China CEO Voices of Experience From 20 International Business Leaders named Book of the Month in SE Asian Bookstores

By Juan Antonio Fernandez and Laurie Underwood

China CEO: Voices of Experience From 20 International Business Leaders, has shipped more than 10,000 copies since its release in late February 2006 and was rated “Book of the Month” for March in bookstores in Hong Kong (the Hong Kong Airport HBS store), Singapore (Borders and Kinokuniya), Malaysia (Borders), Indonesia (Kinokuniya) and Thailand (Kinokuniya). This spring, the book will be released in China, Taiwan, U.S. and European markets.

Wiley also sold the rights for a Orthodox Chinese language printing for the Taiwan market in late April 2006, Korean language in May and Bahasa Indonesia in June.

The 21st Century is the Chinese Century and many international executives know that success in China is critical – for their company and their career. But China is a confusingly complex, fast-moving and often contradictory country for the outsider. What can international business executives do to improve their chances of success?

Authors Fernandez and Underwood interviewed 20 international business leaders working in China to learn how they work in this challenging business environment. These executives were from major companies like Airbus, Coca Cola, General Motors, Microsoft, Sony and Unilever. Each business leader revealed how he deals with crucial issues, like:

- What skills are needed to manage business operations in China today?
- What is the secret to forming successful joint ventures or business partnerships?
- How can companies attract China’s newly demanding and fickle consumers?
- How can international executives and their families lead a satisfying life in China?
China CEO summarises the experiences, anecdotes and advice of these experienced and successful business leaders. The result is a collection of first-hand, battlefield-tested insights on how to lead the China operations of a multinational company. The advice and strategies focus on two main themes: maximizing the opportunities, and overcoming the challenges inherent in the business environment of China.

Fernandez and Underwood organise the essential qualities needed to succeed in China into three levels – professional qualities, personal global qualities, and personal China-specific qualities. These levels are hierarchical, with solid professional qualities forming the foundation, and previous overseas assignments helping to build personal qualities, such as a multicultural mindset and a commitment to learn. Key China-specific personal qualities include humility and strength, patience and speed, and the ability to build guanxi (Chinese-style networking).

China CEO is filled with sound tips for success, like: “When selecting an executive for an overseas posting, look for a person with an adventurous spirit, a sense of humour, and an open mind”. Business leaders are advised to “be humble and avoid using an authoritarian style. Influencing and coaching is the way to get the best out of your Chinese employees”.

Other core topics include: managing Chinese employees, working with local business partners, facing competitors, battling intellectual property rights infringers, winning over Chinese consumers, and negotiating with the Chinese government. All expatriate senior managers in China face these challenging questions. China CEO shows how successful leaders deal with them.

Of course, succeeding at work isn’t enough – your family has to survive the China assignment too. Dissatisfaction among family members is the primary reason for expatriate assignments failing or ending early. Fernandez and Underwood explain the steps that companies can take to ensure that both the expatriate professional and his or her family members adjust well to life in China.

China CEO builds on the experience and wisdom of experienced China hands to give an authoritative and sure-footed overview of how to succeed in China.

For managers taking up an assignment in China – or those overseeing the transfer of staff to China – China CEO is essential reading.

About the Authors

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