



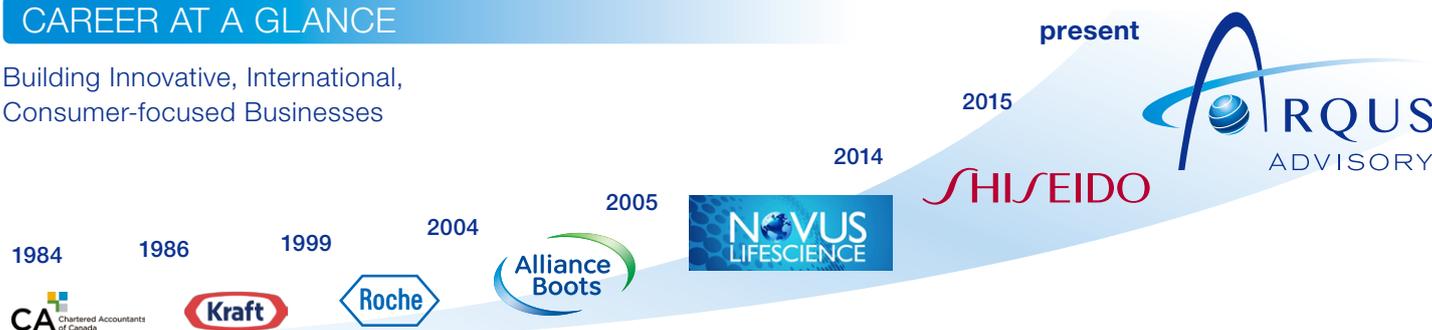
Meet Ralph Ahrbeck, Founder and CEO of Arqus Advisory



“Without a meaningful consumer focus, your strategy, your brand marketing, and your business will not succeed”

CAREER AT A GLANCE

Building Innovative, International,
Consumer-focused Businesses



SPEAKING PERSONALLY

Q What value-add does your marketing and strategy consultancy bring to a multinational organization?

Complacency is the bane of business - I bring innovative thinking to my clients. Working with diverse companies from Fortune 100 to entrepreneurial start-ups, I gained in-depth insights and a vast array of innovative best practices. Leveraging my corporate training from finance through FMCG, I amassed considerable experience solving issues from organizational, brand building, M&A, global expansion, strategic company positioning, etc. My wealth of experience helps clients develop a competitive differentiated position that builds sustainable strategic success.

Q How has your vast international experience shaped your thinking on running a successful business?

Living in 8 countries, working across 3 continents requires cultural sensitivity to apply the right mix of diverse management styles to lead, inspire and motivate employees. While consumers are more similar than one might think, cultural diversity requires an intimate understanding of local consumer insights and a dash of Global experience to drive brands. Flexible execution is vital.

Q How do you overcome complexity in an organization that spans multiple continents?

Simplicity is critical – a leader must have focus and clarity on the overall strategic vision and execution, not on detailed, individual country tasks. Typically, organizations try to “bite off more than they can chew” and fail at execution. The only way an organization can provide superior sales and profit growth is to not only decide what to do, but also what not to do.

Q How would you describe strategy?

I am a firm believer in the teachings of Michael Porter. Fundamentally you first need to define “Where to Play” and then “How to Win”. And in order to do that successfully, you need to have a clear concise understanding of where your business is today and how you stack up against your competitors. Simply put, strategy is a set of informed choices that are integrated, different to competition and are choices that you act upon. Only then will the company be able to build a true competitive advantage to deliver superior sales & profit growth. Differentiation is mission critical. And for me, the book “From Good to Great” by Jim Collins encapsulates clearly my philosophy on how companies should compete.

Q How would you describe brand marketing?

First we have to define what is a brand. For me, a brand is a set of spontaneous perceptions in the minds of consumers – how people think and feel about our brands. Brands are not products. Far too often, companies focus too much on the functional benefits of their products and fail to establish an emotional connection between the brand and the consumer. And the only way to do this is to capture a deep and intimate understanding of a specific targeted set of consumers – and speak to them on an emotional level, through what I call an “emotional hook”.