying a brand can indeed take years. We have therefore consciously chosen to allow ourselves the time to be impatient for a much longer period than conventional investors.

What is the “secret” of your model?
Aside from our passion and main “time”-asset, when you invest in a company there is the human component; throughout the life of the investment, we must indeed collaborate with a wide range of people. We refer to this collaboration with partners, founders, co-investors, suppliers and teams as a “human partnership”. It is this aspect, this human interaction and collaboration, that we nurture and cherish. It is often what makes or breaks a company. We strongly believe that people make the difference, and it’s often the “who” before the “how”. Another “secret” of our model is to go deep, not wide. We indeed pool all our resources behind a limited number of transactions (or platforms), to gain the benefits of closely working as a team, focusing all brainpower, manpower and energy behind a single objective. To give a specific example: we felt the European fast food market was underdeveloped compared to the US and Asia. We subsequently went from acquiring the Italian and Polish Master Franchise for Burger King, to acquiring other strong brands such as Quick, O’Tacos and Nordsee, to creating a “quick service restaurant platform” (QSRP), comprising around 1,000 fast-food restaurant locations across seven European market. This provided diversification and a natural hedge for our investors in this highly resilient sector, not only compared to investing in individual assets but in terms of food offerings, consumer habits as well as geographical exposure.

Technology investing is the other strong pillar of Kharis Capital; it lies at the heart of what we do in fuelling innovation, creativity and fundamentally changing the way traditional businesses operate.

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/danielgrossmann
www.khariscapital.com
JULIEN KINIC

A STABLE BASE FOR INVESTING IN A FRANTIC WORLD

JULIEN KINIC, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF IDI EMERGING MARKETS, SAYS LUXEMBOURG’S APPEAL TO PRIVATE EQUITY FIRMS INCLUDES ITS QUALITY OF LIFE, BUT ALSO THE AUTHORITIES’ ABILITY TO KEEP ONE STEP AHEAD OF THE COMPETITION.

How and where does IDI Emerging Markets invest?
We are an investment firm that focuses on private equity in emerging countries, with 49 investments so far in China, India, Latin America, South-East Asia, Africa and the Middle-East through three different approaches. Our historical model – still accounting for 50% of our business – involves investing through local PE firms. We also acquire portfolios of emerging market investments through secondary transactions, and make direct investments in companies.

What kind of investments do you make?
In all our investments, we target equity investments in fast-growing SMEs. An example of a primary fund investment is Peepul Capital in India. The firm is run by two charismatic partners from Chennai who are very passionate about the companies they invest in, and with whom we have been working since 2006. Through Peepul we invested for example in MedPlus, a Hyderabad-based pharmacy and pathology lab chain providing India’s middle-class professional medical advice in-store. We managed a return of close to four times the investment in this chain, which is growing at a rapid pace.
As another illustration, we conducted a secondary transaction involving China Renaissance, a Chinese investment fund with which we have been in contact regularly since 2008. When one existing limited partner needed liquidity for its share in the fund, we were able to move quickly and optimize the pricing as we already knew the portfolio and trusted each other. An example of direct investment comes from Sub-Saharan Africa and the trend for telecom operators to sell their mobile phone masts to specialist firms. We invested in IHS Telecom, a fast-growing portfolio company managing over 8,250 towers in Nigeria, Cameroon and Côte d’Ivoire.

Why did you set up your GP entity in Luxembourg?
The business was launched in 2004 by IDI Group, a French private equity house, and has been moved to Luxembourg in June 2008 as an independent entity, to benefit from a transparent and efficient structure for investing in emerging countries. Our key people live in the grand duchy – with all their families –, providing an assurance of stability for our investors. Since we are traveling all the time, Luxembourg provides a welcome respite from the frantic world. I personally live close enough to cycle to the office, with the airport only 15 minutes away. Our offices in the heart of the city are relaxed and quiet, letting us focus completely on our work. Recently, we decided to launch our third investment vehicle as a Luxembourg SIF. We are here for the long-run, and always value the ability of officials to run the country as a well-managed company and stay one step ahead of the competition in the fund industry.

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/julienkinic
www.idi-em.com
How is SwanCap navigating these interesting times?
By not changing course. By this I mean we stick to our knitting when faced with unknown uncertainty and disruption, which still remains the issue with Covid-19 and its variants continuing to cause havoc with livelihoods and economies. In SwanCap’s business, which is to manage investment programmes into best-in-class private equity buy-out funds and related co-investments, we know from 20+ years’ experience that a steady investment pace, even in “bad” times evens out the downside risk and captures also potential rebound-upside to produce relatively steady performance through cycles and over time.

What is the impact of ESG on your activity?
The ESG “label-impact” is definitely increasing, but the “fact-impact” of responsible investing isn’t changing so much. By this I mean that we already have a high degree of conscious ESG discipline in professional private equity firms and respective funds, only now there are more investor and regulatory requirements for detailing and documenting all aspects thereof.

What risk and opportunities do you identify in PE in the next five years?
The risks I see relate to excessive regulation, where e.g. private equity is singled out for micro-management and excessive cost-of-business compliance, very uneven when compared to private (or public) shareholders owning companies generally. The opportunity for PE in the next 5 years is huge. Why? Because any crisis raises the pressure on economic participants to adjust and execute rationally, swiftly and decisively, precisely
What is your investment strategy?
We remain loyal to what has been our core business since 2004: focusing on the “luxury retail” sector in department stores, the “travel retail” sector in railway stations and airports and the “luxury discount” sector in shopping centres which compete with brands like McArthurGlen. We invest indirectly by carrying out analysis and by operating as a “club deal”: we invest family money and seek co-investors, be they family offices, funds or banks. For example, with Printemps, Deutsche Bank’s RREEF fund invested alongside us and our exit in 2013 generated liquidity, allowing us to diversify our investments.

Which areas of diversification have you chosen?
Our portfolio becomes more liquid and more diversified. We go to see banks but rather than giving them money to invest as some do, we identify their areas of expertise and work with them within that market segment. Our work with JP Morgan on American high yields and with Midas on European high yields is a good example of this strategy. Managers also present their funds to us. This highly diversified portfolio is managed directly. We’ve just created an open-ended investment fund with specific compartments which enables it to offer an open architecture and to be regulated.

Have you identified other opportunities?
Since 2015, we have also worked with a number of operators to create a hotel portfolio. We’ve identified a grey area in continental Europe which ranges from 5 to 40 million, because these investments pass under the radar of institutional investors and are priced too high for private investors. We find that this more direct and rather opportunistic model produces excellent results, particularly in the 3 and 4-star market segment. We adopt...
PRIVATE EQUITY FOR UNHWI COMES TO LUXEMBOURG

PASCAL RAPALLINO, GROUP PRIVATE CLIENT SOLUTION LEADER AND MEMBER OF THE GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, ANALYSES THE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN PRIVATE EQUITY/REAL ESTATE (PE/RE) IN LUXEMBOURG FOR UNHW CLIENTS. INTERVIEW.

How has Private Equity evolved in Luxembourg over the last 10 years for these clients?
Private equity has made a home for itself in Luxembourg. Private clients’ expectations have really changed between 2010 and 2017. In some cases, today’s market can scare off private investors and many of them want to invest directly and efficiently, both in terms of costs/return on investment, control of and proximity to their investments. In other words, they no longer want to feel like the umpteenth link in the value chain. They converge on Luxembourg because the country is one of the best places in Europe when it comes to legal and tax efficiency. This trend is changing the typology of private clients: newcomers often have a minimum of several tens of millions of euros and demand the same services as those offered to institutional clients because they have a financial power which is often equivalent.

What are the objectives to be achieved in Luxembourg?
We often meet families from Asia, the Middle East and America who want to structure their European investments from Luxembourg because they already have equivalent structures in their home countries, and are aware of the Grand Duchy’s expertise. That said, Luxembourg still needs to develop its brand image, particularly in Eastern Europe. In my opinion, these improvements must focus on two areas: the pooling of efforts made by professional associations to strengthen the “national branding” and the professionalisation of the communication of the country’s potential ambassadors by establishing clear and strong messages. Luxembourg has already made a lot of progress thanks to organisations like LFF, but as...
ALAIN RODERMANN

GENES OF EXPONENTIALLY

ALAIN RODERMANN, FOUNDING PARTNER, PRESENTS EXPON CAPITAL, A VENTURE CAPITAL COMPANY WHICH IS ACTIVE IN THE SECTOR OF TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION AND WHOSE GENE ARE BASED ON EXPONENTIAL GROWTH. INTERVIEW.

What is Expon Capital’s current position?
Our independent management company manages 2 complementary venture capital funds. The first, the Digital Tech Fund, brings together 20 million euros from various economic players in Luxembourg and focuses on promising companies which have been operating in Luxembourg for less than seven years. Among other companies, the fund has invested in the Spanish company Nektria and the German company iTavel.de. Nektria develops and markets yield management software to reduce logistics costs and to improve the experience of online supermarket customers. Prices change depending on the delivery time. Astonishingly, 50% of users accept to change their delivery time in exchange for a small discount. As for iTavel.de, it’s launching its international high-end online travel agent services from Luxembourg. Travel is entirely tailored to customers’ specifications, at prices equivalent to those of standard travel found in catalogues.

What about the second fund?
Primary objective of global fund Expon 1, created in June 2017, consists in investing in ultra-ambitious companies which are having a significant impact on the world and which hope to see their businesses grow exponentially. We ensure that these start-ups show the genes of exponentiality, which enable them to overcome any growth obstacles with ease. Expon Capital offers unique expertise in this field. We have already made several investments in the United States and in France, including Spire Global, an operator of a constellation of microsatellites which is in the process of revolutionising weather forecasts for everyone’s benefit.

What are your plans for the coming years?
Our priority is to work relentlessly to create two portfolios of companies with very high growth potential. To achieve that, we’re travelling around the world and studying thousands of companies. Like start-ups, we take the time to present our vision to investors who are interested in the digital revolution, process disrupting all industries and services, creating seismic shifts. We give them the opportunity to build up diversified and balanced investments in companies with very high potential but which appear inaccessible.

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/alainrodermann
www.exponcapital.com
Can you give some examples of projects?
The “Trop’Portunity” fund seems quite representative as it relates to a sector we know particularly well, real estate. Having said that, we have supported many clients all over the world on Private Equity matters with, for example, an underlying in yachts, logistics centres, wind farms or e-commerce. The strict definition of Private Equity, “investment activities in non-listed companies”, means we can apply our financial expertise to virtually any assets, which ultimately helps companies to expand and/or change, energising the market in which they operate.

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/adrienrolle
www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/finimmo
After recording sales of more than 50 million dollars over the first 9 months of 2013, why is Wix not yet profitable?

A break-even point was reached in some quarters, but this isn’t the main focus. We must bear in mind the many competitors, such as GoDaddy, operating around the world. It was the same with Skype: they were not the only people developing Voice over IP in the early days. For a long time, the priority for Wix was growth and winning market share. Today, the ability to precisely anticipate the costs of acquiring new customers is allowing Wix’s managers to increase their marketing expenditure in a controlled manner to save time. In particular, as customers stay for an average of several years. If the CEO Avishai Abrahami wanted to return to a break-even situation, he could achieve this very quickly, but this would have consequences in terms of future growth! Financial analysts estimate that the funds raised on the stock market will enable Wix to double its turnover within the next 18 months.

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/hansjurgenschmitz
www.mangrove.vc

After recording sales of more than 50 million dollars over the first 9 months of 2013, why is Wix not yet profitable?

How did the Wix story start for Mangrove?

In 2007, we began to explore the Israeli market. As a result of this investigation, we were approached by a seed financer who told us about Wix and asked for our opinion. Mangrove immediately purchased 3% of the company, before going on, 9 months later, to launch a financing round of 3 million dollars to help the start-up company move up to the next gear. This is completely in line with our philosophy, which is based on “getting a feel for” the company we are investing in, while aiming to acquire between 20 and 30% of the capital. At the time, the team in Tel Aviv had barely twenty members and the product was still in the test phase. However, the company’s three managers convinced us from the very start: these hard-working pioneers focused on innovating and on the precise statistic of the number of new customers acquired. They also had a broad vision of a platform offering unrivalled ease of use and encompassing different aspects of website management: creation, hosting, ranking, e-commerce, etc.

What were the key milestones in this project up until the listing on the Nasdaq?

There were two main question marks. First, back in 2011, we received a bid of 400 million dollars for Wix. We were tempted to take this “exit” on behalf of our investors, but we believed in the company’s potential and turned the offer down. Time has now proved us right. Following an investment of 10 million $, our share is now valued at $200 million. Secondly, in the beginning Wix used flash to display its customers’ websites. In 2012, prompted by the success of the iPhone and iPad, the company’s managers decided to recode everything in HTML 5, a language compatible with all terminals: computers, iPhone, tablets, etc. This could have caused delays, a slowdown in commercial development or the appearance of new competitors, but none of these things actually happened. Quite the reverse, the arrival of HTML 5 at Wix accelerated the arrival of new customers.
INVESTING IN PEOPLE AND VISION

DESPITE THE BUZZ AROUND THE FINTECH SECTOR, MARK TLUSZCZ BELIEVES THE NEXT BIG BREAKTHROUGH IN THE FINANCIAL SECTOR IS LIKELY TO COME FROM ESTABLISHED AND CASH-RICH GROUPS SUCH AS FACEBOOK AND GOOGLE. THE MANGROVE CAPITAL PARTNERS CEO SAYS THE FIRM’S INVESTMENT IN WEBSITE BUILDER WIX, NOW A $3BN COMPANY, REFLECTS ITS TRUST-BASED APPROACH TO VENTURE CAPITAL INVESTMENT.

How would you describe the relationship between the financial industry and fintech?

Like other industries, the financial sector has been compelled to reinvent itself. Over the past 10 years, we have witnessed a gradual digital transition. However, it is an industry that does not like change, since innovation implies reduced profit margins. For the past half-century, the sector has been characterised by mediocre service and high margins. Fintech offers great opportunities for consumers in terms of access to services and user-friendliness, but it is still not easily embraced by financial players.

What breakthroughs over the past two decades have been most important to the sector?

There have been two critical innovations: the arrival 20 years ago of PayPal (now valued at $70 billion), which took advantage of the phobia about using credit cards online, and internet banking, launched by banks themselves. There has been no other leap forward since. From an investment perspective, Mangrove is not putting money into fintech because we believe the next breakthrough will come from established firms such as Facebook and Google with the financial strength and branding to develop innovative products. In China, for example, e-commerce giant Alibaba and online service provider Tencent are leveraging their scale and vast consumer base to lead the fintech revolution. That’s why I’m not very optimistic about fintech as an investment choice.

What are Luxembourg’s advantages as a centre for private equity and venture capital?

The value provided by private equity and venture capital in the global business development process is undeniable. The sector’s growth reflects its ability to capitalise on banks’ conservative risk management strategies and its readiness to enter new market segments. As professionals, our aim is to develop businesses, but in a human and thoughtful way – investments aren’t driven just by spreadsheets and projections. We base our decisions on trust and belief in the attitudes and vision of the people we invest in. It’s more of an art than a science and involves a certain degree of risk. With favourable legislation, political support and established financial expertise, Luxembourg is set to remain a centre for private equity and venture capital in the years to come. At macro level, the grand duchy pursues dazzling ambitions with sensible but groundbreaking policies focused on both short and long term. The support by the government for fintech offers a foundation to help start-ups, while the space mining legal framework is fresh testimony to Luxembourg’s determination to pave the way for growth and foster a forward-looking economic environment.

Of which investment are you most proud?

Skype was a great investment, but our involvement with Wix is a very good illustration of our investment approach – getting in early and supporting the team through thick and thin. In 2011, we received an offer to sell for $400 million. I advised Wix CEO Avishai Abrahami against selling, arguing that the potential of the platform had not yet been tapped. We eventually decided not to accept the offer, but Avishai insisted on one condition, that I should be chairman for five years once we had gone public. Now I hold that role, and Wix is valued at more than $3 billion. Considering our initial investment was $8 million, I consider this venture one of our biggest success stories – as well as an eye-opening experience.

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/marktlszc
www.mangrove.vc
PRIVATE EQUITY AT THE HEART OF THE ECONOMY


How would you assess the LPEA’s performance since it was founded?
When it was founded in 2010, the LPEA had about 20 members. Since then, Luxembourg has become the European hub for private equity. This established the association’s international credibility. The expertise of our committees has enabled us to fulfil our threefold mission: to represent, promote and protect the activities of our 140 current members. Our strategy is focused on two levels:
1. At a national level, we show the Luxembourg political world the opportunities which this sector offers. We suggest tools and solutions to be implemented on the legislative side to ensure that Luxembourg is competitive and welcomes industry players. Our constructive proposals have made it possible to improve the existing legislative, regulatory and fiscal framework regarding the competitiveness of the financial market.
2. At an international level, we’ve promoted the Luxembourg industry in major financial cities including London, Zurich, Munich, Paris, Stockholm and New York. This has led to the creation of a number of reports on the subject. This intense promotion has paid off: private equity is currently the country’s most flourishing industry. Each year, a growing number of players open offices here. Moreover, it’s a very positive industry because it invests 100% in the economy. Lastly, we’ve also invested in training through our collaboration with the House of Training and the University.

What are the prospects for the “private equity - venture capital” sector in Luxembourg today?
They are excellent. Brexit has created unbearable uncertainty for players in the UK, a country in which a considerable part of the European private equity industry has been concentrated until recently. Luxembourg offers stability and favourable regulation. This allows industry professionals, who are making decisions for 10-year funds, to focus on developing their business. A recent article in the Financial Times highlighted these different aspects. The article recognised our work and had a very positive impact as this newspaper has an influential effect in our industry, especially when it quotes references within the sector such as Carlyle and Blackstone. News about large private equity groups opening offices in the country and the development of existing groups are sure to follow. At the same time, our competitors aren’t resting on their laurels: we must continue to act.

You are organising the first LPEA Insight conference in April. Why?
Surprisingly, our industry is more visible abroad than in Luxembourg. The aim of the “LPEA INSIGHTS - 360 GP VIEW” conference is to demonstrate that the LPEA is a major player within the sector, by inviting family offices, wealth managers and private bankers to our event and to understand our investment strategies. Since the 2008 recession, Luxembourg’s private banking sector has evolved towards high-end asset management, in which private equity plays an increasingly significant role. It is important to make the link.

What are the expectations of members and individuals who contact the LPEA?
Expectations differ, depending on the members’ profiles. “GPs” - General Partners - ask us to defend their interests at national and European levels. They express their concerns about regulatory, legal and tax issues and are actively involved in improving the sector. Meanwhile, service providers seek to participate in the development of the sector through specialist committees, to develop their network, to find out more information and to promote their company. They also want to be involved in the evolution of a growing industry in Luxembourg.

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/jeromewittamer
www.lpea.lu
THE TREASURY MARKET FAILURE

THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY HAS GIVEN MORE BUDGETARY SPACE FOR FINANCIAL INNOVATION INITIATIVES WHICH IS GREATLY CHANGING THE PROFILES SOUGHT AFTER ON THE JOB MARKET. INDEED, THE AUTOMATION OF LOW ADDED-VALUE TASKS IS CREATING NEEDS FOR MORE SOFT & TECHNICAL SKILLS, AND THIS IS FOR THE BEST FOR FINANCE PROFESSIONALS.

Of course, some roles will be made redundant due to this huge transformation, but we should not be afraid of new technologies as these will support us in bringing more value to our businesses, and to our daily work as well, making it more exciting and rewarding. The challenge in this huge industrial move is to prepare ourselves with new skills. You’ll soon see new colleagues named RPA (Robotic Process Automation), blockchain, big data analytics with the support of AI (Artificial Intelligence), VAM (Virtual Account Management), Swift GPI. It’s not the first time in history that we see such industrial change where humans have to adapt their skills and aptitude to find their way in a new working environment in order to stay alive. Change is not only something nice, it’s something we have to integrate into our DNA because it is unavoidable. We keep saying treasurers are heading towards a more strategic role; well, this is exactly how we’ll be able to free up some time to be spent on creating real value to our internal customers. Without robotization & automation, how can we possibly achieve this? What if we rejected this idea and decided that it was a threat for our own jobs? Would we remain competitive compared to other countries? Would we keep our jobs? Certainly not.

To that regard, the financial sector, especially in treasury, is reaching a point of market failure, at least in Luxembourg, where the supply of skilled workforce does not follow the increasing demand coming from Corporates who are looking to implement and/or develop their treasury centers. This is the reason why (constant) training is a must if you wish to survive, professionally. As a Treasury Association, we have a natural obligation to help Corporates attract and retain their future treasury ‘superstars’ over time, which is far from being an easy task. No matter what the level of difficulty can be, it is key for the sustainability of the function as we cannot stay in this overheating situation where wage costs never stop increasing due to the lack of skilled workforce supply. These overhead costs are putting pressure on the companies’ earnings as they have to replicate this on their sales price in order to secure a decent margin, which as a result is jeopardizing their competitiveness, hence the stability of Luxembourg as a preferred location for implementing a financial/treasury center. If you work as a treasury professional in Luxembourg, you should be concerned about this. Today, we’re in a typical situation where employees only see the short-term benefits of this (short-term) situation, while their career is in front of an absolute risk either because they don’t see the urge of being up-to-date and trained regularly, or because their attractiveness (and their price) is solely based on a scarce resource situation which Corporates could easily overcome by implementing their treasury department somewhere else.

ATEL has been physically meeting with students looking for a financial career and introducing them to treasury, in view of transferring some of our passion for the function and attract them to Luxembourg. In parallel, ATEL has initiated its first treasury cursus which started in February 2019 in cooperation with the House of Training of Luxembourg, which covers cash & liquidity management, trade finance, credit control, advance excel for finance professionals, pension, insurance, risk management, compliance... a challenging program for those willing to perfect their knowledge into treasury and bring value to work the next day. In addition, ATEL has privileged contacts and partnerships with recruitment companies and professional mentors in order to help both the offer and demand to gain in visibility.

Treasury has always been a difficult function to staff properly. This is because it requires highly skilled labor, now more than ever, and this is a limiting factor. For that reason, strong and immediate actions have to be taken to alleviate the shortage. More to come in 2019!
DAMIEN DEGROS, HEAD OF WHOLESALE BANKING AND MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AT ING EXPLAINS HOW THE BANK IS DEVELOPING "BRIDGE FINANCING" FOR FUNDS, A FACILITY THAT BRIDGES THE TIME BETWEEN INVESTING IN THE FUND AND RECEIVING THE PROCEEDS FROM CAPITAL CALLS.

Can you briefly describe ING’s funds activity?

ING has a dual role: like other banks we are part of an international banking group in Luxembourg, but while our competitors only serve the local market, we combine local and international activities to meet the needs of Luxembourg’s fund management industry. To do so, we have developed a franchise for the financial industry and PE/RE funds. We started more than ten years ago mainly with cash management and payment flows. As our clients increased their presence in Luxembourg, there was a business case for ING to insource parts of their activities. We did that for instance with forex transactions: if you manage payments, sometimes you have to manage currency exchange. So, based on the services provided by our local dealing room, we started offering favorable FX rates to our clients. In the same context, we have developed a dedicated approach for PE/RE funds on Custody and Depositary services based on our expertise in securities services.

How is ING helping PR/RE funds meet short-term financing needs?

We have extensive activities linked to PE/RE funds. Seven years ago, we saw clients decide to establish new securities-based activities in Luxembourg, so it was important for us to provide the services they expected. More recently, based on requests from clients who asked whether we could offer bridge financing solutions in Luxembourg, we called on the expertise of colleagues in London to help us develop and offer the service directly out of our Luxembourg office. We sent staff from our department to join the ING team in London for six months to gain the necessary knowledge and expertise. The new activity grew much faster than anticipated. PE/RE funds start their business committing to a certain fund size, but there is a lapse of time until the investors’ money is received. During the structuring phase, the borrowing base is constructed by analyzing the credit quality of the underlying investors and assigning relevant advance rates and concentration limits. The facilities are used to make investments in underlying assets whereby speed of execution, administrative ease or IRR enhancements are reasons to borrow rather than call down capital from investors. The client gains flexibility and efficiency in terms of cash management. It allows the fund manager to better predict future fund cash flows.

How do you adapt your business model to your clients’ needs?

At ING, wholesale banking serves two types of client. The first is the industrial sector composed of local SMEs and international corporates. The second is the financial industry composed of Private Equity actors, Real Estate Investors, alternative funds, banks and insurance companies. Our department is unique in Luxembourg mixing both clients within the same organization. We can successfully "copy and paste" ideas from one client to another. For example, in cash management there are simple and sophisticated solutions designed for international corporates that we have successfully adapted to the financial industry. Another example is the securities custody business, familiar activity to both insurance companies and funds. It is now considered by some treasury centers in charge of the management of shareholdings for international corporates. In this case we can also transfer our experience from the insurance and funds sector onto international corporates and treasury centers. We see this cross-sell between departments as our "cross-fertilization."
Could you describe Simply Treasury in brief?
Simply Treasury is more than just a treasury and an ERM (Enterprise Risk Management) consulting firm for companies, financial institutions, alternative investment funds and FinTech’s – it is also a concept. Simply Treasury is a “thought leader” which aims to promote trends and best practices in treasury. Its objective is to promote treasury management in Luxembourg and to share new techniques and technologies with the financial community, not only with companies but also with other kinds of organisations which manage treasury, often in a less sophisticated way than multinational companies.

What challenges and opportunities do you identify in treasury in the next 5 years?
Treasury faces a wide range of challenges so I’ll mention some of the main issues. Firstly, treasurers are facing major technological challenges with innovative products (including RPA, robotics and, potentially, artificial intelligence), less expensive alternatives offered by FinTech’s, solutions which break with traditional practices; treasurers will have to integrate these elements into the various IT tools which are already in place. Treasury departments use the most IT tools of all the company’s financial departments. The right solutions must be carefully chosen, integrated and interfaced to increase productivity, something which is required of treasurers. Doing more with less requires technology and the good news is that the technology is there and accessible. Treasury is transforming itself into a “fully digital” treasury. The second challenge lies in compliance with new regulations, which are finally slowing down, fortunately! The economic context is also an issue. For example, how can income be generated from excess liquidity when interest rates are negative and will continue to be so for a very long? Counterparty, political, compliance and other risks are relatively new and, in any case, are more intense than before. Treasurers also have to comply with constraints such as KYC/AML rules, which often impose very significant manual work. Market volatility, globalisation and the stronger correlation between markets make daily management more complex. Lastly, the hunt for talent and new skills is key to success in a world in which the scope of activities has greatly expanded and simultaneously become more complex. This role requires ever more diversified skills, which makes it both appealing and challenging. Simply Treasury is there to help with this digital transformation and to establish the right strategies.

How do you help companies to meet these challenges?
Simply Treasury tries to help companies to decide on their objectives, to determine their roadmaps for the next few years and to implement the techniques, products and innovative solutions which will help them to adapt to the numerous challenges they face. But it also tries to roll out these “best practices” to other financial organisations, including alternative funds, for example, which need them to improve their efficiency and productivity in this area. Simply Treasury also helps financial start-ups to develop an offer which is better tailored to the needs of companies, to promote products and to offer innovative communication strategies to make their solutions known. Despite these many activities, I remain more active than ever as president of ATEL and vice-president of the European Treasurers’ Association.

www.duke.lu/simplytreasury
www.simplytreasury.com
SUCCESSFUL WOMEN IN FINANCE - TIPS & TRICKS

RAPHAELAA COVA DE LIMA, TREASURY DIRECTOR - EMEA - KOCH INDUSTRIES, CORALIE BILLMANN, HEAD OF PAYPAL EUROPE TREASURY AND INVESTMENTS AND WINKIE CHOI - HEAD OF AMAZON EMEA TREASURY ARE THREE WOMEN AT THE TOP OF THE TREASURY GAME. THEY SHARE THEIR JOURNEYS TO OFFER ADVICE TO ASPIRING FEMALE TREASURERS.

Can you offer insights from your career journey to treasury?

After working as a fund manager in London and Paris, Coralie began her treasury career in Luxembourg. She enjoys treasury because not a single day is the same as the previous one. “It is not only buying or selling bonds, it’s also structuring a balance sheet and enabling businesses to grow.” Winkie started as an engineering manager before developing a call center for India. Moving to PayPal in California she set up an FX netting operation for them in Singapore. Raphaela has never been afraid of taking on a new challenge like implementing new banking structures or complex financial products in a different country.

What insights have you gained from your varied locations and roles?

Winkie’s comfort zone is challenged when she leaves a company: “Even with a different role within the organization, you’re still within your comfort zone. Once you move to another company, you have to start from scratch: learning the job, building new relationships and learning the corporate culture and politics.” Raphaela says she will keep embracing new relocation opportunities: “I like seeing different environments. It’s a challenge and I enjoy it.” Coralie rates the skills and experience gained from doing different things. She advises, “Go beyond the box. Don’t hesitate to volunteer, even if it’s not treasury specific. Every day treasurers touch different aspects of the business, so we can go always above and beyond what is expected from pure treasury responsibilities.”

What are your tips for the next generation of female leaders?

Raphaela believes it’s important to enjoy what you do. Coralie and Winkie go a step further suggesting a job should be “fun.” Raphaela adds, “I think it’s very important to be resilient, proactive and inquisitive. Winkie agrees about the need for curiosity: ‘Always try to find out more, deep dive; don’t mind getting your hands dirty. You want to know more detail because that is what drives invention and simplification.’ Winkie’s recipe is to be interested enough for your job to be the thing that drives you to wake up every day. Coralie says her mentor told her to keep her enthusiasm, and when you lose it, it’s time to go.
JEAN ELIA

DIGITAL INNOVATION AT THE CENTRE OF THE MANAGERIAL MINDSET

CEO JEAN ELIA SAYS SOGELIFE, ALREADY A LEADING PLAYER ON THE LUXEMBOURG MARKET, IS DEMONSTRATING ITS AGILITY TO THRIVE IN A FAST-CHANGING ENVIRONMENT, INCLUDING ITS EMBRACE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY.

What is SOGELIFE’s background in Luxembourg?
Established in the grand duchy in 1996 in the Grand Duchy, SOGELIFE is a life insurance company, subsidiary of Societe Generale Group that offers products and solutions to international high net worth clients. SOGELIFE has experienced a strong growth, particularly over the past six years, and now is among the biggest players on the Luxembourg market. In addition to Luxembourg, we mainly operate under the Freedom to Provide Services principle within the European Union, with a focus on France, Belgium and Italy as well as the UK and the Czech Republic. We work on an open architecture basis with a large network of partners including major European private banks, asset managers, custodian banks, family offices and insurance brokers. Our wide range of life insurance products enable clients to invest in external funds, internal collective funds, internal dedicated funds and specialised insurance funds. In a nutshell, SOGELIFE provides a comprehensive life insurance framework that incorporates clients’ entire wealth management value chain.

What is SOGELIFE’s competitive edge?
I can cite a few! Nevertheless, our main competitive advantage remains our agility. The latter enables us not only to adapt rapidly to a continuously changing environment but also to be proactive, anticipate changes and sustain our advantages. In an environment of low interest rates, volatile financial markets, ongoing and costly regulatory changes, plus digital transformation that is disrupting all businesses, we endeavour to exploit the opportunities that lie within. I know this sounds a bit cliché but we can point to many projects realised over the last years are obvious examples of our agility, such as the transformation of a large part of our business and product mix from the Euro Fund to Unit-Linked assets and the launch of the Specialised Insurance Fund or FAS in French. This is a particularity of the Luxembourg insurance regulation allowing clients to manage their investments directly, and it seems that SOGELIFE’s FAS solution is one of the “most elaborate” in the market according to our partners.

What is SOGELIFE’s main focus for developing its business?
There are many important aspects, but the key focus is on digital technology. Again, far from being a slogan, digital transformation and innovation are becoming an essential part of our managerial mindset. We have already put in place numerous projects and initiatives in this respect. For example, we launched a B2B portal that was deemed “a truly satisfactory overall journey” by most of our partners. It is a responsive design tool that enables them to manage their entire policy portfolio, in real time and comfortable navigation. We will be announcing many other projects which we trust will enable the enrichment of our partners’ and customers’ experience.

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/jeanelia
www.sogelife.com
LOW RATES, RICH ASSETS

FOR CHRISTIAN GIBOT, CEO OF CARDIF LUX VIE, LIFE INSURANCE IN LUXEMBOURG REMAINS A HUGELY INTERESTING OPTION IN TODAY’S COMPLICATED ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT. IT WILL BE PARTICULARLY APPROPRIATE IN THE YEARS TO COME GIVEN THE CURRENT ENVIRONMENT OF PERSISTENTLY LOW INTEREST RATES DRIVING DEMAND FOR MORE SOPHISTICATED INVESTMENT OPTIONS.

How is life insurance changing?
The on-going environment of sustained low interest rates is changing the investment industry completely. Traditionally, life insurance was often based on guaranteed returns and a logic of capital being available at all times. However, the current context requires us to turn to riskier investments as part of a strategy that will achieve good returns. Increasingly sophisticated assets must be embedded in our products. Luxembourg life insurance provides the ideal framework to manage this evolution. Other key trends affecting the industry include digitalization, which is improving customer experience, as well as how sustainability considerations are transforming investment choices. When once these were latent niche concerns, they have now become indispensable to the nature and quality of the service provided.

What are the priorities regarding this development?
Above all, our services must be managed to the highest quality standards. Secondly, thanks to our expertise, we are able to develop cutting-edge, innovative products. Customers are looking for new investment options to satisfy their demand for healthy returns, and we must support them by adapting our offering to their investor profile and their needs. Digitalization is also vital, both at the time clients are on-boarded with us, and during the on-going relationship phases. Service quality depends heavily on this. Finally, long-term investors are looking to give meaning to their actions. Hence our responsible commitment program “My Impact”, which has been aligned with recent changes in investors’ outlooks, which supports our strategy and guides our employees’ work. Responsible investment is an important part of this program. We have €28 billion in assets under management, of which we manage approximately €9 billion in our General Fund. Finally, in these times of social distancing, we are committed to re-thinking the links that connect us. In particular, this involves managing teleworking to ensure a continued collective dynamic. Working from home will therefore certainly become widespread after the health crisis.

What risks and opportunities do you see for the medium and long term?
Margins in our industry remain low while the cost of ever-increasing, wide ranging regulation could harm both our competitiveness and our ability to innovate. It is important to remain attentive to this trend, as it threatens to limit the number of players on the market, while reducing investment capacity. The second major challenge is to preserve the Free Provision of Services (FPS) rules under which we operate. We saw during the first phase of the coronavirus crisis how Schengen Area rules were challenged. We must ensure that the unimpeded circulation of goods, capital and people should not be called into question. Our role as an insurer and as a major financial player gives us major social responsibilities, and this will be central to our strategic planning. Finally, the challenge of persistently low interest rates requires us to be creative and innovative, while at the same time giving us the chance to develop valuable products that meet demand. If we manage to protect ourselves from these risks and include them in our offering, this will open up substantial opportunities.

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/cardif
www.cardifluxvie.com
GUARANTEED INDEPENDENCE AND GROWTH

GATSBY AND WHITE TAKES OVER THE CARDIF LUX VIE AGENCY PORTFOLIO FROM DEUTSCHE BANK LUXEMBOURG. AN INTERVIEW WITH OLIVIER KRAMER, MANAGING PARTNER.

Can you tell us about Gatsby & White in a few words?
Gatsby & White is an independent company with five shareholders. Founded in 2013, it is the leader in the life assurance brokerage market in Luxembourg. Our 25-person strong team manages nearly 3 billion euros of assets. We are physically present in four countries: Luxembourg - our headquarters - with the dual roles of Broker and Agents, Belgium, Switzerland, in Geneva and Zurich, and Liechtenstein. From these four financial centres, we offer our services to banks, private bankers, management companies, family offices and even lawyers acting for clients all over Europe and beyond. They approach us by detailing the needs and characteristics of their clients and - in our capacity as broker or agent - we offer the most appropriate solution, completely independently and transparently. Our “raison d’être” lies in our legal responsibility to find the right solutions for our client and support them throughout the process in an exercise that we call, the suitability assessment. We play an essential role as an interface between the insurer and the policyholder. As a leading insurance brokerage player in Luxembourg, this is a long-term mission.

You have recently taken over the Cardif Lux Vie agency portfolio from Deutsche Bank Luxembourg. Why?
In view of the new European legislative framework, the IDD (Insurance Distribution Directive), Deutsche Bank Luxembourg decided to dispose of the agent liability it held in this portfolio. One of the reasons why Gatsby & White obtained this portfolio is undoubtedly thanks to he unique spectrum of expertise of our staff. Under one roof, we have a German team and an high number of market skills for a brokerage company. The IDD advocates greater transparency and the establishment of a level playing field. These measures are designed to protect and defend the interests of the end consumer, guaranteeing them, regardless of the entry mechanism to the insurer and the distribution channel - specialist broker or network - the solution that is most appropriate to their needs, at the best price and with the right advice. Investor protection plays a particularly important role in a country like Luxembourg which has a significant reputation for life insurance well beyond its borders, in Europe and in the bespoke, high-end sector. The extremely solid framework in Luxembourg requires insurers to prove absolute separation between the assets belonging to their firm and those held in their client portfolios. The policy is still subject to fluctuations in the financial markets, according to the type of investments made, but the policyholder is protected against bankruptcy or default by their insurance company. In other words, each client is a first-ranked creditor of the assets that represent the value of their policy.

Do you think this transaction will set a trend?
We hope it will and it is something we are seeing more frequently. We are moving towards a specialisation of roles and an increased sharing of responsibilities. I expect further transactions of this kind in the European Union, and I have noticed a growing demand in Switzerland, where Luxembourg insurance solutions are currently very widespread. Many managers who have invested heavily in insurance clients must now ensure they maintain these policies, which will require an even greater, more specialised infrastructure. Acquisitions by specialists such as Gatsby & White, will ensure they maintain compliance in the long-term. We take on financial and legal obligations as well as administrative tasks, developing and monitoring clients’ needs and ensuring the portability of the policy.
THE ASSURANCE OF SUCCESSFUL INNOVATION

FOLLOWING CURRENT TRENDS, THE INSURANCE SECTOR AND THE FOYER GROUP ARE IMPLEMENTING THEIR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION. AN INTERVIEW WITH MARC LAUER, CEO OF FOYER GROUP.

What does innovation mean for an insurer?
We must reinvent the relationship between Foyer and its customers. Innovation means making a daily effort to change habits and look to the future. It comes in different forms: creating an online customer area that develops along with technological progress, taking customers’ opinions on our services into consideration via questionnaires, and providing modern, functional tools. The fact that our customers can send their health reimbursement requests via mobile phone, or that we can film a claim via video conference with the loss assessor creates high added-value for our customers, and therefore for Foyer. The company is also working more closely together internally. Our agility means we can react rapidly to a constantly changing environment. In the past, the boss knew everything and the employees did what they were told. These days, the move is towards a participative company, in which each team has its own responsibility. Among other things, this led to the creation of a collaborative Innovation Hub where our employees can become involved in change and take part in numerous innovative activities, such as brown bag sessions or hackathons.

How do you put this innovation into practice?
Our “ELAN” programme, launched in 2015, helped us recognise everyone’s potential. Through this programme, employees suggest ways to improve their working processes and therefore the quality of our customer service, focusing on continuous improvement. The potential for innovation is huge: it does not stem from fundamental research, but from a succession of everyday improvements. We also seek to demystify mistakes, as they are part of the learning process. Finally, the heads of department work closely with other teams. This necessarily results in a cross-departmental approach, showing that problems do not exist in only one department, but often concern the whole of the Foyer Group. The members of the Executive Committee, including myself, regularly take part in operational department meetings outside our own department, to give us a better understanding of the issues affecting the whole company. Leading by example is essential.

Has innovation changed everyday life for you personally?
Yes, definitely! The era of the CEO as captain of the ship, alone at the top of the tower, seems to be a thing of the past. Today, he manages a fleet of small sailing vessels in which everyone knows how to hoist the sails or save someone who’s fallen overboard. Based on this vision, we also decided not to create a post of Chief Innovation Officer. Instead, we have an Innovation Coordination Officer who gathers ideas, but everyone must be involved, as innovation is a joint mission. Finally, our presence in the innovation ecosystem appears to be crucial. Currently the sole insurance partner at the LHoFT, our positioning as an innovation guinea pig is atypical - we don’t want to invest in start-ups, we prefer to test their products or ideas, offering two possible outcomes: either we become their first customer if their product fits our strategy and gives us added value, or we offer them detailed feedback to help them develop. It’s a win-win situation.

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www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/marcclauer
www.foyer.lu
Catherine Lesourd

Newcomers and Internationalization

Catherine Lesourd starts a two-year mandate as President of APCAL. In this article, she lays out the objectives of her presidency and the opportunities that lies ahead for APCAL and its members.

Can you present APCAL in a few words?
The professional association of insurance brokers of Luxembourg (APCAL) is the only professional insurance brokerage association of Luxembourg created in 2012. We gather more than 80 brokers both life and non-life who represent the large majority of the active players. The association focuses on its three main missions which are the representation, the trainings and the promotion and defense of all its members and more broadly of the brokerage sector in Luxembourg. Training became with the strong regulation environment a key component of our mission. APCAL is committed to offering training and to invite its members and future members to specific conferences and training courses in order to best prepare them for the challenges of the profession, to facilitate access to the profession and enable them to comply with their obligations.

What are the main objectives of your mandate?
I have a mandate of 2 years during which I intend to continue and reinforce the strategy plan initiated during my predecessor’s mandate. This is a team work in which all the administrators are strongly involved. We definitely are willing to maintain a path of growth in order to provide to all our members the needed support in a more and more complex professional and legal environment. In this context we have reinforced our internal administrative team who strongly contribute to make our strategy plan a success. In 2021 we will focus our development on three axes. First, expending the training program, providing English sessions and creating an ended quiz in order to insure the quality of the e learning sessions. Second, reinforcing our technical committees to address specific issues and defend the interests of our profession including a strong legal and compliance hub run by Lorenzo Stipulante. And finally achieving our digital transformation.

What challenges and opportunities do you identify for the Luxembourg insurance sector in the next five years?
The insurance industry in Luxembourg is operating quite a few changes due to the challenges and opportunities this industry is currently and will have to face in the coming years. Challenges are multiple: Brexit, Regulations, Reduction of interest rates, Covid 19, potential economic downturn… Due to Brexit the landscape of the insurance industry is evolving gaining an international recognition not only in life insurance as it’s used to be but also henceforth in the non-life sector. The new actors that have chosen Luxembourg as their new European hub are indeed non-life insurers and brokers entailing a significant rise of written premium. In Luxembourg as in all European counties, the insurance industry will continue to face a regulatory wave that will continue to hit our sector the coming years as Solvency II, IFRS9 / 17, RGDP, LCB-FT, IDD, PRIIPS, DAC 6… and will compelled brokers and carriers to always reinforce their compliance procedures to enforce those new mandatory regulations. Those challenges combined with the inevitable digitalization transformation process increase pressure to maintain profitability. APCAL follows up all these changes and keeps its members informed, trained and prepared.

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/apcal
www.apcal.lu
STATE OF THE UNION

IN THIS 2017 INTERVIEW, MARC HENGEN, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE LUXEMBOURG INSURANCE AND REINSURANCE ASSOCIATION (ACA), SHARED HIS VIEWS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PRIIPs, HIS PREDICTIONS FOR THE INSURANCE MARKET IN 2017 AND THE INCREASING IMPACT OF DIGITALISATION ON INSURERS’ OPERATIONS.

What initiatives is ACA set to undertake in 2017?

2017 is going to be an important year to lay down the foundation work to prepare for the EU’s legislation on Packaged Retail and Insurance Based Investment Products – PRIIPs – which will come into force on 1st January 2018. PRIIPs and Key Information Documents – KIDs – are designed to improve the quality and transparency of information provided to consumers by financial and insurance players. Our association will do what it takes to ensure an easy transition. In addition, ACA and Luxembourg for Finance will focus on promoting Luxembourg as a financial centre abroad by jointly organising two different events in Sweden and Milan. ACA will independently organise conferences in Geneva and Madrid.

How does ACA see today’s insurance market?

The Luxembourgish market is characterised by the fact that a significant proportion of its margins comes from non-residents. Our main target markets are located in France, Italy, Germany and Belgium. We therefore pay close attention to their evolution. The added value of Luxembourg’s insurance sector lies in life insurance and wealth management. In the latter sector, insurers are working on a single yearly premium basis. Their results vary from one year to another, but we feel positive about results in 2017. We believe that our members’ specialisation and competencies will further optimise their operations. Furthermore, general economic indicators have been positive for the Grand Duchy in 2016 and we hope that the situation will continue to improve in 2017.

What impact are new technologies having on ACA and their members?

For ACA, the growing influence of the digitalisation process can be observed in two major areas. Firstly, we’re currently moving towards systems which provide 24/7 insurer-client services. Information on coverage and assets is now nearly instantaneous, but the provision of those services involves transition costs which need to be integrated in our operations. In addition to this, the digitalisation process also involves a restructuring of administrative procedures within firms. Efficient client servicing therefore has clear competitive and strategic undertones for insurers. A further impact will be felt in the car insurance sector with the arrival of autonomous driving cars on the market. They have been proved to reduce the risk of accidents considerably. Insurers will have to adapt to this accordingly.

www.decisionmakersluxembourg.com/marchengen
www.aca.lu
CEOs’ favourite addresses

EATING

UPSCALE
Bouquet garni: www.lebouquetgarni.lu
Clairefontaine: www.restaurantclairefontaine.lu
De jangeli: www.dejangeli.lu
La maison lefèvre: www.lamaisonlefvre.lu
Le Windsor: www.windsor.lu
Léa Linster: www.lealinster.lu
Ma langue sourit: www.mls.lu
Mosconi: www.mosconi.lu
Restaurant Le Sud: www.le-sud.lu

CASUAL
Bick Stuff: www.bickstuff.lu
Brasserie k118: www.k118.lu
Brasserie Mansfeld: www.mansfeld.lu
Brasserie Schuman: www.brasserieschuman.pro
Boos K Fé: www.boos.lu
House 17: www.house17.com
Ikki: www.ikki.lu
La Bergamote: www.labergamote.lu
Tempo: www.tempobaroumanger.lu
Um Plateau: www.umplateau.lu

SPECIALITIES
Burger: Le Booster’s
www.booster.lu

Indian: Maharaja
Tel: (+352) 24 17 45
Sushi: Yamayu Santatsu
Tel: (+352) 46 12 49

CIGAR
La tabatière: www.latabatiere.lu

LEASURE

CASTLES
Beaufort: 24 Rue du Château, L-6310 Beaufort
Bourglinster: 8 rue du Château, L-6162 Bourglinster
Clervaux: Am Schlase, L-9774 Urselt
Vallée des sept châteaux: Leesbach, L-8363 Septfontaines

Larochette: 4 rue de Medernach, L-7619 Larochette

CULTURE
Mudam: 3 Park Drai Eechelen 1499, Luxembourg
www.andyaluuxembourg.com/mudam
Philharmonie: Place de l’Europe L-1499, Luxembourg
Casemates: 30, place Guillaume II, Luxembourg
Palais Grand ducal: 17 Rue du marché-aux-Herbes, Luxembourg

PARTY
Rives de Clausen: www.andyaluuxembourg.com/rivesdeclausen
White House: www.white.lu
GET THINGS DONE

FUN, FAST, FAIR PRICES

360Group combines a communications agency specialising in “Design Sprints”, an innovative training centre and a technology department, which has developed the www.360Box.fr

www.the-360group.com