

European Consultancy of the Year (J)



Alber & Geiger is the leading EU government relations law firm in Brussels. It has been successfully lobbying with the EU institutions and governments on behalf of major European and US-corporations and third countries. The latest example is the lobbying activity of Alber & Geiger on behalf of US Fortune company Solutia Inc which involved an anti-dumping proceeding against China. After the European Commission had already imposed provisional tariffs on PVA imports from China - PVA being the raw material for Solutia's PVB production - Solutia mandated Alber & Geiger with European lobbying support at only five months' notice. The goal was to either turn around the Commission's position or to block the imposition of final tariffs in the European Council.

Further, on the background of the numerous anti-dumping proceedings against PR China, China's EU embassy considered this additional EU action as a political affront, Alber & Geiger's diplomatic action therefore minimized the risk of a potential EU trade war with China. Alber & Geiger's lobbying activity resulted in the Commission revising its preliminary tariff decision. The decision was based on the new understanding by the European Commission regarding the case facts, political and legal problems involved, due to the work of Alber & Geiger.



2007 was an outstanding year for APCO's European office, when the 60-people strong organisation grew by 42% in revenue. Thanks to the team's wide-range of nationalities, APCO is now even better positioned to meet the EU demands of the global marketplace. Moreover, the opening of a Warsaw office enabled APCO to meet the business needs of clients in Central/Eastern Europe. The agency is winning new accounts and providing advice to some of the world's biggest brands and public entities.

APCO developed a number of successful campaigns in 2007, such as one to increase awareness of origin marking among international MEPs and political groups. The campaign resulted in a written declaration adopted with a record amount of signatures. The crisis communications team also did outstanding work on company restructuring in Belgium. In less than 24 hours, they devised and initiated a plan responding to questions from media and stakeholders from 10 different countries. APCO launched the Spirit initiative to promote collegiality and teamwork. Run by mid- and junior level staff, Spirit organised numerous events including national days' celebrations for the 19 nationalities employed, and a wellness week including TaiChi, fresh fruit smoothies and coaching on life balance. APCO assessed staff needs and provided tailor-made training driven by another staff committee.



GPlus continues to grow, hiring 20 new staff in 2007, thanks to continued success attracting prestigious and stimulating clients. Numbering 50 consultants, GPlus continues to work successfully on some of the largest public affairs campaigns in Brussels. These include: advising Gazprom on EU energy liberalisation, working with Microsoft to engage with the Commission and Brussels-based media, and supporting Toyota's efforts to lead on environmental sustainability. In 2007, GPlus helped two clients achieve outstanding results: A French insulation manufacturer, threatened by obscure EU legislation, faced a situation where its market would literally disappear. GPlus helped the client make its case with key EU actors, managing to stave off the threat.

In 2007, GPlus helped Russia tell its story amid rising international tensions. Clients such as Microsoft, Aviva, RBS and BHP Billiton have been with GPlus for many years. In 2007, GPlus won 23 new clients in telecommunications, IP, ICT, VC, raw materials, creative content. The firm offers a unique and innovative working environment, with an open management structure and no formal practice groups. Opportunities include mentoring and bonus schemes, a focus on improving individual/team skills, and involving all staff in recruitment. Staff can also make their case for working on desired accounts. Consequently, staff retention is exceptionally high by industry standards.