



## **The French Chamber of Commerce Annual Gala Dinner, 23 October 2012**

The French Chamber's Annual Gala Dinner took place at the Landmark Hotel in London on 23 October, attended by 320 of the most prominent members of the Franco-British community, including H.E. Mr Bernard Emié, French Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Lord Michael Jay, the former British Ambassador to France, and Lord Robin Janvrin, Deputy Chairman of HSBC Private Bank UK and Chairman of the UK Entente Cordiale Scholarship Trust. The guest speaker was Sir Martin Sorrell, founder and CEO of WPP, the world's largest advertising and marketing services group.

In his address, H.E. Mr Bernard Emié, spoke of the strength of the bilateral relationship between Britain and France, attributing it to the robust partnerships between French and British companies in various sectors such as defence, energy, the environment, construction and infrastructure, as well as the important network of British and French SMEs. He also paid tribute to the French Chamber of Commerce in Great Britain for its support of French companies developing or seeking to gain a foothold in the UK. 'The Chamber is an essential partner for our economic diplomacy in the UK,' he stated.

Sir Martin Sorrell praised French and British companies for their endeavours to expand outside their own boundaries to build global companies. 'French companies are superb at developing global capabilities and global organisations,' he said. 'In the Top 100 companies by market capitalisation, French companies often outdistance their British rivals in terms of their penetration in big multinational companies.' But he sounded a warning about the four 'grey swans' that presage trouble on the political and economic landscape – the eurozone crisis; a soft landing for the Chinese economy, volatility in the Middle East and the US fiscal deficit. As for the lessons that can be learnt from good marketing companies, he pointed to WPP's strategy of entering fast-growth markets, harnessing digital media, making good use of consumer insights as well as the application of technology, and 'horizontality', or getting people to work together.

Between courses guests were entertained by the Revelation Gospel Choir, and participated in a tombola with fantastic prizes that had been donated by a number of member companies. The event was sponsored by Ernst & Young and International SOS, with Accor, easyJet, EDF Energy and HSBC as supporting sponsors.