

# DUTCHCHAM MAGAZINE

INTERVIEW WITH TWO CHIEFS

**Never too late,  
never too early  
- Leo Wealth**

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LEAD STORY

**Hong Kong hotels:  
Providing hospitality  
and positivity under  
tight restrictions**

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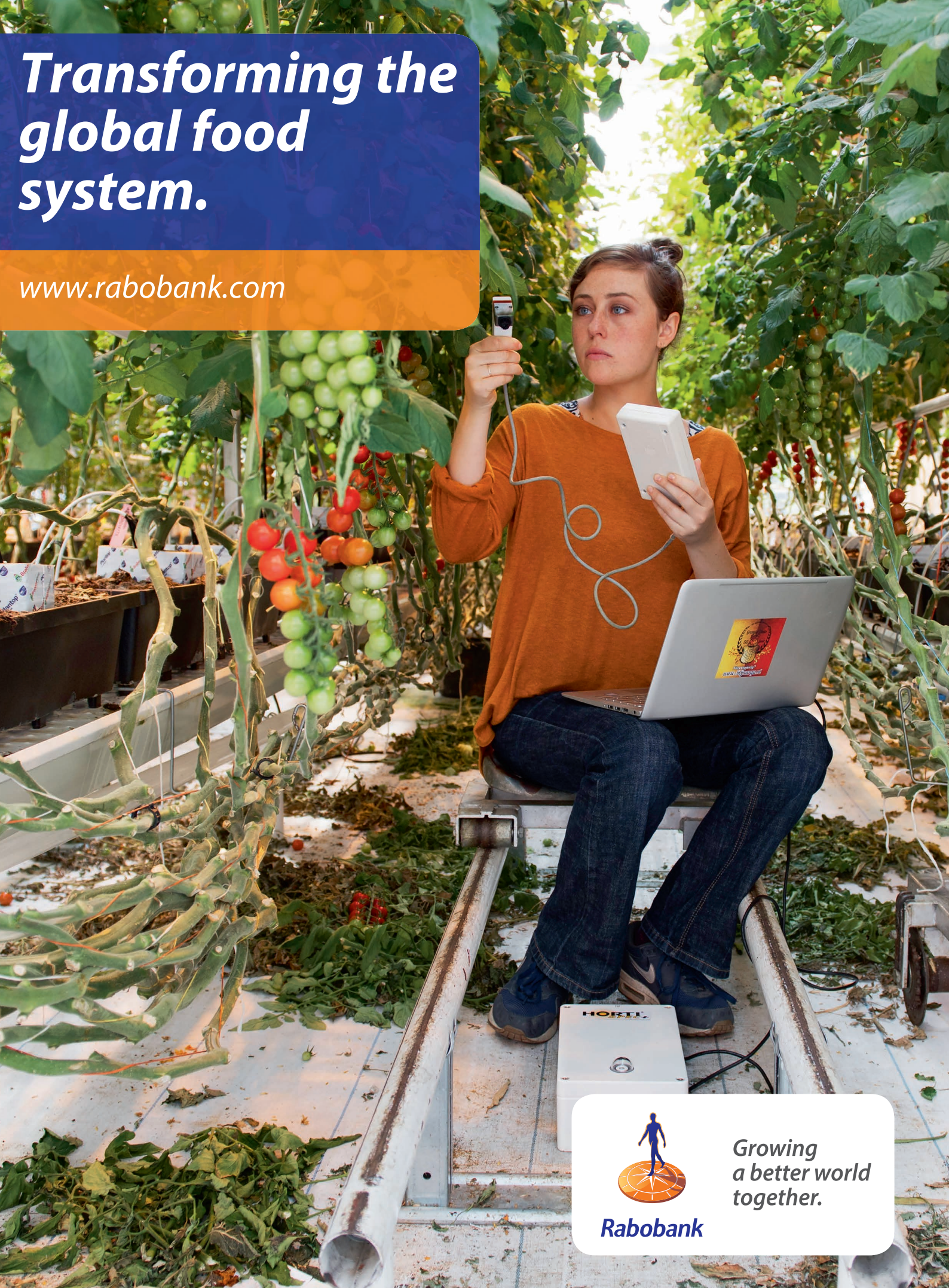
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## THE NEW NORMAL



It has been two years since COVID-19 first reared its ugly head in Hong Kong. In the first year of the pandemic, talk about "the new normal" was often about the world in the post-pandemic future. As time passes, we realise that COVID-19 is not going away. The new normal is not life after COVID but life with COVID.

Does that mean we have recouped from the initial crisis response mode and are now ready to live with this virus in Hong Kong? Yes and no. Yes, we have generally come to accept that we will wear masks in public, have our temperature taken at random, give personal health and travel information to complete strangers and "check-in" in order to Leave Home Safe @. We have grown used to seeing deserted public BBQ pits, plexiglass screens on restaurant tables, cordoned-off playgrounds, babies wrapped in protective gear and empty sports grounds – sights that were inconceivable 5 years ago.

But, no, most of us will never get used to several weeks of mandatory hotel quarantine for incoming travellers and the ever-present threat of a mandatory testing order or Penny's Bay – we are just holding on for the time being and hoping for a policy change in the foreseeable future. Not a sustainable new normal if you ask me.

We see a similar picture on the business side. Many businesses have been able to adapt and are able to make things work, sometimes even very successfully reaping the benefits of the pandemic. Others, such as restaurant and bar operators, travel agents, manufacturers with operations in China and a well-known Hong Kong airline, to name a few, are struggling to survive if they have not collapsed already. Many of us in the Dutch business community in Hong Kong are somewhere in the middle. We are willing to accept the current circumstances and are able to sit it out for a while longer but the current situation in Hong Kong has an expiry date; it is not the new normal.

Until that day, we can share experiences, learn from and support each other. We are all in the same boat and there is always a member to lend an ear.

In this issue, you can read about some of our member's experiences during these times, for example, in our special double Interview with a Chief with Leo Wealth. Co-founders Harmen Overdijk and Jessica Cutrera share how the pandemic has affected their business.

The hotel business has had interesting times, to say the least. Curious about the experiences of a designated quarantine hotel versus a 'normal' hotel? See our Lead Story on page #.

Enjoy the read and I wish you all a prosperous, healthy and quarantine-free Year of the Tiger.

Jan Willem Möller

# NEVER TOO LATE, NEVER TOO EARLY

We had a special double interview with the co-founders of Leo Wealth: **Jessica Cutrera, President** and **Harmen Overdijk, Chief Investment Officer**. We spoke about their new global business, the role of Hong Kong and the future of the Asian wealth management industry.

■ By Zuba Adham-Bos

## Please tell us a bit about yourself and your business

**Harmen:** I worked at MeesPierson when they sent me to Hong Kong in 2001. Here, I met another Dutchman in the industry. After a few years working in private banking in Hong Kong, we decided we could do it better, so we started our own business in 2014. In 2016 we merged with Jessica to create The Capital Company. The firm then became half Dutch, half American. Our focus has always been on helping international clients with their personal wealth, which is more than just investments. It's also about questions such as, what if I move to another country? What does that entail and what should I think about? How about the tax structure? Should I structure my wealth in a different way?

**Jessica:** I've been in Asia since early 2003. I worked at a firm in Tokyo for five years before leaving for Hong Kong to set up my own firm at the end of 2007. I set up that business with a partner, we got our first SFC licence in early 2008. We focused on private equity and the advisory space. At the end of 2016, I bought out my partner and merged with Harmen's company.

We met as we were both at the board of an industry association. As we got to know each other, we discovered our businesses were very similar in how we interacted with clients and the types of investment portfolios we were running. We merged and continued under the brand of The Capital Company. In the last five years, Harmen and I have grown that practice across Asia. In the last couple of years, we met the Leo Group, based in New York, doing similar cross-border work with families, but they did not have a presence in Asia.

Leo Wealth was created on 1 July 2021 as a merger of three global businesses, including The Capital Company. We are a global wealth management firm specialising in what we refer to as global citizens: individuals and families who have connections with different parts of the world. The merger helped us to expand our global footprint and increase our in-house capabilities.

We serve as a holistic adviser managing all aspects of one's financial life: investment needs, asset management, cross-border tax planning, estate planning and financial



Jessica and Harmen

planning. As a multi-family office and independent asset manager, we are a true fiduciary. We're not a product distributor and only take fees, as opposed to commission-based sales, which is a big part of this market.

**Harmen:** We find our clients almost entirely through referral, typically from attorneys, tax advisors and other professional advisors helping families with some of their complex needs.

Our strategic ambition is to grow and have offices in



*Although the 'traditional' expat population is shrinking, the international community is a lot more entrepreneurial than ten years ago.*

*OF From our experience, Hong Kong still remains an important hub in Asia.*

different locations and time zones. In three to five years, we would like to be in Singapore, Tokyo, the Netherlands and the San Francisco area.

### What does Hong Kong mean for your business?

**Jessica:** From our experience, Hong Kong still remains an important hub in Asia. While we have certainly seen some people leaving, there is a number of international families committed to staying or clients who may move to a new location but still have assets in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong remains attractive from an income tax perspective and wages remain strong here. We don't see Hong Kong becoming less relevant on a global basis. Over time, more people from mainland China will move here, but many of those families have cross-border needs too. They often have real estate investments in the US and the UK and send their children to universities overseas.

**Harmen:** Although the 'traditional' expat population is shrinking, the international community is a lot more entrepreneurial than ten years ago: more people are moving here to set up companies rather than being sent by their employer. This is good for our business too, as we often deal with entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs tend to be very busy with building their business, may set up companies in different places and sometimes make decisions quickly – making their financial life quite complicated along the way. A typical added value we deliver is keeping oversight over their financial situation and sorting out company and tax structures.

### What sets Leo Wealth apart?

**Harmen:** Our focus is on advising and helping clients with the financial aspects of their lives in an independent way. We distinguish ourselves as we are not a bank, nor just a financial product provider. A bank can help you with investment management but doesn't offer tax planning and estate planning services. We believe building and preserving wealth are intertwined – you shouldn't separate the two in private wealth. Therefore, we offer a full suite of services and in-house expertise under one roof. Furthermore, we have a relatively low investment minimum, so we can help young professionals in the early stages of their careers too.



Team of Leo Wealth

### How has the pandemic affected your business?

**Harmen:** Surprisingly enough, we did quite a lot more business. Despite all the restrictions, our business grew by more than 25% in 2021. It helps that everyone is used to doing business over video calls. But more importantly, the pandemic changed people's minds around their own personal life and health. In Asia, people were always travelling, either for business or leisure. Now people are spending more time on the ground, at home, and have had time to reflect on their personal circumstances and future plans.

**Jessica:** For Harmen and I as business owners, we have seen the benefits in our team of being more flexible and offering more support in terms of wellness planning. It has always been critical to ensure our employees are engaged, happy and have the support they need, but during the pandemic we have increased our focus on this and we'll continue this after the pandemic.

When we had to work from home, we've had presentations for the team about stress management, maintaining your physical and mental health, and so on. We encourage the team, for example, to extend their lunch break to be able to go to the gym or leave a bit earlier to attend a weekly sports practice. We try to offer employees some flexibility to prioritise their own health and wellness in the most suitable way for them.



Team of Leo Wealth sailing in Hong Kong

### Which industry trends do you expect in the next five years?

**Harmen:** We think the move towards more fully integrated financial services will continue, where people require their service providers to look after all parts of their wealth management. Another trend that we see is there will be more transparency in our industry. It's a trend we clearly see in the US and in Europe, a little less so in Asia, but we think it will come here as well. Our business model is very much built on the American or European model.

Today in Asia, independent wealth managers like ourselves are still a relatively small part of the wealth management industry, probably only 2-3%. This is similar to the US in the early 2000s. Nowadays, over 30% of the US wealth management industry is served by independent companies instead of the big banks. We reckon to see something similar in the next 10 to 20 years in Asia. It's already starting to



Team of Leo Wealth during a company trip

happen; there are a number of firms similar to ours. In Hong Kong, we are organised in the Family Office Organisation, where Jessica and I also sit on the board. Most of us started our businesses only five, six years ago but have seen tremendous growth from almost zero to multibillion-dollar firms.

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

**Jessica:** We often meet people who could have really benefitted from planning earlier in their lives. I always tell people, and whenever I do financial workshops: it's never too late to get started on a financial plan, but it's also never too early. While Hong Kong is generally a high-income, low tax environment, cross-border planning isn't easy. So it's often something families don't do or not right away. We encourage people to seek advice early, especially with the flexibility we offer clients. And if you haven't, it's never too late to get started. Even for clients who do all their own investing or even experts in financial fields, anyone could benefit from planning support and additional perspective.

**Harmen:** Building on what Jessica said, the core of what we do is helping people to invest as it's important for them to build wealth over the long term. Our investment strategy and the many different portfolio choices we offer all have a long-term focus. I often get asked: "Should I invest right now or should I wait?". The best time to invest is today. It doesn't matter if the markets go up or down a bit tomorrow; in the long term, markets go up. Anyone out there who hasn't invested their money – no matter how much it is, the best time to start investing is today.



# PROMOTING THE NETHERLANDS IN PANDEMIC TIMES

2022 has not been off to a great start, pandemic-wise. Despite the draconian measures currently in place, the new omicron variant of COVID-19 has been able to spread locally. Will there be new restrictions to keep its further spread in check?

When I arrived in Hong Kong on 29 September 2020, I left the Netherlands just as numbers of infections rose again and the situation was very much under control here. I quarantined at home for two weeks before starting my discovery of Hong Kong. In those first weeks, I met in person with quite a number of people, although meeting for lunch or dinner had strict limitations. As the year came to an end, Hong Kong too suffered a next wave and closed down. At the consulate-general, we worked in two teams that alternately came to the office to minimise the risk of the whole office having to shut down if one of us was designated a close contact. We kept this until just after Chinese New Year, when the Hong Kong government also started relaxing its rules about working from home. We have been working “as usual” ever since, though we maintain some restrictions for using the Multi-Purpose Room and meeting in larger numbers.

This is in stark contrast to the situation in the Netherlands, where most of our friends and colleagues have been working from home for most of last year. Rules relaxed somewhat in late summer and early fall, but the norm “work from home, unless ...” is back. I mention this because a lot of the work we do at the consulate-general, is for or in collaboration with our counterparts in the Netherlands: whether with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Dutch Enterprise Agency or other stakeholders in the private and public sectors. It is always important to keep each other’s circumstances in mind when working together to better understand each other’s possibilities and limitations.

I must admit that our perceived challenges in doing business here pale in comparison to those of our stakeholders in the Netherlands. Which is not to say ours aren’t valid, but at least I don’t have to “get together” via Zoom (or MS Teams in our case) as much as they do. However, Hong Kong used to be a great place to show off Dutch expertise in the fields of circular economy, logistics, design, waste management, you name it, also because it hosted so many well-known expositions and conferences. But with the city firmly closed to non-Hong Kong residents, we have not been able to welcome any Dutch visitors since early 2020, and therefore not been able to connect Dutch expertise to Hong Kong opportunities like before. We have switched to webinars



Dutch Consul - HON - DutchCham

and have been quite successful too, for example, in the field of food waste management and mental health. Still, all participants agree that it takes a physical get-together to cement new ties and forge concrete cooperation.

I feel blessed with a team that has shown itself to be quite adaptable to this new normal; the webinars we organised and hybrid meetings with Dutch stakeholders video-calling in were very professionally done. But how “normal” should this new normal be? I am all for less – or more focused – travel and using digital means where we can, but forging and maintaining ties is a people-to-people business. Not having been able to do this as much as I had hoped or expected has been frustrating. So, for 2022 I hope for a new balance; a balance between working digitally due to the pandemic and choosing to work digitally depending on where in a project we stand and physically getting together because we can and should. Wouldn’t that be nice? Here at the consulate-general, we stand ready to seize the opportunities that will hopefully present themselves for new and renewed cooperation!



■ By Arjen van den Berg  
Consul General

# ARCADIS ACHIEVES ESTEEMED USGBC LEED GOLD CERTIFICATION FOR ITS HONG KONG OFFICE

Arcadis, global Design & Consultancy organisation for natural and built assets, has achieved the prestigious LEED v4 Gold certification in 'Interior Design and Construction: Commercial Interiors' for its Hong Kong office at 2 Harbour Square, Kwun Tong.

This recognition establishes its office as a benchmark for sustainability and demonstrates Arcadis' leadership in transforming the construction industry. The human-centric design of the space highlights the business' strategy centred around sustainability. "We are delighted to have our office recognised by the U.S. Green Building Council, which reinforces Arcadis' commitment to provide our people an environment that complements the way we work. Since its opening, our Hong Kong office has prioritised sustainability across all practices, while ensuring it is a place of inspiration, collaboration, and well-being for all," said Glenn J. Lutz, Arcadis' Chief Executive Officer, Asia.

The acknowledgement of the LEED Gold certification demonstrates Arcadis' commitment to sustainability, promoting greater collaboration between businesses and building a strong sense of community and well-being. Awarded by the U.S. Green Building Council, LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is the world's leading green building project and performance management system, delivering a comprehensive framework for green building design, construction, operations, and performance. To achieve the LEED certification, the Arcadis office project was thoroughly assessed in terms of factors such as Water Efficiency, Energy and Atmosphere, Indoor Environmental Quality, or Location and Transportation.

Creating an inspiring workplace in Hong Kong through sustainability, including waste reduction, healthy work environment and innovation, has been one of Arcadis' key business focuses.

## Waste reduction

As part of its community engagement programme, the Arcadis Hong Kong office operates an in-house café without the use of single-use plastic and promotes sustainable sourcing. Furthermore, Arcadis provides all Hong Kong employees with BPA-free reusable cups to further minimise waste. Through its paper reduction programme, Arcadis reduced its paper usage by 34% since the office opening in 2018.



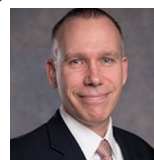
A variety of spaces at the Arcadis office to facilitate face-to-face interaction

## Healthy work environment

Recognising the value that a healthy work environment has for staff, including improving recruitment, retention and the development of employees, Arcadis made a commitment to maximise well-being in the workplace. These principles are being upheld through aspects such as wellness rooms, ergonomic chairs, daylight harvesting, energy-efficient LCD monitors, placement of nearly 800 plants across the space to improve air quality, on-site employee events such as food tastings, and more.

## Technology and innovation

The Arcadis Hong Kong office was also designed utilising the latest technology and innovation to improve sustainability performance, reduce its carbon footprint and increase office productivity by enhancing the end users' experience. Among other initiatives, Arcadis invested in 115 tablets to enable digital mark-ups, installed enhanced work-station screens and standing desks, and deployed industry leading internal and external communication systems.



■ By Glenn J. Lutz  
CEO, Asia at Arcadis  
[www.arcadis.com](http://www.arcadis.com)



# A NEW PLAYER IN THE WAR ON PLASTIC

Evidence of our effects on the environment is all around us. Weather extremes are becoming more frequent, the extinction of animal species is increasing and the never-ending plastic pollution of our seas and countryside are the most obvious ones. It's time to take action!

Techpro Group is committed to tackling one of the largest environmental threats we face; plastic waste. Our desire for convenience has resulted in plastic pollution everywhere. Plastic takes 20-500 years to degrade and production is showing no signs of slowing; by 2050, there will be more plastic than fish in the oceans! In the next ten years the waste that ends up in our oceans could be as much as 58 million tons a year!

We know plastic is a problem, but we're not doing anywhere near enough to fix it.

Thankfully, consumers are starting to take steps to address the problem; however, it's not all good news. Consumers take their own cups to coffee shops only to see the Barista use a plastic cup to measure the coffee. Others are increasing their efforts to recycle, some bring their own shopping bags to stores. The reality is that the consumer can only do so much.

We recognise that plastic pollution is a corporate problem and it's up to us to give consumers a convenient alternative to plastic that doesn't pollute. We're working with other companies and authorities to provide sustainable and environmentally-friendly solutions.

Compostable bioplastics are made from sustainable biological materials such as corn and potato starch, cellulose and soy protein. These bioplastics are non-toxic, food-safe and decompose in an environmentally friendly way which significantly reduces degrading times to just 2-6 months, with the added benefit of no microplastics being released during the process; that means no harmful effects on wildlife.

Techpro Group's sustainability-focused subsidiary, Tech Pro Green, was founded to develop this product. Our aim is



The TechPro Group team in Hong Kong

to eradicate single-use plastics wherever possible and replace them with compostable alternatives made from TUV certified materials. Think of compostable gloves, mailer bags, food waste bags and shopping bags. Tech Pro Green aims to reach carbon net-zero and ultimately negative carbon emissions while creating a product that can reduce our environmental impact.

We are gearing up mass production of our initial offering of EcoSense™ products (bioplastic gloves and bags) right here in Hong

Kong, starting February 2022 and are in discussions with the Hong Kong Government; the hope being that we can work together to replace single-use plastics with a more sustainable and environmentally friendly alternative. Initially tackling the problem locally, we also have international ambitions and we are already working on a similar facility in the Netherlands and have plans to expand into the United States.

As we travel along our journey, we are aware that partnerships and collaboration are the keys to success. Whilst there are many exciting possibilities regarding compostable bioplastics, we have made it a priority to keep an open mindset and we welcome new ideas and collaboration opportunities. The environment is a pressing issue and we believe we can only succeed by working together.



■ By Sanneke Ros  
Marketing Manager at TechPro  
[www.techpro-ad.com](http://www.techpro-ad.com)

# SIMPLE TIPS TO STAY FOCUSED WHILE WORKING (FROM HOME)

More and more people find it hard to stay focused while working, especially when working from home. Here are a few easy-to-implement tips that can help you keep your concentration and work more productively.

## Have a distraction to-do list

We often have trouble focusing because random (and less random) thoughts are racing through our minds and distracting us. If you give in to each distraction, you get carried away by more distracting actions before you know it.

It's okay to have random thoughts or a need for distraction but don't pursue it immediately. Write it down on a 'distraction to-do list', so it is out of your head and you can get back to it once you're having a break. Put a notepad or sheet of paper with a pen next to you when you're working, so you can write your distraction/thought down and then get back to your task at hand.

Regular meditation can help you deal with calming your mind and not giving in to each and every thought popping up in your head.

## Add plants to your workplace

Studies have shown that having plants in your workplace increases productivity. Besides their air-purifying effect and natural calming effect, greenery improves your attention span.

This is underlined by the theory of 'attention restoration'. Mental fatigue can be restored when you give your direct attention a break. Sleeping does this too, but when you're awake you can refresh your attention by shifting your mind to an indirect form of engagement, such as nature.

## Listen to focus-enhancing music or sounds

Music can help improve your focus because it releases chemical dopamine that makes you feel good and lowers stress and anxiety.

Several studies have shown that students perform better on tests when listening to classical music. No matter what you're trying to concentrate on during your work: it's best not to listen to music with lyrics.



Good options are classical music, meditation music, electronic music or nature sounds. If you have Spotify, you can find these neatly organised in the 'Focus' folder. I'm listening to the playlist 'Jazz for Study' as I'm writing this article!

## Declutter your workspace

If you're working in an unorganised place with lots of clutter around you, this automatically distracts your mind because it 'competes' for your attention. Clean up your workplace and keep it tidy by cleaning it every time after you've used it. If your surroundings are neat, it improves your ability to focus.

## Turn off notifications

Our phone is a constant distraction for many of us, whether because of notifications or unconsciously opening apps and losing ourselves in it. You don't have to answer text messages immediately or react to your phone notifications right away. Is it really necessary to receive notifications from apps like Facebook, Yuu, Uber, games, etc.? I'd recommend turning off email notifications too, also on your computer. Any notification popping up in your work environment distracts your workflow, even if you don't open it.

A new option since iOS 15 is 'Focus' mode (go to Settings > Focus). It can temporarily silence all notifications, or only allow specific notifications, block certain apps, hide home screen pages and automatically let others know that you're busy. The Focus modes can be customised and scheduled to be on during certain hours or at specific locations.

Many phones have settings to put a time limit on apps. On iPhones you can find these here: Settings > Screen Time > App Limits. Or you can leave your phone in another room, simply turn it off, or delete any distracting apps (during working hours – or forever).



■ by Zuba Adham-Bos  
Founder and writer at Clear Grow Shine  
[www.cleargrowshine.com](http://www.cleargrowshine.com)



# THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF THE OECD'S LATEST PILLAR 2 RULES ON LARGE MULTINATIONALS IN HONG KONG

The OECD released the rules for the proposed global minimum tax on 20 December 2021.

The proposed rules will require large multinationals (those with income EUR 750 million or more) to pay a minimum effective tax rate of 15% in each jurisdiction where they operate. This will significantly impact the tax positions of many multinational groups and is also likely to lead to changes in domestic tax systems, especially in relatively low tax jurisdictions such as Hong Kong.

The rules lean heavily on the consolidated financial accounts, both as a starting point for calculating the profits subject to tax and determining the tax payable for calculating the effective tax rate. This may mean that accounting judgments and estimates start to have a bigger impact on tax payable than has previously been the case.

## Potential tax and accounting considerations / issues

The agreement of a limited set of adjustments based on common taxation principles is likely to pose more significant challenges for tax systems, such as Hong Kong's, that differ from international norms, for example by exempting offshore profits or capital gains.

In general, the new rules accept timing differences but penalise permanent differences. Some timing differences have a five-year limit, but several important deferred tax liabilities, including accelerated tax depreciation, research and development allowances and insurance reserves, do not have a time limit. This may mean a change of emphasis from governments in how they compete from a tax perspective which may make some existing incentives less attractive.

## Loss election for entities with tax losses carried forward and other available elections

A number of elections are included within the proposed rules, including electing for revaluation gains and losses to be excluded from taxable profits and elections on the use of losses. Affected taxpayers will need to model the impact of the new rules on their businesses and understand which elections are appropriate for them. Losses, in particular, are a complex area under the new rules and groups should work to identify which losses are available for reducing

top up taxes and ensure they are used effectively. Tax managers will need to review their loss entities and ensure they understand the impact of the losses on their overall tax position.

The Hong Kong Government will likely amend domestic legislation as a result of the global minimum tax. One option being considered is a minimum tax based on accounting profits, which would mean that incentives or other exempt items were effectively negated for taxpayers within large multinational groups. The imposition of a minimum tax in Hong Kong would have significant effects for many companies operating here and consideration may need to be given to whether existing arrangements remain tax effective.

## Increased administrative and tax burden

Compliance with the rules is likely to impose a significant administrative burden on organisations. The proposals include provision for a safe harbour, allowing certain jurisdictions and arrangements automatically to fall outside the rules, the details of which have not yet been provided.

The new rules will add significant amounts of complexity to the tax positions of international businesses and are likely in many cases to result in an increased tax burden. It is important for those with responsibility for tax within a business to understand what the impact of the changes will be and to ensure that key stakeholders are also aware of the impact. Businesses will need to ensure that processes are in place to collate and analyse the necessary information.



■ By Ivor Morris  
Partner at KPMG China  
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# PROVIDING HOSPITALITY AND POSITIVITY UNDER TIGHT RESTRICTIONS

The hotel industry in Hong Kong has been hit hard since COVID-19. Over the past two years, many of us have stayed in a quarantine hotel or have done a staycation – or both. In this Lead Story we talked with **Sander Looijen, Cluster General Manager at Marriott International** and **Jan Jansen, General Manager at Conrad Hong Kong** about their experiences and hotel operations.

■ By Zuba Adham-Bos

## What made you choose to be selected as a designated quarantine hotel?

**Sander:** I lead the Sheraton and the Four Points by Sheraton, in Tung Chung. They're both new hotels and became ready for operation in December 2020. When we opened, the business environment was clearly not good. During construction, we had hoped that the spectre of COVID-19 would recede and everything would be fine again by the time we would open. Unfortunately, this was not the case. Whilst we had been very cautious with hiring associates, we still had a lot of people on the payroll. As a general manager one of my main responsibilities is to protect the livelihoods of our associates and to run a financially stable business.

The assignment of a designated quarantine hotel was a good opportunity to run a financially successful business in the current economic climate. Travel, however limited, is still happening so quarantine rooms are needed, creating a steady demand. Taking care of the Hong Kong community and supporting the government in the fight against COVID-19 were also key considerations. Our proximity to the airport and open sea and mountain views helped to make Four Points by Sheraton a logical choice for many returnees.



Jan Jansen



Sander Looijen

## The Conrad is not a quarantine hotel. What were your considerations for this?

**Jan:** The Conrad is a very established hotel, which opened back in 1990. We are located in Admiralty, a very central location. Over the years, we have built a loyal customer base of guests coming to our hotel, restaurants and event spaces. To step away from that would be a difficult decision, given the history of the property.

Now, I have to be honest that when this all started, obviously we – and many others – had not expected it would take this long. Of course, we had all hoped that the borders would have reopened by now.

## Sander, how are quarantine hotel operations different from being a 'normal' hotel?

Running a quarantine hotel is very different from managing a normal hotel. Adjusting to the new operations is undoubtedly stressful, especially in the beginning. But I would like to highlight that one thing would not change, at least not for us. We are here to provide hospitality and a comfortable and relaxing stay for our guests.





The Conrad Hotel

One of the biggest differences is that we cannot see our guests face-to-face. Usually, a manager would be in the lobby, see their guests around and ask about their stay. Now every contact is by phone.

Our quarantine packages include three meals a day which the guests can pre-select from a menu prior to arrival. Four Points by Sheraton has 1,000 rooms and on busy days we serve about 4,000 meals. Ensuring all of those meals are served with the right selections at the optimal temperature to the right room at the right time is a major logistical and service challenge. We practiced and evolved our procedures to make sure we did it right.

Not surprisingly, hygiene expectations are very high, both from guests as well as our associates. My team has done a phenomenal job of making sure we adhere to the regulations, maintaining our own service standards and creating a safe environment for the team.

It's worth noting that while we have strict international standards in place which exceed those of many



Breakfast at the Conrad Hotel



Ocean view suite bedroom at Four Points by Sheraton in Tung Chung

jurisdictions, we have to work within the tight guidelines set by the Hong Kong Government and are constantly under their supervision. This certainly keeps us on our toes as they evolve their protocols which result in new standards and rules being introduced frequently. I think it took all the quarantine hotels some time to figure out how to provide the best possible hospitality under such circumstances.

### Jan, how are operations different without tourists from abroad?

The closed borders have allowed us to open the doors to our local guests. Nowadays, we are wholly reliant on staycation guests or locals staying here for an extended period of time, for example during home renovations.

Before, there would be business travellers, often coming individually and typically staying for three or four nights. During the day they would go out to offices and meetings. Now, it's the complete opposite. Guests often come with a partner or family, so more people are staying in a room. Secondly, people in Hong Kong typically only stay one night when they do a staycation, which operationally requires more check-ins and check-outs and cleaning the rooms more frequently. Besides, staycation guests come to experience our hotel and the facilities, so logistically seen we have more people in the hotel simultaneously, which needs a different way of working. With a few adjustments in our setup and the packages and experiences we offer to keep people entertained and excited, we are able to provide a memorable experience at our hotel.

Lastly, echoing back to what Sander said, hygiene and cleanliness expectations have increased a lot. As part of the Hilton Group, we collaborate with Dettol, giving guests additional peace of mind.

### What sets you apart from other hotels in Hong Kong?

**Sander:** I think all quarantine hotels, especially those who have been part of the programme from the beginning, have come a long way.

Many of our guests follow their regular work routines from Monday to Friday but end up with nothing to do at the weekends. Their wellness is an important part of our responsibility as is keeping them entertained to create a positive quarantine experience. For example, we partner with PURE for in-room workouts and yoga. Our Friday Happy Hour, in collaboration with local craft beer brands, is extremely popular. We also organise something special for each public holiday. Over Christmas, we sent a small Christmas tree kit to each room that guests could put together themselves.

While the extra touches are welcomed, the basics are still very important: the room needs to be comfortable and the air conditioning and water have to work properly. We are fortunate to have a brand new, well-constructed property. For example, the water systems have no issues when everyone takes a shower in the morning. We had a large internet bandwidth when we opened, but since quarantine guests use the internet a lot and bring multiple devices, such as tablets, game consoles and TV boxes, we tripled our bandwidth to accommodate all the extra devices. At the peak, we had about 4,000 devices connected at the same time. That's unheard of in a hotel.

**Jan:** We are very fortunate to have a team here with many people that have worked here since the opening, for more than 30 years. It is a very loyal group of team members who had to shift their focus from being an international business centre to becoming a staycation property. I have to give them all the credits for adjusting and coming up with new ideas to enlighten and make our guests happy.

The biggest thing we try to do is give people a positive experience. For the past few years, the Hong Kong people have been confronted with many challenges, ambiguity and negativity. Even though we are so restricted in what we can do, we try to leave people with a positive day or two while they are here. It's important to deliver a memorable experience with a personal touch.

### Is there anything you learned or experienced that you will take with you post-COVID?

**Sander:** The biggest lessons are nothing new, but the pandemic has made them more important. The whole perception of hygiene and cleanliness standards has



Quarantining at the Four Points by Sheraton in Tung Chung

changed, and I think Hong Kong will remain extremely focused on that, even more so than other places.

We are part of Marriott International, which is about 90 years old. From the beginning, Mr Marriott would say that if you take care of your associates, they will take care of the guests and the guests will come back to you. While it is not a new mantra, it has been extremely important to look after our associates during this pandemic, particularly as we are a quarantine hotel. It has made me once again realise that taking care of your team is by far the most important job of any general manager. Making sure that our associates are safe, happy and healthy is key to a successful hotel operation, particularly in challenging times.

**Jan:** Things are getting more sophisticated in terms of getting services done through your mobile phone, for example, ordering food and groceries. I think this will affect the hotel industry as well. The traditional way of running a hotel requires a lot of human interaction, but increasingly people rely on QR codes and mobile connections to get the services they desire. For example, digital checking in and out and opening hotel rooms with their phone instead of a key card.

Another interesting development is that since working from home or being in quarantine, people have created new hobbies; making barista coffee, cocktail mixing, bread making, you name it. More guests in our restaurants talk about things they have learned, which actually makes it more engaging for our team members to talk to guests. In the past, guests would take matters for granted but now we see more passion, knowledge and depth.



# HIGH COURT RULES HOUSING AUTHORITY POLICY AMOUNTS TO UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION AGAINST SAME-SEX SPOUSES

In another step forward for same-sex rights in Hong Kong, in June 2021 the High Court handed down a judgment confirming that the Housing Authority's policy excluding same-sex married couples from their Home Ownership Scheme ("HOS") amounts to unlawful discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation. The discriminatory policy was held to be both disproportionate and oppressively unfair.



The HOS previously excluded same-sex spouses of owners of HOS flats from being added as authorised occupants (in effect, preventing the HOS flat owner's spouse from living with them) and required the payment of a premium for the same-sex spouse of a HOS flat owner to co-own the flat (which premium is not required to be paid by opposite-sex spouses). This was on the basis of a policy excluding same-sex spouses from consideration within the definition of "family members" and "spouses" for the purposes of the HOS.

The late Ng Hon Lam Edgar's application for judicial review of the Housing Authority's decision was allowed by Justice Anderson Chow, who made the following orders:

- i. a declaration that the decision (and the policy it was based on) was unlawful and unconstitutional for being in violation of Article 25 of the Basic Law and/or Articles 22(1) and 1(1) of the Hong Kong Bill of Rights;
- ii. an order of certiorari to remove into the High Court and to quash the said policy and decision; and
- iii. liberty to apply for such further or other relief as may be necessary to give effect to this judgment.

In his judgment, Justice Chow stated: "The fact that heterosexual marriage is constitutionally recognised and protected by BL 37 does not mean that it is permissible

to discriminate against same-sex couples based on their sexual orientation in relation to matters where same-sex couples and opposite-sex couples are in a comparable or analogous position."

Li Yik Ho and the late Ng Hon Lam Edgar won a previous judicial review with a judgment finding on inheritance rights in intestacy, which decision has since been appealed by the Department of Justice. Since Mr. Ng's death in December 2020, Mr. Li has issued a third judicial review of decisions denying him the right to identify his husband's body without the authorisation of Mr. Ng's mother.



In a postscript to a previous judgment in the case of *MK v Government of HKSAR* [2019] HKCFI 2518, Justice Chow commented that cases such as this challenging discriminatory government policies will continue to be brought before the Court until the government conducts a wide-scale review of its policies and their application to those in same-sex relationships. It remains to be seen whether the government will do so in light of the success of similar cases in the Court of Final Appeal in recent years.



■ By Joanne Brown  
Partner

Elizabeth Seymour-Jones ■  
Foreign Registered Lawyer

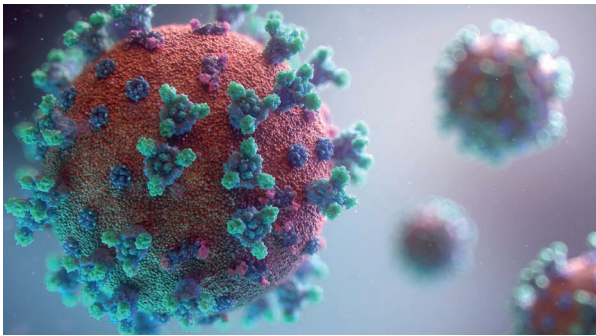
Tanner De Witt  
[www.tannerdewitt.com](http://www.tannerdewitt.com)



# THE NEW NORM(AL) – LIFE IN THE TIME OF COVID

As if by cue for this article, CNN reported this morning that “the new normal” is on Lake Superior State University’s 2021 Banished Words List.

Ostensibly this is due to the term’s excessive and inappropriate use as a catchall for the ways our world has changed with COVID-19, as a mere excuse for complacency. COVID is neither new nor normal, hence its elevation to the banished list.



The term “norm(al)” and its derivatives are ironic. We tend to use them in situations representing the exact opposite. Many New Year’s wishes this year include an expression of hope that life will return to some form of normality in 2022. The term “new normal” stresses not how familiar, but how absurd and grotesque life has become. Christmas without family members; twenty-one days locked up in a hotel room; cost of a single flight equal to that of a family holiday, the list goes on. Remember the estate agent in “Under the Tuscan Sun” explaining the idiosyncrasies of Italian property? No matter how odd the local custom, she pre-empted any debate on whether that custom met accepted standards of human interaction with a friendly but firm “Normale!” Freely translated, “This Is Italy; live with it.”

Flashback to Florence, January 2000. Contract negotiations in their final stages, my US employer was taking over a local business and staff. Contracts in Italian must be signed before a local notary. Signatories include senior US executives who are flown in for the occasion. Everyone is on edge, time is of the essence to meet self-imposed “hard” deadlines, contracts MUST be signed that day.

The notary arrives by bike. Immaculately dressed, not a strand of his wavy white hair out of place. Just a few more i’s to

dot and t’s to cross, the notary is handed an espresso and a seat in a side room. Two hours passed, final issues ironed out. Originals are printed, executives ready to sign... The notary, however, is nowhere to be found. Frantic calls to his office, expecting an apology, instead yielded a lecture on Italian lunch hours and an offer to come back the next day. “Normale!”.

Back to the “new normal” of the 2020s. 2021 started with a storming of the US Capitol, actively encouraged by none other than the sitting US President. Apparently, 34% of Americans now believe violence against the government is justified at times. I suspect the 34% align closely with those practising “disruption” as if it were somehow a positive. It is no secret that I beg to differ. Most disruptive technology is precisely that: disruptive. It rarely yields any immediate benefit and worse, typically does not offer an option to stick with current, trusted methods. Worse still, problem solving invariably involves helpdesk staff out of their depth for all but the simplest issues - and thus painfully inadequate to address real customers’ needs.

Reason for my suspicion is that disruptors tend to consider only one side of the coin, theirs. I dare you to find a Proud Boy to take up arms if his own candidate wins an election, however fraudulently. Or find a bank to freely surrender its banking licence because its technology focus means it lost the ability to perform the essential functions of a bank, like generating a return on client deposits.

The difference is this: “Normale” works in Italy because Italian property is available only there. Iconoclasts and disruptors tend not to have that luxury. Beware of the “new normal” fallacy. If any lesson is to be drawn from the COVID-19 mayhem, it is that virtually all of us prefer the familiar.



■ By Ralph Ybema  
Managing Director at China Law & Tax  
[www.chinaltd.nl](http://www.chinaltd.nl)



# THE PANDEMIC OF PACKAGING POLLUTION

How did COVID-19 change our daily habits and usage of packaging within Hong Kong? When we look at parcels, meal deliveries and groceries, we have elevated numbers by a shocking amount. This does not yet include the tremendous amounts of single-use plastics wasted in quarantine hotels and Penny's Bay.

An NGO called Green Sense conducted an in-depth check of various parcels and delivery services. A shocking statement for the 2020 figure: "An estimated 780 million pieces of plastic packaging were used for goods bought online in Hong Kong."



This number was a 20% increase from the year prior. The final number of 2021 has yet to be released. Consumer goods sales were up 54.9% in the first half of 2021. So it is safe to say "the new norm" in food and goods delivery in Hong Kong shows shocking figures.

**A shocking statement for the 2020 figure:**  
**"An estimated 780 million pieces of plastic packaging were used for goods bought online in Hong Kong. This number was a 20% increase from the year prior."**

The collection and recyclability of all these goods are meagre. The Dutch Chamber recently invited me to a "Public Engagement on Control of Single-use Plastics". The local government is looking for new ways to eliminate the vastly growing number of single-use plastics. The intention and willingness to learn from various countries and their Chambers of Commerce is a step in the right direction.

Food delivery packaging and groceries are two issues that can be adapted on a local basis. In contrast, consumer

goods and electronics often arrive from outside of Hong Kong, making the change of patterns a global matter. Or, in some cases, that of certain company strategies.

In that aspect, we can do our part to learn more about easy ways to make a difference. See the following examples to encourage a different thinking pattern and not to highlight or benefit the mentioned companies:

- Meal delivery services: the Black Sheep Restaurant group in Hong Kong decided to launch their own platform (GO), allowing the containers to be used for all venues within the group. No single-use plastics are involved at all.
- Groceries: those who have been in the Netherlands in the last five years may know the new grocery delivery service named PICNIC. It does not have physical stores, only electric vehicles and crates with (mostly) package-free groceries.

For any ideas on how to eliminate single-use plastic waste in Hong Kong, keep an eye out on the website of the Council for Sustainable Development ([www.susdev.org.hk](http://www.susdev.org.hk)). Perhaps they will open to more views from the public in the coming year.



■ By Rosien Grasveld – Uiterwijk  
 Regional Development Manager at Agiplast  
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# THE QUEEN OF CANTOPOP

On the second day of Chinese New Year a government official or dignitary draws a fortune stick as an omen of how the coming year will turn out to be. This annual tradition, known as kau chim, takes place at Che Kung Temple in Sha Tin and the result is quickly reported in the local news.

This ritual also took place in 2003, the start of the year of the Goat, when the Secretary of Home Affairs, Dr Patrick Ho, drew the worst fortune stick possible – predicting a truly awful year for Hong Kong.

The bad luck must also have brushed on Dr Ho, who in 2018 was convicted on seven counts of bribery and money laundering following a federal trial in New York. He was sentenced to three years imprisonment and fined USD 400,000 in March 2019 for bribing the Ugandan Foreign Minister and the President of Chad to secure an energy deal for a Chinese energy conglomerate.

2003 really demonstrated the power of the prophecy, as it indeed turned out to be a truly awful year for Hong Kong. In March, the SARS outbreak started (much shorter than the COVID pandemic), in April Leslie Cheung (aka “Gor Gor”), the most famous singer and actor that Hong Kong has ever known (subject of a previous Passport to Hong Kong d.d.....) committed suicide by jumping from the Mandarin Oriental Hotel. In December, Hong Kong’s other most beloved Cantopop singer Anita Mui died of lung cancer.



Anita Mui Yim-fong

Anita Mui Yim-fong, who was also known as the “Queen of Cantopop”, the “Madonna of the East” and “the daughter of Hong Kong”, is the subject of a new film directed by Longman Leung and simply titled “Anita”. This film is causing full movie theatres many weeks after its release, showing how popular Anita Mui still is. It is very well produced, and the role of Anita is brilliantly played by Louise Wong, a Hong Kong model for whom this role was her acting debut! Anita was born in 1963 and her father died when she was a small child. As the family’s youngest daughter, she began



Che Kung Temple in Hong Kong



performing at the age of five, singing Chinese opera and pop songs in theatres. She dropped out of school during her second year of junior high school. After that, she sang at bars and nightclubs for several years. Her mother ran a bar to support the family but after a fire completely destroyed the bar, Anita had to work harder to support the family and pay off the family debts. Anita's big break came at the age of 19 when she defeated 3,000 contestants to win first prize in the 1982 New Talent Singing Competition.

Her first albums soon followed, and she quickly grew in popularity, scoring hit after hit and winning multiple Hong Kong music awards. Her popularity also grew outside of Hong Kong, underlined by the fact that she was invited to sing at the 1988 Summer Olympics opening ceremony in Seoul together with Janet Jackson. Anita was very popular in Korea, but also in Malaysia, Singapore, Japan and Taiwan.



Anita Mui and Leslie Cheung

During the SARS outbreak, she initiated a fundraising concert titled the "1:99 Concert" to raise money for SARS-affected families, which attracted famous fellow celebrities such as the actor Andy Lau and the singer Jacky Cheung. Anita was famously active in many charitable causes, not only in Hong Kong. For example, her establishment of a nursing home in San Francisco prompted the city's mayor in 1992 to name April 18 as "Anita Mui Day".

While her career was a great success story, Anita's love life was known to be much more difficult and complicated – and the subject of much gossip and rumour. Different men such as Jackie Chan, Zhao Wenzhuo, Andy Lau and Nicholas Tse were all said to have been lovers. But she once said: "I dare not get married because I have a marriage-phobia. I'm afraid that my marriage will result in divorce. I don't want that regret in my life." Anita Mui repeatedly



**Anita was famously active in many charitable causes, not only in Hong Kong. For example, her establishment of a nursing home in San Francisco prompted the city's mayor in 1992 to name April 18 as "Anita Mui Day".**

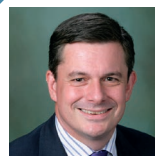
said she would like to trade all her success for a woman's basic aspiration, namely love. Anita's closest friend and confidante over many decades was Leslie Cheung, who's suicide in April 2003 hit her really hard. Leslie had been her support throughout her professional and romantic ups and downs, and since he was gay, there was never a romantic involvement. Anita considered Leslie her brother.

In September 2003, Mui publicly announced that she had cervical cancer, from which her sister had died. She held a series of eight final shows at the Hong Kong Coliseum in November, where she thanked her fans for their love and support and said goodbye, wearing a wedding dress because she was married to her singing and her fans. Her last words before her last song were, "Dusk is beautiful, but the sunset is always near". Then she sang her last song called "Song of the Setting Sun", which all local Hongkongers know, walked up the staircase, and exited the stage for the last time.



Anita Mui and Leslie Cheung

Indeed, these were to be her last concerts before her death on December 30. In the annus horribilis of 2003, Hong Kong also lost her beloved daughter.



■ By Daniel de Blocq van Scheltinga  
Managing Director at Polarwide Ltd  
[www.polarwide.com](http://www.polarwide.com)



# COVID-19 – ANY TAX IMPACTS BROUGHT TO YOU?

**Have you and/or your business been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic? The resulting worldwide quarantine measures and travel restrictions have unexpectedly changed individuals' workplaces and entities' mode of operation.**

There are concerns about whether these changes would have any tax consequences, particularly for individuals who travel frequently for work and those entities that have a cross-border business/presence.

Both the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development ("OECD") and the Hong Kong Inland Revenue Department ("IRD") released (updated) guidance on certain tax issues arising from the pandemic on 21 January 2021 and 28 July 2021, respectively. The IRD's approach is generally in line with that adopted by the OECD. Here we will discuss the tax issues related to tax residence of companies and individuals, permanent establishments ("PEs") and employment income of cross-border employees covered by the guidance:

## Tax residence of companies

Both the OECD and IRD state that a change in location of a company's board members or other senior executives due to the pandemic is an extraordinary and temporary situation. In general, such change should not trigger a change in that company's residency status, especially not where the tie-breaker rules contained in tax treaties apply.

Having said that, the IRD will still take into account all the relevant facts and circumstances when assessing a company's residence.

## Tax residence of individuals

As stated in the IRD's guidance, an individual's residency will unlikely change if they temporarily stay in the host jurisdiction because of travel restrictions or other public health measures imposed, particularly where the tie-breaker rules under tax treaties apply. However, if such stays continue after the said restrictions are lifted, the assessment may differ.

The OECD also states in its guidance that if an individual's temporary presence in a jurisdiction results in dual residencies, based on the tie-breaker provision, that person's place of residence should unlikely change.

## Permanent establishment

The term PE refers to a fixed place where the business of an enterprise is wholly or partly carried on. It is relevant

for determining the corporate income tax exposures of an entity. The OECD's guidance provides that, considering the extraordinary nature of the COVID-19, working from home would not create a PE for the business/employer.

The IRD is prepared to adopt a flexible approach for PE assessment given the extraordinary nature of the pandemic. Temporary working from home should not create new PEs for employers. Likewise, any temporary conclusion of contracts in the home of employees or agents because of the pandemic should also not create PEs for enterprises.

However, if an individual continues to work from home after the cessation of the public health measures, further examination of the facts and circumstances would be required.

## Income from employment

Should an employee be prevented from travelling because of COVID-19 public health measures and remains in a jurisdiction, both the OECD and IRD consider it reasonable to disregard the additional days the employee has to spend in that jurisdiction for the purposes of the 183-day test.

The IRD has no discretion to exclude the days of physical presence in Hong Kong for the purpose of the 60-days tax exemption rule under Hong Kong's domestic tax legislation. In other words, if one spends more than 60 days in Hong Kong for a year of assessment, they cannot be entitled to the said tax exemption claim under Hong Kong salaries tax.

The IRD's guidance is for general information only and the treatment for each case will be determined based on its own facts and circumstances. In addition, most tax issues are not straightforward and there are no fixed and fast rules. Hence, one should seek professional advice from a tax lawyer/consultant in case of doubts.



■ By Willem Jan Hoogland  
David Lo ■  
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# PASSING THE PEN

**Name:** Romy Rubiano-Kunen

**Organisation:** Dutch Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong

**Email:** pm@dutchchamber.hk



## Who am I?

I am Romy Rubiano-Kunen, I was born in the beautiful village of Venray in Limburg, the Netherlands. At the age of 14, we moved to Singapore; this is when I fell in love with Asia (and its food). After this Asia adventure I moved to Maastricht to enjoy my student life but always dreamt of moving back to Asia.

In my spare time I enjoy spending time with my husband and our two dogs, going out with friends, hunting for new restaurants throughout Hong Kong, and I also practice ballet and love to bake.

## My professional background is:

I studied International Business. During this study, I conducted an internship in Singapore and at MECC Maastricht, both in the field of marketing and sales.

After graduating, I did a 3-month assignment as a student recruiter at Maastricht School of Management (MSM). I had no clue that working in this sector was right up my alley! This assignment changed into a long-term contract where I had to represent MSM at national and international fairs and continuously improve the recruitment and marketing strategy together with an amazing team. After 2 years, I changed to Maastricht University where I was still involved in student recruitment and marketing but also coordinating events and a part-time PhD program.

I loved being in an international environment, meeting people with different backgrounds and learning from them.

## I moved to Hong Kong because:

I've always wanted to go back to Asia. Though my mind was set on Singapore, my personal life made me change Singapore for Hong Kong. When I met my husband, he was

already living here. The pandemic made it impossible to travel, so I decided to move to Hong Kong in August 2020.

## I work for:

In September 2020, I started as a trainee at the Dutch Chamber. My main tasks were developing and launching our Soft Landing Kit and increasing our membership database. Initially this was for 5 months but I felt there was more to it, so my contract changed to Project Manager. As I'm still enjoying my role and the Dutch Chamber has so much to offer, I will continue as Project Manager!

## My most remarkable work story is:

Twice in my (short) career I was assigned a temporary job, but I managed to create a permanent position by showing added value; I'd say this is remarkable and something I'm proud of.

Also, being part of the Dutch Chamber's 30th Anniversary Business Award Gala organisation was a remarkable experience. I'm proud of the extremely successful gala we, as a team, have organised.

## I find most of my business contacts through:

The Dutch Chamber has given me the opportunity to expand my network within Hong Kong, the Greater Bay Area, the Netherlands and beyond!

## One day I will be:

As life always brings surprises I take it as it comes, but I do hope that I will always have the opportunity to keep learning, developing and improving on both work and personal levels. I'd like to be in an international environment surrounded by people I can learn from. My biggest dream is to open my own bakery one day.



# EVENT PHOTOS

## How to become a board member

1 November 2021



## Pitch Perfect

24 November 2021



## KLM Cocktail

26 November 2021



## Mentorship Program Workshop

10 December 2021



## Christmas Cocktail

15 December 2021





# “WE CAN USE THIS OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE”

Thinking rationally, you could argue I was slightly crazy or overly courageous to start a new fashion brand in the middle of a pandemic.

The cut-throat industry was already under enormous pressure to reform because of its environmental impact. Then the mother of all challenges hit: the COVID-19 pandemic. This could have been a valuable reason for me to put my dreams to launch an independent, conscious, sustainably-minded, female-tailoring business on hold, but I decided to approach it as an opportunity instead.

FREY. officially opened its doors in September 2021. I did not need to adapt my business to a new world with COVID as I was starting from scratch. This was a chance to create answers to new business- and consumer needs in a world where COVID-19 was already a fact. After my twenty-year career in men's tailoring, I knew the fashion industry inside out. I lived and breathed fabric, design, sharp tailoring, production runs, emerging trends and market mechanisms my entire professional life. I was comfortable in this environment, and I knew where and how to make a difference. So launching FREY. in the middle of a pandemic was not so crazy after all. I saw and still see it as an opportunity to meet ever-changing consumer demands in ever-changing markets.



Shop FREY. at Queen's Road Central

to establish new ways of doing business in the world we currently live in. It is a fast world; things don't stay the same for long due to rapidly developing new technologies and knowledgeable, demanding consumers. This was already a reality before COVID, but the pandemic has definitely caused an enormous acceleration in businesses catching up and keeping up with the latest in tech. We have to think on our feet, find solutions, change, and adjust constantly and quickly. Besides – especially in fashion – we also

The overriding “new norm” in my business and many others has to be agility. In each industry, everyone constantly has

have to uphold the critical industry sustainability principles and goals.

Pressure for more sustainability comes from within the industry and governing powers but also from the consumer. People are increasingly more conscious of what they buy. There is a growing need for transparency and authenticity. I think this is

probably true for more industries. People have become more aware of the environmental and social impact of their consumerism during the pandemic and want to know what fabric is used, where it comes from, who produced my garment and where? Are the factory workers treated fairly?

The story behind what you wear holds value, more and more so now the trend for circular fashion is growing. FREY. is very transparent about these details; we want our customers to have access to these stories so they can buy with conscience and confidence. Besides offering a timeless, high-quality product that lasts beyond just one season, this transparency helps to establish trust and loyalty, which is invaluable and essential for a fashion brand to survive.

Consumer demands will continue to change. Markets will be impacted by future global events. We don't have the answers to every future challenge yet, but FREY. is young. I believe agility is the new norm for us in all we do, so we can continue to bring the right sustainable solutions whenever we can.



Campaign FREY.



■ By Frederieke van Doorn  
Founder and CEO of Frey  
[www.frey-tailored.com](http://www.frey-tailored.com)

## NEW MEMBERS

**Wiebe Rietberg**

Young Professional membership

**Wendy Chen**

Young Professional membership

**Tom van der Lee**

Associate membership

**Frederieke van Doorn from Frey**

Start-up membership

**Bianca He Xin Dubbelaar**

Young Professional membership

**Ka Wai Chan**

Young Professional membership

**Liza Jansen**

Young Professional membership

**Lars Reekers from ValueBlue**

SME membership

**Nadine Schrampers from Edufax**

Corporate membership

**Emrah Oren**

Young Professional membership

**Hon Chuk Yu**

Young Professional membership

**Job-Jan Spanjes from Action**

Corporate membership

**Ties Coolen from Quality Control  
China, Vietnam & India**

Overseas membership

**Patricius Brenninkmeyer**

Young Professional membership

**Francis Heymans**

Associate membership

**Dennis Plomp**

Associate membership

**Stephanie van den Boogaard**

Young Professional membership



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**TIMELESS FEMALE TAILORING,**  
exquisite **CRAFTMANSHIP,**  
**HAND FINISHED** details,  
**NATURAL** top quality fabrics,  
effortlessly **STYLISH,**  
consciously **DESIGNED** to **LAST,**  
**CUSTOMIZABLE** to your exact **FIT.**

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



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PHILIPS



### 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

Joining fee waived for 2021

### DUTCHCHAM COMMITTEES

#### PR & Pub Committee



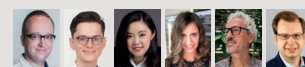
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#### China Committee



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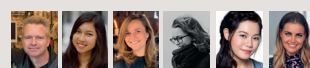
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