

The magazine for members of the Dutch Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong



# DUTCHCHAM MAGAZINE

2019 - Issue 3

**Volume 199**

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**The magazine for members of the  
Dutch Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong**

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Special thanks to APC for their generosity in kindly distributing the DutchCham Magazine in Hong Kong, China, Asia and the Netherlands





*Imagine...  
that there is enough healthy  
food for everyone.*

Can you see it in your mind's eye?

Imagine...  
that we can produce more food without  
overtaxing the earth. That we revive  
agricultural land and waste fewer resources.

Imagine...  
that no one has to leave their home to flee  
famine. And that there are fewer conflicts.

Now imagine...  
that it is a bank working towards this vision.  
A bank founded by and for farmers,  
that understands you can achieve more  
together, and knows all about food and how  
to grow it.

Imagine...  
that we help kick-start the smartest  
innovations by our customers and partners  
on a global scale. And jointly address the  
biggest food issues on six continents.

Imagine...  
that we can solve the world food problem  
together. And you can count on us.

**Growing a better world together**



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## Social Engagement



The theme of this issue of the magazine is social engagement, with focus on how companies engage with others through corporate social responsibility and how social media is changing their practices.

The term social engagement is commonly used as the extent to which an individual participates in a broad range of social roles and relationships, and as the commitment of a member to stay in the group and interact with other members. We asked DutchChamber's members who contribute to this issue to discuss their views on social engagement.

The Interview with a Chief is with Andrew Byrne, CEO of Aegon Asia, who discusses how he defines social engagement and why it is important to Aegon. The Lead Story is with Marielle Sas of The Women's Foundation and Nerice Gietel of Back to Work. Marielle and Nerice share their views on engagement of women (in the workplace) in Hong Kong.

Another theme in this issue is corporate social responsibility (CSR): a type of international private business self-regulation, which, over the last decade or so, has moved considerably from voluntary decisions at the level of individual organisations, to mandatory schemes at regional, national and even transnational levels. Natellie Sun of Randstad explains how CSR can support employer branding. This issue also features our member companies which successfully participated in the DutchChamber's plastic waste challenge.

We also look back at the DutchChamber's Business Awards Gala, held on 29 March with the theme of Game Changers. The DutchChamber jury and the public voted amongst short-listed members who are changing the game in their field by being innovative, sustainable, socially engaged or exceptionally talented at a young age. I would like to again congratulate the winners:

- Madelon de Grave – Young Talent Award
- Techpro Group – New Business & Innovation Award
- Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club – Sustainability Award
- FrieslandCampina – Social Engagement Award

I would like to thank all of the short-listed entrepreneurs, the jury, our sponsors and anyone who voted for all their engagement and support which made our Gala a big success! And a special thanks to all guests and sponsors who jointly contributed to our Gala's CSR ambition by raising HKD 133,089 for the Changing Young Lives Foundation.

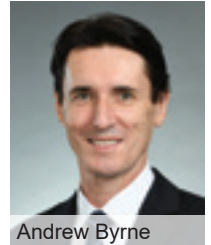
I wish you happy reading of the Magazine and I am looking forward seeing you at one of the DutchChamber events!

Maaïke van Meer  
DutchCham Chairman



# Connecting with the community and serving it better

Andrew Byrne joined Aegon in September 2016 as Chairman of Aegon Asia's Executive Committee. He shares his thoughts about social engagement in business and how his company helps people to protect their families, health and provide for the future.



■ By Donna Mah

**Please tell us a bit about yourself and what you do at Aegon.**

I joined Aegon in September 2016 as Chairman of Aegon Asia's Executive Committee and am also the Chief Executive Officer for Aegon Asia. Prior to that I worked for many years in insurance

I grew up in Canberra loving the outdoor life, so I spent a lot of time sailing, hiking and kayaking. Hong Kong offers a lot of opportunities for outdoor activities so I feel really comfortable here. Working in Asia in the insurance sector has offered me an opportunity to shape the business and find innovative ways to serve customers better.

**How would you define social engagement? Why is it important to your business?**

Social engagement can be interpreted in many different ways but ultimately it is about how you connect to the community that you are a part of. This includes how you communicate, how you ensure the fundamental value of the products and services you offer, and in some cases, which social contribution initiatives you take part in. Our core aim at Aegon is to ensure that our products and services contribute real value for society. With our ageing society there is a big need for insurance and protection that will help people provide for their families, save for retirement and protect their assets.



Aegon team building event

and financial services with different roles in Australian and International insurers. My focus on Asia started in 2009 when I was approached to help build a new type of consumer insurance business from Singapore, and since then I have stayed in Asia with roles in Singapore, Shanghai and now Hong Kong.

Very few people aim for a career in Insurance! Following a BA in Accounting from University of Canberra, I qualified as FCPA in 2003. I very much enjoyed the legal aspects of the finance studies and went on to complete legal studies from University of Sydney and was admitted to the Bar of NSW in 1993. After that, I completed a Master's Degree in Applied Finance & Investment in 2007.

I first joined an insurance company in Australia to help set up their tax function and then went on to move into a variety of different management roles. My interest in insurance grew when I realised the material difference that insurance, when done well, can make to people's lives. It is an industry that is very data driven and digitisation offers opportunities to improve quality of service and customer outcomes. This has encouraged my interest in industry innovation and improving insurance in the community.

For this reason we have identified social, environmental and economic priority areas where we can help customers manage their finances and lifestyles effectively, including:

- Helping customers improve their financial security and well-being, by highlighting the correlation between financial and personal well-being.
- Being a leader in retirement and healthy ageing, by investing in retirement research and working closely with governments and policymakers.
- Helping take care of the environment, by choosing to invest more in clean, renewable energy and energy-efficient real estate.

With research confirming that we need to support a system in which people can save throughout their lives for their retirement, we need to:

- Encourage people to make it a habit to save up
- Raise awareness on the need of developing plans to manage retirement savings to last a lifetime

And we feel that it is a duty for our industry to have a part in ensuring this happens.

### How does Aegon engage with customers?

Knowing our customers is key to our business. We connect with our customers every single day and that gives us insights as to what people see as important. In addition, we do research in different areas. For example, in India we undertook the largest ever primary research in relation to community attitudes and thoughts about insurance to better understand our customers.

Another example is retirement and ageing. We have established centres of longevity and retirement, in a collaboration of experts from Aegon's businesses in Europe, the Americas and Asia. We have been conducting research on people's readiness for retirement, longevity and population ageing since 2012. In fact, the 'Aegon retirement readiness survey' is one of the largest surveys of its kind in the world. The survey found that the global readiness index in 2018 was an average score of 5.9 out of 10. And for Asia, scores in China and India were significantly higher at 6.7 and 7.3 respectively.

Also, as part of our strategy to focus on the customer, we are committed to being an expert on financial education. We conduct research, educate the public through our Tomorrow Makers (<https://www.tomorrowmakers.com/>) in India, Futuready in Indonesia and our investment GoBear which serves consumers across seven Asian countries.

### What innovations have Aegon made to better serve customers?

Traditionally in insurance, there is a tendency to rely on agency distribution. Nowadays, especially in Asia, digital and direct is the way to go. In fact, 69% of the digitally active population in Asia uses platforms for FinTech. This is compared to 33% for USA. And we respond to this customer behaviour when building our business strategy.

A good example is Futuready which is now available in Indonesia and Thailand. It is one of the only fully licensed eBroker platforms for financial products, which doesn't only offer Aegon products as we have partnerships with other businesses as well. We offer this flexibility because that's what the customer wants – one platform where they are given options and can choose based on their needs.

Similarly, we have a comparison site called GoBear which operates in seven countries in Asia providing information on financial products with no commissions involved.

### What about employee engagement?

When it comes to employee satisfaction, I really believe that making sure we are providing real value to our society is key. To help strengthen our Aegon team and contribute, the yearly team building activities we organise are generally volunteering events where we work with organisations that help the community. For example, in 2018 we teamed up with the Hong Kong Society for the Deaf, a non-profit organisation founded in 1968 that aims to promote the well-being of the hearing impaired. The previous year

we worked with Food Angel, a food rescue and food assistance programme with the mission to "Waste Not, Hunger Not". In fact Aegon has had a partnership with Food Angel since 2015.

### According to some reports, people expect businesses to respond (and quickly) on social media. Is this true for your business?

Yes, our digital world is certainly increasing consumer expectations in relation to speed and timeliness of interaction. But I think this is a good thing – it increases our ability to understand customer needs and concerns and also to respond more quickly if there is a problem. This has required us to be more agile in our approach.

Just like the way customer needs continuously evolve due to digitisation, how we respond to the public also needs to evolve, and this is the case in particular with social media. In our pursuit to help customers achieve a lifetime of financial security we embrace digitisation. In fact we are investing in digital initiatives to simplify access for our customers. Aegon wants to be where the customer is, so we can offer products through multiple distribution channels, delivering greater transparency, efficiency and accuracy of processes.

### Anything else you'd like to share with readers?

Especially in Asia there is a growing need for ways to help people protect their families, health and provide for the future. With our global experience we can contribute towards this and over the long term, because we want to help customers achieve a lifetime of financial security. This is another reason why we are embracing e-commerce and digitisation, so we can further transform into a customer-centric company, and invest in digital initiatives by providing better product access to customers and enabling them to purchase online.

Aegon sees Asia as a growth market, in fact in recent decades we have expanded operations here, these include Transamerica Life Bermuda, serving the high-net-worth segment for over 80 years, joint ventures in India and China, and overseeing 10 countries through our tech-driven distribution businesses GoBear and Futuready. ●



Aegon team building event

# How can CSR programmes help lower HR costs?

Corporate social responsibility, also known as CSR, is defined as a “self-regulating business model that helps a company be socially accountable to itself, its stakeholders and the public”. Since the period of globalisation in the 1950s, this concept has been widely embraced by global enterprises, as they have a greater sense of responsibility, more resources to give back to the society and stakeholders to manage.



■ By Natellie Sun, Managing Director, Randstad Hong Kong

Successful CSR programmes can encourage better workplace collaboration, help employees find purpose and increase retention rate. However, a majority of CSR programmes often fail to meet its key HR objectives due to the company's lack of strategic vision.

In one of our recent Workmonitor surveys – which studies evolving HR trends and workers' motivators – we found that while 2 in 3 Hongkongers consider it important to contribute to the society, only 1 in 3 actively commit time to it. Furthermore, 77% of Hongkongers feel that they should be paid time off by their employers should they choose to take time off for volunteering activities, which defeats the purpose of giving with no strings attached.

While beneficial to the society, a majority of the CSR activities that employees contribute their time to are not aligned with their personal values. In fact, like you and I, most employees feel somewhat indifferent when they return to work the next day. This is the reason why employees do not feel particularly motivated to participate in CSR activities.

- *“While beneficial to the society, a*
- *majority of the CSR activities that*
- *employees contribute their time to are*
- *not aligned with their personal values.”*

Our research further supports this, as only 1 in 5 respondents said that they are entitled to time-off to volunteer for a cause they care about. This means that the remaining 80% either do not receive time-off to volunteer or do not get a chance to choose the cause or charity they want to commit their time to.

In the 2019 Employer Brand Research, we found that the local workforce ranked ‘give back to society’ fifteenth out of a list of 17 EVP (Employee Value Proposition) factors. This disconnect between employees' and employers' expectations indicates that CSR programmes should not only be about giving back, but should also help employees be better versions of themselves.

According to a global earned brand study conducted by a consulting firm, 54% of the respondents believe that brands can lead societal change. This indicates that people already have faith in employers to help make the world a better place to live in.

When planning CSR activities, it is not about seeing what's already available or who's the easiest to help. It is about ensuring that the CSR programme that companies design and implement connects with what employees believe in.

*“We have found that these younger workers seek to do purposeful work to contribute back to the society through their day-to-day.”*

CSR programmes should also be aligned with the long-term business strategy and company's mission, as well as give employees a strong sense of purpose and belonging in their communities. When developing a CSR programme, companies should have a thorough understanding of what motivates their employees and consider what they are passionate about.

By 2025, 75% of the workforce will be dominated by Millennials and Generation Z employees. Through multiple global studies and from our own observations, we have found that these younger workers seek to do purposeful work to contribute back to the society through their day-to-day. It is highly likely that they will look for organisations that can meet their expectations, which is why companies should start considering developing CSR programmes that are aligned with their values.

If you are a healthcare company, there is a high chance that your employees are already encouraged to make the world a healthier place to live in. Therefore, an access programme that can improve access to quality healthcare will naturally draw the attention of your employees. A technology or engineering company can help spark the interest of our next generation of leaders through interactive learning at a young age. A financial firm can play an important role in ensuring fair trade around the world.



At Randstad, we aim to empower our next generations with information and knowledge and help them get ready for the working environment and to improve their quality of life. For instance, we partner with Suits for Success in Hong Kong to provide the less fortunate with professional outfits to help them build confidence for job interviews; as well as with The Hub Hong Kong to help nurture the future generation of leaders.

There are many societal and environmental issues to address in the world. In addition to the overarching cause that is aligned with the business, companies can give their employees the flexibility to choose a charity or cause that they personally believe in. Through this, employees feel that they have a chance to do purposeful work. To encourage our people to serve the communities that we live in, Randstad employees get up to eight hours of paid time-off to give back to the society through a non-for-profit association.

CSR programmes should not be a short-term commitment where efforts are focussed on ensuring high employee participation rate for that one day worth of activities. Good CSR programmes should articulate the company's long-term commitment to the society. In fact, if done right, a company's commitment to giving back can strengthen the employer brand and improve the company's positioning as an attractive employer.

Employees who are driven by the cause will likely be more loyal. They will feel that their values are aligned with the company they work with, especially when their work is made more meaningful through the opportunity to volunteer. Companies that invest in effective and inclusive CSR programmes are also able to convey a more desirable culture and employer brand. This will allow them to attract better prospective employees whose values and beliefs are aligned with theirs right from the beginning.

*Companies that invest in effective and inclusive CSR programmes are also able to convey a more desirable culture and employer brand.*

Strategic CSR programmes have the potential to lower HR costs and improve employee engagement in the long run. Companies can benefit from a lower attrition rate, a better talent pool to tap into and a highly-collaborative workforce filled with people who are motivated to help each other to make the world a happier, healthier place to live in. ●

## Corporate Social Responsibility: Definition and Real Value

There is little consensus on the definition of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Different definitions exist because they represent different interests. Fortunately, the Business Dictionary provides a widely accepted definition of CSR as “a company’s sense of responsibility towards the community and environment (both ecological and social) in which it operates.”

■ By Boyd Mulder, Dragon's Gate Co. Ltd.



Boyd Mulder

The same definition points out that CSR is usually expressed by companies under three key areas of activities:

- 1) Through their waste and pollution reduction processes,
- 2) By earning adequate returns on the employed resources,
- 3) Through their contribution to educational and social programmes.

**Following the headline, I will use this definition to build on and to start with the first question: Is the widely accepted definition for CSR complete?**

The answer is No. For the first two listed areas I can argue that, generally speaking, it is in a company's own economic interest i.e. Profit, to reduce waste and increase efficiencies (e.g. via Lean practices). Therefore, these activities are driven by self-interest and not necessarily driven by a genuine sense of social responsibility for the community and environment, aka People and Planet. The third area of activities, covering educational and social programmes, directly benefits the community, the immediate or wider environment, or a combination thereof. And this is exactly what a company's core CSR model should be built on; to do good for People and Planet and not originate from a basis of creating economic gains or Profit for the company itself.



Besides this, there is an important fourth area of activities missing, in my opinion. This is the added value to People and Planet that a company should provide through its products and services. What is the purpose of reducing waste and pollution if companies offer consumers unsafe or unhealthy products and services, which negatively impact health and wellbeing?

Too often consumers are exposed to inferior products that could be harmful for their health: highly processed food with too many E-numbers; microplastics in bottled water; melamine in baby milk formula; asbestos in talc powder; diesel cars with high emissions; formaldehyde exposure from new furniture. Often (wrong) business decisions based on Profit are the root-cause of such inferior offerings, instead of prioritising consumer health and well-being. This is especially condemnable when companies deliberately mislead the consumer with false claims, or cover ups. Companies' CSR activities should not simply stop at limiting or reducing waste and pollution, increasing efficiencies and offering social programmes. Companies should strive to provide consumers with good quality, safe products that not only meet accepted safety standards and regulations, but directly contribute to an overall improvement in the health and wellbeing of people and their environment.

### **That in itself is the value for the end user and addresses the second question - What is the Real Value of CSR?**

For consumers the value is having increased access to products, services or social programmes that enable them to live a healthier and better life, while knowing the negative environmental impact is limited, or better yet, that there is a positive impact or improvement for both people and planet.

But what is the value of CSR for the company itself and their shareholders?

I believe that companies which prioritise doing good for People and Planet will reap the Profits of their efforts in the middle and longer term. The impact of social media and the ever-increasing number of vocal netizens will only increase the expectations for corporate responsibilities, especially among the affluent and growing middle classes. CSR and its leverage in marketing, is and will remain a competitive advantage that drives brand preference, if the four key areas of activities (see fig. 1) are embedded in the

company's business strategy and well executed. If companies only focus on the economic gains from reducing waste and efficiencies in the value chain, but disregard the wider opportunities to add value to the health of People and Planet, companies will ultimately miss out on increasing its value by losing brand preference and consumer loyalty.

For many smaller companies, such as among DutchCham members, it will be economically or resource wise challenging to launch social programmes. The straight-forward step to CSR starts with assessing your own offering, and see whether you can provide healthier, less wasteful products and services. Whether your company is small or large, CSR has to be taken seriously and embedded into your business strategy, activities and offering. Without a genuine commitment to CSR, your company might just miss out on addressing ever increasing expectations from your customers, and on creating long term value for your company. ●

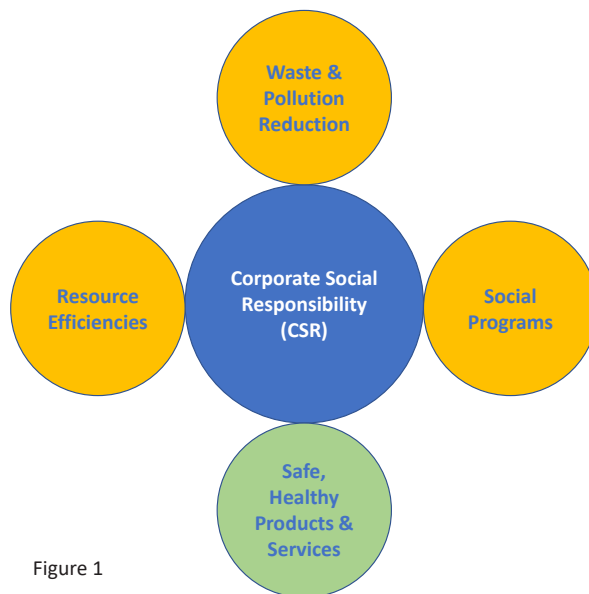


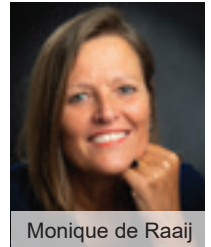
Figure 1

### **Boyd Mulder**

After working in executive positions for Philips Electronics around the globe, Boyd founded his business management and investment company Dragon's Gate Co. Ltd. in Hong Kong in 2017. Boyd's company supports businesses to scale up with a focus on sustainability, and improving the health of the planet and people. For the last two years Boyd has been working with Bluewater ([www.bluewatergroup.com](http://www.bluewatergroup.com)) as CPMO, alongside managing his investment and advisory projects.

# Dine with Dignity

An important percentage of people worldwide is affected by dexterity issues, and the figures are expected to increase considerably in the years to come due to the longer life expectancy of the population. Dexterity issues are often caused by age-related problems such as loss of strength, arthritis and injuries including broken bones, which greatly limits a person's independence. Losing independence in daily life affects not only physical health, but also emotional health.



Monique de Raaij

■ By Monique de Raaij, Commercial Manager, Amefa International Ltd.

For people suffering from dexterity issues, cutlery can be challenging to use. It is surprising how limited the selection of ergonomic cutlery and aid products in the market is, despite the fact that the ageing population is growing year on year. When people struggle to pick up and hold a fork or, in worst case, can no longer feed themselves, this also triggers emotional problems. The cutlery existing in the market which attempts to address this special need receives mostly negative feedback from its users due to its appearance and/or lack of practicability.

Since I started working at Amefa, a company with over 400 active patterns in the hospitality and retail market, I have seen cutlery in many shapes and materials, but our Integrale line stands out on so many levels. It has been specifically designed for people with gripping difficulties and limited wrist range, and shows that aesthetics and functionality can truly co-exist in ergonomic cutlery. The products are smart yet aesthetically pleasing tools allowing the users to recover the pleasure of eating, of dining in a restaurant, of reconnecting with food. Integrale gives dignity back to people who need it most.

Integrale deserves to be brought into the limelight to improve awareness, as it enhances self-care and increases self-esteem of people affected by dexterity issues. It is vital for people to maintain their independence, regardless their age and health problems.

Last year, Amefa participated in a forum organised by Dutch Days Hong Kong about health, ageing and dementia. At that occasion we met Dominica Yang, the Chairman of the Hong Kong Art Centre and co-founder of Brain Health Initiative Hong Kong, who shared the challenges her father-in-law is facing in every day's life due to dexterity problems.

"I was first introduced to the Amefa Integrale Cutlery range at a Dementia Forum in April 2018 hosted by Brain Health Initiative HK at the Hong Kong Arts Centre, which was part of Dutch Days Hong Kong.

I was given an Integrale fork as a free gift, which I brought back home to my father-in-law who has been suffering from involuntary hand tremor. My father-in-law was amazed by how the Integrale fork helped reduce his hand tremor by more than 50%!

I therefore contacted Amefa to ask if they also had a spoon and knife, and also commented on how effective it was.

Now my father-in-law will NOT leave home or eat without his set of Integrale cutlery. He brings it with him wherever he goes for a meal, and he is so proud of it. The design is quite ingenious. It is modern and sophisticated looking, aesthetically appealing, combined with functional technology, but most important of all, it brings joy and quality of life to those who struggle with gripping, dexterity or tremor issues.

As a co-founder of Brain Health Initiative, a dementia support group, and Chairman of the Hong Kong Arts Centre, I truly applaud the Integrale design as it embraces all the artistic elements yet at the same time it brings joy and health benefits to those in need. A true quality lifestyle product of our time!

I so wanted to share this wonderful product with the Hong Kong community. Amefa has kindly donated a number of sets of Integrale cutlery to be sold at the HKAC Art shop, with all sale proceeds to benefit art education programs at the HKAC," said Dominica.

Dominica's sharing has strengthened my conviction that Integrale is more than just a stylish and ergonomic cutlery. It genuinely allows people in need to dine with dignity. Amefa is currently working with several hotel chains to make Integrale cutlery available for their elderly guests. ●





# Digital messaging: Part of everyday social engagement or risk to business security?

Instant messaging, we can't quite seem to live without it, touching both our personal and business lives on an ever constant basis. Driving the accelerated world that we live in today and not likely to be replaced by a new medium soon, although we've thought that many times before about new things that quite quickly became obsolete.



■ By Jacob Feenstra, Group Director – Business Development of Campfire, [www.campfire.work](http://www.campfire.work), [Jacob.feenstra@campfire.work](mailto:Jacob.feenstra@campfire.work)



**M**essaging and chat have evolved way beyond kids using SMS to plan where to meet up. More and more business conversations and business transactions take place using a range of messaging apps. However, while a little better than unencrypted email, these apps are notoriously insecure.

WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, WeChat, Viber and other commonly used apps can unfortunately be hacked quite easily. Additionally, almost all messaging apps log conversations, and those conversations can be turned over to third parties to target advertisements or handed over to government intelligence agencies. Data is not owned by the user but more so by the platforms they are sent and received on.

Nevertheless, millions of messages containing personal or commercial sensitive data are shared on a daily basis, without us the users asking the pertinent questions around their security or ownership of information.

Most larger companies or government offices have communication policies in place, mandating that any company communication is sent via approved corporate tools only, through paid for enterprise chat technology solutions available. However, even in the most stringent sensitive environments it can be difficult to control what employees send where, particularly also if clients are pushing conversations across WhatsApp and other chat applications most frequently used by them and their communities.

There's a lot of data being collected, and it's not just by the platforms offering free chat services. It's by an increasing list of companies that are starting to realise they can monitor everything we do and provide personalised services in real-time.

It used to be that only tech experts and the paranoid bothered with encrypted messaging. Now more and more people realise that anyone who wants to keep their conversations truly private should use encrypted messaging.

So, what are the reasons why you might want to use a secure messaging app?

- Identity theft, which we all should be concerned about
- You don't want your personal data being sold to 3rd party advertisers.
- You are handling corporate data that is valuable or protected by an NDA.

Modern secure messaging apps use end-to-end encryption, so only the intended recipient can read the message. The better apps will also delete your messages once they have reached the end recipient, although not all services do this.

Now is the time to think about it. What security do I want or does my business need? Where and how do we send internal and external communication that still allows for easy social engagement? Who owns my data? It's a vital conversation with many predictable problems that we need to start solving today, before they wreak havoc tomorrow. ●



# Social media engagement: blessing or curse?

Social media is part of the fabric of the corporate world. Most brands, if not all, have some sort of online presence from LinkedIn to Twitter or China's WeChat. While the rise of social has led to new ways of reaching customers, it can also be the catalyst for a brand crisis.

■ By Annemarelle van Schayik, Telum Media



## Social allows brands to be on doorstep of people's homes

With social channels and smartphones, brands have the power to reach consumers any place and any time as long as they are connected, and, of course, interested. While bus and metro advertisements as well as TV ads remain part of brand's communication strategies, via social channels, consumers are now empowered to also connect with their favourite brands or to voice their grievances about their disliked brands.

## Engaging social in times of crisis

Brands will use social media as part of their normal communication strategies, but also in times of crisis. Either as part of planned crisis strategy or ad hoc. A recent Sprout Social report found that consumers are placing great responsibility on brands to be transparent, particularly on social. Combined with the fact that within seconds of an event happening, it will have already been tweeted, posted and shared by millions across the globe, brands have few places to hide.

Obviously not every negative review, consumer incident or internal screw-up will become a crisis, but identifying when it might, and responding to it in an effective, well-thought out, unified manner across channels may take away some of the anger, and is part and parcel of crisis communications.

- *"While bus and metro advertisements*
- *as well as TV ads remain part of brand's*
- *communication strategies, via social*
- *channels, consumers are now empowered*
- *to also connect with their favourite brands*
- *or to voice their grievances about their*
- *disliked brands."*

## Cathay's data crisis

Increasingly, people buy and associate with brands that they feel are close to their value system. PR agency Edelman's 2018 Earned Brand study revealed that nearly two-thirds (64%) of consumers globally are buying or boycotting a brand based on belief.

While brands are out there to make money and be profit-making, few people would happily buy from a brand that doesn't value its customers.

When Cathay Pacific's customer data was breached last year, the outrage wasn't so much about it having been breached, but more about how it communicated this. Consumers expected transparent and clear communication, but instead ended up being confused by the different messages. Customers took to social media en masse complaining about the brand trying to cover-up its security leak and it not caring about what happened with its customers' stolen data. Cathay's series of vague, and on the surface contradictory, statements regarding the data breach only made matters worse. Especially given the fact that the airline had become aware of suspicious behaviour on its network for half a year and that it had known three months prior to its October announcement that passenger data had been compromised.

*"PR agency Edelman's 2018 Earned Brand study revealed that nearly two-thirds (64%) of consumers globally are buying or boycotting a brand based on belief."*

Cathay made a serious calculation error believing that it would get away with the breach. And it may well have if it happened a few years earlier. But the launch of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in May that year, and the fact that British Airways saw a similar breach in August which it announced almost immediately, netizens and consumers had an incident to compare it with. In addition, it wasn't so much that Cathay had been breached, it was more the fact that it tried to cover it up, was vague about it and didn't seem to care about what happened to its customers' leaked data. In 2019, consumers have become active and echoing Sprout Social's survey expecting brands to take full responsibility.

Cathay Pacific seemed to have taken lessons from its data breach and the outraged community. In January this year, it announced its new community engagement strategy. And while it says nothing about its crisis communication plans, it does indicate that the airline is becoming more involved in community engagement "to bring benefit to society." Whether or not the consumers have forgiven Cathay will be seen in the coming years. ●

# Dutch Chamber Business Awards 2019 - Game Changers

Over 160 guests gathered at the Renaissance Harbour View Hotel on March 29th for the 5th Biennial DutchCham Business Awards Gala. Themed “Game Changers” – the Business Awards shone a light on businesses and individuals that are making a significant difference in four key areas: Young Talent, Social Engagement, Sustainability and New Business & Innovation. We believe that these business activities are key for economic betterment, and therefore dedicated the night to those pursuing them.

■ By DutchCham

The Under Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr. Bernard Chan kickstarted the event by delivering a warm and supportive speech for the Dutch community in Hong Kong. We'd like to think that the rest of the evening itself was game-changing, different from previous business galas, with LED dance performances, neon lights, 3d printed awards modeled after the winners faces, soul music and a glass ceiling reflecting the always-dazzling Hong Kong skyline.

Four awards were presented throughout the night to individuals and businesses amongst the Dutch business community in Hong Kong. Three accomplished women, Elizabeth van der Zee (PwC), Iris ten Teije (Neat) and Madelon de Grave (Bamboo Scenes) competed for the Young Talent award. Danona Nutricia, FrieslandCampina and Intertrust were the top contenders for the Social Engagement award. For the Sustainability award category, we had three promising nominees: Arcadis, Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club and UPC Renewables. Last but not least were BlueMeg, Product IP and Techpro Group in line for the New Business & Innovation award.

The jury, and we are sure, the public too, had a very difficult task in choosing four winners from a list of 12 very strong nominees. However, a choice had to be made. Madelon de Grave, FrieslandCampina, Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club and Techpro Group were the winners of the night.



Not only do we want to thank all the nominees who have been so inspiring for the Dutch and Hong Kong business communities, but also our sponsors who have helped us give them the recognition they deserve: the Consulate General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Hong Kong sponsored the Young Talent Award, Robeco sponsored the Engagement Award, ING Bank sponsored the Sustainability Award and KPMG sponsored the New Business & Innovation Award. Moreover, we had Techpro Group, Danone Nutricia, InvestHK and Tanner De Witt as gold and silver table sponsors.

Even more important than celebrating talent is to foster it of course! Which is why we raised funds for the Changing Young Lives Foundation (CYLF). CYLF is a charity dedicated to serving the underprivileged youth in Hong Kong, by providing free educational developmental programmes. We are happy to announce that this year, we raised a record-breaking total of HKD 133,000. Our generous in-kind sponsors donated an array of items for guests to bid on in a silent and live auction or win through a lucky draw.

Finally, our biggest thank you goes out to everyone who attended the event. We hope you enjoyed the night and will see you at our future gatherings! ●





# Architecture and The Built Environment

Architecture and the built environment, is something that we as a society are surrounded by and faced with every day. It is interesting because architectural designers do not only regard aesthetics in our designs, but also the social impact.



Ellen Chang

■ By Ellen Chang, Architectural Designer at Groundwork Architect & Associates

**M**y personal aspiration of becoming an architect started off with wanting to design and build beautiful luxurious villas. Beautiful landscapes, views and astonishing homes are what intrigued me. Homes were always the type of building I found interesting because they are so personal and can be very relatable as the basics and essence of ways of living are put up for discussion. These discussions can often be seen as a reflection of the challenges society is facing at a particular moment in time. The global issue of the densification of cities and spatially efficient designed units is, for instance, a great example of how societal challenges are translated into architecture.

Throughout the years, my interest in architecture has evolved as I learned the process of research and design. I found that being open to understand and relate by engaging with the end user was a process that I was very interested in. My admiration of architecture grew in the beauty of simplicity and smart design. I wanted to train myself to give back beauty to not only those who are privileged enough to afford luxurious homes, but also to those who are less privileged and in need of social housing. Personally, I believe that a good home is one of the basic rights people should have access to.

- *"It was quite a shock to me to learn that*
- *60% of the homeless in Hong Kong are*
- *employed."*

Being brought up in the Netherlands where social housing is a well-established and facilitated programmes with many proposed typologies of social housing designs, it was quite a shock to me to learn that 60% of the homeless in Hong Kong are employed. It showed that hard work in this city isn't necessarily enough to be able to afford a roof over your head. This led me to do more research and find out about cage homes with a rent that could almost get you a subsidised one-bedroom apartment in the Netherlands. The government in Hong Kong realises that there is a significant shortage of social housing in Hong Kong and that the supply does not meet its demand. The average waiting period is 5.3 years, of which each year there are around 150,000 applications for social housing, with only 11,000 units built and provided per year, supplying only 7% of the demand.

It is a big factor in the way our society is formed in the city. Not having adequate housing can really place a great deal of pressure and stress on people, which consequently also has an impact on daily interactions with the outside world. This makes it all the



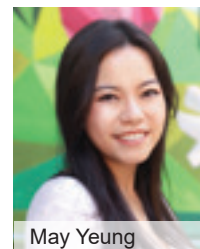
more important for the greater good to create a sense of belonging and a balanced and encouraging society. Fortunately, there are a few organisations that help families that live in poverty. From their experience, they share that existing housing conditions or even social housing units often have give priority to numbers over quality and livability of the space. With the high demand this is understandable, but should this compromise really be made?

As an architect I believe that innovative and smart design can greatly contribute to high livability and spatial qualities at a reasonably low cost. It is, however, very important that challenges are prioritised. Therefore, the importance of understanding and engaging thoroughly with the end user is essential in finding the best solutions. Throughout these processes, it is important to keep in mind that the issues we see might not be seen as problematic for the users themselves. Their priorities may lay elsewhere.

This I learned when I visited a Leprosy village in China. What I took from this experience, is that it is so important to listen to the end user. It is okay to help, but we as outsiders should make sure that our vision aligns with the users' needs in their own eyes too. Otherwise there may be a risk of only creating more or even exacerbating issues. Therefore, going back to the basic needs can help to arrive at common ground regarding what can be improved and is needed. It can bring the discussion back to more objectivity and the necessities in life. Interactions like these with the end users are definitely beneficial for both parties as it can also teach us so much, and is also one of the factors that makes the architecture profession very intriguing. We keep learning to be open minded and understanding towards each other. I hope that with this attitude and respect for each other we can create and build balanced societies together. ●

# Community Art's Empowerment of the Next Generation

"I believe that every right implies a responsibility; every opportunity, an obligation; every possession, a duty," John D. Rockefeller once said. As a graduate of the University of Chicago, I perceive John D. Rockefeller as a role model, and sincerely hope to be a visionary leader like him one day, making the world a better place.



May Yeung

■ By May Yeung, [may.sculpture@gmail.com](mailto:may.sculpture@gmail.com), [www.facebook.com/myeungsculpture](http://www.facebook.com/myeungsculpture), @m.y.sculpture

The HKSAR government recently published "Hong Kong Blueprint for Sustainable Use of Resources 2013-2022," and I believe now is the best time to make changes. With my knowledge in visual arts and my passion for sustainability, I am determined to inspire the next generation through community arts projects.

For me, community art serves as an effective catalyst to trigger behavioural changes on the application of single-use plastic at both local and international levels. From being the Artist-in-Residence at Faith in Love Foundation, the Curator of the UN #BeatPlasticPollution Family Day Project and the Sustainability Advisor at Yan Chai Hospital's Board of Directors, I have engaged with children, the elderly and the disabled to facilitate public art installations. The aim was to present the work at a public space to encourage further discourse within a larger community. Together, we successfully upcycled 2,000 plastic bottles into containers for the homeless and plant arrangements for the elderly.



Public service is a major driver for the #BeatPlasticPollution Family Day Project. I am alarmed that Hong Kong throws away 5.2M plastic bottles every day and so I participated in the Meeting of Bills Committee in Waste Disposal 2008 (Charging for Municipal Solid Waste) (Amendment) Bill 2008, advocating the use of community art as a vehicle to implement the bill and reduce the use of plastic.



For the long run, I envision the UN #BeatPlasticPollution Family Day Project to be incorporated into the core school curriculum of Hong Kong. By enabling students to connect their learning in sustainability together with arts practices, it instils in students a sense of responsibility, prompting them to make changes to their daily habits, and spread eco-friendly behaviours amongst their families and friends. Through cooperation between schools and communities, all parties will develop a stronger sense of belonging to their neighbourhoods, building a more sustainable community for our future. ●

# Thank you for participating in our single-use plastic ban challenge

Plastic, especially single-use plastic, has become so deeply ingrained in our lifestyles that we tend to forget that it is even there. But that is exactly why - it is barely there; some items, such as the vegetable plastic bags from grocery stores, we use for a few minutes if not less.

■ By DutchCham

How long before you throw away that morning cup of coffee? Plastic straws, bags, water bottles may be out of our sight in a few minutes, but they are very much present for years on end, crowding up landfills which are not too far away from us. What makes this even more serious of an issue is that Hong Kong's landfills are reportedly running out of space. Fortunately, we can see that eco-friendly practices are becoming more of a routine in Hong Kong households.

However, like most, we also realise that real change will come when businesses contribute to changing the system in addition

to individuals changing their lifestyles. Hence, in July 2018, we initiated the "Ban Single-Use Plastic Challenge". Our member companies were challenged to not offer water or other beverages in disposable plastic bottles or cups in their Hong Kong workplace.

Fast forward to a year later, we are proud to have received a very positive response from the Dutch business community, with close to 30 participating member companies. Hereby we would like to thank you for taking a step forward in making the world a better place to live in. ●



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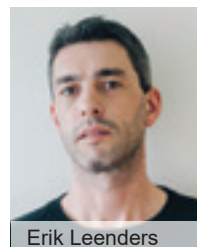




# Corporate Social Responsibility: Social Media

While many would agree that social media has made a lot of things easier, this may not be everyone's story. For artists, it has become one more thing they need to worry about in order to stay in the minds and hearts of their followers.

■ By Erik Leenders, Managing Director of David Lewis Productions Asia-Pacific, [erik@dlp-asia.com](mailto:erik@dlp-asia.com), [www.dlp-asia.com](http://www.dlp-asia.com)



For those who have missed the article I contributed a few months ago in the 'Building Bridges' themed edition of this magazine — my name is Erik Leenders and since 2008 I represent the Dutch company David Lewis Productions ("DLP") in Asia, an agency active in the bookings management of Electronic Dance Music Artists, ranging from Deephouse and House to Progressive, Trance and even Hardstyle. Have a look at our website [www.dlp-asia.com](http://www.dlp-asia.com) and you will see a number of artists that we represent exclusively and, in most cases, worldwide for all of their bookings, e.g. their performances.

● *"Nowadays, the same applies ... but even*  
● *with all those efforts mentioned before to*  
● *stay 'in the picture', if artists next to that*  
● *also don't very actively involve themselves*  
● *in the online social media, they are*  
● *pretty much dead to the new generation*  
● *audience ..."*

... and our job would be a lot harder if all those artists would not engage themselves thoroughly in the world of digital social media ... In the 'old' days, when this form of social media did not exist yet, artists would produce tracks and songs, be broadcast, show up (in person ;) in radio- and (if big enough) in television shows and perform on stage for live audiences ... if all that didn't happen (anymore), well ... that meant your career ended up nowhere and you would be considered 'non-existent'.

Nowadays, the same applies ... but even with all those efforts mentioned before to stay 'in the picture', if artists next to that also don't very actively involve themselves in the online social media, they are pretty much dead to the new generation audience ...

For example, have a look at the Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts of some of our artists:

<https://www.facebook.com/arminvanbuuren>

[https://www.instagram.com/andrew\\_rayel/](https://www.instagram.com/andrew_rayel/)

<https://twitter.com/feddelegrand>

<https://www.instagram.com/wandwmusic/>

[https://twitter.com/sj\\_rm](https://twitter.com/sj_rm)

(or simply check our website and go from there)

The fans are not satisfied anymore with frequent new tracks (e.g. this also means a brand new track pretty much every two weeks ... one album per year doesn't cut it anymore ...) and that track then also MUST hit the higher echelons of Spotify and Soundcloud and the like. Your weekly one or two hour radio show and/or podcast and your energetic frequent DJ-sets also aren't enough ... No ... they need to hear from you almost every day! They need to be engaged ... know what you're up to, what you're doing, what you did and what you will be doing.

'Cause if not, they will be engaged with someone else, another artist or 'role model' and you will be long gone forgotten ... after a month or so.

That continuous pressure is enormous, and takes even more energy of your artistic mind than before as you have to come up with something 'interesting' all the time. Something new, something that excites and ... something for the readers and followers to engage in.

● *"They need to be engaged ... know what*  
● *you're up to, what you're doing, what you*  
● *did and what you will be doing."* ●

The bigger artists also don't do it themselves anymore; their managements take over the 'personal' role of social media and do most of the posts ... it's all about marketing, branding and exposure. It simply became a tool in the progress and development of an artist's career. Sometimes the artists themselves chip in with something of their own, something more personal or while on the road, because the more personal, the better. Private lives are only for the non-famous, right? After all, we are friends, aren't we?? We are connected.

Hence, it is not about producing that brilliant in-depth track or album anymore ... or the uplifting set or performance you gave. It is all about how 'cool' you are. How engaged you are in their lives and how they can be engaged in yours.

Friends and fans forever ... well, at least for this month ... ●

# Your online inclusion strategy

Most companies have an explicit or at least implicit social inclusion strategy. However, when it comes to the online strategy this is often forgotten based on simplistic statistics.

■ By Maarten Swemmer, Apprique Ltd., [maarten@apprique.com](mailto:maarten@apprique.com)



Maarten Swemmer

“We target 80% of the market”, for example. About 20% of households in Hong Kong does not own a computer according to the HKSAR Census and Statistics Department.

If for some reason your company still has a website that is not easy to access on a mobile, or you exclude certain functionality on the mobile version, you exclude at least 20% of your potential reach, apart from the fact that in Asia mobile visits represent about 60% of all traffic. In a recently launched online shop [www.vegbasket.hk](http://www.vegbasket.hk) for vegetables we found that 85% of customers placed their orders through mobile.

Whether through mobile or desktop, browsing and using your website is not always as easy for people with cognitive, visual, hearing or physical impairments. With an aging population the number of people with such disabilities is expected to grow. The HKSAR Census and Statistics Department determined that in 2013 the numbers of people experiencing a vision problem, hearing difficulty or a restriction in body movement were up 37%, 64% and 62% respectively, compared to 2007.

Small letters and low colour contrasts between letters and background, cause challenges for anyone, but they cause serious problems for people with impaired vision. At the same time, text-to-speech web browsers, used by blind people, cannot read graphical files that contain texts, no matter how large the characters or how good the colour contrast is.

Due to its dual lingual nature a significant part of the Hong Kong population that can read Chinese cannot read English (well) and vice versa. While illiteracy is very low in Hong Kong, some people are illiterate in one of the two main written languages. Adding additional languages to your website requires a relatively small effort.

As part of any online social inclusion strategy of any company, it makes sense to include these three groups:

- People without access to computers
- People with visual, hearing or physical impairments
- People that are not fluent in all of the main languages in a country

Optimising a corporate website for mobile use and people with impairments and adding additional languages is one of the easiest steps. The effectiveness of your website would be greatly enhanced if the widest possible audience, including persons without PCs or people with disabilities can access it easily. Below I will focus on accessibility instead of mobile.

## What you can do

By optimising a website or other user interface and making the right design choices like colour contrast and fonts, your website or app can be made better accessible for people with visual impairments. Technical enhancements can further improve accessibility with, for example, text-to-speech technologies and Braille readers. When your company publishes videos on YouTube, adding subtitles ensures that also people with hearing impairments can understand the message. For the physically challenged to be able to interact with your company website more easily, you could make sure buttons and links are not small or placed close together.

*If blind people can read your website  
or people with hearing impairments can  
read the subtitles of your videos, so can  
Google's search engine!*

When done well, measures taken to improve accessibility also improve user experience in general, as well as search engine optimisation. If blind people can read your website or people with hearing impairments can read the subtitles of your videos, so can Google's search engine!

To improve online inclusion, you could involve a specialised company. However, there are also things you can already do yourself today:

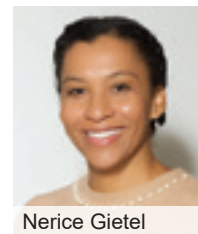
- Add descriptions (so called ALT texts) to all images using the content management system of your website. This enables people with visual impairments to interpret the images.
- Test colour contrast and font sizes using a contract checker (for example <https://contrastchecker.com>)
- Test web page structure using a web accessibility evaluation tool (for example <https://wave.webaim.org/>)
- Create content in different local languages in your target area.
- When creating a corporate video, include subtitles and a voice and when creating a podcast include a transcript. ●

## Sources:

Census and Statistics Department, Thematic Household Survey Report No. 64, <https://www.statistics.gov.hk/pub/B11302642018XXXXB0100.pdf>  
StatCounter, Desktop vs Mobile vs Tablet Market Share Asia, <http://gs.statcounter.com/platform-market-share/desktop-mobile-tablet/asia>  
W3C Accessibility guidelines: <https://www.w3.org/standards/techs/accessibility>  
HKSAR Web Accessibility Recognition Scheme: <https://web-accessibility.hk/en> or <https://www.apprique.com/website-accessible/>

# Engaging with women in the workplace

We spoke with Nerice Gietel, Director, Back to Work Hong Kong and Marielle Sas, Development Director, The Women's Foundation about social engagement in the workplace, and in particular, the ways in which their work engages and supports women in the workplace.



Nerice Gietel



Marielle Sas

■ By Donna Mah

## About Nerice and Marielle

### Nerice Gietel, Director, Back to Work Hong Kong

Nerice grew up in Curacao, studied in the Netherlands, moved to the UK for work and now lives in Hong Kong. Nerice works at Back to Work Hong Kong which she says is simply an organisation which helps get people back to work. Back to Work Hong Kong helps to ease the transition to return to work after a break and works with both individuals as well as companies. They run programmes to help individuals to figure out what they would like to do career-wise, help to build confidence and skills to return to work and to perhaps start their own businesses. For companies, Back to Work Hong Kong works with them to create attractive workplaces that support people returning to work.

As for Nerice's own career path, she first worked as a social worker, then at a charity helping clients who have experienced domestic and sexual violence. She later moved into HR with an international development consultancy and completed a MSc in Human Resource Development and Consultancy. After gaining her coaching certification in 2017 she set up her own business in Hong Kong. In 2018, she merged her existing coaching practise with Back to Work Hong Kong.

### Marielle Sas, Development Director, The Women's Foundation

Marielle has lived in three different continents over that past 20 years working for Heineken International and Nestle before joining The Women's Foundation (TWF) in 2018. It was while she was in Mexico that she decided to make a career change to combine her corporate experience with her commitment for women's empowerment and to work with underprivileged women and girls.

TWF is an NGO dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls in Hong Kong. The organisation conducts research, runs impactful and innovative community programmes and is engaged in education and advocacy. The areas of focus include: challenging gender stereotypes, increasing the number of women leaders and empowering women in poverty to achieve a better quality of life for themselves and their families.



Nerice speaking at a 'Finding Balance in the Workplace' event

## Social engagement should happen naturally

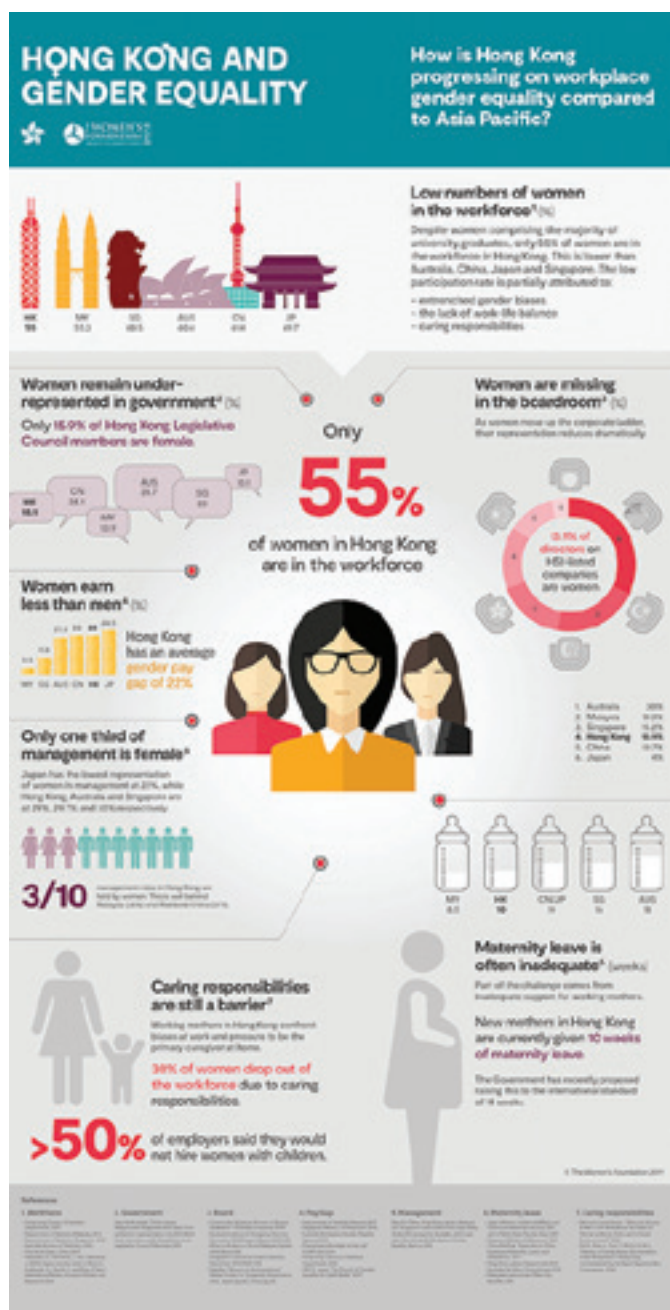
From the start of our conversation, it is clear that Nerice believes in the importance of social engagement, but also that she believes that it should be a natural and inherent part of a company's culture.

'I don't think that companies need special social engagement programmes to build connections with staff and clients. The bonds should be built through normal practices and behaviours. Respect for others and what each individual contributes helps to foster a community or corporate culture where people will naturally engage with each other,' Nerice explains.

Through Nerice's work, she meets many people looking to return to work after a break. She does note that majority are women, many of whom took a break from work to raise children, and are now looking for new challenges. With women making up half the workforce, it's important for companies to be aware of the issues specific to women and how they can help to make the transition back to work not just easier, but feasible. It's not just about getting people back to work, but also enabling them to stay at work.

Marielle also added that studies have shown that gender diversity at every level of an organisation is good for business. Diversity has been shown to boost profits, create better business practices, increase innovation and improves risk taking. By employing and engaging with a diverse workforce, companies not only build more inclusive environments, but also work better.





## Some of the issues

While many people in Hong Kong employ helpers to manage the child-care issue, the fact remains that affordable childcare for working parents outside of hiring a domestic helper is lacking. Nerice noted that the current business environment is not built for a balanced lifestyle.

'The work environment in Hong Kong is not built for balance. Flexible working hours are not common here, but for many, being able to leave work on time would already improve their situation and allow them to be employed full-time,' said Nerice. It is a major deterrent for those seeking full-time employment yet have child-care or elder-care responsibilities to have the uncertainty regarding their regular working hours. Support in this area in the

public sector is woefully lacking. According to the Hong Kong Federation of Women's Centres, there are around 60,000 babies born in Hong Kong, yet there are only 738 vacancies in the current subsidised independent childcare centres.

Marielle mentioned that in her work, she and her colleagues often meet people who are not aware of the reality of the status of women and girls in Hong Kong. The perception is that the position of women in Hong Kong, being a global financial centre, is well established. When the statistics are shared, people are often surprised by the information, for example, only 55 per cent of women in Hong Kong are in the workforce. 'This number is lower than that of other countries in the region such as Singapore, Japan, Mainland China and Australia. Only one-third of management positions is occupied by women and at board level, less than 14 per cent of board positions in Hong Kong are held by women,' added Marielle.

Another statistic that Marielle shared is that research findings from the Equal Opportunities Commission last year showed that over 50 per cent of employers would rather not hire women with children.

The fact that people are living longer means that the responsibility for elder care often falls on the shoulders of women. In Hong Kong, the Census and Statistics Department projects that the proportion of those aged 65 and over is projected to rise significantly from 11.7 per cent in 2003 to 27 per cent in 2033.

'Many women have left the workforce or are unable to return due to child- or elder-care responsibilities,' said Marielle.

## Engaging women in the workplace

At TWF there are a number of key initiatives already in place. One such initiative is a cross-industry Mentoring Programme for Women Leaders bringing together 100 women in its year-long programme. The programme is designed to build up the pipeline of women leaders in key decision making roles including peer-to-peer mentoring, group mentoring and workshops in developing business skills.



At the International Women's Day Lunch 2019 (L-R) Connie Cheung, Senior Manager TWF, Iqbal Tania – Girls Go Tech presenter, Form 2 student, Priscilla Cai – Girls Go Tech presenter, Form 2 student, Ms Chan Mei Ling, Vice Principal all from Kit Sam Lam Bing Yim Secondary School.

## Lead story



Community training for CSSA recipients by TWF ambassadors

TWF also founded the Hong Kong Chapter of the 30% Club, a group of chairmen and business leaders who are committed to bringing more women onto Hong Kong corporate boards. The Boardroom Series for Women Leader addresses the imbalance in Hong Kong boardrooms by preparing women for boards and connecting them to the right people.

Last year, TWF formally launched the TWF Male Allies Initiative as gender equality is not just a women's issue. Men are instrumental as key agents for change and the group of business leaders in the Male Allies Initiative are committed to driving gender equality in their organisations and communities. 'These male business leaders have chosen to acknowledge the importance of gender equality and listen to women's voices. As Male Allies, they question and adapt personal values, thoughts and actions - at the breakfast table, in the boardroom, at conferences, with friends. They have joined us to put Hong Kong on the map of a global movement to re-imagine equality,' said Marielle.

Both Nerice and Marielle spoke about the need for gender-inclusive global mobility programmes, return to work programmes and unconscious bias. Nerice also emphasised the importance of each individual looking within themselves to examine how their own biases may be affecting others.

### An engaged workforce is good for business

Research shows that engaged employees help to create better organisations which translates into better bottom lines. Reduced staff turnover, fewer sick days, improved productivity and efficiency, higher customer retention rates and increased profits are some of

- *'By better understanding the needs of*
- *the workforce, senior management can*
- *implement policies that support gender*
- *diversity. Engaging women and men*
- *by understanding where the gaps are,*
- *management committing to embedding*
- *inclusive policies in corporate strategies*
- *and driving change at different levels all*
- *help to build an engaged workforce,' said*
- *Marielle.*

*'I don't think that companies need special social engagement programmes to build connections with staff and clients. The bonds should be built through normal practices and behaviours. Respect for others and what each individual contributes helps to foster a community or corporate culture where people will naturally engage with each other,' Nerice explains.*

the benefits of a happy, engaged workforce.

'Acceptable behaviours are cascaded down from the top, and when a company is known for being a fair and respectful employer, it attracts quality talent. Everyone can affect how others feel, so by taking ownership of this and building connections with others, companies can not only build a sense of belonging for employees, but also for customers,' Nerice explained.

Marielle added that, 'By better understanding the needs of the workforce, senior management can implement policies that support gender diversity. Engaging women and men by understanding where the gaps are, management committing to embedding inclusive policies in corporate strategies and driving change at different levels all help to build an engaged workforce.'

Both Nerice and Marielle spoke about the need for clear communication from top management regarding policies and to lead by example. A happy workforce is better equipped to engage with customers in a positive manner leading to happier customers which makes better business sense. As Nerice said so succinctly, 'It's common sense.' ●



Nerice running a workshop titled – 'Re-engage with your career'



# Corporate Social Responsibility making its way into the corporate legal field

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has rapidly gained a foothold in business in the last decade or so. Many companies have developed 'Planet, People, Profit' strategies and put them in practice. This article touches on some of the corporate legal aspects of CSR in the Netherlands, in Europe and internationally (including Mainland China and Hong Kong).



Ewout Stumphius

■ By Ewout J. Stumphius, Senior Partner China, Hanzhang Dai, China Practice Legal Assistant, and Pimm Sünnen, trainee at Loyens & Loeff N.V.

## CSR – Central Theme

The concept of CSR embraces the idea that multinational companies should operate in a socially responsible manner with a long-term vision, and not merely prioritize profit and value maximisation regardless of the impact of their business conduct on society. Companies are expected to publicly report on their policies and actions in this regard and are publicly accountable to stakeholders and society. Direct legal sanctions for failure to be CSR compliant are scarce, though.

## Legal Context – Corporate Governance

CSR links with many areas of law, at both national and international level, and impacts most notably on corporate governance. Corporate governance is the set of rules and norms that drive the way in which a company is managed, sets its policies and takes account of its shareholders and other stakeholders along the way. Managing an enterprise can be a juggling act of marrying various diverging interests of stakeholders, from the purely value-driven shareholder interest to the broader concept of long-term continuity and success of a business for all of the stakeholders concerned: not only the shareholders but also the employees, customers, suppliers, supervisory authorities and society.

How these varying interests relate to each other differs from country to country. The US is a good example of prioritising the shareholders' interest: the company as a 'tool to maximise value' for the shareholders. In contrast, in the Netherlands (and many continental western European countries) the company is seen as independent from its shareholders, with management setting the policies and carrying a responsibility towards all stakeholders. Chinese corporate law is a mix of the two – with considerable power and control vested in the shareholder but otherwise with many features resembling Dutch corporate law.

Note: In the recently announced changes in Chinese Foreign Investment law (FIL) that are scheduled to take effect in 2020, the more European approach is adhered to. The FIL constitutes quite a fundamental overhaul aimed at facilitating access and reliability of Chinese corporate law, also for international investors, and replaces current specific rules governing foreign invested enterprises (FIEs).

Taxation is also a field where CSR is having an impact, and arguably the current public debate on international taxation,

ranging from appropriate implementation of international tax structuring opportunities on the one hand and aggressive use of tax havens on the other hand, make it likely that tax practices will become an important feature of CSR for multinational companies.

## CSR – added norms and standards of behaviour

Back to CSR: from a company perspective, CSR adds a new perspective on additional norms and standards that multinationals are expected to adhere to in their business conduct. Think of responsibility for sustainability, environmental impact, child labour, human rights, anti-corruption and bribery, taking responsibility for business in the (international) supply chain, combating poverty and securing access to clean drinking water.

There are many examples of how CSR impacts policies in major multinationals: Coca-Cola has set a target to reduce the absolute carbon footprint of its business operations by 15 per cent by 2020 from a 2007 baseline. To address the issue that its fleet of delivery trucks accounted for 3.7 million metric tons of greenhouse gasses (GHGs) in 2014, significant changes have been made to the supply chain by investing in trucks that are powered by alternative fuels. They also focus on reducing the amount of packaging material; packaging represents around 52% of Coca Cola's carbon footprint, and by making bottles and cans lighter and using recycled and renewable materials the objective is to further reduce the ecological footprint.

Years after a 55-year-old pipeline ruptured and spilled millions of litres of crude oil into the Niger Delta, Shell started to clean up the delta and restore nature in the area, with Shell footing the US\$150 to US\$500 million budget. This in parallel to various social investment projects in Nigeria sponsored by Shell, focusing on community and enterprise development, education and health.

Before 2000, Nike focused on low-cost production overseas and seemed to ignore child labour issues, claiming it could not be held responsible for the practices of its suppliers. But after some pictures leaked to the media of Pakistani children assembling Nike footballs, the company decided to structurally change its approach towards its responsibility for the supply chain and fully accepted that it could actually control and influence this. This proved to be a watershed moment for CSR: a major public company and household name drastically changing its policies.



## Legal focus

Another striking example is the growth of ‘impact investing’ where asset managers steer away from certain investment sectors such as the tobacco industry, the nuclear weapons industry and environmentally hazardous industries, and shift to investments in industries that meet ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) goals. In doing so, the larger institutional investors can exercise influence on the business direction of the corporate world, its transparency and accountability.

### Legal framework to date – guidance and public reporting rather than sanctions

It is of note that CSR norms have typically not yet made it into mandatory law in many parts of the world. Direct sanctions are therefore often not yet in place. Rather, CSR is laid down in a variety of semi-private self-regulatory instruments, such as codes of conduct that companies in a given sector voluntarily agree to adhere to. Consider, for example, the way in which safety at work and tackling child labour has translated into sector-wide covenants in the garments and clothing sector, not least as a result of public scrutiny in the wake of the devastating factory fires in Karachi and Lahore, Pakistan in 2012.

In terms of corporate governance in listed companies, there are various kinds of Corporate Governance Codes that provide a framework of principles of good governance. Companies are expected to ‘comply or explain’: if a governance principle is not adhered to the company must publicly explain why. The Dutch Corporate Governance Code (which was revised in 2016) for entities listed on the Amsterdam Stock Exchange is a good example. This Code specifically addresses CSR by requiring the management to develop a vision for the long-term value of the company and to formulate an appropriate strategy that also pays attention to CSR aspects. At EU level, EU Directive 2014/95/EU contains an obligation for companies to be publicly transparent about these issues and show they have internal due diligence procedures to identify potential CSR risks.

### Access to the courts in CSR matters

It is a relatively new phenomenon that multinationals can be sued in the courts of their home countries for CSR issues that occurred abroad. For example, Shell has been sued in the Netherlands by Nigerian civilians in connection with the oil spills in Nigeria as already mentioned, claiming compensation for the negative effect on people and the environment. Similarly, the UK mining company Vedanta is being sued in the UK for alleged pollution of a Zambian river and drinking water, with numerous casualties as a result. Individual victims are increasingly being allowed access to the courts in these types of situations to sue the ultimate multinational parent company. This is also based on the 2011 ‘Ruggie Framework’, a set of UN principles (zooming in on the corporate responsibility to respect human rights and for individuals to have proper access to legal remedies) that are not binding, but which have been broadly accepted in the international business community.

This shows that international guidelines and codes of conduct can have a normative effect and serve as a basis for companies, sectors, and/or governments in drawing up their own CSR policies. There are many examples of international guidelines to mention here, such as the International Labour Organization’s Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, the United Nations Global Compact Principles, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the International Standard for Social Responsibility (ISO 26000), and the Global Reporting Initiative Guidelines and Standards

(GRI Standards). All of these go back no further than 2010, to underscore the relative recent nature of the CSR trend.

### China and Hong Kong

In China, CSR has been part of the policy framework for a number of years, focusing so far on environmental aspects and responsible business policies. For instance, China has enacted new and stricter laws and regulations such as the China Social Compliance CSC9000T Standard by the China National Textile and Apparel Council (2011), various environmental protection laws since 2016, and the Social Responsibility Guide of China Industrial Companies and Industrial Associations (2017).

The environmental challenges in China are greater than anywhere else in the world, the country being the largest CO<sub>2</sub> producer worldwide. Sustainability of the energy supply is an enormous challenge and substantial budgets have been allocated to this. Also, in the context of the Belt & Road Initiative, a specific “Guidance on Promoting Green Belt and Road” has been generated, to underscore the relevance of environmental impact and environmental risk prevention policies and measures in the context of China’s investments abroad.

At the time of writing, the UN Global Compact Principles have 246 Chinese business signatories. Each year the Global Compact Local Network China, which sits within the Chinese Enterprise Confederation, highlights best practices relating to the 10 Global Compact Principles on human rights, labour rights, environment and anti-corruption. Industry associations and local authorities have issued many CSR-related norms and guidelines over the last few years. Since 2008, state-owned companies have been obliged to publish annual CSR reports. It will be interesting to see how SMEs, major SOEs and private-owned businesses will in day-to-day reality match the CSR principles, for example the notorious ‘996’ schedule of working from 9am to 9pm, six days a week in the major Chinese tech companies.

In Hong Kong, requirements for environmental, social and governance reporting are certainly on the radar for listed companies. Research shows that the performance of the 50 constituent companies of the Hang Seng Index in the areas of CSR has been improving each year. In December 2015, the HK Exchange amended its “Environmental, Social and Governance Reporting Guidelines” to require ESG reporting on a “comply or explain” basis for all publicly traded firms starting from 2016, thereby closely following international developments. The recently launched Hong Kong SME Business Sustainability Index shows a growing acceptance of CSR, referring to socially conscious business practices and environmental awareness.

CSR sets a necessary and ever more tangible standard of performance for multinationals to have adequate policies in place, conduct their business in a responsible manner and be accountable based on public reporting. So, as an aside, when law firms pitch for work or are selected on a legal panel of a potential client, nowadays it is quite common for the client to require that the law firm confirms that and how it addresses issues in the field of diversity, environmental awareness, employment, pro bono work, etcetera. In other words, CSR is all around and is here to stay. ●



# Passing the pen

**Name:** Tina Goguia

**Organisation:** PandAsia Digital Limited

**Email:** tina@pandasiadigital.com

## 1. Who am I:

I'm Tina Goguia and I've been living in Hong Kong for more than three years. I was born in Georgia (former Soviet Union), raised in the Netherlands and have worked for five years in Dublin. I speak several languages: Georgian, Dutch, English, Russian and a bit of Spanish. In my free time, I love to travel when possible, exploring new cultures, being in nature, hanging out with friends and anything related to Nutrition and Marketing.

## 2. My professional background is:

I gained my Bachelor in International Business and Management Studies in Amsterdam with a minor Entrepreneurship. During my studies, I did a 6-month exchange in California in Marketing and haven't stopped travelling since.

## 3. I work for:

Myself. I always wanted to start something for myself, and last year I finally took the plunge! I am a founder of a fast-growing Digital Marketing agency helping other businesses grow with Online Advertising. I just hired my first employee and it's very exciting to see the company take off. It brings a lot of stress and sleepless nights at times as it's 24x7 work, but I enjoy it immensely. Seeing other companies grow with my help is tremendously satisfying as well having the freedom to divert the company into the direction I choose. I have a long way to go and still a lot to learn when it comes to growing and running a company, but I'm enjoying every step of it.

## 4. I moved to Hong Kong because ...

I never intended to move to Hong Kong. Back in 2015 when I was living in Ireland, I decided to take a break from work to figure out what would be the next step in my life and went travelling by myself for four months throughout Asia. After visiting several countries, I decided at the last minute to book a flight from New Zealand to Hong Kong as it was the cheapest last-minute ticket.

As travelling can be quite expensive, I decided to look for a job in Hong Kong and was lucky to have found one within a week. After a couple of months here, I met my boyfriend and decided to stay.

## 5. My most remarkable work story is:

After graduating, I was working for a hosting company in the Netherlands but wasn't too sure about the role. I was one of those people that never knew what I wanted to do in terms of work, so was trying out different jobs, hoping that I would have it figured out sooner or later.

Then one day in 2010, my life changed with one simple message on LinkedIn that said: Hello from Google! I couldn't believe my eyes. Was Google reaching out to ME? It surely must be spam. It turned out that a Google recruiter found my outdated CV on Monster board (which was popular back then) and contacted me via LinkedIn to see if I was interested in a job at Google! I said YES (who says no, right?) although it entailed leaving the Netherlands and moving to Dublin. To my surprise, I got hired and within two weeks I moved to Dublin.

It was an amazing experience where I learned a lot about Google and its advertising (I was part of their sales team), worked with some amazing colleagues and made lifetime friends and unforgettable memories. I couldn't thank the recruiter enough for approaching me as I would have never thought of applying for Google. It was life changing.

After three years at Google, I worked for two years at Facebook Ireland and saw it grow from 500 up to 2,000 people.

It has been an extraordinary experience having worked for both these giant companies. Each had unique company cultures and I try to apply some of the principles I learned to my own company.

## 6. I find most of my business contacts through:

In Hong Kong it's all about networking and referrals.

## 7. Social Engagement to me means ...

Coming from a Digital Marketing field, Social Engagement for me means engaging with your audience on Social Media Channels to build meaningful relationships

## 8. 25 years ago I was ...

Living in Georgia and was about to relocate to the Netherlands.

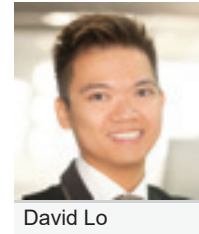
## 9. One day I will be:

Mentor and a coach to younger generations. ●



# Certificate of Resident Status – Is Your Company Able To Obtain It?

In order to be entitled to certain tax benefits granted under double taxation agreements (“DTAs”) such as reduction of withholding tax rates on dividend income, interest income and royalty income, it is generally required for recipients of the said income to prove that, amongst others, they are the beneficial owners of the income concerned and they are tax resident in a particular tax jurisdiction pursuant to the relevant DTAs.



David Lo



Willem Jan  
Hoogland

■ By Willem Jan Hoogland (taxservices@hkwj-taxlaw.hk) and David Lo (david.lo@hkwj-taxlaw.hk), HKWJ Tax Law & Partners Limited

**E** specially for the latter, the income recipients are usually required to obtain a certificate of resident status (“CoR”) from the relevant tax authority. As such, the CoR is one of the most important documents for the purpose of enjoying the tax benefits offered in the DTAs.

## Factors considered by Hong Kong tax authority regarding issuance of a CoR

In Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Inland Revenue Department (“HK-IRD”) will look at a number of factors when determining whether to issue a CoR to an applicant. The factors include but are not limited to the following:

- (i) in which jurisdiction the applicant is incorporated?
- (ii) what are the principal activities of the applicant?
- (iii) from where the applicant is being (normally) managed and controlled?
- (iv) in which jurisdiction(s) the applicant’s director(s) and management personnel reside and their respective roles and duties for the applicant?
- (v) whether board of directors’ meetings of the applicant are physically held? If yes, in where the meetings are organised? Who participate into the meetings and what are the issues discussed and resolved in the meetings?
- (vi) whether the applicant has its owned office/other forms of physical establishment (apart from a registered office address), staff, fixed assets, stocks, bank account, cash, telephone line and fax line as well as internet account maintained in Hong Kong? If yes, what are the relevant details?

There are no fixed and fast rules for obtaining a CoR from the HK-IRD as different cases have their unique facts and circumstances. Usually, the more substance maintained by an applicant in Hong Kong, the higher the chance it can obtain a CoR from the HK-IRD.

## Potential issues with the IRD

Probably due to the concerns of abuse of tax treaty benefits by taxpayers and to protect Hong Kong’s reputation as a responsible tax treaty partner, the HK-IRD has become more and more stringent when considering whether to issue a CoR to the applicants. It is not uncommon that further to lodgment of an application for the CoR, the HK-IRD will request for detailed information together with supporting documents from the applicants for determining whether to issue the CoR.

Moreover, apart from ascertaining whether an applicant is a Hong Kong tax resident, the HK-IRD will also further consider whether the applicant is qualified for the claimed tax benefits granted under the relevant DTAs, such as whether the applicant is satisfied as the beneficial owner of the income concerned. In this regard, it has been noted that the HK-IRD itself would ‘sit’ on the chair of the tax authority of the foreign tax treaty party to determine whether the applicant is qualified for the tax treaty benefits and accordingly whether to issue a CoR to that applicant.

In case an application for the CoR is rejected by the HK-IRD, it appears that it will be rather difficult for the applicant to continue to fight for the CoR with the HK-IRD. So far, there are no court cases in Hong Kong regarding the application of the CoR.

## Conclusion

To conclude, in case one would like to obtain a CoR from the HK-IRD, it is recommended to have its management and control as well as its business operation to be well planned and structured in advance. In particular, the applicant’s management and control are suggested to be actually exercised from out of Hong Kong. Moreover, it will be better for the applicant to have active business to be carried out in Hong Kong and have its own office, staff and other substance to be maintained in Hong Kong to run the business. ●



# Social Engagement

*From “Running Dogs” and “Capitalist Roaders” to “Splittists” and “Whore of the East” – Being PC in Mainland China*

■ Column by Ralph Ybema, rybema@chinaltd.com.hk



Ralph Ybema

The term “social engagement” is an odd one. To me, it evokes images of CEOs of large MNCs smiling at cameras while holding an out-sized cheque for a ditto amount in their hands. Obvious message is “behold our generosity”, I on the other hand usually wonder whether the choice of charity truly matches the wishes of the shareholders who provided the funds to the company – or is more a function of the CEO’s or his spouse’s personal ideas on what makes a worthy cause.

It seems to me this choice goes to the core question of who wins when it goes down to the wire: – political ideals or economic reality. The question, of course, is as old as mankind. In the 15th century, Niccolo Machiavelli took the fairly simplistic view that any means is justified to hold on to political power. Most monarchs of the time would have agreed – whether out of convenience or because they believed themselves descendants from God and their powers thus unassailable.

In the late 18th century, Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s “Contrat Social” challenged those powers and voilà, the basis for social engagement was laid. The concept of rulers having to strike a balance between the way they exercise their powers and the fundamental rights of their subjects took on pretty quickly. An American Revolution decided by French “Ancien Regime” military support and – with magnificent irony – the ensuing French Revolution overthrowing that same Ancien Regime, bore testament to a change in thinking that was going to enlighten the entire world.

Or was it? Even today, one need not look far from where we stand to find examples of, shall we say, a somewhat less balanced approach. As fundamental rights go, the right not to be driven over by a tank for pitching up one’s tent in the middle of the town square comes across as a fairly obvious one. As does the right not to be blindfolded, bundled into an unmarked van and transported across the border for selling books with undesirable content. Or for exercising one’s ancient rights to petition for remedies against abuse of office by government officials.

We “Westerners” tend to take our freedoms for granted. Terms of endearment employed during the Cultural

Revolution such as “Running Dogs” and “Capitalist Roaders” have an alien ring to us. The term “splittist” sounds downright laughable in any multi-party system and government officials and a state-sanctioned press stooping as low as to call a foreign senior government official names as the Chinese did our last Governor seems, well, puerile at best.

*It seems to me this choice goes to the core question of who wins when it goes down to the wire: – political ideals or economic reality.*

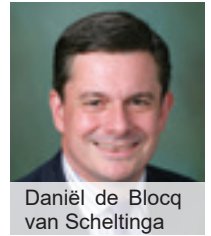
Recently, I came across the updated Xinhua News Agency style guide for editors and journalists, a list of terms and phrases those working in the media are prohibited from using. The list contains pretty mundane PC terms for handicapped persons (not “blind” but “sight-impaired”) and of course a list of banned expletives – though I must confess I find the term “ball ache” for a feeling of frustration perfectly adequate and a worthy addition to Chinese vocabulary.

On closer inspection, the list contains some telling examples of politically sensitive terms. What of the directive to use, “The Party committee suggested an official be removed from his or her position” – instead of “decided to remove” (Why? To leave room to find a convenient scapegoat?). A ban on the use of social identity to label a criminal lists the examples “factory worker thief” and “professor criminal”. Apparently, “corrupt government / party official” did not make the cut ...

Most striking though in the context of the current Hong Kong political debate must surely be the instruction not to use the words “extradite suspects or criminals” in relation to Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan, but to say “transfer” instead. This puts the current debate on a new Extradition Law in a whole different light. Forget social engagement and consultation rounds, let’s just use a different name and we won’t need a new law! Blindfolds and unmarked vans are waiting ... ●

# Please Stand Back From the Doors

The public opinion in Hong Kong is notoriously fickle, as demonstrated by recent articles in the press regarding the state of the Mass Transit Railway, or MTR. The most recent event was which a new signalling system was being tested at night, outside of the normal operating hours and closed to the public, which resulted in a crash that seems to have angered many people, and even some LegCo members.



■ By Daniël de Blocq van Scheltinga, Managing Director, Polarwide Limited

Operated by the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL), the MTR network in Hong Kong today comprises 10 lines, 220 km of rail, 91 railway stations and 68 Light Rail stops.

The initial route, (which had been revised many times from the initial 1967 study made for the government by external consultants), opened in 1979, and connected three short lines, with just fifteen stations in total. The train drivers were, however, very well prepared as they had all been sent to London for weeks to receive real training on the London Underground!

The first line from Chater Station, now called Central, (named after Sir Paul Chater, the Indian businessman who came to Hong Kong as penniless teenager, was a millionaire by the age of thirty, and founded Hong Kong and Kowloon Wharf and Godown Co. Ltd (1884), Dairy Farm (1886), Hongkong Land (1889), Hongkong Electric (1889), the Star Ferry (1898) and Hongkong Telephone (1924)), to Tsim Sha Tsui (TST). Tsim Sha Tsui in Chinese means sharp sandspit, as it formed a corner in the water, facing Central. It was also known as Heung Po Tau, meaning a port for exporting incense trees.

- *“In the metro sector, profitability is measured by a metric called “farebox recovery ratio”, meaning the percentage of operating expenses that are covered by the fares paid by the passengers. This percentage is 187% for the MTR!”*

The second line was from TST to Shek Kip Mei, passing through Waterloo (now Yau Ma Tei) and Argyle (now Mong Kok) stations. Shek Kip Mei district is an area that saw a major tragedy in 1953, when a large shanty town that had developed, housing thousands and thousands of immigrants from the Mainland fleeing communism, erupted in a major fire leaving 53,000 people homeless. This had an important impact on thinking regarding public housing in Hong Kong, and soon the Governor Alexander Grantham launched the plan to develop multi-storey buildings for the immigrant population. When completed they contained units of 300 square feet each (28m<sup>2</sup>), each meant to house up to five people. Each building had 500 units, so a total capacity of 2,500 residents.

The third and longest line went from Shek Kip Mei eastwards to Kwun Tong. Kwun Tong was one of the first New Towns in Hong Kong developed in the 1950's. Kwun Tong remains largely an industrial area although it has been changing over the past decade. The original name was Koon Tong, which meant Mandarin Pond named after the Koon Fu salt yards, which had been set up and managed by the government, in order to combat the illegal salt trade and smuggling (which was still occurring on Lantau Island). However, the residents of this New Town disliked the word Koon, as this meant government or government official, and so they petitioned and managed to have the name changed to Kwun Tong, which means “viewing a pond”.

From 1988, the Light Rail Transit system in the New Territories was developed in Tuen Mun and Yuen Long. In 2007, the company running that Light Rail (the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation) merged with MTR Corporation Limited to form one single operator in Hong Kong. The MTR had already also won the mandate to run the new Airport Express Train.

In 2000, MTR Corporation Limited became Hong Kong's first rail company to be privatised, as part of the start of a Hong Kong Government initiative to dissolve itself of public utility interests.

Since those days, the MTR has gone from strength to strength. The MTR is one of the most profitable metro systems in the world; earnings in 2018 totalled HKD 54 billion, with a net profit of HKD 16.2 billion. In the metro sector, profitability is measured by a metric called “farebox recovery ratio”, meaning the percentage of operating expenses that are covered by the fares paid by the passengers. This percentage is 187% for the MTR! This is because it is highly popular, with an almost 50% market share of all public transport in Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, the MTR serves an average 4.8 million passengers per day, excluding the Airport Express and the Light Rail. Furthermore, the MTR has an enviable track record of on-time departures and arrivals, with 99.9 % of all rides being exactly on the clock!

- *“All in all, the international operations serve a combined 1,459 million passengers annually (compared to Hong Kong MTR's 1.7 million passengers annually).”*
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Future planned lines include the South West, linking Hong Kong University with Wong Chuk Hang, Hung Hom to Admiralty (expected to be completed in 2021), Sha Tin to Central, and a future Tamar Station, acting as a transfer between two of the major lines. The original plan was that this station be built under the new Tamar Central Government complex, but after the 9/11 World Trade Centre attacks in New York, the Hong Kong government became concerned that an attack on the government could be planned via the MTR station. It will now be built a bit further away near the water.

- *“If you take the MTR, then you will be*
- *familiar with Dr. Cheri Chan Yu-yan, who*
- *works as an Assistant Professor at the*
- *Division of English Language Education at*
- *the University of Hong Kong.”*

If you take the MTR, then you will be familiar with Dr. Cheri Chan Yu-yan, who works as an Assistant Professor at the Division of English Language Education at the University of Hong Kong. You will most likely never have seen her, but you will certainly recognise her voice: since 1992 she has been the voice of the MTR, having recorded all the various announcements in both English and Cantonese. “Be a safe escalator user. Hold the handrail and take care of children and the elderly”, or “Please stand back from the doors”, or “Next station is ... Causeway Bay”. She was chosen in 1992 amongst a total of six candidates who were competing

for this job. Since then, whenever a new station is opened, when messages are reworded, or temporary new messages necessary, Cheri is once again asked to record the new announcement!

Many do not realise that the MTR is also a very successful international business. In Mainland China, the company has subsidiaries in Beijing, Shenzhen (which also uses Cheri’s voice for English and Cantonese), and Hangzhou (49%); in London it has a joint venture with Arriva for the London Overground trains, and another subsidiary to operate the Crossrail; in Sweden, the MTR operates and maintains the Stockholm Metro as well as the Express Train between Stockholm and Gothenburg; and in Australia, it is the operating partner in consortia to operate the metro’s in Sydney and Melbourne. All in all, the international operations serve a combined 1,459 million passengers annually (compared to Hong Kong MTR’s 1.7 million passengers annually).

Even though the carriages can be quite full at times, I wouldn’t trade our MTR with its cleanliness, punctuality, safety record, and Cheri’s voice, for any other system in the world. Its international success seems to validate the quality of the offering, and we should be very proud of this highly successful Hong Kong company. ●

- *“I wouldn’t trade our MTR with its*
- *cleanliness, punctuality, safety*
- *record, and Cheri’s voice, for any*
- *other system in the world.”*
-



# Corporate Social Responsibility



■ By Bernard Scheffens, CEO, WSS Asia Ltd., [bernardscheffens.wss@gmail.com](mailto:bernardscheffens.wss@gmail.com)

The four types of Corporate Social Responsibility are:

1. Environmental Sustainability Initiatives
2. Direct Philanthropic Giving
3. Ethical Business Practices
4. Focus on Economic Responsibility

For practical reasons we limit ourselves to the Environmental Sustainability Initiatives, as there is a growing trend or recognition that companies have more responsibilities than economic or financial interests. Subjects like climate change, security, health and working in a chain instead of being a silo, as well as shortage of resources and dilemmas regarding energy and water, they all have an impact on organisations.

Is sustainability a subject that companies need to address? Yes, I think so. Here are some reasons:

1. Let's think about reputation management, or the value of your brand. The impact of a CSR programme can have a big influence on how your customer and others will view you and it will help you to avoid mistakes that may ruin your reputation.
2. What about the pride and motivation of your employees, who can identify themselves with an employer to be proud of?
3. And what does it mean if you are seen as a leader in the new world, a world where we need to cooperate, to reach out and promote future goals and build a new world?

All of this and more, is why CSR is important. Not only doing 'good things' but it has a great business value as well. An excellent way of positioning your company in the Green World. We all know about companies that strive to be 'green'. They see the value of the reputation. But it needs to be a continuous effort, it needs to show results, it needs to be communicated, it needs to be integrated into the DNA of each corporation.

- *But it needs to be a continuous effort,*
- *it needs to show results, it needs to be*
- *communicated, it needs to be integrated*
- *into the DNA of each corporation.*

In this column, I would like to call upon each member of the Dutch Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong to think about the importance of CSR, of – I am sure – a good number already have done so. There are enough examples. Within our remit, we have seen serious efforts of Hong Kong companies producing annual green reports with initiatives such as energy saving programmes.

But we can do better. We should not wait for others to start the work when we ourselves can start by generating less solid waste. Why wait for a tax on waste, when we know we can start today with (waste) separation at the source, in households and companies. And there are a few good reasons to do so.

First, landfills are getting full, the waste-to-energy plant is not yet available and capacity of organic waste (50% or more of the waste) treatment facilities is terribly insufficient. Inevitably, this leads to extension of landfills, as Hong Kong produces 15,000+ tons of waste each day.

*It is not about blaming a particular organisation, it's about recognising the threats and the opportunities to clean up the city – to create a more liveable environment.*

And even when the waste-to-energy plant is there, 2024? 2025?, it will have a capacity of 4,500 tons per day (tpd). But burning waste is burning value, except for those types of waste that cannot be recycled. Most scholars on this subject estimate this to be 8-15% of all the waste, i.e. suitable to create energy.

So, where do we go from here? Debating the issue has already seriously delayed the programme set up by the Government in 2013.

In my view, as stated earlier in Waste Management Conferences in Hong Kong, we are all partners in crime if we don't act. It is not about blaming a particular organisation, it's about recognising the threats and the opportunities to clean up the city – to create a more liveable environment. Whether it is about healthy food, air quality, energy savings or reducing solid waste. I have seen encouraging examples of leaders taking the initiative and showing it can be done. We need more of this!

One more thing. Working with Hong Kong folks, I know that if they set their mind to it, they can succeed in whatever they undertake. It is my call upon this spirit, to start (if you have not already done so) working on a sustainable, green and clean Hong Kong, which will improve the city and its reputation, with all related benefits coming from it.

Reach out to me at E: [bernardscheffens.wss@gmail.com](mailto:bernardscheffens.wss@gmail.com) and let's discuss how we and our partners can help. Thanks! ●

# The Dutch Association: bringing Dutch people together

Some of you might know, others might not be aware of it, but Hong Kong has its very own Dutch Association (Nederlandse Vereniging). The Dutch Association in Hong Kong is focused on socialising and *gezelligheid* by bringing Dutch people – or whoever has a link with the Netherlands – together and keep Dutch traditions alive in Hong Kong.

■ By the Dutch Association, [facebook.com/nvhongkong](https://facebook.com/nvhongkong)

**W**e organise several events throughout the year for children and adults. Members in the 20 -35 year old age group is growing, but we would like to see more young people join and get more involved with events and the organisation.

On the first Thursday of each month we organise the 'Dutch Drinks', where all Dutch people in Hong Kong are invited to join us for a drink in The Boilermaker (45 Staunton St. in SoHo), whether you're a member of the Association or not. Happy hour drink prices are extended until 10 pm.

There is the famous Dutch children's Sinterklaas celebration, so children can keep celebrating this in Hong Kong, or perhaps



get to know Sinterklaas for those who've been here since they were very little. We also organise an Easter party for children, with an Easter egg hunt in a garden and the Easter Bunny pays a visit as well. Together with the Dutch schools in Hong Kong we set up the Koningsspelen (King's day games). These children events give kids a chance to bond with other Dutch children and maintain or build a connection with Dutch traditions.

Speaking of Dutch traditions, did you know that we organise a real nieuwjaarsduik each January? With Unox hats and erwtensoep! Come out and join the fun in the new year!

Previously we organised an annual charity gala, but as the Dutch Chamber has a biennial gala, we decided to make it biennial as well, so the galas alternate each year. This year we've organised a great party for our members with a barbeque and free flow drinks. Besides parties we also have other social events such as, beer tasting, an adventure hike, a junk trip, a mussel dinner and more. We are always looking for new ways to get people together.

To get Hong Kong and the Netherlands together, we participate in the International Dragon Boat Races in Stanley with our

team, the 'Dutch Dragons'. Because of the high level of interest and enthusiastic participants, we actually have two (!) teams. To support our Dutch Dragons, we have our own tents at the Hong Kong Sea School in Stanley where the team and supporters can hang out and enjoy snacks and drinks all day long during the races. The organisation of the Association is entirely run by volunteers, who come together every 4-6 weeks. Besides the overall board, we have event-specific committees. Because it is volunteer-based, having sponsors and members are important for us to be a socially active and a financially healthy organisation.

Many of our events are free to members and the others have discounted entry for members. As a member you will also receive our quarterly magazine, the 'Hollandse Nieuwe', which not only includes news about the Association, but also lots of interesting articles. We use our Facebook page, website and an e-mail newsletter to reach out to the community. If you're interested in becoming a member or would like to sponsor the Dutch Association, please send an e-mail to [vz@nvhongkong.com](mailto:vz@nvhongkong.com).

After each summer break we organise a 'Welcome (back) party' for newcomers and existing members, so when you read this, that is our first upcoming event. You are more than welcome to join and get to know us! Follow us on Facebook ([facebook.com/nvhongkong](https://facebook.com/nvhongkong)) for more details. ●



# Serve together to meet social needs

With a record 1.37 million people living below the poverty line – existing on as little as HK\$4,000 per month – the role Hong Kong non-profits play in supporting the community is more critical than ever. But they cannot do it alone. Many charities depend on the support of volunteers to make their programmes possible.

■ By Catherine Dannaoui, Associate Director, HandsOn Hong Kong, <http://www.handsonhongkong.org/>

**H**andsOn Hong Kong is a registered charity dedicated to ensuring our city's local charities receive the manpower support they need. Their team's mission is to empower everyone in Hong Kong to volunteer – their vision is for a Hong Kong where our community serves together to meet all social needs.

The organisation was founded by Shaun Bernier in 2007 soon after she relocated here from the US and realised there was a need for an organisation that connected Hong Kong citizens who want to serve with local charities in need of volunteers. After speaking with various charities she also saw their desire to outsource the development of volunteer programmes and the recruitment of volunteers, which can be hugely time and resource consuming for a small non-profit.

The HandsOn team believe that a large number of Hongkongers would like to volunteer their time to support the community but simply don't know how to get started. A city-wide study they undertook with Nielsen in October 2017 confirmed this, showing that 70% of Hong Kong citizens would like to volunteer but in reality less than a third actually had. This supports their belief that it has to be really easy for people to take that first step – the study also showed that once people started volunteering, more than 70% went on to continue.

HandsOn Hong Kong makes volunteering accessible for our busy citizens by organising up to 150 service programmes each month and hosting them on an easy-to-use online calendar: [www.handsonhongkong.org/calendar](http://www.handsonhongkong.org/calendar). They provide this calendar as an entirely free public service – at no cost to their 100+ NGO partners or individual volunteers.

Registering as a volunteer takes less than one minute and each activity can then be joined in a single click. These service programmes support more than 100 local non-profits which focus on causes such as feeding the poor, educating children, assisting the elderly, empowering people with disabilities, supporting animal welfare, environmental conservation and more.

In 2018, they ran over 2,000 service programmes throughout the year to support their non-profit partners – ultimately serving the 82,638 individuals in need that their partners work tirelessly to support each day. Many of the registered charities they work with are small, under-resourced and depend on volunteers in order to run their day-to-day operations but do not have the bandwidth to manage them. The small HandsOn programme team running their public service calendar and managing volunteers become an extension of their NGO partners' own teams.



There are a number of regular service opportunities on the HandsOn calendar open to English speaking volunteers – explore their calendar today and sign up for an opportunity with your family, friends or colleagues!

- Kindness Walks to support the homeless with Impact HK:
- Recycling soap for families in need of hygiene items:
- Collect bread for people needing food support:
- English storytelling workshops for children from low-income families:
- Knitting blankets for the needy in Central:

HandsOn does its work for the Hong Kong community as a free public service so that their non-profit partners can continue to further their mission and support the beneficiaries they serve. If you would like to support them, please consider making a donation at [www.simplygiving.com/nonprofit/HOHK](http://www.simplygiving.com/nonprofit/HOHK). Any kind of donation – large or small – makes a difference!

HandsOn creates meaningful volunteer programmes for companies, customised to meet CSR objectives and employee engagement needs. They provide full management as part of this service with their team conceptualising, planning and executing a company's programme, aligning with NGO partners, promote activities on social media and providing a thorough debriefing with impact measurement and photos. ●



## InterSME Breakfast: Employment Essentials

During this InterSME breakfast seminar, an expert panel discussed topics that are crucial for managing employees.

**Tuesday, 26 February**  
**UniCredit**



## Exploring Your Unconscious Bias via Wine Tasting

The wine tasting event was a fun get-together where some long-held beliefs were dispelled and people were able to identify their unconscious bias.

**Wednesday, 13 March**  
**Spaces Sun House**





### YP Networking Cocktail

The Swiss and Dutch Chambers of Commerce hosted their first joint Networking Cocktail. With wine and canapés on a quaint rooftop, it was a great opportunity for young Hong Kong professionals to mingle.

**Thursday, 14 March**  
The Hive Sheung Wan



### Workshop: Impact & Influence

This workshop at CUHK Business School provided insight into how to communicate with impact and influence, to make significant adjustments to how you deliver messages.

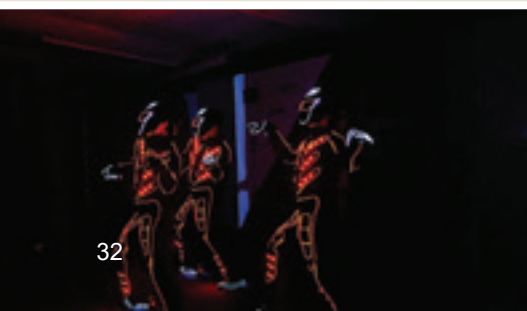
**Tuesday, 19 March**  
CUHK Business School



### DutchCham Business Awards Gala 2019: Game Changers

Our 2019 Biennial DutchCham Business Awards shone a special light on entrepreneurs who are changing the game in their field by being innovative, sustainable, socially engaged or exceptionally talented at a young age.

**Friday, 29 March**  
Renaissance Hong Kong Harbour View Hotel





## Crisis Management

In this workshop Willem Hoekstra, President at Community Group Asia, gave a presentation regarding how businesses should manage crisis situations effectively. This was then followed by a mini scenario stimulation to provide participants with more hands-on experience.

**Thursday, 11 April**

**Dutch Consulate General in Hong Kong**



## (Personal) Branding on LinkedIn for Young Professionals

During this interactive session, Ricky Cheung and Larry Lai from LinkedIn gave practical tips to help you build your professional brand as well as offer an overview on how to create an executive profile, connect with people that matter, build and maintain effective networks and leverage LinkedIn for professional development.

**Tuesday, 14 May**

**Dutch Consulate General in Hong Kong**



## The Age of Rage

This year Michael Avery zoomed in on rising global populism, polarization, and geopolitical tensions: why are these all happening and what does it mean for businesses and markets ahead?

**Friday, 17 May**

**Rabobank**





### — NEW MEMBERS LISTINGS —

#### NEW CORPORATE MEMBER

##### Aldo Soprani, Group CEO, APC Logistics

APC recently joined the Dutch Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong. As new members, we are proud to be the team distributing the DutchCham Magazine across Asia and the Netherlands to all fellow members. We specialize in shipping and logistics and are at your disposal for any supply-chain needs in your daily activities locally and globally.

With more than 50 years of experience, APC is an independent, reliable and flexible air and sea logistics provider, headquartered in Hong Kong, with offices in Asia and Europe, ready to connect you to any country in the world. Our primary activities include consolidated shipments by air, sea and rail with specific tailor-made logistics, pick & pack services and E-commerce B2C order fulfilment. APC has 24 offices in Europe and Asia with some 400 employees worldwide. Since 2012, the company has been part of the Nippon Express Group, allowing APC to keep its business independence, whilst simultaneously offering procurement synergies to APC and its network of agents.

I joined APC in 2014 and have worked in shipping and logistics for about 25 years – 20 spent across Asia in Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong. I am happy to offer you a nice coffee at our office in Hong Kong and talk about how to improve your supply chain performance and potential. See you soon!

Aldo Soprani, Group CEO, APC Logistics



#### NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBER

##### Erwin Chan, General Manager at Norman Express (China) Limited

Erwin received education abroad in Canada. In 2006, he returned to Hong Kong to pursue his career. Over the past 13 years, Erwin has acquired experience in the logistics industry in China and at the same time experienced the rapidly developing and evolving era in China. Erwin is now the General Manager at Norman Express (China) Limited. Norman Express (China) Limited is a freight forwarding company headquartered in Hong Kong with branch offices in Guangzhou and Shanghai. Following Erwin's admittance into the Chamber, he has quickly joined the China Committee in the Chamber. Combining his Western and Eastern experience, he is looking forward to contribute to the committee as well as the Chamber.

Erwin Chan, General Manager at Norman Express (China) Limited  
[www.normanexpress.com](http://www.normanexpress.com)



#### NEW START-UP MEMBER

##### Sylvie Coupaye, Managing Partner at Mews Partners

Mews Partners is a French independent management consulting firm of 150 consultants. We carry out projects of operational strategy with our clients from the industry, retail and services sectors. Our approach combines sectoral expertise, human values and innovative methods. One of the main axis of our strategy is to develop our international footprint. We currently have 5 offices in Paris, Toulouse, Munich, Montreal and New-York. Our next priority is to open an office in Hong Kong to address China and the South East Asian market. We are convinced that new digital technologies will impact our customer's business models, regarding emergence of new uses and disrupting processes. In this context, we support our customer's transformation, within the broad scope of R&D and Supply Chain. "Our new project in Asia will enable Mews Partners to consider new growth drivers for our customers in these markets," explains Flavien Lamarque, Co-Chairman of Mews Partners.

Sylvie Coupaye, Managing Partner at Mews Partners  
[www.mews-partners.com](http://www.mews-partners.com)



## — TRADE SHOW CALENDAR —

### IN THE NETHERLANDS

#### GreenTech

Location: Rai Amsterdam  
Date: 11-13 June 2019  
Organiser: RAI Amsterdam  
Email: [registration@rai.nl](mailto:registration@rai.nl)  
Website: <https://www.greentech.nl/>

#### Test Automation Days 2019

Location: Jaarbeurs Media Plaza  
Date: 19-20 June 2019  
Organiser: CKC Seminars  
Email: [linda@ckc-seminars.nl](mailto:linda@ckc-seminars.nl)  
Website: <https://www.testautomationday.com/>

#### IoT Tech Expo 2019

Location: Amsterdam RAI  
Date: 19-20 June 2019  
Organiser: RAI Amsterdam BV  
Email: [registration@rai.nl](mailto:registration@rai.nl)  
Website: [www.iiottechexpo.com/europe](http://www.iiottechexpo.com/europe)

#### ReMaTec 2019

Location: Amsterdam RAI  
Date: 23-25 June 2019  
Organiser: RAI Events  
Email: [rematec@rai.nl](mailto:rematec@rai.nl)  
Website: [www.rematec.com](http://www.rematec.com)

#### IMAST (spine pathology)

Location: RAI Convention Center  
Date: 17-20 July 2019  
Organiser: Scoliosis Research Society  
Email: [meetings@srs.org](mailto:meetings@srs.org)  
Website: <https://www.srs.org/imast2019>

### IN HONG KONG

#### Travel Expo Hong Kong

Location: HKCEC  
Date: 13-16 June 2019  
Organiser: TKS Exhibition  
Email: [travel@tkshk.com](mailto:travel@tkshk.com)  
Website: <http://www.itehk.com>

#### Smart Investment & International Property Expo

Location: HKCEC  
Date: 15-16 June 2019  
Organiser: Smart Expo Ltd  
Email: [info@smartexpos.com](mailto:info@smartexpos.com)  
Website: <https://www.smartexpos.com/>

#### In-Home Expo

Location: HKCEC  
Date: 28-30 June 2019  
Organiser: Exhibition Group Ltd  
Email: [marketing@exhibitiongroup.com.hk](mailto:marketing@exhibitiongroup.com.hk)  
Website: <http://www.exhibitiongroup.com.hk/en>

#### HK Book Fair 2019

Location: HKCEC  
Date: 17-23 July 2019  
Organiser: HKTDC  
Email: [hktdc@hktdc.org](mailto:hktdc@hktdc.org)  
Website: [www.hktdc.com](http://www.hktdc.com)

#### HK Sports and Leisure Expo

Location: HKCEC  
Date: 17-23 July 2019  
Organiser: HKTDC  
Email: [hktdc@hktdc.org](mailto:hktdc@hktdc.org)  
Website: [www.hktdc.com](http://www.hktdc.com)

## — TRADE ENQUIRIES —

These trade enquiries were received by the Economic Section of the Consulate-General of the Netherlands in Hong Kong. Interested parties may approach the companies directly or contact Betty Liu, Senior Commercial Officer on phone 852 2599 9202 or by fax to 852 2868 5388 or via email [economic.section@netherlands-cg.org.hk](mailto:economic.section@netherlands-cg.org.hk).

#### Hong Kong companies wanted Fruit beverage importers

Company: Jaguar, the Fresh Company  
Contact: Mr Stephen Yuen  
Email: [Stephen.yuen@jaguartfc.nl](mailto:Stephen.yuen@jaguartfc.nl)  
Website: [www.jaguarthefreshcompany.com](http://www.jaguarthefreshcompany.com)

#### Dutch importers wanted Aluminum window & door system

Company: FOEN  
Contact: Ms Wendy Wong  
Email: [wendy.w@foenalu.com](mailto:wendy.w@foenalu.com)  
Website: [www.fenan.cn/en](http://www.fenan.cn/en)

We are an independent, member-driven, non-governmental, non-profit business association which serves to facilitate business in Hong Kong and Greater China for its members by providing networking, knowledge sharing and company profiling opportunities. As the representative body of Dutch business in Hong Kong, we maintain close relationships with both the Dutch and the Hong Kong SAR governments.

### DUTCHCHAM GOLD MEMBERS



### MEMBERSHIP & ANNUAL FEES

• Gold Member	HK\$ 20,000
• Corporate Member	HK\$ 8,500
• SME Member	HK\$ 3,500
• Associate Member	HK\$ 3,500
• Young Professional	HK\$ 750
• Start-up Member	HK\$ 1,750
• Overseas Member	HK\$ 2,500

NO JOINING FEE

### DUTCH CHAMBER COMMITTEES

#### PR & Pub Committee:



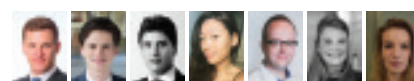
- Jacob Feenstra (chair) • Donna Mah • Monique de Raaij
- Maarten Swemmer • Annemarelle van Schayik • Mike Spaan
- Judith Huismans

#### China Committee



- Michiel Mak (Chair) • Rinske Kuiper • Rogier van Bijnen
- Ewout Stumphius • James Donnan • Erwin Chan • Judith Huismans
- Muriel Moorrees

#### SME Committee



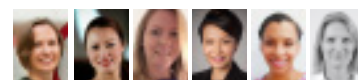
- Jan Willem Möller (chair) • Paul Du Long • Antoine Fasse
- Iris ten Teije • Jeffrey Broer • Emilie Oostenbroek • Judith Huismans

#### Tax Committee



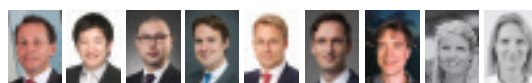
- Willem Jan Hoogland (chair) • Eric Kampman • Harmen Rosing
- Miranda Baas • Muriel Moorrees

#### Women in Business Committee



- Maaïke van Meer • Claire Worp • Emily de Bruijn • Sandra Wu
- Nerice Gietel • Muriel Moorrees

#### Finance Committee



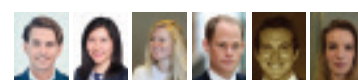
- Michael van Ommeren (chair) • Lapman Lee • Litai Wai
- Bram van den Bergh • Michiel van Voorst • Hugo Sterkenburgh
- Rogier Hekking • Esther Verhoek • Muriel Moorrees

#### Creative Committee



- Saul Smeding (chair) • May Yeung • Anoeska Krijnen
- Madelon de Grave • Marcel Heijnen • Judith Huismans

#### Young Professional Committee



- Alexander de Haseth • Vicki Chi • Chantal Rensing • Rolf Sperling
- Hidde van der Burg • Judith Huismans





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