

“Independent Success”

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**Translation of the german interview
of the E-3 magazine with Timo
Burkard (Managing Director, PIKON
UK Limited), John Frijns (board of
management, PIKON Belgium N.V.)
and Jochen Scheibler (board of
management, PIKON Deutschland
AG)**

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E-3: Mr.Burkard, in the face of such bleak expectations, aren't you showing a great deal of confidence in opening a firm?

Timo Burkard: As a matter of fact, we do have confidence. Even and especially in such economically challenging times as these, companies have a need for information systems which optimally support them. We firmly believe that, also in the United Kingdom, we will be able to enthrall customers with our performance.

E-3: What concrete expectations do you have for the forthcoming year?

Timo Burkard: The following year will mainly be characterised by an expansion of our UK market. We plan to build up and extend our existing customer contacts. Thus, we will grow with our customers and projects. We are planning new recruitments for 2009. But, first and foremost, there are some running projects in Great Britain that will keep us busy in 2009. Additionally, we will be targeting selected companies.

E-3: Are you going to start the market development alone?

Timo Burkard: For the initial preparation and set up I was able to rely on the support, and especially the experience, of my colleagues from Belgium and Germany. Now I am delighted that we have backing in England, as scheduled.

Jochen Scheibler: It is especially important at the beginning to employ the right people. In order to build up a new company, we need dedicated people with ideas who make progress fast and who can and want to accept responsibility. We have got to know many people in the UK who meet our specific demands. We were even able to attract one of the applicants for PIKON UK to PIKON Deutschland AG.

E-3: Which specific characteristics does the English market display with regard to SAP consulting, and how do you plan to align yourselves to these?

Timo Burkard: Apart from the mandatory talk about the weather ? (laugh) Seriously: PIKON International Consulting Group (PICG) and I personally have been able to gather several years experience in Great Britain. Overall, besides the large consulting companies, the market here is characterised by many more freelancers than in Germany. We see this as a big

opportunity for a company like PICG, which, because of its organisation and size, can combine flexibility and professionalism.

E-3: Why the UK, of all countries?

Timo Burkard: Further internationalisation is a part of PIKON's strategy. When we got the acceptance for several large SAP implementation projects in England, it was simply an opportunity that we had to seize. After discussing it with my partner, the decision was not difficult because, after previous stays and one year in Wales, I knew that I felt comfortable in Great Britain.

E-3: Mr. Scheibler, Mr. Frijns, what is the plan behind this pursuit of PIKON group's expansion?

Jochen Scheibler: PIKON International Consulting Group is an international consulting company. It is part of our strategy to further strengthen our international presence. We are doing this by establishing independently operating consultancies abroad, which are integrated into the same group strategy. Our customers benefit from quick decision routes within the particular consultancies. At the same time the consultancies are able to take advantage of the benefits of a strong group.

John Frijns: A running organisation grows and thereby opens up new prospects for customers, partners and employees. We have been working on projects in the UK and Ireland for a long time, and we work there for Henkel and Jungheinrich, amongst others. As the international style of the Anglo-Saxons is very similar to ours, we have long wanted to get a foot in the door in the UK. Timo Burkard was the right man at the right time for the job. He is cut from the same cloth as PIKON and can certainly anchor our foot in the door in the UK.

E-3: PIKON International Consulting Group is made up of four consultancies in four countries. How far are you intending to go with your expansion plans?

Jochen Scheibler: Since PIKON's establishment 12 years ago, we have grown organically. This is also the guideline for the future. At the moment there are no concrete plans for additional consultancies. For the time being we are investing our energy in supporting Timo Burkard and his team with the building up of the company in the UK. Afterwards, we will keep an eye on prospects in the different markets, and will pounce on the best

opportunity, wherever it arises. PIKON UK will not be the last consultancy of the group. However, success in the UK is a prerequisite for any further commitment.

E-3: Which requirements concerning international presence do your customers have?

John Frijns: In the present EU and world economy, people think less in national borders, but tend to constantly adapt according to market demands and potential. Trivia which can be a hindrance, like foreign languages, different work cultures or even large distances, have to be circumvented in order to make a profit from international investments. This demands flexible and competent specialists, who can align themselves to new situations without any adjustment problems, in order to coordinate processes within the group or adapt the accounting processes in line with international regulations.

E-3: Which business segments are you going to represent in the UK?

Timo Burkard: At the start, my personal expertise will be used to focus on ERP and Business Intelligent areas. It is also in these areas that we will be building up our local resources.

E-3: Are you planning to use mainly free-lancers for large projects in the British market, which is common practise, or do you prefer to appoint PIKON employees?

Timo Burkard: It always was and still is, PIKON's idea to assign mainly its own resources to projects. We also appoint selected partners where special expertise is required, but on the whole, for me, a well-trained team is the best way to look after our customers efficiently.

E-3: What projects are you busy on in the UK at the moment?

Timo Burkard: We are presently working together with colleagues from Germany and Belgium on a large SAP implementation project for four British locations belonging to one of our existing German customers.

E-3: PIKON International Consulting Group has been operating successfully as an SAP consulting company in an international environment for over 12 years. What are, according to your opinion, the success factors needed to survive in such an international environment?

John Frijns: Competence and commitment are, for me, two important characteristics needed to ensure that we stay ahead in the race. Our organisation and our people enjoy learning. We are good at what we do. Our customers' goals and problems are the goals and problems that we align ourselves with. It is a daily motivator for many PIKON employees, to make the crucial contribution to a project.

Jochen Scheibler: From my point of view, there are basically two factors: customers and colleagues. This may sound too general, but it is the crux of the matter. We are connected to our customers through a longterm partnership. We want to help the companies make use of the methodological and technological developments to improve their processes. We thereby present ourselves to our customers as innovation drivers. Regarding our employees, it is important to find people with the right capabilities and be able to offer them a chance to develop personally and professionally, through an excellent leadership conception. Colleagues are highly motivated when they reach their goals independently and receive credit therefore. We want to use this motivation to inspire our colleagues towards longterm prospects in PIKON. This is one of the reasons why PIKON is successful.

E-3: Thank You for this interview.