

**Member Focus:**  
Every issue, ALTO Connect speaks to two ALTO members about new developments in their businesses. This month, ALTO talks to iAE Global and Study Group International about their strategies for resilience during a difficult economic year.

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# **Member Agency & School Focus**

# iAE Global

Over the last decade, with O.J. Kim at the helm, iAE has established 35 sales offices in Korea, employing 220 counsellors/recruiters, plus 67 branches or joint-venture partner offices with 260 counsellor/salespersons in major markets around the world, including China, Hong Kong, India, Mexico, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Taiwan. The company also has support and on-shore offices in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Recruiting some 10,000 students a year in Korea alone, iAE Global is by far the biggest language travel company in that country, and, working with some 25,000 students worldwide, it is one of the biggest in the world. "A lot of the European agents do a lot more in numbers of students," reports iAE Global Managing Director Mark Lucas, a partner in the company, "but they are very short term, say, two or three weeks in England, Spain, or Malta. Korean students tend to go for a very long time."

iAE offices are set up to place students in other schools after they complete their language studies. "Many students come to Australia or Canada primarily to study language," says Lucas, "and then want to stay. So we continue to recruit them for other institutions." iAE Global works with primary and secondary schools, universities and colleges with undergraduate and post-graduate programmes, two-year colleges, vocational institutes, and foreign-language schools teaching Japanese, Chinese, French, Spanish, and more.

Altogether, iAE has contracts with 2,500 institutions globally, working closely with some 500. "Australia, U.K., New Zealand, and Ireland are proactive in using agents to recruit for them," notes Lucas, "while the United States and Canada are probably the farthest behind with regard to university centres dealing with agents. But the United States is starting to move that way."

So far, despite the global recession, reports Lucas, "our onshore offices are doing quite well in Australia, and I think Canada and the rest of them are making out quite okay. China is still powering along, and Hong Kong seems to be fine."

"Of course, we have to be very careful," he is quick to add. "We've ceased operations in a couple of the countries we had, and we're focusing on ones that we think will continue to grow." Accounting for iAE's staying power in the language travel market, Lucas points to O.J. Kim's sophisticated management protocols. "He's got an amazing management and CRM (customer relationship management) system for handling an education business," he says.

But perhaps more important, adds Lucas, "basically, it just comes down to training and a professional approach. Our staff are really well trained. We have a lot of information on Internet systems, and we continually have institutions coming through to train our staff on their products and their institutions and locations."

iAE "Edu Planners" assist students and parents to identify appropriate courses and institutions, and they often maintain those relationships for years.

Another key factor in iAE's success is its singularity of focus. "There are some very big operations in Europe and South America," notes Lucas, "but they tend to be born out of the travel business and do education on the side. iAE is the exact opposite. We're totally focused on education recruitment and marketing."



For more information about iAE Global, visit [www.iaeglobal.net](http://www.iaeglobal.net).

When iAE Global was founded in Seoul, Korea, in 1992 by O.J. Kim, it was a modest recruitment agency, connecting students with English language schools in Australia and, to a lesser extent, the United States. The company opened its first offshore office soon after that, in Sydney, Australia, as well as a franchise office in Busan, Korea.