

PublicAffairsAsia

Press Release: For Immediate Release

Global Corporations Must Rethink Asian Engagement Strategies, finds top-level survey

HONG KONG: March 29, 2011: Western corporations must do more to localise their operating plans, government relations strategies and senior staffing profiles if they are to achieve their goals in Asia Pacific. These are the central findings of the PublicAffairsAsia “State of the Industry Survey” which was conducted among senior-level corporate public affairs practitioners representing global and Asian multinational corporations operating in Asia Pacific.

The survey, conducted in partnership between PublicAffairsAsia and The Research Pacific Group, highlights how an emerging public affairs and lobbying industry is developing in Asia. But it also sounds a series of alarm bells about future strategies, talent shortages and the impact of nationalism and corruption in the Asian governmental and business environment

The report, published today by PublicAffairsAsia magazine and network, finds that three quarters of PA industry leaders in Asia Pacific believe that global operating plans, public affairs and government relations practices will have to change to accommodate the shift in geopolitical and economic power to the East.

The report, conducted among 43 leading corporations, also suggests that many business structures in Asia Pacific may not be fit for purpose. Despite the fact that many business units are built around the Asian map, senior practitioners are unanimous in stressing that Asia cannot be viewed as a market in the same way as Europe or North America. Significant moves towards the localisation of strategies and practices are essential if MNCs are to achieve their business goals, the report suggests.

Commenting on the findings of the survey, **Craig Hoy**, Executive Director of PublicAffairsAsia, said: “This report proves that global companies need to rewrite their operating plans, localise their government relations teams and develop more strategic engagement techniques if they are to influence the political and regulatory environments in which they are operating. Nationalism and corruption remain concerns for PA directors, and staffing constraints appear to be holding back the development of corporations in Asia Pacific.”

The State of the Industry (In-House) survey also finds that 70 per cent of practitioners believe that an identifiable PA and lobbying industry is emerging in Asia. However three in four believe that the term “public affairs” is not fully understood, although 68 per cent concede it is better understood than it was previously. The study also identifies significant staffing and capacity concerns, with a significant number of PA industry leaders warning that staffing shortages in the corporate affairs and government relations arenas is impeding international firms’ development plans.

The report received strong support from senior corporate public affairs and communications professionals engaged in Asia’s increasingly complex governmental, communications and regulatory markets.

Welcoming the report, **Stephen Forshaw**, Microsoft’s Director of Corporate Communications in Asia Pacific, said: “This report reminds business just how important it is to invest in the public affairs practice, build skills, retain talent and stay ahead of the new challenges that will come with growth and a globalised economy.”

Stephen Thomas, Head of Corporate Affairs, Citigroup China, added: “The public affairs profession in Asia faces rising complexity, heightened responsibility and a challenging external and internal landscape. The 2011 State of the Industry report highlights these factors, among others, and the drivers behind them, making insightful reading for anyone interested in the evolving nature of public affairs in the region.”

The PublicAffairsAsia State of the Industry (In-House) report forms part of a two-volume annual series published by PublicAffairsAsia, the magazine and network for senior corporate public affairs professionals. A second volume of the report, which covers in the consultancy sector, will be released in June.

A REVIEW COPY OF THE REPORT IS AVAILABLE FROM http://www.publicaffairsasiaevents.com/SOI_2011_INHouse.pdf

About PublicAffairsAsia:

PublicAffairsAsia is the network for senior government relations, public affairs and corporate communications professionals operating across the Asia Pacific region. It offers news, features, analysis and intelligence on practice and policy through PublicAffairsAsia magazine, online channels, intelligence and events. It also operates the flagship Gold Standard Awards for government relations, public policy and corporate communications. For more information, to REGISTER, or SUBSCRIBE: visit www.publicaffairsasia.com

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