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## New Website Launched - Very Quietly

*Global Direct Investment Solutions emerges as a new channel with a vision of consolidating a very fragmented market for the support of billions of dollars in major corporate investment projects around the world each year*

**September 21, 2002** -- There was no fanfare to accompany the launch of Global Direct Investment Solutions through the Internet today as a new service in the niche of economic development and professional services related to capital investment projects by companies, such as for new, expanded, or relocated offices or factories.

Instead, a very simple new website appeared quietly over the weekend in preparation for the Annual Conference of the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) in Oakland CA. The website explains and demonstrates a new business model through which corporate executives can be quickly and efficiently introduced to relevant professional service providers and area representatives to support their capital investments in offices or factories anywhere in the world - for free.

### **BACKGROUND : PERSONAL GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE ON RISKS**

Bruce Donnelly, President and founder, actually set the business up last summer after leaving PricewaterhouseCoopers, where he had been the US representative of the Plant Location International consulting group for five years. He started to test market the new business at the annual conference of the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) in Philadelphia on September 10-11, 2001, and had to quickly change plans during that event and

the long drive home to Chicago in response to the obvious effects on the economy and his profession, not only in the US but worldwide.

As expected, the economy soon changed the resources and plans of many of his potential clients in the location consulting and the economic development fields as state budgets turned to deficits. Many were trying to anticipate how such events would affect future corporate investment plans and real estate developments, especially in central business districts worldwide. There was also new recognition among corporate executives of the need to reconsider their location strategies, such as where they deploy critical business functions, in response to these new perceptions of risk.

As a former US Foreign Service Officer who served as a volunteer in the "Operations Center" of the State Department during the Tehran embassy hostage situation, and at the Consulate General in Karachi Pakistan during the Soviet Union's war in Afghanistan, Bruce had a different perception of these "new" risks of terrorism. He had been assigned to Pakistan when it was a "high threat" post attracting few volunteers after the US Embassy in Islamabad had been burned down by a mob recently. For several years he had to be constantly alert, changing his path to and from work, varying his schedule to avoid patterns, and so forth. He subsequently worked in Germany for an officer who lost many friends when the US Embassy in Beirut at which that officer was working was destroyed by a bomb attack. Bruce later worked with people who had been responsible for promoting economic development in Northern Ireland during the "troubles" there, and also assisted executives with investment plans in various "high risk" markets around the world.

Terrorism was therefore not a new risk for Bruce, but it was now an inescapable issue for corporate executives and economic development professionals in the United States who had never expected it to become a concern in their companies or communities here. It was immediately obvious that this would have an impact

on both the US and other economies, as well as his chosen niche market, so the intended launch of the new business was quickly deferred.

## **HOW THIS BUSINESS GOT STARTED**

Given the perspective of already living with global risks for over 20 years, Bruce simply shifted the focus of his work to quiet preparations for a rapid and successful launch of the new business at the appropriate time. This also reflected the methodical process by which he had previously launched a successful management consulting business in Brazil while at Deloitte & Touche during an economic crisis of unprecedented hyperinflation there.

He therefore took advantage of the following months to quietly prepare for the expected upturn in the economy, despite subsequent surprises such as the sudden collapse of Arthur Andersen, which had appeared until then to be a valuable prospective client. He started to organize the necessary networks of contacts, identify potential clients, and test market some of the ideas behind his new business model among professional peers. He started to quietly promote the new business among potential clients, so that it would be possible to quickly launch the business once he was ready.

The quiet launch of the new website marks a turning point in the business plan. "The ducks are in line now". A far more sophisticated website with additional features has already been planned for implementation as resources permit. The plan is to grow quickly once the improved website makes it much easier for potential participants to visualize the benefits of the new services for their own purposes.

## **WHAT THIS BUSINESS DOES**

The gist of the new business is very simple. The focus is on key account relationship work to develop and maintain ongoing relationships among top executives who are responsible for major investment project decisions anywhere in the US or worldwide. The service is to quickly and easily introduce such executives, on a free and independent basis, to specialized professional services or economic development representatives according to their project interests.

"A fairly small team of relationship leaders nationwide will connect these three networks of contacts to support major direct investment projects anywhere - just as the financial markets bring together investors, investment services, and investment alternatives. There is no organized marketplace today to efficiently assist executives who plan literally billions of dollars in capital investment projects around the world each year. All three groups struggle to make the right contacts at the right time, which slows down investments and leads to costly mistakes or suboptimal choices. That costs money and jobs.

## **WHY NOW? THE VISION BEHIND THE BUSINESS**

Why wasn't a basic website launched earlier? The solution isn't technical, such as just another database or website. The key is all the relationships and the knowledge required to make good connections - like the phone company with the switching and other infrastructure in place already to quickly connect your call properly. It's also analogous to the retailer who knows what to stock in the store, and where to place items so customers find what they are seeking, and has the knowledge and service focus to help customers to quickly find relevant products for their specific needs. As perhaps an even better analogy, it is like the financial markets, which bring investment alternatives, service providers, and investors together efficiently.

That knowledge infrastructure is developed through many relationships. The website just becomes a portal to tap into all that shared knowledge. It doesn't

have to be slick technically. It just has to help the executive to very quickly find good solutions to needs in this specialized niche. High value can be added by cutting months out of project timelines, and by finding better solutions which will enhance company performance for many years.

GDI Solutions has a very ambitious vision to consolidate a highly fragmented global market for services related to direct investment projects by companies - from anywhere, to anywhere. Now that the business concept is out in the open on the website, the quiet period of the launch is coming to an end, and the challenge will be to quickly become the global leader in this niche by developing all those working relationships into better sharing of local knowledge about investment alternatives during the months ahead - not by doing a lot of PR work and advertising to hype the general idea.

## **WHY QUIETLY?**

That's why the website launch wasn't a big event - yet. The business model is to work quietly behind the scenes to develop the relationships and knowledge necessary in cooperation with very selective participants to deliver on the concept. It will become far more visible once the potential participants among corporate executives, professional service providers, and area representatives demonstrate their active support for this approach to the challenge of making an inefficient global direct investment market far more efficient for everyone's shared benefit.

"It's the old invisible hand - Supply is introduced personally and independently to Demand to see if they want to do business with each other."

If successful, this could be a historic first step towards the transformation and consolidation of a huge service market, but the key to the business isn't the website. It's the potential global network of valuable personal relationships

among executives and project support professionals who can add great value by finding each other and creative ways to work together to mutual benefit at the right time ... which sounds like a suitable challenge for a former diplomat.

If diplomacy was ever really "war by other means", as the old cliché goes, then perhaps this business could be called "diplomacy by other means".

It's a natural fit for Bruce - the convergence of the optimistic diplomat, the pragmatic management consultant, and direct international business experience, including the perspective and business contacts from many years in the global economic development profession.

Any fanfare can come later, after it is a demonstrably successful and profitable business, delivering high value to many satisfied participants.

## **BIOGRAPHIC PROFILE**

--- a biographic profile introducing Bruce Donnelly, including an essay on personal philosophy and favorite charities, is available for reference on the website at [www.gdi-solutions.com](http://www.gdi-solutions.com) in the Biography section.

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