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# Global Compact\*

Communication for progress

Opération **Phénix**

Fourth report – December 2008



**LANDWELL & ASSOCIÉS**  
Avocats Réseau **PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS** 

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Studies show that French third level graduates in arts, history, philosophy and human sciences have significant difficulty finding worthwhile employment and even more trouble aiming for positions of responsibility.

This is a case in point of the “French exception”.

With “Opération Phénix”, which we launched in 2007 with the involvement of 7 universities and 10 large enterprises from the industrial and services sectors, we have attempted to show that it is possible to tackle this very specific form of discrimination.

The results are now there for all to see: not only has our project obtained the direct support of the French government, but it is being extended and is giving rise to other similar projects.

PricewaterhouseCoopers France is proud to have championed this project and to have illustrated, once more, its commitment to the objectives of the Global Compact.

Serge Villepelet  
Chairman of PwC in France

# What is operation Phénix?

1. First it is the alliance, supervised by PwC France, of 9 big French Companies (AXA, Coca-Cola Entreprise, HSBC, L'Oréal, Randstad, Renault, Siemens, Société Générale and Thales) and 7 French Universities (Panthéon Sorbonne, Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris Sorbonne, Val de Marne, Marne-La-Vallée, Cergy-Pontoise and Denis Diderot) to diversify the recruitment of students and allow graduate philosophy, literature or social-sciences to get technical or financial jobs in the companies below.
2. For these companies, the diversification of their employees enhances ability to innovate. It offers a new perspective to the client and moreover, it allows the teams to start thinking outside the box.
3. By diversifying our recruitment, we can also anticipate future problems due to the tensions of the current market.



Valérie Pécresse, French Minister of Education and Serge Villepelet, Chairman of PwC France



# How the recruitment process was organized by PwC France

1. We set up specific forums for the 7 universities involved:

- Presentation of the 10 companies involved
- Presentation of the positions proposed (eg for PwC : auditors, consultants in performance improvement, consultants in international mobility)

One big careers fairs in Sorbone University in April 2008 gathered 1000 students. The Forum was honoured by the presence of Valérie Pécresse, Minister of National Education.

2. We created a special Phénix email address shared by all 10 companies to receive the applications.

3. We define in connection with the universities the application process :

- Attestation from the university confirming the applicant is following one of the eligible Masters
- The candidates could apply 3 companies maximum and they had to specify an order of preference

4. Each company followed its own recruitment process; the applicants were interviewed according to their order of preference

5. For PwC France : our current recruitment process was adapted and evaluation based on the following core criteria : intellectual curiosity, attention to detail, critical mind, ability to adapt, a taste for learning, sense of initiative, autonomy, team spirit, respect, integrity.

6. When recruited, people have 350 hours of training to business management.

## Contents:

- Background to business management (economic, regulatory...)
- Functional approach to management : financial analysis and policy, HR management, consumer behaviour, strategy management)



- Tools and skills (project management, accountancy and financial analysis, communication techniques)
  - Systematic approach to management (simulation of strategic management situations)
7. In addition, for the PwC recruits we set up a 2 weeks of specialised training:
- Presentation of PwC (strategy, economic and regulatory environment, organisation)
  - Knowledge of our HR practices
  - Familiarisation of our IT tools
  - Further analysis of fundamental auditing and consulting practices: principles and objectives, professional ethics and behaviour, methodology and tools, client simulation

# What were the results for PwC France for 2007/2008?

160 Phénix applications : 82 people chose PwC France as one of their 3 choices

82 applications : 70 candidates were invited for the interview process

From the 70 applicants invited for the interview process, 27 were recalled for a 2nd interview with a recruiting Associate Partner, who evaluated their capacity to integrate the company and their capacity to evolve.

He gave also a personal appraisal of the candidate.

We offered positions to 18 candidates and 16 accepted :

- 12 auditors
- 3 consultants in performance improvement
- 1 international mobility consultant (tax/fiscal)



# How to better integrate the recruits?

Closely followed assistance is given for each mission :

- Planning on large missions and coaching by an experienced auditor
- Tutor attributed to each person – Associate Partner of the LoS or the HR Associate Partner
- 2 further days (within the first 3 months) are dedicated to further training and feedback

Our main objective:

**9 months after their integration, they have reached the same level as our other recruits**



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