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 The Alta Group

January 2008

**A message from Derek Soper,
Chairman of The Alta Group Ltd -**

Our last newsletter concentrated on the large amount of traveling we had been doing in the first half of last year and some of the issues in the newer growing leasing markets. The second half of the year saw us in the conference season. We also address some of the wider issues facing the industry in established leasing markets.

ALTA SPONSORS LEASING LIFE AWARDS DINNER



The Alta Group was delighted and proud to sponsor the inaugural *Leasing Life Awards Dinner* held in Brussels in mid December. Derek Soper had long been a keen advocate of the concept of an awards ceremony for the European leasing industry and, at last, his persistence and enthusiasm came to fruition. As anticipated, the evening was a glittering and vibrant black tie occasion. All present eagerly awaited the results as Alan Leesmith revealed and introduced the excellent nominations which had given the judging panel plenty to deliberate. So, which companies and personalities were nominated, and why? And who were the winners? [The answers and photographs are unveiled here.](#)

WHAT DO LESSORS DO ON A SATURDAY NIGHT?

PROFILE

MARC TENDLER
Principal
The Alta Group



Marc joined Alta in London on its European formation and has been very

active in its development. He has helped a wide range of lessors and vendors develop and expand across Europe. One of his main focuses has been developing vendor strategies such as tackling the challenging question, "How can I increase my market penetration rate?" Finding solutions is a critical issue as vendors compete against a range of alternative funding sources, not only in micro and small ticket but also in medium and enterprise space. Marc has worked with many clients considering market entry analysis, benchmarking, competitive reviews and



Why would the small 900-year-old village of Cuckfield in rural Sussex, England, have been witness to a large gathering of prominent members of the international leasing community from the last four decades? And what was Derek Soper doing dressed in a dinner suit with a microphone in his hand on a Saturday night? Well, it was not Karaoke! To find out what was happening to cause people to fly across the Atlantic just to be there, please [click here](#).

M&A strategies. His many years of leasing experience help solve these challenges. For more information about Marc's expertise, please [click here](#).

RECORD ATTENDANCE AT LEASEUROPE

With well over 350 delegates and about 30 countries represented, the 2007 Leaseurope and Eurofinas Joint Annual Convention in Edinburgh provided an excellent networking opportunity with industry colleagues from across Europe as well as with important policy-makers.



Derek Soper, Rita Jakusch of UniCredit, Ed White of White Clarke Group and Malcolm Ogle of The Alta Group, exchange views between sessions.

The Alta Group unveiled its new exhibition stand at the Convention and the Alta team was kept busy throughout the Convention as both clients and industry colleagues stopped by the stand to talk about Alta's services, industry issues and the wider economic climate and prospects.

PROFILE

JAVIER de LEON BLANCO
Principal
The Alta Group



Javier de León Blanco, our Principal based in Madrid, makes the

following observations on the Spanish market. "It was more than 18 months ago, a long time in economic terms, when the Chairman of the Bank of Spain recommended the Spanish Banks and Saving Banks to turn to business such as Consumer Credits and B2B, instead of looking mainly to mortgages for growth, as they had done in the previous five years. That message today is far more valuable in light of the recent crisis caused by the subprimes. That is why the Spanish Alta members view the future of our Asset Finance Industry in Spain with great confidence and optimism for 2008, despite the large shadows over the mortgage market and its influence on the economy, higher rates,



The new Alta Group exhibition stand.

Derek Soper enthused: "It was an extremely busy couple of days but very rewarding in terms of meeting clients and chatting with our colleagues from so many different countries. We were delighted to welcome a large number of visitors to our stand and to have the opportunity to talk about a wide range of business challenges." To read Derek's reflections on the Convention, please [click here](#).

HELPING LESSORS FIND QUALITY STAFF

The CEE and SEE regions of Europe are areas of significant growth in the leasing industry and staff are also in great demand there. In order to be in a position to assist our clients who are seeking to recruit and grow in those regions, The Alta Group has a new business partner, Hill International, which is a personnel search and find consultancy with offices in 20 countries, mainly in Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe. To read more about how Alta and Hill can jointly assist lessors with recruitment in those regions [click here](#).

Many in the industry, on both sides of the Atlantic, question whether there is adequate staff with competent leasing knowledge available to replace those who built the industry and are now "moving on" or reaching retirement age. The problem is even more acute in growing markets such as China where even those with limited knowledge are greatly sought after. To read Derek Soper's article on this subject [Click Here](#).

IS THE SME MARKET A SUITABLE TARGET FOR LESSORS?

The European Union officially describes Small and Medium Enterprises as having less than 250 employees. An estimated 99% of businesses in the EU are classified as falling into the SME category. To read why Derek Soper questions if lessors tackling this market may be "flogging the proverbial dead horse" [click here](#).

PREDICTIONS FOR M&A ACTIVITY IN THE NEW YEAR

Alta's extensive databases are not divine oracles. They do, however, provide keen insights for predicting trends in mergers and acquisitions. Malcolm Ogle shares his predictions in the article *Is Leasing About To See An Upsurge In M&A Activity?* He evaluates a

bad debts and unemployment." To read Javier's profile please [click here](#).

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number of factors influencing M&A activity, then challenges companies to evaluate their own holdings and answer the question, "Is my business likely to be worth less in three years time than it is today?" In many cases, the answer will be "Yes," Malcolm writes. To read the full text of his article, [click here](#).

Editor's Note: Decision Points Brief is a free, quarterly newsletter published by The Alta Group. The Alta Group - advisors to the leasing and asset finance industry worldwide.

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