

Investment safeguard

Case study:

Asia ventures

The Challenge

A medium size Asia-Pacific concern wants to set-up a J/V with an Asian distributor who was never vetted but has proven efficient over the years. The work must be done within a very short period of time since negotiations already are at an advanced stage and the client wants to quickly finalize the terms of the deal. Our work must also be conducted without the proposed partner hearing anything about the due diligence being conducted.

Asia Global Risk solutions

Beside going through the necessary motion of a classical due diligence in order to verify the possible litigation background of the distributor and other such elements, other industry players are approached under different pretexts in order to collect information about the company which is of interest to our client. The said company is also directly approached under 2 widely different pretexts to test its resistance capacity to negative influence which could later prove to be the downfall of our client's investment.

The impact

The client is now enjoying the fruits of his investment decision without any doubts about his partner and its Asian operations are starting to contribute positively to its overall business.

What the client valued

Our absolute discretion, including the fact that, to this day and after the J/V having been in operations for a couple of years, the Asian company still has no inkling that we thoroughly checked its background. The client also appreciated the swiftness of our action and the pertinence of our findings. In fact, he even asked our in-house consultant lawyer to draft the final Agreement which was entered into with his Asian partner.

RISK MANAGEMENT CONSULTANCY

Investment safeguard

Case study:

upgrading to ensure business growth

The Challenge

The client is a very large multinational company involved in various aspects of the service industry and has been trying internally to upgrade the quality of the organization and work in one of its Asian business unit so as to facilitate said unit's growth. Numerous attempts have failed to produce the expected results and the client then decides to entrust this assignment to AGR. The duration of the assignment is estimated to last between 12 and 18 months with six-monthly reviews and reassessments.

Asia Global Risk solutions

Due to the sheer size of the unit and its presence in a large number of locations over a very widespread territory, it is decided, in agreement with the client, to first start by producing an inventory of the present situation. Once this is done, a market potential growth assessment is conducted together with a comparison of our client and its competitors as far as their respective position and perception by the market is concerned. Lastly we submitted to the client a very comprehensive document which covered all recommendations to improve operations both internally and externally.

The impact

The client ultimately saved time and money by outsourcing the work and, more importantly, benefited from our non partisan experience and understanding of both its business and its goals in that particular country and thus ensuring a healthy and profitable development for the future.

What the client valued

The fact that we dedicated to this work a Project Manager with both the background and the experience in organizing large command structures but who also had been in-country for years thus allowing him to perfectly understand the specificity of the local industry and politics at regions and national levels. Also, the absolute transparency of what was done, the constant brainstorming with the client's local management which led to producing a document that will assist this business unit's development in this country for years to come.



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Investment safeguard

Case study:

Join venture fraud

The Challenge

A medium size continental company has a J/V in Asia where the partners appear to be working for their own benefit. The local partners are well connected with the local authorities and are represented by a first class lawyer similarly "connected". They manage the business directly since the foreign majority partner has never delegated one of its own representatives to work locally within the company and they are on the verge of signing a significant contract for a specific project. The client has reasons to believe that the J/V's reference (hence these of the foreign partners) have been used to procure the project but that, ultimately, said project will be managed through another company belonging to the main local player thus defrauding the J/V of revenue. The foreign partners have tried to no avail to convince the local partner to sell back his shares so as to allow the J/V to be properly managed once again. The local partner refuses. Not being present in-country and not feeling comfortable enough to fight this alone, the client calls upon AGR to assist them.

Asia Global Risk solutions

AGR immediately puts in place a multipronged action plan, keeping the client's lawyer involved in order to coordinate the investigation and the negotiations with possible legal actions to be engaged by our client against its partners. A full due diligence into the activities of the J/V is launched including approaches to the J/V's clients, especially the one with whom a major contract is being negotiated, the J/V's partner's activities within the past 1 year, whether he has direct or indirect interest in other companies involved in the same business, etc... Simultaneously, a direct approach to the partner is arranged and he is being advised that signing over his shares to the foreign partner at a reasonable price would be in everybody's best interest and would avoid any untoward activities of his to be revealed.

Contact is also established with the Police since Criminal Breach of Trust is a possible crime having been committed by the local partners.

Within 1 month, this dispute which had been going on for more than a year was resolved to the satisfaction of all parties involved. Our client then took back control over his business activities in this country.

The impact

A client cheated by his partner was able to wrest back control of his affairs and is now successfully operating in that country without having to contend with unsavoury partners.

What the client valued

The swift reaction of AGR together with our understanding of the local legislation and our capacity to quickly uncover illegal activities spearheaded by the local partners and going against our client's interest. Our strong support during the negotiations leading to the client recovering his shares.



Corporate assets aegis

Case study:

Labor dispute crisis

The Challenge

A large industrial multinational company finds itself in a major labor dispute in Asia one day before Christmas' eve. The immediate situation is that the Chairman and his GM (who has been physically assaulted by the local staff) are holed-up in hotels, the production facilities are controlled by unsatisfied local workers, the authorities feel that this is strictly a labor dispute between workers and a "big foreign company" and that, thus, their active presence is not really required. The location is a very large city and its surrounding area.

Asia Global Risk solutions

A team of negotiators is on the ground within 24 hours and makes contact with the workers' representatives as well as the authorities to assess the situation. An action plan is presented to the client forthwith, accepted and put into action. The objectives are to bring the client and its workers to a negotiation table while regaining physical control of the offices and production facilities together with a more visible presence of the authorities while avoiding negative Media coverage. This is achieved within one week. AGR officers' presence is maintained for a few months after this to ensure that nothing of the sort happens again and local security companies are contracted to ensure the physical integrity of the client's premises. During the talks with the workers, one interesting nugget of information is unearthed: most of the problems came from a badly prepared lay-off program, brainchild of a local HR Director who had been hired by the client.....against AGR's recommendation pursuant to a background screening performed close to a year earlier.

The impact

A minimum financial lost, all things considered, a PR nightmare avoided, workers re.assured that they would be treated fairly in the future and the senior management's awareness as to how best deal with local workers properly heightened.

What the client valued

First and foremost, the reaction time sending people on site which, in this case and considering the time of the year, was exceptionally efficient. Also, the diligence with which contact was established with the aggrieved workers and the local authorities while reassuring the foreign senior management of the company in-country. Finally, our negotiation capabilities which allowed for the company's activities to quickly resume. Last but not least, the client acknowledged the mistake made in hiring an incompetent HR staff against our written advice which increased our credibility where the client was concerned.



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Case study:

Corporate Extortion Attempt

The Challenge

A multinational retail business receives credible threats from an unknown source requesting one of their Country Director to pay-up a large amount in local currency to avoid having poisoned consumer goods put on their shelves. At the time, the client finds matters further complicated by the non-responsiveness of the local police force and then decides to hire our services especially so since its corporate and insurance policy forbids him from being directly involved in such negotiations.

Asia Global Risk solutions

The first step is to take the next call of the extortionist in order to let him know that negotiations are possible but that the person in charge is one of our senior executives posing as a client's employee. The second simultaneous step is to approach senior members of the Police force in order to convince them that such a case will look bad in the international business community and, possibly the Press, if the authorities are seen to do nothing. Within 48 hours and through our intervention, a total of 50 Police officers, including communication monitoring specialists, are deployed at the client's premises and on the ground to support AGR negotiation officer in order to work towards an arrest which happened 2 weeks later.

The impact

The client saved money not only by not paying the extortionist but by avoiding a media reported incident about the quality of the goods sold in its stores. The authorities were satisfied with the discreet outcome.

What the client valued

The fact that we reacted immediately and got things moving quickly including with the authorities. The client was impressed by the professionalism and patience brought by AGR to the negotiation which, while allowing for the Police to get closer to the extortionist at every call, divided the amount initially requested by 10... even though it was never paid. After the arrest of the extortionist it was discovered that the same Individual had committed the same crime one year before and that the victimized corporation had tried, unsuccessfully, to deal with the issue internally.



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Case study:

Ethics and good governance

The Challenge

A Fortune 500 company wants to verify whether some of its vendors in an Asian country have any connection whatsoever with some of its key employees in the said country. Absolute discretion is of the essence since some of the vendors are para-public concerns.

Asia Global Risk solutions

First of all, a complete check is done on each company as to who their shareholders, directors and key employees are. Also checked are their relationship with the client and, possibly, some of the client's competitors. Also, the pattern of purchases by the companies from the client are verified as well as who are the individuals involved within the client's organization and who is dealing with said vendors. Then some checks are done on the client's employees (and their immediate families) as to their previous employment history, whether they have direct or indirect involvement in corporations (shareholders, directors, consultants) and whether said corporations, if any, are involved in a business related to this of our client. Last but not least, a discreet "lifestyle check" is conducted on said employees. Finally, a cross-check is conducted between the names of the vendors's key employees against the client's employees so as to attempt to identify any family relationship. While tedious, this process allowed for AGR to identify a few cases of unethical behaviour in definite contravention with the strict rules of compliance enforced by our client. Corrective measures were taken.

The impact

A few individuals were indeed connected to some of the vendors. Some without any proof of improper dealings who got off with warnings and reminders about the company's Code of Ethics and Good Governance practices, some with clearly proven corrupt and collusive acts which brought about their dismissal for cause.

What the client valued

While the investigation was long due to the sheer number of individuals to check against a number of companies spread over the whole country, the client appreciated the fact that we kept him apprised of our progress on a strictly regular basis, exchanged questions and ideas with him throughout the duration of the assignment so as to verify certain finer issues and, very importantly, avoided to read misdeeds when there were none and thus saving a lot of time reaching the correct conclusions. Furthermore, at no time either the companies or the individuals investigated were made aware of this situation thus guaranteeing peace of mind to our client who could have faced union reactions and such.

Corporate assets aegis

Case study:
political analysis and advice

The Challenge

The client has existing sizable investments in the country which has a history of instability and plans further investments. The CEO wants a direct briefing about the potential risks connected to the changes within the new government and the possible short/medium/long term impacts on their business, the security of their staff and other key factors.

Asia Global Risk solutions

Our own senior manager's exceptional understanding of the country stemming from his connections within the governmental apparatus but also because of his closeness to this country for the past 20 years in various capacities, allowed him to give a clear and practical insight as to what could be expected not only in the capital city but also in other strategic parts of the country as well as in regards to the relationship with neighbouring countries for the foreseeable future. The client's CEO was sufficiently impressed that follow-up analysis were requested from AGR.

The impact

The company has restructured some strategic partnerships based on the advice given by AGR and is now enjoying a fruitful period of growth.

What the client valued

The fact that our country specialist was perfectly knowledgeable about both economic and political aspects of the country's life as well as to give a very personal insight into the mind of some key governmental and private sector players thus allowing the client to broaden his reflection about his company's future in the country.



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Brand assurance

Case study:

Fraudulent Grey Market export

The Challenge

A market leader in the cosmetics industry receives anonymous emails alleging a collusion between a few of his local distributors and possibly some of his staff in order to sell its products onto the export market. AGR is called to investigate the allegations and bring elements of proof to the client.

Asia Global Risk solutions

Each of the alleged co-conspirators is investigated, reputation and market wise, but also through surveillance in order to ascertain their connection to the client and possibly to some of his employees as well as the relationship among themselves and with any third parties which could be involved in this scheme.

The impact

The client managed to let the culprits know that they had been uncovered, that careful watch would be kept in the future and thus could send the right message to the market as well as to its own employees.

What the client valued

AGR's speed in bringing to light the reality of some of the allegations, our honesty in confirming that some of the parties alleged to be involved were most likely not involved and our discretion which allowed us to do this without alerting either the targets who are still, ultimately, clients of our client or the market since this could have had negative commercial repercussions

Brand assurance

Case study:

Trans-national counterfeiting ring

The Challenge

A very large European industrial concern active, among other areas, in the skin cosmetics business detected a disruption of one of his South-Asian markets, the point of origin possibly being a neighbouring country with a manufacturing activity in yet another country. AGR was contracted to investigate.

Asia Global Risk solutions

Starting from retail points and combining this with national and regional field intelligence, AGR soon discovered the local source of the products but also uncovered a large trans-border traffic, indeed bringing the products from a neighbouring country. Further to this, we managed to trace the production site to a third larger country in the north of Asia but with a “mixing-packaging” plant in the second country and a distribution network over a few countries, including the one where the products were first detected by the client. Once we had mapped the whole organization and pinpointed a soon to come shipment from the manufacturing country, the client then decided to use international official channels to approach the authorities of the “middle link country” where the manufacturer’s family was well connected but which showed the best promises in terms of potential quantities to be seized. **AGR objected to this method and warned the client accordingly**, drawing his attention to the corruption level in this particular country and the risk of having no results at the end of the day. The client, encouraged by the international authorities continued in this direction and the results were disastrous. The client then came back to AGR and gave us an unconditional free hand to restart the investigation and use whatever means necessary to bring it to a successful conclusion. It took AGR six months to do just that and the case culminated in the largest anti-counterfeiting raid ever organized in that country which netted very large quantities of the client’s goods but also of other brands.

The impact

A major transnational manufacturing/packaging/distribution network of counterfeiters was annihilated, the local authorities acknowledged for the first time the extent of the collusion between such organizations and some members of the authorities and legal action was taken for the first time ever against such groups. The financial losses to this group.

What the client valued

The fact that AGR did not shy away from a complicated case involving transnational organized crime, working over 3 countries with a minimum assistance from the local authorities and accepting to pass its findings over to the authorities chosen by the client in total transparency while warning them of the risk. More importantly, the client was supremely impressed by the fact that AGR subsequently accepted the challenge to restart the case until it was brought to fruition.



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Brand assurance

Case study:

Training for authorities

The Challenge

To offer meaningful and practical training to the various authorities involved in various aspects of Intellectual Property protection without repeating what is being told to them all the time by various other consultants and also without seeming to “teach them how to do their own work”

Asia Global Risk solutions

AGR has developed a number of modules which combine theoretical aspects with specific field requirements necessary to efficiently fight against counterfeiters, especially organized ones. Indeed, intelligence gathering and surveillance can be generic but, in this particular field, require some adjustments due to the nature of the laws used to fight such crimes: the fact that, sometimes, criminal charges can be pushed forward when it is impossible at other times and that, thus, other elements of proof must be brought to the authorities (for Civil action, for example). Furthermore, one cannot approach luxury goods counterfeiting the same way pharmaceutical products are tackled.

The impact

The authorities who attend our training sessions know that they are dealing with professionals talking to professionals, who go into the field, take risks together with their own men and this makes cooperation with such authorities much easier and thus much more productive for our clients.

What the client valued

The fact that we have adapted our training modules not only to the various authorities possibly involved but also the fact that we have done so in the local languages and, more importantly, that we have stayed close to the actual reality of field cases from “picking-up the scent” right down to gathering Court activable evidence and arranging arrests by the relevant authorities. We promote practical trainings rather than purely academic ones.

Information management

Case study:

corporate resources hijacking

The Challenge

An online retail business owner suspects two of his key employees of fraud. Several clues led him to that conclusion but there was a lack of evidence. For some time the working atmosphere around the office was real tense in their presence but suddenly lightened-up when they were not around. When one of the employees started holding back information critical to the business, the owner decided to call upon professionals to solve the issue.

Asia Global Risk solutions

A forensic expert was dispatched on site to perform a forensic copy of the workstation of both suspects in presence of the business owner and a notary. Analysis of the data showed that both were working on the design of a new online retail platform intended to compete with the client on one of his key product range. It was obvious that most of their time in the office was spent on this new platform and that they were transferring most of their normal workload to colleagues. The key information held back from the business owner by one of the suspect was also recovered. A plan was quickly prepared to ensure the continuity of the business after the two employees were dismissed. That plan included the taking over by the management of critical information systems through AGR shortly before the dismissal and until the transition was completed.

The impact

The client was able to dismiss the two employees for breach of contract based on the evidence collected. The evidence was strong enough to discourage either employee to even attempt litigation against our client. The client did not have to wait until a replacement was found to dismiss them as AGR was able to take over some critical responsibilities during the transition time.

What the client valued

The fact that an intervention was arranged quickly outside office hours together with proper legal support and that the in-depth analysis gave definitive proof of the fraudulent activities. Our deep understanding of Information Systems allowed us to design and implement a transition plan for the remote management of some key information systems without any consequence for the business and with the full confidence that there would be no service disruptions.



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Information management

Case study:

corporate fraud investigation

The Challenge

The regional management of a large industrial group suspects one of their senior managers to be involved in a large fraud operation. The senior manager is very well connected both inside the company, including with some IT staff, and on the local business scene. The client wishes to confirm the existence of an actual fraud and gather evidence without alerting the suspect.

Asia Global Risk solutions

The suspect had several electronic devices at his disposal that were assigned to him by his company. A pretext was arranged to obtain physical access to the devices and a forensic copy of the data was performed. To obtain further intelligence on the suspect's activity, a monitoring solution was also installed on all of his devices. The information gathered using these technical surveillance solutions was instrumental in breaking the case. A large operation was uncovered involving several suppliers and a factory that was set up to produce and sell copies of the client's products.

The impact

A major sidelining of all untoward elements inside and outside of the company took place following our report and this resulted in an increased competitiveness for the client on the market.

What the client valued

The fact that a monitoring solution was installed and monitored without the local IT staff being aware of it.

Information Management

Case study:

Securing a high level meeting's proceedings

The Challenge

The client, a large multinational manufacturing concern, wants to hold a meeting in one of its major Asian offices and, because of the seniority of the company's officers present and the extremely sensitive trade and products related discussions, insists on having a pre-meeting physical and electronic audit as well as to guarantee an absolute protection against eavesdropping during the meeting to be held over a period of 2 days.

Asia Global Risk solutions

A thorough audit is conducted, using both electronic detection equipment and physical observation to determine whether listening devices, hidden cameras or any such equipment could have been placed in the relevant area by third parties. The audit also entails verifying if any distance eavesdropping (using laser equipment for example), IT hijacking or human interference are possible as well as defining the best possible set-up to jam all electronic signals during the proceedings. The meeting area is then physically secured until the proceedings start and jamming equipment is activated during the meeting while the area remain physically secured at all times.

The impact

The client was allowed to discuss major technical and strategic subjects impacting the region while being comfortably protected from any outside interference and competitors undue interest.

What the client valued

The in-depth understanding of the client's requirements as well as the technical know-how of AGR's officers, their reactivity in general and the fact that a senior member of the local team was left on duty throughout the duration of the proceedings to complement the client's security team.

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