



## Partner Up

Companies increasingly require local expertise abroad.

▲ In order to strengthen their overseas capabilities, many Minnesota companies are partnering with firms headquartered abroad—or even acquiring them. In January, Motion International, a Minneapolis-based consulting firm that specializes in Oracle software implementation for manufacturing companies, acquired the Oraplus group of European Oracle consulting companies: Italy-based Equilybra, Oraplus UK, and Oraplus France. Motion International was looking to offer a more efficient way to support the needs of its manufacturing clients overseas. For instance, now Motion International can input legal requirements for shipping products across European borders into its software system, says Julie Johnson, Motion International's president.

Meanwhile, Minneapolis-based boutique financial-investment firm The Mercanti Group is now partnering with Mahon China, a provider of advisory services to investors interested in entering the Chinese market. Mahon's client base is primarily located in inland China, away from cities such as Shanghai. As wages rise in popular port towns that are the traditional centers for Chinese business, many companies will be driven further inland and Mahon will be positioned to help them access resources, says Jim D'Aquila, managing director of The Mercanti Group. Mercanti and Mahon China's partnership will provide their customers with expertise in joint-venture structuring and asset restructuring.

While managers of some firms believe that it's more cost-effective to open a small office in a city like Shanghai, D'Aquila says joint ventures bring important resources from both organizations on a committed basis: "They put people in a position to be very proactive and create transactions."

Why is now a good time for Mercanti to partner with companies in China? D'Aquila says it's been only within the past three years that the global economy has arrived in inland China. He says, "We are now truly a global market."

—Vincent Staube