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RECRUITING CHIEF SEES GRADUAL IMPROVEMENT IN SEARCH INDUSTRY

The World Search Alliance, LLC (formerly World Search Group) is an international strategic group of independent, owner managed retained executive search firms with members in virtually every market around the world. Founded as the World Search Group in 1984 by Maurice Dennis of the U.K., Alain Touveron of France and Ekkehard Wille of Germany, the Group has now 27 members worldwide. Jim Carlisle is the chairman of World Search Alliance and partner at Western Management Consultants in Toronto. He has over 24 years of recruiting experience that has been spent almost exclusively in executive search and seven years in the financial industry. In the following interview, Mr. Carlisle discusses how the World Search Alliance and its members have performed in the first six months of 2009 and what they expect moving forward.

How has the economic climate changed for you since last summer?

It has slowed down the actual search activities of our member firms worldwide. However, many new business opportunities are being explored and several new potential client relationships have sprung up not only at the local level, but internationally as well.

Has the economic climate improved in the last three to six months – and do you think the recruiting industry has bottomed out or are markets still declining?

We believe the economic climate has improved in the last several months, as the number of closed searches from April to June has almost equalled the number of ongoing searches from July through September.

What do you expect for the global economy in the next six months?

We see a gradual improvement and a slow recovery. We are optimistic about future growth in the business environment. World Search Alliance believes that overall demand should increase for the remainder of 2009. Contributing to this trend is the increase of shared searches worldwide as more and more clients become more global in reach. We also see Latin America becoming a stronger region where executive search activity is growing due to the influx of multinational expansions, particularly in agribusiness and energy sectors.

How do you see 2010 shaping up; what industries do you see rebounding first and which industries might lag the recovery?

The industries with the best improvements during the past few months have been the energy and natural resources, life sciences/healthcare and not-for-profit. While the financial services industry continues to struggle. Despite the sizzle that many search firms are projecting, we see a slow up tick. Most of our firms have a noticeable increase but choose to be very cautious.

How have your member firms weathered the current state of the global economy?

Everyone is busy. This is not a time to be boastful. The search industry has done remarkably well in the last four decades. The premium is on excellent service at a fair market value. Our members are, for the most part, entrepreneurs who provide value beyond expectations.

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