

# FOUNDER



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# OVERVIEW



*Can you provide an overview of PR Squared Worldwide Eurasia Bridge and its core areas of specialization in international trade and development?*

PR Squared Worldwide Eurasia Bridge is a cross-border investor relations & public relations company active mainly in various tech sectors, Series A and beyond, as well as in contemporary art promotion. We act as neither financial advisors nor investment portfolio managers and do not allocate company cash to the opportunities we represent. What we do is present tech business owners to potential investors worldwide acting as an introducer, and follow-up in the consequent deal

discussions and negotiations. Though we do our own analysis of the investment opportunities, the investor is ultimately responsible for his or her own due diligence, risk profiling, and investment allocation. We concentrate on Series A and beyond; we do not take mandates for Seed and Pre-Seed rounds, which are too early and too small for us, nor capital raises of less than USD 5 million. We do not allow for success fee only clients. Our retained mandates are usually medium to long term: 6-12 months minimum.

Once we have good conviction of potential success of the business opportunity at hand, we may help the founder to review the deck in order to help present it in the most effective way in order to achieve desired results. Thus, we engage with tech founders (sell side), venture capital & private equity funds (buy & sell sides), family offices, and other institutional investors (buy side). The contemporary art scene is another area of interest and passion, and we help to promote it internationally.



# *What inspired you to start PR Squared Worldwide Eurasia Bridge, and how has the company evolved since its inception?*



I founded first PR Squared Worldwide Eurasia Bridge in 2015 and followed up by establishing PR Squared WEB Private Limited in 2020. The journey that led to me opening my own investor relations company began in the early 1990s when my school received funding by George Soros and subsequently, in 2000, led me to write my university thesis about hedge funds. In 2005 I joined the due diligence team for investment funds at ING Private Bank in Luxemburg. Thereafter, in 2010 I moved to

Singapore and worked with a number of Asian family offices and investment fund managers gaining both buy & sell side experiences and patiently building my investor network. By 2015, I had a sufficiently robust contact base to be able to found my own enterprise. The early years were very challenging as I proved my value-add to my clients and defined my service proposition, what do I do and don't do, the latter being sometimes more important because it saves you an enormous amount of time and

ultimately money, allowing you to concentrate on a few selected winning deals instead of spreading yourself too thin. I also wish to say a big thank you to all the business mentors I met on my way as they helped to crystallise my ideas. In 2011, I hiked to the Everest Base Camp, and this is the highest altitude that I have ever been to or will ever be. Speaking metaphorically, I believe I am getting closer to conquering my business enterprise Everest with each new client and fundraise. Stay tuned!

# *Can you share some examples of successful projects or initiatives that PR Squared Worldwide Eurasia Bridge has undertaken in the field of international trade and development?*

Over the years, I worked with Perry Barrow from FGD Strategic on the UK mandates in Asia raising capital; Mathew Welch from Asia Dorset Management on pan-Asian investments including Mongolia; Alek Trpkoski from AST Fortis Family Office and BlackPearl Capital Partners on Australia-focused mandates; Ran Poliakine, a serial Israeli entrepreneur, and Doron Cohen from A-Labs on SixAI, an AI Robotics roadshow in Singapore; Irwin Katsof, President of Trademissions.org, the US Department of Commerce Trade Mission, on getting new Asian limited partners (LPs like Family Offices) to invest in the US investment fund managers (GPs), predominantly in Venture Capital, Private Equity and Real Estate. Despite COVID, in 2021 I managed to promote

Aspire, a Singapore-based FinTech with Italian founders, in Europe.

With the help of the Kazakhstan Embassy in Singapore in 2018, I organised a road show in Kazakhstan where Asian investors got introduced to AIFC, the Astana International Financial Centre. According to Timur Onzhanov, with whom I have also collaborated on a number of KZ projects, “AIFC is an international financial and investment gateway to the immense, yet untapped Central Asian market”. I wrote a research paper on the ancient Silk Road and contemporary China’s Belt and Road Initiative in Central Asia, including Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan as well as Mongolia. I collaborated with Thomas Hugger and his award-winning AFC, Asia Frontier Capital



Hong Kong team who continuously studies and invests in these frontier markets, including the AFC Uzbekistan run by Scott Osheroff. I was on the India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka (U)HNW team at Henley & Partners.

As a more in-depth example, I worked with Now Comms Asia on their Series A. This is a MediaTech / EventTech award-winning agency with an inspiring leadership by Andrew McArthur-Edwards. I managed to organise a European roadshow for Now Comms Asia in 2021 despite COVID restrictions. Also, I would like to mention that this company managed to change their business model to adapt to and ultimately benefit from the pandemic situation. It is fantastic to work with such a forward-looking client as I could share my enthusiasm with potential investors.



# DEVELOPMENT



In 2017 Ohad Zuckerman from Copia Agriculture and Food Technologies Fund found me on LinkedIn ahead of his trip to Singapore. I managed to quickly put together a number of Asian investor meetings effectively organising Copia's Singapore roadshow. I have been in touch with Ohad and Eyal Cohen, his partner, ever since, helping Copia to find new potential LPs, as well as looking for co-investors for the underlying portfolio companies. I really like the sustainability angle here because many technologies that Copia invested in and helps bring to market are instrumental to feed better, cheaper, quicker our growing population which is facing a global climate crisis. One of these companies that Copia invested in is ToBe with Eric Joely who found a solution for varroa-free beekeeping.

My late father used to be a beekeeper (outside of his main job as a senior researcher in geophysics for the Academy of Sciences),

and I understand the importance of bees in the food chain, so again promoting an enterprise where I see value-added is great. I am helping ToBe with their Series A capital raise as we speak. And when Ohad and Eyal launch their second fund, I will be happy to help them raise the necessary capital.

For several years, I have been an active member in Singapore and in Israel of the Union of French Abroad, l'Union des Français à l'Étranger, UFE, a worldwide organisation, and working on several cross-border projects with Gerard Pomper, UFE's Israel Representation, with French and Israeli entrepreneurs and investors.

I am a Board Member of the Asia CEO Community created by Gary Lam. And as of now, I am working on a Series A for Israel-based varroa-free beekeeping ToBe as well as negotiating potential new mandates in Dubai in the UAE and in Milan in Italy.

*In the current global economic landscape, what are some of the key challenges that businesses face when expanding into international markets, and how does PR Squared Worldwide Eurasia Bridge help them overcome those challenges?*



I would call it familiarity bias: Asian investors prefer to invest in Asia whereas European investors like to invest in Europe, and the US in the US. Bringing an Asian business, like Now Comms Asia or Aspire, for funding in Europe is not easy because most investors there say that it is outside of their investment scope. Similarly, looking for funding for let's say an Israeli tech business or the US investment fund in Asia is not straightforward either as local investors feel more comfortable investing in South East Asia.

Now, it is not impossible,

and I have worked on all above-mentioned cross-border cases. The additional challenge is how to manage parties' expectations. Many potential clients from Europe that I have spoken with over the years have this view that the moment when they present their business in Asia, they will miraculously find the necessary funding because cash-rich Asian investors need to deploy their capital, that it is easy, it is a piece of cake. Or clients who need the capital inflow "yesterday" or within one-two months. It is just not realistic! It is impossible for me to live up to these kinds of

expectations, and I have to explain to these counterparts that raising money in Asia is not easier than everywhere else and is possibly more difficult because of high context of Asian culture and respecting the "face". To sum up, capital raising is not a sprint but a marathon and is a side-by-side part of business development over all the stages of enterprise growth. And you don't hire the same runners for the marathon as you do for the sprint. Businesses should be aware of this before engaging in fundraising.

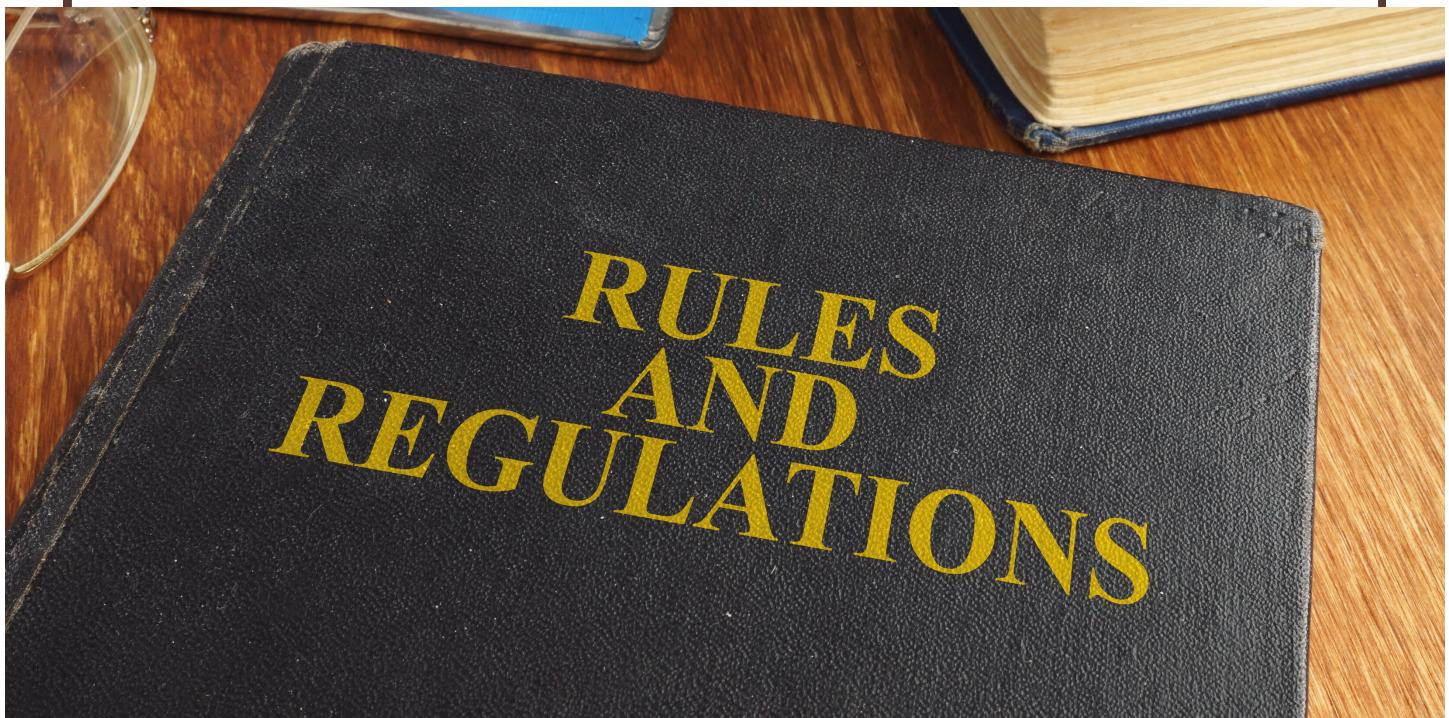
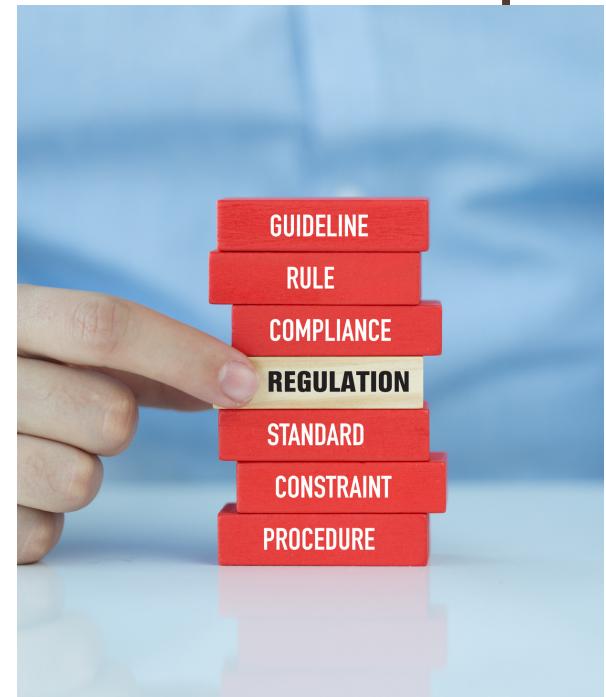
## *How does PR Squared Worldwide Eurasia Bridge assist businesses in navigating complex international trade regulations and compliance requirements?*

Having a legal counsel, in our case Harry Elias Partnership LLP, is a must. Moreover, there are things to watch out for, like how US investors always need to be treated separately from others in view of FATCA requirements; and for Switzerland entities in particular we need to have a reverse solicitation mechanism in place.

At PR Squared WEB we are careful not to do advisory

nor investment portfolio management, both of which require a license, and that greatly simplifies the implications of regulations and compliance.

Ultimately, the investor and the company looking for funding need to make sure that the contract that they sign adheres to all the rules and regulations.



# *What strategies does PR Squared Worldwide Eurasia Bridge employ to facilitate effective communication and collaboration between businesses from different cultural and economic backgrounds?*

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o far, I have lived and worked in seven countries around the world and I believe that I acquired the necessary flexibility of mindset to be able to adapt to different cultural environments. Also, the knowledge that I got through the Senior Management Program at Cambridge Judge Business School for Senior Executives on cultural diversity comes really handy.

I like to say that a cultural understanding is like an iceberg with the majority of our beliefs that act in our subconscious background: we are not even aware why we act in this or that way.

Bringing these hidden principles to the surface is the key of successful cultural adaptation. I will give you an example; I managed to

bring a conclusion to a deal that almost failed between the governments of two countries. One invented a technology for construction, and the other one wanted to buy this new building material. However, during the price negotiation a quarrel started, and the parties were ready to walk out without the deal signed. I understood the underlying reason of the significant gap in pricing: one party was thinking in cubic meters and the other one in cubic feet! Thanks to this insight, both parties were happy to conclude the deal. It is not always this simple, of course, but this illustrates well how a grain of sand can spoil the whole endeavour.



## *What are some of the key factors that companies should consider when entering new international markets, and how does PR Squared Worldwide Eurasia Bridge provide guidance in this regard?*

Opening new markets for clients is not our primary concern as we are engaged to identify potential investors, not customers. However, it has happened before that finding a strategic investor also helps the client to penetrate a new international market. So, for PR Squared WEB, bringing new customers for our client is often a by-product of investor search.



## *Can you talk about the role of technology and digital platforms in facilitating international trade and how PR Squared Worldwide Eurasia Bridge incorporates these advancements into its services?*

Nothing replaces a personal conversation, face-to-face or zoom. Digital platforms are great for finding the right person to speak to but are only as good as their input data. Excel tables and databases need to have trustworthy information like the investment stage (Pre-Seed, Seed, Series A, B, etc), geography focus, relevant sectors and the size of the usual cheque. Customer Relationship Management, CRM, systems are great for managing all investor-relevant information but again are only as good as your discipline to write everything down in the CRM.

# HOW DOES PR SQUARED WORLDWIDE EURASIA BRIDGE SUPPORT BUSINESSES IN MANAGING RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES ASSOCIATED WITH INTERNATIONAL TRADE, SUCH AS CURRENCY FLUCTUATIONS, TRADE BARRIERS, OR POLITICAL INSTABILITY?



As corporates, we cannot influence currency fluctuations, trade barriers or political instability. The word that describes the right attitude here is resilience, and the best example I can think of right now is probably the Israel tech sector that aims to deliver “no matter what”, despite the war. As a business leader, I can choose the mandates that I wish

to concentrate on and the terms that are agreeable and fair, fair for both sides. Cornering someone and forcing their hand to accept unjust terms because of the “difficult situation” will never be beneficial in the long run as it ultimately destroys the relationship. As investor relations executive, relationships are my utmost priority and the most precious asset of my consulting company.

*What advice would you give to businesses looking to expand their operations internationally, particularly in the context of sustainable development and responsible business practices?*

On business expansion, I would advise building a solid and profitable business in one market first before expanding to any other market. Also, one should consider doing solid research for demand as well as building virtual teams to test new markets before embarking on building new offices in other locations. This helps avoid potential hire and fire situations and avoids overall risk of business collapse from too rapid expansion.

On sustainability, I am all for sustainable development, and when I talk with a new potential client, sustainability is definitely one of my main criteria when considering whether or not to onboard a new client. And I truly hope that with the help of PR Squared WEB we can make the world a better place for us all!

*Maggie Au Yeung*  
Edited by



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