

International Accounting Bulletin

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STRATEGY

'Palpable excitement' around JHI, reports executive director

JHI international executive director Ruth Abrahamson has praised the association's Asia-Pacific members for their innovation.

JHI has announced its executive committee for the region for 2007 to 2008, naming Norman Same from KNP Solutions in Australia as chairman. The other committee members are Lindsay Holloway from Webb Group, Australia; Dan Marfatia from Marf & Associates, Australia; Lim Yeong Seng from Kong Lim & Partners, Singapore; Mark Smith from eks Solutions, Australia; and Roy Varghese from Roy Varghese & Associates, India.

Abrahamson commented: "There's palpable excitement in the organisation. There's so much going on [in Asia-Pacific] and [member firms] are so innovative. They're so marketing-oriented; it's very impressive."

Abrahamson also pointed to Latin America as a region on the move for JHI. "We have our first Latin American group meeting taking place at the end of August in Brazil," she said. "We've got 25 individuals going [to the meeting] from member firms in the region. It's quite amazing as this was only concocted five to six weeks ago because there's so much business going on there."

A number of other initiatives have been launched by JHI recently, such as a managing partners' forum. Abrahamson said, in the past, managing partners were not always the people within member firms who were involved in JHI activities. "By creating a separate managing partners' forum, which is also open to up-and-coming leaders in our member firms, we were focusing therefore on slightly different topics," she said. "It's not just about generating business but also running a business, growing a business and how to be strategic and so forth. In that environment, managing partners can share and learn from each other."

The initiative was launched last year in Denver, Colorado and a second forum will be held this September in Atlanta, Georgia. Abrahamson said this year's event is focusing mainly on strategic planning.

A separate initiative is the JHI University. Abrahamson explained: "We've always offered training sessions and, very often, informally, larger member firms that do internal training open it up to other members. Now we're formalising that and JHI is going to be the catalyst for the training sessions. We may still be using various member firm offices, those offices with training facili-

ties, but we are formalising [the sessions] and putting them under the JHI umbrella."

The initiative has been launched in North America. However, Abrahamson noted: "We're looking at this model to see how it's working and then we'll be spreading it around the world after that."

She added: "There have been informal collaborations [between member firms] already so whether we will let the informal collaborations continue or whether we will impose a bit more of a JHI structure on it is to be seen." Abrahamson said it is likely more formal sessions will be established in countries outside of North America in the next year "because people are looking for more rationalisation of qualifications and training and this is a way to do it".

The topics that will be addressed in the North American training sessions will follow those in the continuing education training programmes that JHI's professionals must complete. Abrahamson said the topics will also fit with all the North American accreditation programmes. The sessions are open to junior and senior staff members. She said: "We always have the continuing education unit at our conferences anyway so we always make sure that we have registered ourselves with accreditation bodies and therefore our members who come to the conferences can use the conference sessions against their continuing education programmes. That's one thing the university is largely focused on: junior staff and credentialing." ■

NETWORK DEFINITION

JHI considers IFAC status

JHI executive director Ruth Abrahamson has suggested the organisation may elect to be defined as a network under the International Federation of Accountants' (IFAC) network definition. The definition comes into force in 2008 and will require networks to adhere to strict independence requirements regarding audit work.

Abrahamson said while a decision has yet to be taken on the matter, "there's a lot of healthy discussion". She said: "I think there are a lot of feelings in favour of [being defined as a network] although JHI has always hitherto said we are a network of independent firms." ■