

Ogilvy PR Acquires Taiwan's Era Public Relations

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Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide (Ogilvy PR) has announced the acquisition of Era Public Relations (Era), Taiwan's leading technology-specialist public relations firm. The partnership unites two of the market's most respected firms and creates Taiwan's largest public relations capability by a significant margin. Ogilvy PR holds a 70% stake in Era, with Era's senior management owning the remaining equity.

The partnership brings together an unprecedented scale of professional resources. Together, Ogilvy PR and Era have more than 100 employees. In Taiwan, few PR firms employ more than 15 professionals and few international networks have succeeded in developing or maintaining a significant presence in the market. Ogilvy PR opened its Taipei office in 1987. Olive Ting established Era in 1992, after serving as a senior executive at Acer and the Elite Group. Era has grown steadily through both the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis and the recent global slowdown in the technology and telecommunications industries.

The acquisition prepares the firms to meet the emerging needs of Taiwanese and multinational clients as the Taiwanese economy continues to undergo profound change. The move from manufacturing to a more service-based economy is putting pressure on companies to add value and cut costs.

During the next five years, many Taiwanese firms, already well-known for producing cutting-edge technologies as original equipment manufacturers, will focus on developing such technologies as software and high-end semiconductor production and design. Additionally, manufacturing of IT-related items will move towards more higher-value products like LCD monitors and mobile handsets. This will put greater emphasis on building and developing home-grown brands as a means of adding value. In other areas, Taiwan-based firms are expected to seek ways to lower costs, including moving manufacturing and sales operations to such locations as Mainland China.

In addition, Taiwanese institutions and multinational clients are increasingly seeking communications counsel relating to crisis and issues management, M&A, internal communications, corporate social responsibility, investor relations and in-depth expertise in such industries as healthcare, biotechnology and finance – services currently offered by Ogilvy PR.

"We are committed to strengthening specialist PR in Taiwan and linking Taiwan in constructive ways with other parts of Greater China and the world," said Matthew Anderson, President, Asia Pacific, of Ogilvy PR. "We have built our network in Asia first by attracting top, locally-rooted talent and second by fostering a culture that encourages collaboration and strong international links. With Olive Ting and Era, we are well positioned to help management teams with pressing corporate and marketing strategies," said Mr. Anderson.

Olive Ting, managing director of Era Public Relations, commented: "As partners with Ogilvy PR and its network, especially in Greater China, we are now able to provide our clients with the expertise Ogilvy is best known for – branding. Era will remain focused on our strength – information technology. That won't change. In the future, however, we will help technology clients with a wider array of marketing and corporate challenges." Era will have access to owned offices in 14 countries and territories in the region as well as professionals in different specialties. This will benefit Era's clients as their businesses become more complex. Prior to today's announcement, Ogilvy PR and Era had already begun helping clients such as Scottish Development International, TECO and ALi, in mainland China.

Ogilvy PR and Era will maintain distinct management teams and separate offices. Professional development, training and general knowledge sharing will begin immediately between the two firms. Ms. Ting continues as managing director of Era, and Mark Lamb continues as managing director of Ogilvy PR Taiwan. The current chairman of Ogilvy PR in Taiwan, Dr. Joseph Pai, will

focus on the strategic development of the combined group. Ms. Ting and Mr. Lamb will report to Dr. Pai.

Era Public Relations is the third major partnership formed by Ogilvy PR in Asia Pacific this year. In June, Ogilvy PR announced the acquisition of H-Line PR and the subsequent formation of H-Line Ogilvy, which made Ogilvy PR the largest firm in Mainland China. In January, Ogilvy PR announced an equity stake in PRAP Japan Inc., the largest international public relations firm in Japan. With year-on-year revenue up 32 percent, Ogilvy PR was ranked by PR Week as the second largest and fastest growing of the top five major networks in Asia Pacific for 2001.

Through organic growth, acquisition and partnerships, Ogilvy PR is seeking to deepen its local management expertise and specialist skills in the countries where it operates and meet the localization needs of multinational clients in Asian markets. In 2001, Ogilvy PR entered Australia and Vietnam, taking a leading position in those markets. In Australia, the firm's technology specialists operate under the name Howorth Communications.