

PRESS RELEASE

Private equity fund ESPIRA has joined forces with the executive management team to purchase 100% of ICON Communication Centres, an award-winning provider of multilingual contact centre services.

Prague, Czech Republic: 16th April 2019

ICON Communication Centres s.r.o (ICON) is a Prague-based contact centre that utilises technology-led outsourcing solutions to connect global brands with local customers. Their nearly 300 strong team of brand evangelists deliver leading customer communication and acquisition strategies in over thirty languages. For sixteen years, ICON has proved to be a valuable partner in growing customer loyalty for its clients thanks to its professional service delivery and competitive price point.

The strategy of ESPIRA is to partner with exceptional Central European management teams that have balanced gender representation, in order to unlock their value and accelerate growth. “We seek managers who successfully lead their business and maintain enthusiasm for further growth. ICON’s Managing Director, Helen Hickin, has thirty years of industry experience and inexhaustible energy – traits that positively fulfil our criteria,” said Andrea Ferancová Bartoňová, a founding partner of ESPIRA Investments.

The fusion of ICON’s exceptional management team and the financial and network resources of ESPIRA provides a strong foundation for the future development of the company. “We have immense respect for Helen and her team, and we are pleased to join forces with them to build the future of ICON. We will work together toward achieving ICON’s core objective of providing the highest quality of outsourcing service to its growing network of global clients,” said Emilia Mamajova, a founding partner of ESPIRA Investments.

"After sixteen years of developing ICON, the timing is perfect to join with a strong investment partner that can help us achieve further growth on the global outsourcing market. From several alternatives, we chose to work with ESPIRA in our management buy-out, as they best understood both the dynamic and agile nature of the contact centre industry and our objectives as a management team. The ESPIRA team brings strong managerial and development expertise, and just as importantly, they expressed genuine care for the company and our colleagues. I am thrilled with what our cooperation will bring," said Helen Hickin, Managing Director of ICON.

Existing clients will benefit from the stability that comes with the continued expertise of ICON’s executive management team and from the robust financial support from ESPIRA. ICON will maintain its core operations in Prague and will undertake appropriate expansion as new business opportunities arise.

ICON’s operational management will progress with its executive team, strengthened by a Supervisory Board that will be established for strategic oversight with respect to growth and client acquisition. ESPIRA identified industry expert Eric Ignoul is an essential asset to join the Supervisory Board and leverage his over twenty years of contact centre experience. As a centre owner and board member for some of Europe’s most successful centre locations, Eric’s expertise will bring new perspectives and techniques for growing ICON’s business footprint.

ESPIRA and ICON’s executive management team acquired ICON from the Joint Administrators of former energy broker Utilitywise Plc. ICON was an independently managed and operated company, not connected to Utilitywise’s operational business. All parties have agreed not to disclose financial details of the transaction.

ESPIRA was advised on the legal aspects of the transaction by a CMS team consisting of Laura McIntosh (lead UK counsel), Helen Rodwell, Patrik Przyhoda and Štěpán Havránek (Czech transactional and structuring aspects). EY Czech Republic provided financial and tax advice.

ESPIRA Investments

ESPIRA Investments provides advisory services to private equity fund ESPIRA which invests in small and medium-sized businesses in Central Europe. An element of ESPIRA's strategy includes investing in companies managed by balanced teams of men and women. ESPIRA looks for entrepreneurs who successfully lead their business and maintain enthusiasm for further growth. The ESPIRA's philosophy is to be a value-add partner for entrepreneurs providing not only capital but also managerial support enabling them to fulfil their business ambitions. Investors in ESPIRA's fund include the European Investment Fund, the founding partners of ESPIRA, family offices, well-respected local entrepreneurs and a mix of local and international investors.

<http://www.espirainvestments.com>

ICON Communications Centres s.r.o

ICON specialises in tailor-made outsourcing solutions that deliver leading communication strategies to connect global brands with local customers. With sixteen years' experience as brand ambassadors for leading global companies, ICON's brand evangelists provide superior service across all outsourcing responsibilities. Based in Central Europe, clients take advantage of ICON's competitive price point, access to native-level multilingual talent, and geographical location. ICON's executive management team comprises Helen Hickin, Mark Matthews, and Jiří Kratochvíl.

<https://theiconadvantage.com/>

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