

## **Industry Veterans Delivering Timely Capabilities for Preferred Suppliers Facing Ethical Trade Audits and Increasing Supply Chain Scrutiny**

### ***Next-Gen ESG/Sustainability Platform Transforms Audit Preparedness into a Discovery of New Business Opportunities***

(March 11, 2019 – Boston, Mass.) A team of industry veterans headed by **Robert Pojasek**, Ph.D. and **Art Stewart**, MPM are delivering a suite of integrated capabilities that improve the management of uncertainty, build greater resilience, and develop new business opportunities for Preferred Suppliers facing ethical trade audits by their major sourcing company customers – and increasing scrutiny from external third parties.

The suite from **Strategic Impact Partners** (SIP) comprises advanced capabilities that have never been available in this integrated configuration before. It synthesizes their team's uncommon blend of multidisciplinary client-side and consulting experience for major brands involving enterprise risk and reputation management, manufacturing and supply chain, values marketing, human capital, organizational culture and governance, and C-suite executive leadership. It also utilizes a cloud-based SaaS technology backbone and captures Dr. Pojasek's rich experience in having conducted more than 20 ethical trade/audit preparedness engagements to date for a range of preferred global supplier organizations.

#### **A Dramatically Changed Competitive Landscape**

Unlike any other time, large multi-national sourcing leaders like Walmart are being held to very high standards regarding their business operations. They are expected to operationalize policies and practices to meet stakeholder expectations and improve corporate integrity while also ensuring growth at the top and bottom line. At the same time, these sourcing organizations are competing for more buyers of their products and services on price, speed and proximity, which is increasing their risk exposure. They are also competing for better suppliers and more favorable supplier relationships. In many of these sourcing organizations, up to 80% of their operations can interact with a supply chain.

For a supplier organization, if they are successful doing business with any one of these sourcing leaders, they can become the supplier's largest customer – and that power can influence the destiny of the supplier's overall business. While preferred suppliers may have every reason to be confident, their sourcing customer may impose certain requirements on the relationship as a result of unrelated mishaps with other suppliers that have affected their overall risk strategy. One bad apple can inflict damage to any supplier in the first, second, third or fourth tier.

#### **A Solution That Has Met Its Time**

The SIP solutions suite includes identifying gaps or shortfalls in a supplier's operational systems, processes and infrastructure that create non-conformities. The team helps suppliers optimize their governance systems by aligning the Facility Code of Conduct with their Corporate Code, enabling them to more confidently conform to the Supplier Code of Conduct enforced by any one of their sourcing company customers.

The expertise Pojasek and Stewart offer ensures suppliers that all their codes are not only up-to-date but structured to accommodate the expanding areas of scrutiny from external parties of all kinds. It equips suppliers for more neutralized day-to-day interactions with their sourcing company customers, thereby promoting more enduring relationships premised upon value creation.

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## **NEW SERVICES PLATFORM FOR PREFERRED SUPPLIERS**

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The SIP suite expects to deliver significant improvement in suppliers' predictive and responsive capabilities for managing uncertainty. Part of the suite includes a platform to support development of a customized management and documentation system for the supplier, as well as optimization of their existing tools.

Augmented by an alliance Pojasek and Stewart have formed with an ESG/sustainability SaaS technology developer, suppliers gain a quality assurance and accountability system embedded into the very areas of their operations most susceptible to audit scrutiny and potential exposure. Suppliers then transition to a state of "self-auditing" – a seamless function to monitor everyday uncertainty and discover new business opportunities.

Overall, the SIP suite supports a new communication standard for supplier organizations along with improved internal cultural alignment. Suppliers realize strengthened coordination between their internal functional managers (and their alignment with external risk management standards) and their internal financial auditors.

Pojasek and Stewart also ensure that suppliers are complying with – and accurately tracking – all local, state, federal and other requirements as employers. The highly-customized suite includes assessment of the supplier's external and internal context, discovery and validation of new business opportunities out of reducing uncertainty and threats, creating an Ethical Trading Code of Conduct, implementing new operational priorities such as a next-gen reporting program, training for employees and leadership teams, and development of a preferred supplier marketing strategy.

The SIP team offers on-site support and defense of the audit preparation material for supplier teams during the actual audit visit, if requested. The team also includes Alec Alessandra, CPM/MBA, a distinguished supply chain executive who spent 25+ years in global leadership roles at Deere & Company, heading their supply chain innovations involving sustainability and CSR, diversity, ethical trade, risk, talent development and operations.

### **Exceptional Qualifications for Helping Suppliers Master New Operational Challenges**

Pojasek has extensive working knowledge of the international standards preferred by corporate investors and Boards for complying with their supply chain protocols, as well as with the only International Standard on Risk Management used by most U.S. companies in their compliance with Sarbanes-Oxley and the U.S. SEC. He was trained in the Australian risk management system (AS/NZS 4360:2004), the first national risk management system in the world, which became the global framework ISO 31000.

Most of the SIP team are currently, or have been, university educators and corporate trainers. Pojasek was on the founding faculty team and remains the lead instructor for the graduate-level sustainability program at Harvard University (where he won the Petra T. Shattuck *Excellence in Teaching* Award in 2008). Stewart developed a curriculum in corporate responsibility and launched the first CSR course at Emerson College. He is a Research Fellow at the Hoffman Center for Business Ethics at Bentley University, and currently teaches graduate business and communications students at Northeastern University.

Pojasek is highly regarded for his many years of personal commitment to industry advancements, having served as a Founding Board Member of the Corporate Responsibility Association and International Society of Sustainability Professionals, as well as serving on the Sustainability Design Team for the American Society for Quality, the STEM Advisory Board at the Society for Manufacturing Engineers, and Board President of the American Institute for Pollution Prevention. His book, "[Making the Business Case for EHS](#)", was awarded the APEX "Best How-To Book" award for 2006 and his latest book, "[Risk and Risk Management for Leaders](#)" (Business Expert Press) will be published this Summer.

You may [read about the other SIP team members here](#).

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