



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FD Acquires Ashton Partners

NEW YORK - October 1, 2007 – FD today announced the acquisition of Ashton Partners, one of the USA's most respected communications advisory firms specializing in financial and corporate communications, marking a significant enhancement to FD's North American presence.

Established in 1997, Ashton Partners serves national and international clients across an array of industries and is distinguished by its depth of expertise in providing sophisticated capital markets counsel to companies on the critical business issues they face. With offices in Chicago, San Francisco and Boston, the firm has more than 50 staff, many of whom were former Wall Street professionals and business journalists, and it advises companies across an array of industries, including industrials, technology/telecommunications, life sciences and financial services.

"Ashton Partners is widely recognized as the industry's premier independent firm focused on financial and corporate communications and is a company we have long admired," said Declan Kelly, CEO of FD in North America. "Having them join FD will strengthen our North American offer and enhance our national footprint. Importantly, Ashton Partners also shares the same approach that we do, providing expert counsel to clients' executive management to help them protect their reputations, enhance their valuations and build their brands. This common focus and sector-specific approach, coupled with their dedicated staff and its well-earned reputation honed by company founders Elizabeth Saunders and Chris Hodges, excites us as we welcome Ashton Partners to the FD Group."

"Joining FD gives us the opportunity to work together with one of the most respected communications consultancies in the world," said Elizabeth Saunders, Chairman of Ashton Partners. "FD's core focus is very similar to our own and we are excited to bring the global reach and additional resources of FD's network to our clients. This is a milestone for our firm that was made possible by the dedication and commitment of our people and Chris and I are looking forward to continuing this success alongside our new partner."

About FD

One of the most highly regarded consultancies in the communications industry, FD employs more than 550 staff and advises more than 750 clients worldwide through its hub offices in London and New York, as well as its network of wholly-owned offices in Bahrain, Beijing, Bogota, Boston, Cape Town, Chicago, Dubai, Dublin, Frankfurt, Hong Kong, Johannesburg, Los Angeles, Manchester, Moscow, Panama City, Paris, San Francisco, Shanghai, Sydney and Washington, DC. With a 20 year history of advising clients in both the private and public sectors, FD's services include financial public relations, investor relations, public affairs, crisis and issues management and corporate, business-to-business and business-to consumer communications. FD is also a market leader in M&A advisory work. FD is structured around specialist sector teams operating on an international basis, covering consumer industries, financial services, basic industries, business services, life sciences & healthcare, media, real estate, technology and telecommunications. FD is a division of FTI Consulting Inc. For more information, please visit www.fd.com.



About Ashton Partners

Founded in 1997, Ashton Partners is one of the largest strategic advisory firms specializing in investor relations and corporate communications. With offices in Chicago, Boston and San Francisco, the firm works in partnership with top-level corporate executives at public and private companies to manage and position the information that impacts a company's credibility, reputation and ultimately, its valuation. For more information, visit www.ashtonpartners.com.

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