



Kristen Lackajis reports.

FORWARD THINKING

Having completed its first full year, which included the disposal of non-core business DKM Wertpapierhandelsbank AG, ThomasLloyd has its sights set on success. Executive director, Tony Coveney, explains to ACQ the key elements behind the company's driving force. Kristen Lackajis reports. It was in August 2006 that ThomasLloyd was incepted following the acquisition of Illington Fund Management LLC by DKM Asset Management AG.

This created a new company under the header of ThomasLloyd Group plc, which serves as the parent organisation for the group.

ThomasLloyd offers a full range of financial services to its clients in the Americas, Europe and Asia through its divisions: Investment Banking and Investment Management.

Headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland, the company employs more than 60 professionals worldwide in six countries on three continents.

Meet Tony Coveney. Following a career already spanning 26 years and including alumnus of some of the world's most prestigious financial institutions, Coveney joined ThomasLloyd in 2006 as executive director and as global head of its Investment Management division.

"Throughout my career, I have been fortunate to work with some great people in some great companies, from the largest such as Bank of America and Citibank, to the prestigious, such as Lazard," advises Coveney. "I have always taken advantage of the opportunities that came my way to broaden my experience both by product and by geography, most recently working as treasurer of Riyadh Bank in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. "At ThomasLloyd, most of my colleagues have similarly broad backgrounds and experience from some of the world's leading financial institutions. This was one of the key criteria that encouraged me to join such a young company. We all believe in putting the client first and ensuring that our senior executives remain with the client throughout the lifecycle of a transaction. That makes for a great dynamic within our team. We currently have more than 60 staff in offices throughout Europe and the US. We recently opened our first office in Asia, based in Beijing to support the exciting initiatives we have in that region."

An exciting year

Here, Coveney explains how a successful 12 months will lead to further growth of the group.

"2006 was the pivotal year for our company," he begins. "ThomasLloyd Group was created from the merger in August 2006 between DKM Asset Management AG and New York-based Illington Fund Management LLC – the aim was to create a diversified banking group.

"As the ThomasLloyd Group was essentially only born 15 months ago, this last year has been very much a building year for us. We have spent much of the last 12 months putting the basics into place and getting the structure of the group correct."

"The main sector which I believe has seen the most activity this year is definitely the merchant (investment) banking sector. It's been a key area for us, particularly with regards to the renewable energy sources market. We brought in a couple of bankers earlier this year who specialise in this market sector and it's been a real eyeopener – it is certainly an area where we will continue to focus, grow and expand."



DKM disposal

It was in December 2004 when Thomas Lloyd acquired its initial stake in DKM, then Börsenmakler Schnigge AG, which led to a management restructure of the acquired company under the guidance of ThomasLloyd Group chairman, Michael Sieg. The company was renamed DKM Wertpapierhandelsbank AG in 2005 after ThomasLloyd increased its stake to 80%.

Listed on all of the main German stock exchanges, DKM is one of the leading independent securities trading houses in Germany. It is a specialist market maker in more than 5,600 stocks, funds and bonds on the Frankfurt, Düsseldorf and Hamburg stock exchanges.

“At the beginning of 2007 we had a full strategic review,” comments Coveney. “And it was really as a result of that examination that the decision to dispose of DKM was made. After assessing the future validity of all of our business models, we felt that DKM was no longer core to what we wanted to do moving forward.”

The review concluded that the ThomasLloyd Group would focus on its existing investment banking and investment management businesses. DKM was successfully disposed of in 2007.

Secret to success

As part of the disposal, Coveney will be staying on as a member of the supervisory board of the renamed and re-launched Schnigge Wertpapierhandelsbank. He commented:

“I am delighted to remain part of the management team and to signal ThomasLloyd's continuing support for the Schnigge Wertpapierhandelsbank brand, its management team and its business model.”

So how are ThomasLloyd different?

“One of the things that we aim to do is to make sure that all of our clients have consistent access to one of the senior bankers here. Therefore, if you took any of our senior managers and put them in a room, they would all say that one of the key elements of our business model is to make sure that clients have access to senior managers throughout. We all believe that our shared experiences create better solutions.

“And the larger financial institutions tend to get trapped into processes that are product-driven rather than client-driven. You see it in a large organisation where you're locked into a vertical and prescriptive silo that automatically dictates one course of action. Sometimes customers need people who have the experience to look horizontally across products and look for sympathetic relationships or arbitrage between products and processes in order to create more appropriate solutions.”

“At ThomasLloyd, we have a small group of senior managers who are very dedicated indeed, and who seek to stay in touch with the client throughout the entire lifecycle of the transaction until completion.”

Looking ahead

After a fantastic year, and with the company structure in place, Coveney is very much looking forward to the flowing 12 months.

“It's exciting, and personally I cannot wait until 2008. It is a chance for us to bring all our hard work over the last 12 months to fruition.

“We do have plans, which include expanding in the Middle East and Asia, and we have already been recruiting in these locations.

“We all want our business to be successful and respected, but most of all, we want our customers to do well. Successful clients will always keep coming back.”