

Best trade finance boutique institution



FALCON
TRADE CORPORATION

Few people in trade finance will have failed to notice the rise of Falcon Trade Corporation in recent years. Having started in the Middle East – and retaining their head office in Dubai – they have opened their latest offices in the Americas after previous openings in Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia.

“Our focus is on making the seemingly undoable doable,” says CEO Will Nagle, who presides over a rapidly expanding team in London’s iconic ‘Gherkin’ tower. “We look for opportunity in difficult markets or difficult situations where our innovative structuring skills can add most value. And, believe me, there have

been a lot more of those lately – not just in emerging markets.”

Indeed, the parent company, Falcon Group is expanding to take in assets that are not directly trade-related.

“Trade finance is a very innovative market,” says Nagle. “And some of the products and techniques can be applied elsewhere – especially in periods where credit risk is increasing.”

Yet trade services remain at the core of Falcon, which is unlikely to forget its roots anytime soon – especially given the recent results.

“We have the ambition of achieving turnover of US\$5bn in the next three years,” says chairman Kamel Alzarka, who founded the company in 1996 when still in his twenties. “And having recorded a 67% increase in turnover to US\$1.3bn in financial year 2008 from US\$790mn in 2007 we remain

on course. We are also very profitable – with the group’s net profits increasing by 342% to US\$24mn in 2008.”

Certainly, Falcon appears to be scaling up at a rapid pace. “It is heady stuff,” says Nagle. “But in a rapidly changing market it is those that adapt that survive and prosper.”

With Falcon making such a rapid name for itself in trade services and beyond, the most pertinent question may be for how much longer it can call itself a “boutique”.

“We like the tag because it suggests speed, innovation, service, freshness and – these days – freedom,” says Alzarka. “But, in terms of scale, our ambitions go way beyond being a boutique.”

