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CREATIVITY, FORWARD THINKING AND LEADERSHIP ARE KEY IN THESE CHANGING TIMES, SAYS BUCK

LONDON: 19 December 2008 – Buck Consultants (Buck), an ACS company and one of the world's leading human resource and benefit consulting firms, today announced the findings from its recent breakfast roundtable, 'People vs Profit', where HR leaders discussed how to retain and engage talent in the global recession.

Many businesses are shifting focus to maintenance and stability, rather than new market entry and M&A. In some areas, staff are less busy, have less interesting work to do, and have fewer opportunities for development and progression. This is not motivating for high potential talent, who are at risk of becoming unproductive or worse, leaving the organisation. In the last downturn, companies learned that the cost and time to replace talented people is too high compared with the effort to retain them through a difficult economic period – so companies are looking for ways to retain and engage talent without over-investing

Anna Marie Detert, Head of Human Capital & Communication at Buck, comments: "Organisations will get round this by thinking creatively. They can leverage job rotations to international locations or secondments to companies within the same value system such as suppliers, and offer skills development through offsite training programmes, career breaks or sabbaticals to keep high-potential talent engaged with the business."

She adds: "In uncertain times, it is important to recognise that many employees, particularly talented people, feel vulnerable in the current workplace, and require reassurance and direction. However, management tend to isolate themselves from the workforce until they can fully understand the impact, which has a further destabilising effect on employees.

"Leaders need to be visible, open and communicative. Many leaders resist this in times of uncertainty because they either feel like they should 'know all the answers' or believe they should wait until there is something substantial to say. An honest and upfront approach will generate greater confidence and commitment.

"We are seeing that companies which can manage the short-term cost pressures, focus on retaining talent and coach leaders to stay in touch with their employees are best placed to survive and thrive in these difficult times."

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Notes to editors:

Buck Consultants, an ACS company, is a leader in human resource and benefits consulting with more than 1,800 professionals worldwide. Founded in 1916, Buck is an innovator in the areas of retirement benefits, investment advice, health and welfare programmes, human resource management, compensation and employee communication. News and other information about Buck Consultants is available at www.buckconsultants.co.uk. Buck is an independent subsidiary of Affiliated Computer Services, Inc (ACS).

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