



PRESS RELEASE

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Contact Business Growth Alliance, LLC (BGA)

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BUSINESS GROWTH ALLIANCE, LLC. (BGA)

Pittsburgh, PA and Greenwich, CT. (March 15, 2006). The formation of the Business Growth Alliance, LLC (BGA), a national firm specializing in providing growth advisory and investment banking services for family-owned and other closely-held, middle market companies has been announced by James C. Bly Jr. and Francois M. de Visscher, its Co-Chairmen. Messrs. Bly and de Visscher, on behalf of the BGA Founding Firms, are also pleased to announce the appointment of Manning J. O'Connor II as the Executive Director of BGA. Mr. O'Connor assumed his duties on December 1, 2005.

ABOUT BGA

Business Growth Alliance, LLC (BGA) is a National Affiliate Network of seasoned, professional services firms, which are dedicated to providing growth advisory and investment banking services to middle market and family-owned companies and their principals. In addition to providing core growth advisory and investment banking services, BGA Member Firms collaborate to address the strategic growth, capital formation, owner liquidity, and governance needs of such businesses and their owners.

Included in BGA's Affiliate Member Firms' Clientele are: companies owned by individuals listed among the Forbes 400 and businesses listed on *Forbes'* list of the Largest Private Companies, *Family Business Magazine's* rankings of the Oldest Family Companies in America, America's 150 Largest Family Companies, The World's Oldest Family Companies, the World's 250 Largest Family Firms, and many other noteworthy family-owned and closely-held, middle market companies including companies owned by individuals, families, trusts, buyout and private equity funds, and as subsidiaries of larger businesses.

The eight Founding Affiliate Members of BGA include:

de Visscher & Co. of Greenwich, CT

Source Companies, LLC of Pittsburgh, PA

yet2.com of Boston, MA

The Pursuit Group of Toledo, OH
Tenzing Consulting of Pittsburgh, PA
Value Defined Middle Market, LLC of Toledo, OH
Asher Training of Washington, DC
US China Business Solutions, Inc. of Washington, DC and Shenzhen, China

The eight founding firms of BGA employ over eighty professionals who are pooling experience, contacts, resources, and processes to create tailor-made, value-added solutions for existing and future clients of BGA. In addition to the eight founding firms, BGA will carefully select other Affiliate Members in the future.

“Family-owned and other middle market companies are integral participants in the US and global economies. By providing high value-added growth advisory and investment banking services, BGA fulfills its mission to protect and enhance the vitality of such businesses and, thereby, the contribution their stakeholders can make to their communities. BGA Members are committed, growth-oriented advisors rather than firms primarily interested in selling companies,” said Mr. Bly.

“By combining the talents of leading middle-market advisory firms, BGA has an unprecedented opportunity to provide family businesses and middle market firms a unique value-added mix of growth advisory services, owners’ capital management services and governance services. This combined service offering enables BGA to develop and nourish long-term relationships with leading middle-market companies around the country and internationally,” said Mr. de Visscher.

BOARD MEMBERS OF BGA

Mr. James C. Bly, Jr., Co-Chairman of BGA, is also the Founder, Chairman and CEO of Source Companies, LLC (Source), which is headquartered in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Source was founded in 1982. Under Mr. Bly’s leadership, Source has pioneered operating a multi-disciplinary professional practice that provides services related to the strategic growth, capital formation, owner liquidity, and business transition needs of privately owned businesses and their owners. Source specializes in providing such services to family-owned and other closely held, medium sized businesses. During his 30-year career, Mr. Bly has personally advised the principal owners of hundreds of medium-sized businesses in a wide range of industries on numerous business growth, corporate finance or inter-generational transfer transactions. Mr. Bly also currently serves on the advisory board of C. H. Briggs Hardware Co, Inc., Draper Holdings Business Trust, Energy Alloys, LLC and the National Charitable Initiative.

Mr. Francois M. de Visscher, Co-Chairman of BGA, is also the Founder and President of de Visscher & Co. LLC., one of the nation's leading independent financial consulting and investment banking firms for family-owned and closely-held companies. de Visscher & Co was founded in 1990 and is headquartered in Greenwich, CT. Over the last twenty years, Mr. de Visscher has been an active advisor and consultant to over 200 business owning families worldwide, mostly in the United States, Canada, Europe, the Middle

East, and Latin America. A native of Belgium, Mr. de Visscher is a family director and fourth generation shareholder of his own family's global enterprise, N.V. Bekaert S.A. headquartered in Brussels, Belgium. Mr. de Visscher is a past president of the Family Firm Institute, current Chairman of the European Family Office Conference, and a contributor to many publications, including *The Wall Street Journal*, *LA Times*, *NY Times* and many others. He is a full-time contributing editor of *Family Business Magazine*.

Mr. Russell F. Peppet, Director of BGA, brings with him over 43 years of experience in finance and equity investment. He spent 28 years with KPMG Peat Marwick holding various positions including Vice Chairman, Management Consulting. Mr. Peppet then moved into the private equity field, as Vice Chairman, Principal at Quirk Carson Peppet Inc., and as a Principal at Churchill Capital, Inc. He initially became involved with Park Avenue Equity Partners in 2001 as a Special Advisor. He was integral in the acquisition of one of Park Avenue Equity's portfolio companies, and was Chairman of the Board of a second company. Russ has also served on the boards of numerous other private and public companies as well as the Executive Council for Foreign Diplomats, and as Chairman of American Field Services (AFS –USA) for 6 years. He is also actively involved in the Fairfield County Microenterprise Investors Council (FCMIC), a group that is involved in establishing microenterprise loan programs in Ecuador, Chile and the Dominican Republic. He holds a BS from Michigan State University and an MBA from Northwestern University.

Mr. Manning J. O'Connor II, Executive Director of BGA, an experienced attorney, worked closely with Mr. Bly for many years in developing the BGA business plan and strategy. Mr. O'Connor has repositioned a considerable portion of his law practice within his law firm in order to accept the appointment to his position with BGA. Mr. O'Connor also serves on the adjunct faculty at the Duquesne University School of Law. He has also lectured at Robert Morris University on the topic of business law and is a member of the Allegheny County Bar Association. Mr. O'Connor is a 1983 graduate of Duquesne University Law School. He earned his bachelor's degree, cum laude, from Duquesne University in 1980.

AFFILIATE BOARD MEMBERS OF BGA

Mr. John Asher, Founder and CEO of Asher Training, a professional firm specializing in sales and marketing best practices and training courses and Co-Founder and President of US China Business Solutions focusing on sourcing in China for US manufacturers and distributors, and finding US acquisitions, brands or business partners for Chinese companies.

Mr. Ben duPont, Co-Founder and President of yet2.com, which specializes in intellectual property transfers, licensing and joint ventures between Fortune 500 companies and middle market companies.

Mr. Thom McLeod, Founder and Managing Director of Tenzing Consulting, which specializes in strategic sourcing, supply chain performance and operations effectiveness consulting to improve bottom-line results and global competitiveness.

Mr. Barry Rosen, Founder and President of The Pursuit Group, which assists business-to-business enterprises with more successfully pursuing revenue growth from their base of prospects and customers.

Mr. Garth Tebay, Founder and Managing Partner of Value Defined Middle Market, LLC, a leading provider of valuation opinions, fairness opinions and valuation consulting services to middle market, closely-held companies with businesses.

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