

Nowadays, foreigners are pouring into China at an even faster pace than the country's economic growth. More than ever, these foreigners are going to China by their own mean.

To a Successful Start



by John Binay

Bio

John Binay was born from Swiss and Turkish parents and raised in Gruyère. In 2012, John obtained a Master's degree from Rotterdam School of Management, following studies at McGill University, the University of Hong Kong and HEC Lausanne.

Throughout his studies John has consistently and actively engaged into a wide range of activities and events, taking up leadership opportunities in student organizations and initiating several projects on his own. With 51 visited countries, John also has clearly an appetite for traveling.

John is now looking for new opportunities in Switzerland after working as business consultant in China since he graduated last year.

How do they find a job? But most importantly, what do they do to be successful? These are a two questions I will try to answer based on my experience as an intern for a multinational in Hong Kong, and as a consultant in a startup based near Shanghai.

Finding a job

If you are not lucky enough to work for an international company willing to send you to, economically speaking, the most exciting country of the moment, then I cannot stress enough the importance of your network and networking opportunities. In my case, I attended an HEC alumni event while I was exchange student from HEC Lausanne in Hong Kong. There, I met a fellow alumnus who helped me obtain a summer internship at Logitech Asia Pacific. Two years later, I was asked by a former classmate to join the startup he had recently launched in Mainland China.

As long as you find a company willing to sponsor you, getting a work permit is not too complicated. The main requirements are a two-year working experience, internships included, and a university-level degree.

Succeeding

As of today, the language barrier is still one of the most important obstacles for succeeding, unless you want to join the ranks of the army of foreign language teachers who China keeps recruiting massively. At our small consulting firm, I was mostly focusing on our Indian and European clients due to my lack of proficiency in Mandarin.

Of course, there is always the option of joining an export-oriented company. This chance is however usually kept for people with longer experience. If this is your case, this can be an interesting option as salaries for mid-level managers and above are often comparable to European levels while the cost of living is much lower.

If you are of the entrepreneur kind, target the expat community or the English speaking new generation of Chinese at first. Cultural differences and language barrier

might be too much of a challenge to crack for an expat-led startup.

Life as an expat

Wherever you live in China, you will likely find activities to suit your taste. From the quiet public parks to a street were 30 night-clubs are line up one after the other, not mentioning the indoor sport centers and a 1680-seat classical theater, even the third-tier city where I lived had way more to offer than I could possibly experience in a year. And if you ever feel homesick, there will always be the other expats to cheer you up, or the high

speed train that will bring you at 350 km/h to Shanghai, Beijing or Hong Kong where a Swiss-owned restaurant will await you with a cheese fondue!

I left HEC Lausanne 4 years ago and lived abroad ever since. I have just returned a few days ago back to Switzerland. I am happy to be closer to my family now but I already start missing the fascinating fast-pace vibe of China, an experience that I suggest any of my fellow HEC alumnus to live.

« The language barrier is still one of the most important obstacles »

Vues de Chine



Yangshuo – Rizières en terrasses

L'agriculture en Chine est un secteur économique important qui, aujourd'hui encore, assure près de la moitié des emplois. Cultivé dans les régions du Sud, le riz est la plus importante culture du pays et procure jusqu'à trois récoltes par année.