

Growth in France

An Interview with **Martine Pelier**,
Managing Director, Active International - France



Martine Pelier

EDITORS' NOTE After a 25-year career in the food and media sectors, Martine Pelier has now served as Managing Director of Active International – France since 2011. She was successively the Beverages and the Food Business Unit Director for France and a member of the PepsiCo Management Committee for 12 years. Pelier is a board member of Bonduelle Food Group and a member of the Paris Entrepreneurs Network. She has been involved for many years in professional diversity initiatives and is also co-founder of a charity in Madagascar. For the accomplishments of her career, she was made Knight of the Legion d' Honneur in France in 2016. Pelier graduated from Science Po Paris and

ESSEC School of Management.

Will you provide an overview of your role and key areas of focus?

I have been running the Active subsidiary in France for ten years with the strong conviction that Corporate Trading is a very creative and innovative way to support companies in their search for productiveness. This is all the more true in 2020 given the challenges of productivity and adaptation to an absolutely new business situation. Active's role in this context is to listen to its customers in order to help them optimize their cash flow and maintain a sustained level of investment despite the contraction of their business. My role is to initiate an in-depth conversation with our clients to innovate in times of crisis and to ensure that my employees are on the alert at all times.

How has Active adapted its business in France to address the challenges brought on by the pandemic?

The last 12 months have led us to question ourselves by developing new solutions adapted to different clients in particular sectors. For example, we have focused our efforts on distributors and e-merchants so that they can maximize their communication on the Internet by developing partnerships with media agencies specializing in social networks. We have also developed a private marketplace capable of delivering programmatic media campaigns in exchange. We have also been able, for example, to respond effectively to our food service customers who saw their turnover collapsing after the lockdown and called on Active to optimize the valuation of their perishable unsold products.

Where do you see the greatest opportunities for growth for Active's business in France?

The economic recovery that will follow the pandemic in 2021 will be a strong lever for a return to communication for our main customers who remained silent in 2020 because of the lockdown. This is a great opportunity for Active to strengthen these links, both with its customers and with its media partners. The agility developed by the French team at Active in 2020, our ability to handle all types of media campaigns for our clients, including programmatic, will be a tremendous growth accelerator. I am convinced that our corporate trading offers will be even more attractive when the activity restarts as the players will gain in adaptability and in the search for agile financial solutions. ●

Financial Strength

An Interview with **Michele Vinci**,
Vice President of Finance – International, Active International



Michele Vinci

EDITORS' NOTE Michele Vinci is a skilled corporate professional with 24+ years of experience in finance and accounting management. She joined Active in September 1996 as a staff accountant and has held eight different positions during her tenure with Active, including Finance Director of Active Canada, Director of Accounting – International Operations, and Vice President of Finance – International and Corporate Reporting. In her current role as Vice President of Finance – International, she works alongside the International CFO to oversee the finance functions of the international division and provides ancillary finance support to the international executive teams around the globe. Vinci graduated from St. Thomas Aquinas College with a bachelor's degree in accounting.

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Will you provide an overview of your role and key areas of focus?

The Vice President of Finance – International has two core areas of responsibility: supporting the International business units' finances and finance teams, and supporting the International executive management team. The key areas of support for the above include managing, leading and developing the finance staff across the division, financial reporting and analysis, coordination and interpretation of management information, anticipating and managing working capital supplies across the division, investment appraisals and approval, risk assessment and financial stewardship, M&A support, guidance on financial systems, financial policies/procedures compliance as well as tax compliance. I act as a key liaison between international and the corporate office in the above matters.

Is the finance role engaged in business strategy and development?

Absolutely. I feel the role of finance has changed dramatically over the years. Finance plays a critical role in ensuring that organizations continue to succeed. It is key that finance be involved from early on in the operational/commercial decision-making process. At Active our role in finance is seen to be as financial leaders across the organization adding value that goes beyond just accounting and finance. We aren't just seen as "bean counters" or "number crunchers" anymore. We partner with all divisions of the organization to help optimize operations and provide insight in aligning costs with our business strategy in our journey to continue to grow the business. We look to make analysis and reporting more efficient, help them get more insights and value out of financial data and increase the organizations focus on strategies and objectives.

How critical is Active's financial strength and capabilities in its international growth and expansion?

Financial strength is crucial for any business to be successful. It is a key component necessary to not only sustain a business, but help continue to grow and expand it. At Active we are always looking for ways to grow – whether it is expanding on our core offerings or through investing in other companies. Placing an increased focus on the company's financial strength and consistently monitoring your financial performance are critical to growing your business and achieving success. We also encourage our finance talent to develop leadership qualities across their teams anticipating the financial skill sets needed as our division continues to grow and the future working environment changes. You cannot expect to succeed or grow in this industry without building the financial strength of your company. ●