

# SHANGHAI – YOUR GATEWAY FOR A CAREER LEAP

## CEIBS INDIAN ALUMNI TELL WHY YOU SHOULD LOOK EAST



In KASHMIR

**Ranjeeta Rai is a Regional Category Manager at Henkel, one of the world's largest household chemical products companies. Many people are familiar with Henkel's consumer goods brands such as Persil, Schwarzkopf, Purex, and Fa. After earning a degree in psychology and media/communications, Ranjeeta worked in Human Resources for multinational companies such as JP Morgan Chase and Goldman Sachs. During her MBA studies at CEIBS she gained the confidence to make a career shift into a different industry and function.**

**Q: What do China and Shanghai mean to you?**

A: China, and especially Shanghai, is synonymous with having an Asian passport with a global visa. The most striking part about this country is the way it has adopted, or rather imbedded, some western nuances into the local culture. It is a city that can really push you to challenge yourself -whether it is dealing with the language, the food, or the great breadth of the country. Through this process of self-exploration and experiential learning, one emerges as a more mature, wise, and level-headed individual.

**Q: What impact has CEIBS had in helping you advance your career?**

A: In fact my position today is all because of CEIBS! Not only did the opportunity come through the school, it was primarily the school and its rigorous MBA that enabled me to successfully convert this opportunity into the career shift I was looking for.

CEIBS and its very resourceful Career Development team worked hard to bring these opportunities to us. They coached, mentored, and guided us at every stage - from helping us to assess our strengths and weaknesses, to identifying the right opportunities and helping us prepare for them. My immediate post-MBA goal was to manage a business unit or region for a leading multinational company. This opportunity came to me through a very unconventional way. I was representing CEIBS at an MBA networking event in Hong Kong, where I met a senior Vice President from my current employer, Henkel. What began as a casual introductory chat led to an actual interview call the next day. Before I left Hong Kong I had a series of interviews scheduled. After a few months of discussions I finally received an offer. My current role within Henkel requires me to manage two separate categories within the purchasing business of one of Europe's largest fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies. The position is that of an Asia-Pacific lead - requiring extensive coordination and business negotiations between the many country managers within the region.

**Q: What are your fondest memories from your time at CEIBS?**

A: CEIBS provided some of the best experiences of my life. I have hundreds of fond memories. Some of these are from when we students celebrated each other's culture at various gatherings - or when we simply went out to celebrate someone's birthday. I vividly remember working with a diverse group on various assignments and projects which often led to hours of discussion in a meeting room. I also can't forget the introductory Mandarin lessons that we took! Living on campus helped me make close friends and have a lot of fun after class hours. There was never a dull moment in the MBA programme and I only wish that it could have lasted longer.

**Q: Why should someone from India consider an MBA in Shanghai vs. one in Europe or the U.S.?**

A: Most of the top MBA colleges in India still use an 'old-school' teaching methodology. Their concept of an MBA and what it needs to offer to a student is very different from what it is elsewhere in the world. It is still seen as a mere extension of an academic, post-Bachelor's degree, and hence lacks a focus on relevant work experience. In fact some of the top MBA schools do not even require work experience for a student to qualify for admission. I personally believe that this completely distorts the essence of a business degree, since students are then unable to connect theory to real life issues. Also it is more academic and less practical. The focus is on 'teaching' rather than 'learning'. In addition, if one needs to learn how to be a better business manager they need to experience a diverse, challenging environment. This is still not possible in Indian schools. This is why students from India look abroad.

Though the European and American schools have been around for decades, that in no way makes them better than a school in Shanghai. In terms of the overall value one can get out of this degree - the scope is much more here in China. Their traditional tried and tested way of doing things can mean that the European and American schools fail to innovate. I am primarily referring to innovation in the classroom, be it teaching methodology, introducing more current and relevant subjects or even challenging students with something as unique as real time consulting projects. Plus life is so much more exciting if you couple the MBA with learning a new language. Shanghai, and China, is equipped to offer world class academia and infrastructure. This is one reason why CEIBS does so well in the MBA rankings, year after year. Coming here is a decision you will never regret and an experience you will never forget.

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