



PROI
WORLDWIDE



THE STORY OF THE PROI FAMILY



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FOREWORD



Allard W. van Veen LM, APR, FCPRS, FPRCA
Founding Partner, PROI Worldwide
Global Chairman (1982; 1989; 1990-93)
Managing Director (1994-2020)

When asked to write a short history of PROI Worldwide in order to bring *The Story of The PROI Family* to life, I realized that I would need to include references to my own experiences during, involvement in, and perceptions about, the early years of our Partnership and its evolution over the next five decades.

I am one of a few Partners whom Ellis Kopel, PROI's Founder, invited to join the global communications Partnership. My wife, Valerie, and I owned a rapidly growing group of integrated communications companies in Canada, founded in 1967. We appreciated the benefits of being able to add new, or continue to serve existing, clients in our market who, increasingly, required global support. The ability to do so, while maintaining our Agency's independence and with little overhead cost as marketing would remain the responsibility of each Partner Agency, was a simple, cost-effective, and elegant solution.

In my mid-twenties and the youngest Partner by far, I quickly made friends with the much older owners of Partner Agencies who often shared confidential information about their agencies including challenges they had faced and opportunities they had seized. The PROI Partnership became one of the most successful business and personal investment decisions my wife and I made.

In 1994, after stepping back from my Agency and after serving as PROI's Global Chairman on three occasions, I accepted the challenge to assume responsibility for developing and administering the partnership.

This overview provides insight into PROI Worldwide's formative years, 1970-1989, the winds of change which set the stage for a more competitive and larger PROI, 1990-1999, the years of growth, 2000-2009 and PROI's maturation as it prepared for the future, 2010-2020. By 2019 PROI Worldwide had become the largest global partnership of independent Agencies with US\$ One Billion in fee income derived from its operations from 165+ offices manned by 7,000+ staff employed by its 78 Agencies.

Whether you are an Agency owner or staff member, you can be proud of what we have built together over the last 50 Years.

THE FOUNDING OF PROI



Ellis Kopel
PROI's Founder +
First Global Chairman and First Managing Director (1970-1994)

Short in stature, Ellis, who escaped the Holocaust in 1939 and was proud of his Jewish heritage, was an avuncular man who often held strong opinions. He had a variety of jobs before getting his break as a journalist for magazines and local newspapers in the early 1950s. A Socialist, trade unionist and strongly committed to social justice, he founded the UK National Union of Journalists Press + PR Branch. He worked in England's House of Commons press gallery for five years before founding Ellis Kopel Public Relations in London in 1965.

PROI's Founder identified the need for an integrated communications strategy to position and promote the strength of a company in the marketplace. He wrote about this in *"Financial and Corporate Communications: The Integrated Approach"*, published by McGraw-Hill UK in 1982.

Ellis was supported by his wife Doris, PROI's Grand Dame who understood the important role spouses often play in the lives of entrepreneurs. She became instrumental in organizing social events and invited Partners' spouses (and their children) to attend social events organized around PROI meetings. She influenced the deep level of personal relationships and trust that developed between Partners and their spouses during PROI's first two decades. PROI became a Trusted Family, a notion that, even with PROI's significant growth, continues today.

Ellis Kopel, our first "Mr. Chairman" and Managing Director from 1970-1994, was a close friend and he left a deep and lasting impression on me. He died at age 77 in 2001.



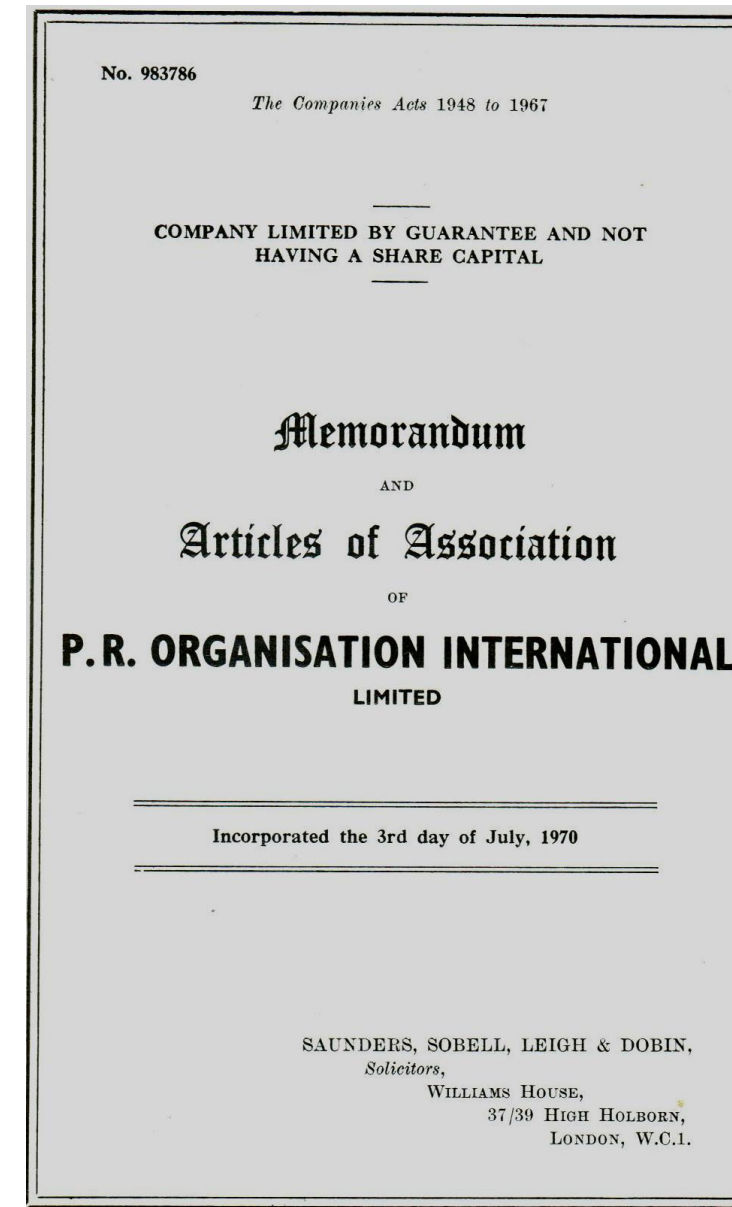
PROI Partners during the 1970-80s.

FRONT, L-R: Allard W. van Veen (Canada), Ernest van den Biggelaar (The Netherlands), Sten Lagerman (Sweden), Ellis Kopel (UK).
 BACK, L-R: Inger Lagerman (Sweden), Peter Evers (UK), Patrick Morley (Australia), Staff Member, John Hasagawa (Japan),
 Pierre Jegu (France), and Karl Schneider (Switzerland).

PROI's Rules for Success

The original owner partners agreed to the following "Founding Rules" which have underpinned PROI's success when competing networks have often failed. ***I believe it is why PROI still exists after 50 years.***

1. PROI is a partnership of owners of Agencies.
2. PROI is not an operating company to ensure it maintains its legal status as a tax-exempt corporation. Each PROI Agency markets their services, seeks, and carries out client business. Multi-national projects are managed by a lead PROI Agency which is responsible for the project.
3. PROI provides a structured environment where Agency owners meet other owners to service clients, to develop joint business opportunities and to share personal and business intelligence.
4. A PROI Agency's expertise and excellence matters.
5. A PROI Agency's responsiveness is paramount.
6. PROI owner Partners, in order to maintain openness and trust among themselves, cannot join a competing network of generalist agencies.
7. PROI owner Partners should contact each other when visiting another Partner's market(s).



1970-1989

The Formative Years

As Ellis Kopel's UK financial services clients were expanding globally in the late 1960s and early 1970s, he developed professional relationships in financial markets that mattered to his clients. Most of these connections were with sole practitioners, often also former financial journalists, or owners of very small public relations agencies. Ellis cemented those relationships whenever these practitioners visited London.

After registering Public Relations Organisation International Ltd. in England as a non-profit corporation, a number of his early contacts discontinued their membership in PROI as it now required investing significant time and resources. In response Ellis identified other agency owners who understood the value of PROI and were prepared to invest in the relationship as a Founding Partner.

During the 1970s, PROI's Founding Partners were located in the USA, France, The Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Japan, Sweden, Canada and, of course, England. During the 1980s PROI added Partner Agencies in Italy, Australia and Ireland, bringing the total to 12 agencies by 1989.

During the first two decades PROI owners shared information about how each of us were running our businesses, how we addressed management problems, and what we were investing in, both personally and corporately. While business flowed between agencies, owners focused on how we dealt with owning our business in our busy lives. PROI offered a trusted environment where information flowed freely, and it offered a platform for building our individual businesses and our personal development. We shared. We were friends. **It was more than business: we became a PROI Family.**

Partners left the administration of PROI to Ellis as it was his "baby". It was not until 1985, our 15th Anniversary which we celebrated at the tony Mayfair Hotel in London, that the winds of change started to blow into what others referred to as "The Club". It was becoming apparent to some of us that PROI needed to grow geographically, expand its services, and broaden its expertise to generate more potential opportunities for exchanging client business.

1975

Munich



1977

Stockholm



1979

Amsterdam



1982

Vancouver



1983

Paris



1984

Stockholm



1987

Dublin



1988

Lindau



1989

Maui



1990-1999

Winds of Change



L-R: Former Chairman Peter Evers, Misha van Veen (now Misha Cook), Valerie van Veen, Chieko Hasegawa, Dora and Ellis Kopel and an unidentified staff member at the 1992 Global Summit in Birmingham, England

PROI Partners knew that, compared to multi-nationals, independent local Agencies were nimbler, more flexible, cost-effective, and often had a better understanding of, and access to, local expertise. And clients realized that, by retaining a local Agency, they had the attention of the Agency owner.

PROI connected the best local Agencies into a global force. And owners could enter into joint ventures or establish bilateral relationships with other PROI Agencies to explore regional or global marketing opportunities.

At the 1990 Summit of PROI Partners in Paris we agreed that we needed additional Partners. My own Agency, PROI's largest with 7 offices across Canada, was headquartered in Vancouver. We needed a solid footprint in the U.S. and Asia-Pacific Region and access to Agencies with diverse areas of practice. I accepted the challenge from Partners to continue to lead PROI for the next, critical, three years, supported by England's Peter Evers, who would host our next Global Summit in Birmingham, England in 1992.



Ernest van den Biggelaar (The Netherlands), Peter Evers (UK), Allard van Veen (Canada), Founder Ellis Kopel, Dr. Bernd Sibitz (Austria), Aaron Cushman (Chicago), and John Hasegawa (Japan) in Birmingham in 1992.

By the time we met in Birmingham, England at our 1992 Global Summit, I had recruited 7 US Partners in Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, Chicago, and Denver. We had also recruited a young, capable, and progressive owner of a public affairs Agency in Belgium. Little did we know then that Jean Leopold Schuybroek, "JL" as we know him today, would eventually join PROI's Management Team as Director, Global Development after retiring from his Agency in 2014.

By the time of our 1994 Global Summit in San Francisco, the significant growth and changes that had occurred within PROI since 1990 were creating stress. Ellis struggled with the decisions and new directions being contemplated. He continued to believe that our new aggressive approach to enlarging the partnership in order to provide access to many more clients would become problematic, place an unrealistic burden on the relationship and undermine unfettered discussions among Partners. It was with great sorrow and regret that we accepted his resignation immediately after our 1994 Global Summit. A few Partners left with him.

By the end of 1994, with assistance from PROI's then Chairman and Chicago Agency owner Aaron Cushman, PROI moved its head office from England to, and incorporated in, the United States to gain status as a tax-exempt Corporation. This allowed us to build up retained earnings without taxation. Simultaneously we determined that a new corporate structure, geographical and organizational, was needed, leading to the creation of Regions and adding the positions of Regional Vice-Chairs at Board level.

When I stepped back from my own Agency in 1994, PROI's Management Board approached me to assume the role of administering the PROI partnership. At my request, monies that would normally be paid to the Managing Director were placed in PROI's Reserve Fund to ensure PROI would eventually be able to retain another Global Managing Director after my departure, add other staff as required and have significant capital reserves to deal with unforeseen circumstances during the years ahead.



PROI Chairman Allard van Veen addressed Partners during the 1992 Global Summit at an official dinner held at Warwick Castle in England's West Midlands. The Summit was hosted by England's Peter Evers.

1991

Naples Florida



1992

Birmingham



1994

San Francisco



1998

Mexico



2000-2009

Years of Growth



PROI Partners meet to celebrate PROI's 30th Anniversary in Venice under the Chairmanship of Marcel Barthe (Canada) and Chairman-Elect Jean Pierre Beaudoin (France).

We started the 2000s on a roll. We attracted the attention of global industry media, including relative newcomer Paul Holmes whose Holmes Report (PRovoke) has ever since branded PROI the leading global partnership of independents. Paul shared the stage at our 30th Anniversary Summit in Venice in 2000, an appearance he repeated at two subsequent PROI Summits in New York and Lisbon.

In the 1990s we increased the number of medium sized Agencies, especially in the U.S., in order to increase the flow of business referrals within the partnership. However, we soon realized we needed varying sizes of Agencies in all PROI Regions as clients working with a PROI Agency in one Region often expected to work with a similar sized Agency in other Regions. The hunt was on to add Agencies with various levels of expertise and size to generate the greatest potential for future client opportunities.

PROI also attracted the attention of Agencies, both in markets where we already had a PROI Agency as well as in markets where we were not yet present. We became very selective, as is the case today, often turning down weekly requests from Agencies wishing to join our successful partnership.



Allard van Veen, PROI's Founding Partner and now its Managing Director, addresses Partners in 2000 at the 30th Anniversary Dinner held in Venice, Italy.



Five Global Chairs in Vienna meeting in 2009.



Scott Widmeyer, (Washington, DC, now FINN Partners), Jean Leopold Schuybroek (Belgium) and Richard Tsang (Hong Kong-China-Taiwan)

Twenty-four Agencies were added during the 2000s. These included many of the large Agencies which remain PROI Partners in each of our Regions today. We realized the diversity in size and sector expertise of our PROI Agency Partners would form the basis for PROI's future growth and success and would maximize the ability for Partners to exchange or earn new business.

Our growth was reflected in a dramatic increase in net fee income and, by 2010, rating agencies compared PROI's combined fee revenue of US\$ 382 million with those of other "networks", multi-nationals and holding companies.

Global Summits offered one of the highest added values that PROI offered its owners and Agencies. In addition to discussing business and developing relationships with other Agency owners, PROI Summits also often provided unique and memorable social events such as an evening on a South Carolina Plantation, an evening in the South African Winelands, sailing off the coast of Charleston and a 40th Anniversary celebration with one of the original Beach Boys on the beach in Malibu.

Organizing Global Summits, including their agenda and its many social events, were part of my overall responsibilities until 2017 and became very time-consuming as PROI grew ever larger. I continued to receive support from my wife, who managed our Agency and who is my business partner. In addition, starting at our 2001 Global Summit held in Vancouver, I also received assistance from my daughter Misha van Veen (now Misha Cook) who initially joined our Team as a volunteer while completing her Bachelor of Communications at Simon Fraser University. Misha was, since 1987, already quite familiar with PROI, had attended a number of PROI Global Summits and knew many of our Partners.



PROI Partners Keiko Takagi (Japan), Patrick Vastenaekels (Belgium), Ana Margarida Ximenes (Portugal), Pia Bodal (Denmark) and (standing) Michaela Benedigova (Slovak Republic).



Misha Cook pours champagne on bus ride to an evening soiree high above Denver at the 2007 Global Summit.



Partners Joanne Paquet (Quebec), Rob Falls (Cleveland), Rachel McCallister (Los Angeles) and PROI Global Chair (2004-05) Jeff Julin (Denver) start with shooters in Denver in 2007!

During the 2000s PROI's Board recognized that their Managing Director, whose responsibilities also included recruiting new Agencies, would eventually need to be replaced and that his replacement would expect adequate remuneration. When I assumed the role in 1994 PROI had a deficit on its balance sheet. By 2000 PROI had accumulated a surplus of US\$ 101,393.39. In 2007 the Board agreed that I would continue to place monies, that would normally be paid to the Managing Director, in PROI's Reserve Fund. Our goal was to reach a surplus of at least US\$ 600,000 by 2017 to ensure PROI's operations would be sustainable after I left.

By 2010 and our 40th Anniversary, which was held in Beverley Hills, we were well on the way to becoming financially stable and we did not look back.

2000

Venice



2001

Vancouver



2002

Barcelona



2003

Charleston (USA)



2004

Stockholm



2005

Chicago



2006

Berlin



2007

Denver



2008

Beijing



2009

Vienna



2010-2019

PROI Prepares for the Future



The 2012 Global Summit was held in Helsinki, Finland, hosted by Kaija Pohjala and her husband Tapani who captured many memorable moments on film of spouses and significant others attending the Summit. The 2012 summit was the last time we seated partners in a horseshoe seating arrangement, reflecting PROI's growth and our unwillingness to provide each Partner with binoculars to see other Partners.

Like a snowball rolling down a hill, success breeds success. And that was the case with PROI during the next decade. As the number of PROI Agencies increased it became increasingly difficult for one person to manage the meetings, activities, communications, recruitment initiatives and the administration of PROI. I recommended, and the Board understood, that we would need to invest in a Management Team for the future.

I knew that Jean Leopold Schuybroek (JL), owner of Belgium's Interel Agency which joined PROI in 1992, was planning to step back from his Agency in 2014. Aware of his expertise and industry connections I asked him to join our Management Team as Director, Global Development, responsible for most of PROI's recruiting. It was agreed, starting in 2015, that both JL and myself would receive a token payment, or honorarium, to recognise our contributions while we continued to build up PROI's reserves. Our Management Team was now comprised of "JL", Misha Cook, our Director of Communications and Meetings who started working full-time for PROI in 2006, starting with organizing the 2006 Berlin Global Summit, and myself. JL was responsible, with assistance of Partners and Board members, for recruiting 29 of the 45 new Agencies that joined PROI this last decade, a significant accomplishment.

Today PROI is the dominant force, best positioned and most successful partnership of independents in our industry. PROI's dominance is based on the reputation of our Agencies, our position in the market is attributable to the leadership of our Regional and Global Chairs who have served PROI over the years and PROI's success reflects the willingness of our Agency Owners to share intelligence and experience, knowing that their relationships within The PROI Family are based on mutual trust.

With US\$ One Billion in net fees from operations in 165+ offices manned by 7,000+ staff employed by 78 Agencies, PROI was, in 2019, the largest global partnership of independent Agencies by far. According to statistics published by The Holmes Report, later PProvoke, PROI was rated #4 compared with global Holding Companies and #1 compared with Multi-Nationals, based on net annual fee income.

When I turned PROI's finances over to former PROI Partner Jeff Altheide, who succeeded me as Managing Director in June 2020, we had accumulated approximately US\$ 1.2 Million in PROI's Reserve Account. This significantly exceeded our initial goal of US\$600,000 set several years earlier, mainly due to careful management of our finances, including earnings from foreign currency transactions.



PROI EMEA Partners attended the 2017 Global Summit held in Sydney, Australia.



Richard Tsang, PROI Global Chairman (2017-18), addresses 2018 Global Summit in Lisbon, Portugal.

When, as a teenage entrepreneur, I formed my first company which published Western Canada's newspaper for students, I knew building businesses would offer me the challenges I was seeking in my life. While I've been successful in my personal ventures, I am gratified to also have been an integral part of **The Story of The PROI Family**. Thank you for sharing your success and excitement as fellow entrepreneurs with all Partner Owners.

Together we've built the world's largest Partnership of Independent Integrated Communications Agencies and, notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic which has severely affected all global business in 2020, I expect PROI will offer many more opportunities and continue to be an important resource for agency owners and their staff in the future.

2020 marks the beginning of another exciting period in PROI's history, starting with the creation of a new, colourful and inclusive logo and positioning statement "Home of the World's Leading Independent Agencies". Together Partners are leading for change as we enter the next decade.



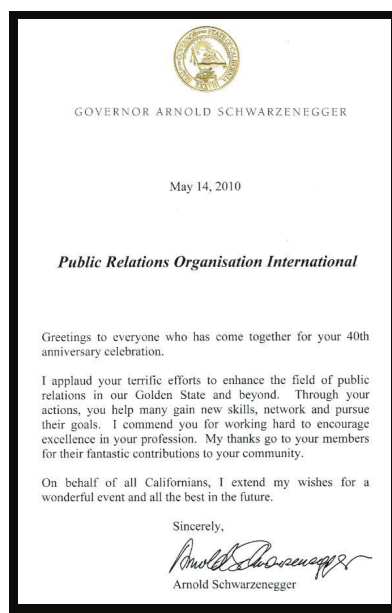
PROI Worldwide's Global Management Board met in Quebec City in 2019.

Front Row L-R:
 Jean Leopold Schuybroek (Brussels)
 Allard W. van Veen (Vancouver)
 Clare Parsons (London)
 Richard Tsang (Hong Kong-China-Taiwan)
 Angela Scaffidi (Melbourne)

Back Row L-R:
 Kaija Pohjala (Helsinki)
 Henning Sverdrup (Norway)
 Lisa Ross (Miami)
 Lena Soh-Ng (Singapore)
 Laura Tomasetti (Boston)

2010

Beverly Hills | 40th Anniversary Summit



2011

Singapore



2012

Helsinki



2013

New York



2014

Hong Kong



2015

Cape Town



2016

Atlanta



2017

Sydney



2018

Lisbon



2019

Quebec City





Jeff Altheide
Global Managing Director

Further and Faster Together

At the 50-year mark, PROI is stronger than ever by virtually any measure possible. We have much to be proud of, and much to be thankful for. The cultural bonds of our partnership are unique. And, the ability to harness the power of the world's most ambitious communications firms benefits our businesses, our employees and our clients.

Building on our strong foundation, we continue to rely on each other for many things. Insights. Leadership. Best practices. Innovation. Motivation. Integrity. Campaign collaboration. As independent business owners, we know PROI will take us further, and get us there faster, than we could do on our own.

Now, with an entrepreneurial spirit and dynamic new brand, PROI Worldwide charges boldly into the future. Working together, we will push boundaries to deliver the most impactful communications campaigns possible. Locally and around the world.

PROI Worldwide Logos – Then and Now



PROI Management Team



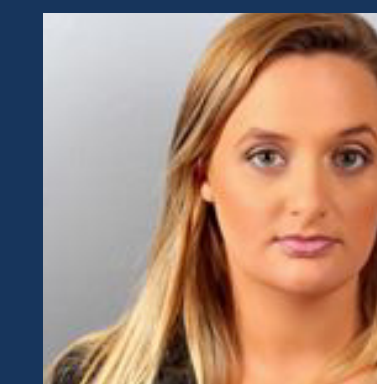
Allard W. van Veen
Founding Partner
Managing Director, 1994-2020



Jean Leopold Schuybroek
Director, Global Development,
2015- present



Jeff Altheide
Managing Director,
2020- present



Misha Cook
Director of Communications
and Meetings,
2006- present

PROI is indebted to the following Partners who have served as our Chair:

Year	Chair
1970-74	Ellis Kopel
1975	Hans Kruger-Franke
1976	Pierre Jegu
1977	Sten Lagerman
1979	Ernest van den Biggelaar
1981	Karl F. Schneider
1982	Allard W. van Veen
1983	Pierre Jegu
1984	Sten Lagerman
1986	John de Nigris
1987	Liam O'Lonargain
1988	Wilhelm Börke
1989-91*	Allard W. van Veen
1992-93	Peter Evers + Allard W. van Veen

Year	Chair
1993-96	Aaron Cushman
1996-99	Jean Pierre Beaudoin
1999-2001	Marcel Barthe
2001-03	Carl Courtney
2003-05	Jeff Julin
2005-07	Jean Leopold Schuybroek
2007-09	Bill Carlson
2009-11	Philip Roffey
2011-14	Bob Frause
2014-16	Andreas Fischer Appelt
2016-18	Richard Tsang
2018-20	Clare Parsons
2020-22	Ciro Reis

*Start from 1990s, Chair served 2 years from June to May, except Aaron Cushman, Jean Pierre Beaudoin and Bob Frause.



Ellis Kopel



Pierre Jegu



Sten Lagerman



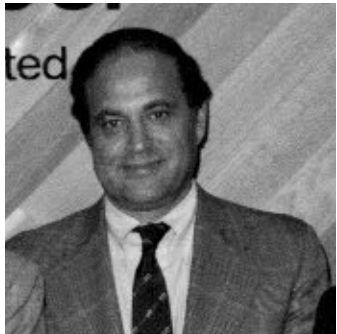
Ernest van den Biggelaar



Karl F. Schneider



Allard W. van Veen



John de Nigris



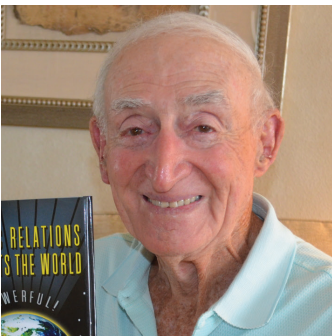
Liam O'Lonargain



Wilhelm Börke



Peter Evers



Aaron Cushman



Jean Pierre Beaudoin



Marcel Barthe



Carl Courtney



Jeff Julin



Jean Leopold Schuybroek



Bill Carlson



Philip Roffey



Bob Frause



Andreas Fischer Appelt



Richard Tsang



Clare Parsons



Ciro Reis



AMERICAS	EMEA	ASIA PACIFIC
Brazil Brasília Rio de Janeiro Sao Paulo	Austria Vienna	Australia Brisbane Gold Coast Melbourne Richmond Sydney
Canada Calgary Edmonton Toronto Vancouver Winnipeg	Belgium Brussels	Burma Yangon
Colombia Bogotá	Bulgaria Sofia	China Beijing Guangzhou Hong Kong Shanghai Taipei
Mexico Mexico City	Congo D.R. Kinshasa	India Ahmedabad Bangalore Chandigarh Chennai Hyderabad Jaipur Kolkata Mumbai New Delhi Pune
United States Atlanta Boston Chicago Cleveland Denver Detroit Fort Lauderdale Grand Rapids Lansing Los Angeles Miami Nashville Needham New York Oklahoma City Portland Raleigh San Francisco Seattle St. Louis Washington D.C.	Croatia Zagreb	Indonesia Jakarta
	Czech Republic Prague	Japan Tokyo
	Denmark Copenhagen N	Malaysia Kuala Lumpur
	Egypt Cairo	New Zealand Auckland Wellington
	Estonia Tallinn	Philippines Quezon City
	Finland Helsinki	Singapore Singapore
	France Paris	South Korea Seoul
	Germany Berlin Cologne Frankfurt/Main Hamburg Munich Stuttgart	Thailand Bangkok
	Ghana Accra	
	Greece Athens	
	Hungary Budapest	
	Ireland Dublin	
	Italy Milano Torino	
	Kenya Nairobi	
	Latvia Riga	
	Lithuania Vilnius	
	Netherlands Amsterdam	
	Norway Oslo	
	Poland Warsaw	
	Portugal Lisbon Oporto	
	Romania Bucharest	
	Russia Almaty Moscow Saint-Petersburg	
	Slovakia Bratislava	
	Spain A Coruña Barcelona Madrid Malaga Valencia	
	South Africa Cape Town Johannesburg	
	Sweden Göteborg Malmö Stockholm Sundsvall Umeå	
	Switzerland Basel	
	Turkey Istanbul	
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