



BSCC Member In Focus – September 2008

The BSCC is not a remote organisation, but rather it is its members. This is why we have added a new regular monthly feature, in which we profile a BSCC Member. Each of our members has an interesting story to tell, whether they are a large international company or someone working alone.

We begin by talking to the founders of an ultra-discrete Swiss-based company that is expanding globally and has been called “**the CEO’s secret weapon**”.

Intrigued? Let **Iain Martin** and **Marlene Uetz**, the co-founders of I.J. Martin & Co Ltd, Executive Coaches for Global Business Leaders, give you some insights into the world of executive coaching. They talk about how they use their team’s own high-level business experience in working with clients, and look back at their first ten years. They also give their thoughts on how to develop a mutually rewarding relationship with BSCC.

I.J. Martin & Co – working with the people at the top in business

What is your area of activity?

IM: We are Executive Coaches for Global Business Leaders. That means that we act as advisors to senior men and women in business. We work almost exclusively with big international companies.

MU: Our primary goal is to help client companies increase shareholder value by supporting the development of their senior executives. Busy top people tend to neglect their own development. We fit our work around their agendas.



The I.J.Martin & Co Team

What makes you different from other coaching firms?

IM: Our scale and our approach. We provide our global clients with an international service from several bases in Europe, USA and very soon Asia too. Everything we do is custom-designed for each client. “A special service for special people” a client recently said.

MU: We offer ‘experience-based’ coaching, as opposed to ‘psychology-based’. Our coaches are all former business leaders from big companies. They have run significant businesses with ‘bottom line’ responsibility. We’re sometimes called ‘The CEO’s Secret Weapon’.

IM: We work by dealing with real-life business issues in a very practical way, based on our own management experience and training. This is what most businesspeople really want when they hire a coach.

MU: We have a jargon-free, plain-speaking policy. Our approach is process-light. It has been continuously developed, entirely in-house, over the last ten years.

How does the business fit with BSCC?

MU: We only in international businesses, as personal advisers to senior business leaders. Many of the global Swiss and UK corporations are BSCC members, as we are. Our interests are aligned.

IM: We're in a trust-based business. BSCC is an effective way for executives to get to know and trust us, when we meet at Chamber lunches and other events.

Why did you join BSCC?

IM: It's a friendly, stimulating business club. Senior executives are always interesting company. As a former Managing Director in Europe and Asia, it keeps me very much in touch with current business affairs.

MU: At first, the Chamber's lunchtime events were just nice social breaks from the long working days. Over time, they became useful 'shop windows' which helped us get known to the right audiences. Membership soon became part of our strategic marketing plan. It's still a great way to meet nice people but it's now also a very useful marketing channel.

Is trust important to you?

IM: Absolutely! Clients need to trust us completely and BSCC has proved to be a good recruiting ground for high-level coaches. For example, BSCC's former President, Monty Style OBE, is a well-regarded member of our team.

MU: our clients routinely discuss issues with us like strategy changes and acquisitions. Business leaders often use our coaching meetings to test their strategic thinking, before launching a discussion inside the company.

How does the Chamber work for you?

MU: We don't advertise, but rather sponsor carefully chosen events such as World Radio Switzerland Broadcasts from the World Economic Forum and high-profile BSCC events - for example, last year's FIFA Lunch with Sepp Blatter, which we co-sponsored with Jaguar Cars. Chamber events offer us a relevant forum to meet the kind of people who might use our services or mention us to others.

IM: The expression 'you're only 5 handshakes away from your next client' illustrates a true but possibly undervalued benefit of BSCC's lunchtime and evening events for business people at all levels.

How else has the Chamber helped your success?

IM: Switzerland is our gateway to the world. We have coaches in Europe, USA and soon also Asia. The British Consul-General's team in USA has been really helpful, although we're

officially a Swiss-registered business. That could not have happened without our BSCC credentials.

MU: We are also getting valuable help from the Swiss Government's Trade Development Teams in other countries. Both the UK and Swiss Embassies give us warm support and useful information in various regions.

Do you give anything back to the Chamber?

IM: I am a BSCC Councillor and I'm active in the Steering Committee. I was closely involved in the planning, and now the execution, of BSCC's new 'Vision 2020' Strategy for long-term growth. My own pet project is to promote the Chamber's benefits in my native Scotland. Maybe some day, we'll have a BSCC Chapter there.

MU: I am currently Deputy Chair of the Zurich Chapter. Our Committee has ambitious plans for its future. Several years ago, I wrote a Strategic Marketing Plan for the Chamber. I have been told that this helped to shape the early thinking for Vision 2020. Some of our coaches are very active Chamber members too.

As your business grows outside Switzerland, will you continue with the BSCC?

IM: No matter where we expand, Switzerland will always be the home of I.J. Martin & Co Ltd. The British Swiss Chamber of Commerce will always be an important part of our marketing strategy and of our social lives.

MU: I'm Swiss and a bit of an Anglophile in its widest sense. BSCC events in Switzerland give me an insight into the different UK cultures and, very often, the chance to meet well-known British businesspeople and politicians in closer surroundings than are possible in Britain.



What final message do you have for our readers?

Pictured above: Iain Martin

IM: Use the Chamber actively. Come to lunches and other events. See and be seen! That's how people will get to know you and mention your business to others. Be involved in its work. Make a difference!

MU: Visit us at www.ijmartin.com It could be your best investment ever!

Interview with Liz Wilson of www.imcp.ch