

## Government Affairs Workshop

January 30, 2020

### TRAINERS



#### HANS VRIENS

##### **Managing Partner**

Hans is the founder and Managing Partner of Vriens & Partners, the leading government affairs, public policy and political risk analysis firm around Southeast Asia. It is headquartered in Singapore and has more than 90 staff and 30 senior counselors around the region.

The firm has offices in Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, The Philippines, and Cambodia.

Hans has lived and worked in Asia since 1990. He is a regular commentator on regional issues.

Prior to establishing V&P, Hans was Vice Chairman, Asia at APCO Worldwide. He set up and served as Managing Director of the Indonesia practice for six years. Prior to this he worked as a political economist at the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy in Hong Kong. Earlier he practiced law in the M&A practice at Clifford Chance and was the Asia correspondent for a leading Dutch financial and economic daily. In 1995, he was elected president of the Foreign Correspondents' Club Hong Kong, then the largest in the world.

Hans served on the Board of Trustees of the Foundation of UWCSEA. He was a founding member of the Europe ASEAN Business Alliance, Chairman of the Foundation Dutch Education at UWCSEA, board member of Eurocham, and founding chairman of DutchCham in SG.

Hans graduated from law school in civil and public law at Groningen University in the Netherlands. During his studies, he was a research assistant in European parliamentary history and public law. In 1982 he took a year off from his studies when he was elected Senatus Rector of the Student Union (VAP).

Hans studied at the Bologna Center of the Paul Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) of the Johns Hopkins University. He also did stints at the Universities of Grenoble in France, and Krakow in Poland.

His family lived in Batavia, Semarang and on Biak off Papua in the Dutch

East Indies for several generations until the handover of Papua in 1962. He is married to Katy le Blanc. They have two sons.



## DESIREE HWANG

### **Director**

Desiree has over 14 years' experience in government relations and sustainability. Prior to joining Vriens & Partners, she was Sustainability Director in Agrigology Group, a triple-bottom line company managing an agri-energy project in the coconut industry. As part of the management team, Desiree oversaw the development of the supply chain towards achieving greater social impact and environmental accountability, whilst still ensuring financial profitability.

She was also Senior Director at APCO Worldwide, Southeast Asia, a public affairs and strategic communications consulting company. Desiree managed two of APCO's top five global client accounts along and headed the company's Southeast Asia Corporate Responsibility Functional Practice.

Desiree started her career in trade policy. She holds an MA in Southeast Asian Studies from Johns Hopkins SAIS, as well as a BA in Philosophy and Political Science from University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She is currently working towards her International Coaching Federation ACC certification.



## JANICE ARMSTRONG

### **Senior Counsellor**

Janice Armstrong is a senior counselor with Vriens and Partners. She has 30 years of experience in government affairs, crisis and issues management, corporate communications and sustainability in Asia, Latin America and North America.

During the past decade in Asia, she held senior Vice President positions in Government and Corporate Affairs with several companies in the food, agriculture and pharmaceutical industries including Monsanto, GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) and Mondelez International.

She has comprehensive government affairs experience and has worked with governments in multiple countries. She has designed strategic government affairs plans, including detailed stakeholder mapping, aimed at supporting business goals. She has dealt with global and regional issues covering brand and product safety, major product regulatory and scientific issues, negative government policy decisions, coordinated campaigns by special interest groups and a variety of other government affairs issues.

Adept at working in the complex and culturally diverse Asia region, she has also counselled senior business leaders on government affairs

strategy, issues and crisis management, and corporate communications including media relations.

In addition, Janice has extensive international media relations experience and has worked with reporters from numerous news outlets including 60 Minutes, New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, ABC News, CNBC International, Reuters, South China Morning Post, Times of India and Economic Times.

Janice has held several leadership positions in the business and public policy sector in Asia including past board member of the Singapore American Chamber of Commerce and the US-ASEAN Business Council. She has also chaired the ASEAN Task Force for PhRMA, a pharmaceutical industry association.

She has received several awards throughout her career from the Public Relations Society of America and was nominated for the Public Affairs Asia Gold Standard Award for Professional Excellence in 2012.

Prior to her corporate career, Janice was a press secretary for a political party in Canada and a political lobbyist for a Canadian teachers' union. Janice holds a Bachelor of Journalism Degree with Honours from Carleton University in Canada.