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## **Falcon looks to expand beyond trade services**

Falcon Group has hired two structured finance professionals, Niels Slikker and John Bishop, for its principal investing and financing activities for banks, other financial institutions, and corporates.

Slikker has joined from reinsurer Swiss Re and will focus on developing structured products for the Falcon Group. Meanwhile, Bishop joins from the credit hedge fund Observatory Capital Management, and will focus on origination and marketing. Both will report to Falcon Group's chairman Kamel Alzarka and CEO Will Nagle.

The move represents an evolutionary diversification for Falcon Group – owners of independent trade services provider Falcon Trade Corporation. The pair will develop Falcon's offering of financial structures away from the trade services arena, although utilising some of the innovation Falcon Trade Corporation has developed for their trading clients.

“The employment of Slikker and Bishop is a major development for Falcon as we seek to maximise the potential of our established financial structures and techniques beyond the trade finance arena,” says CEO Will Nagle. “Slikker brings with him significant structuring expertise, especially around areas such as Basel I & II, and Bishop is a highly-effective originator with an enviable contact base. Together we should be able to make significant headway in offering a wide range of tailor-made structures.”

Before joining Falcon, Slikker spent three years at the reinsurer Swiss Re, where he focused on risk and capital optimisation for banks. This followed two years at ABN Amro and a previous three years with the reinsurer. Bishop spent five years with Observatory Capital Management, having co-founded the investment management firm in 2004. Before that, Bishop spent more than 20 years working for some of the top names in investment banking, including Banque Paribas, Credit Suisse First Boston, and Bankers Trust International.

“The Falcon Group has developed an award-winning track-record as a multi-billion turnover financial services provider to FIs and corporates globally,” says Slikker. “So far this has largely focused on trade services. Our role at Falcon Group will be to develop the structured finance products available, and harness the financial solutions for use with capital intensive financial assets. The opportunities are apparent, but require strong structuring and good origination to fit Falcon’s risk appetite.”

“By building a new service offering on the foundations of the group’s boutique heritage and innovation, I am confident that Falcon Group’s new structured product offering will be acknowledged as a welcome alternative by many corporates, banks and other FIs,” says Bishop, “particularly in light of current market conditions.”

Financial structures offered by Falcon's new team will include asset financing and off balance sheet financing.

“One aim will be to realise intrinsic value from capital intensive financial assets through imaginative structuring and security application,” says Nagle. “This means providing bespoke applications that are relevant to many market situations – utilising our financial strength and expertise to take full advantage of market conditions.”