

FEEL THE REAL CHINA IN THE CHINA WEEK

By Audrey Wu



Mr. Maurits van den Berg is the European accounts manager at Akzo Nobel, a global leader in the pharmaceuticals, coatings and chemicals industry. Akzo Nobel has established many subsidiaries around the world, and is investing heavily in China. Mr. van den Berg's work is strongly connected to China and he needed to know more about China to get a real sense of how business is developing here. This was becoming increasingly important, both to his career and to the development of his company. Currently an EMBA student at the Rotterdam School of Management, Mr. van den Berg availed himself of the opportunity to take an overseas module to come to China and study at the China Europe International Business School (CEIBS). The "China Week", a one-week Programme specifically designed for overseas EMBA students by the Executive Education Programmes of CEIBS, comprehensively met his requirements and left a lasting impression on him. The following text is a record of interviews with van den Berg by *The LINK*.

THELINK: What do you feel about China and studying here?

This is my first visit to China. It's a good opportunity for me to come here, look around and get a real sense of China and the companies here, since many of our investments are focused on China. I read many articles at home and it is interesting to come and see it with my own eyes. It's always different when you come and experience what's happening. I am very impressed to see how Shanghai is growing and developing and how eager people are to learn and to pick up what's happening in the world.

THELINK: Had you heard of the CEIBS China Week before?

I had learned that Chinese business schools and the business education sector are growing very quickly and doing very well. CEIBS ranks as the foremost amongst them and I am very happy to attend here.

THELINK: Did you find the pre-arrival materials from CEIBS useful?

Yes. The preparation was good, useful and well-related to the ensuing studies. We were provided with pre-reading materials, including a number of case studies on Philips and Emerson. These were very practical in content and related directly to the companies we visited here.

THELINK: What do you think of the programme? Do you think it is well-designed and well-organized?

It is extremely well organized and well balanced. The diversity amongst the Professors was most interesting to see and we readily assimilated their experiences. Prof. Wang started the first day by explaining the general political and economic environment of China, from a traditional viewpoint. Then we had a Belgium Professor, Wilfried Vanhonacker, whose long-term experiences in China as a European were invaluable. The following day our lecturer was Prof. Fernandez, another European, who approached the subject from a different angle. The same could be said of Prof. Willem Burgers, the Professor of Marketing. Their experience, as Westerners in China, I found to be completely different from that of the Monday lecturer. Today we had Prof. Xu Bin, who is absolutely amazing. He was extremely interesting and I listened attentively to the entire 3 hour lecture. Prof Xu Bin is very perspicacious and gave an excellent analysis and explanation of the Chinese economy. For me, all of the professors were very good, and Prof. Xu made a lasting impression upon me. A balanced program, good content, informative lectures! It was great!

THELINK: Would you say that, by taking this programme, you have learned more about

China? Including a different perspective on marketing, HR and economics?

Yes, I also now know more about the young people. Some of whom work in the private sector. They are very good business people, very aggressive and flexible, yet still open and friendly. That's something I have learned here that you can't learn from articles at home, and has given me a sense of the real China!

THELINK: How about your company visits?

We went to different kinds of companies: Shanghai General Motor, which is a successful joint adventure, and Zijiang Color Printing & Packaging Company, a booming start-up. I am involved with the printing industry, so I know little bit about it. It's a very modern company with modern facilities, which is just like a European or US corporation. It is small but very well organized, clean, and very professional. I am impressed by many of your companies, which are ready to compete in the global market. The communications with the company personnel I found to be very rewarding.

THELINK: What do you think of China's development?

China is part of the world economy. We are accustomed to having goods from Japan and Korea, but China is far bigger than those examples, so who knows what its future influence will be on our lives?

It's impressive. I can see both opportunities and benefits. I don't see that it poses a threat; unlike some people seem to think. We are young and dynamic and can work anywhere and we are coming to China to visit, live, trade and be interactive.

THELINK: Do the evening activities give you a flavor of life in China?

I arrived two days early, which gave me some extra time to explore the city. We visited lots of local places, both modern and traditional. We went to Xin Tian Di, which has a fine mixture of western modernism and the flavor of Old Shanghai. We also visited the Oriental Pearl Tower, followed by the history museum. It was nice to learn some local history. One cannot but be impressed by how much Shanghai has grown. In 1990, Pudong, the flourishing place where we are now standing was only barren farmland. I am sure that, when I come again, there will be even more skyscrapers, both here and everywhere. Shanghai is unbelievably dynamic and active 24 hours a day. Sometimes it's difficult to find time to sleep because I want to get out and meet people. I've found that there doesn't seem to be much of a difference between Chinese and western people as we seem to like a lot of the same things.

THELINK: What is your impression of CEIBS in general?

CEIBS is very professional, very dynamic and enthusiastic. It is located in the economic and financial center of China, which means it has an advantage over the others with respect to cross-cultural issues and foreign contacts. I think China should be proud to have such a business school. It's a nice place, with excellent buildings and facilities. I can't think of one negative point. We were well looked after and our coordinator and project manager were very helpful. Everything was wonderfully organized, from the hotel pick up to the company visits.

THELINK: Do you have any suggestion to this programme?

I don't really think I have. When I get back, I will recommend to my company and my colleagues that they should spend a week at CEIBS to learn what I have learned. Businessmen who come here are commercially minded, and it is both valuable and worthwhile to spend a few days at CEIBS. I will take this message back to Akoz-Nobel, and send a lot of its personnel to CEIBS. **THELINK**



CHINA WEEK ATTRACTS INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION

By Audrey Wu

The booming Chinese economy has made the country the centre of world attention. As it is playing an increasingly important role as the driving engine of today's world economy, China has been included by more and more overseas business schools in their international study module of MBA programmes since increasingly more overseas companies are eager to have a better and deeper understanding of this dynamic country.

Three years ago, the Executive Education department of CEIBS launched the first "China Week" program in China, which is specifically designed to meet the increasing need of overseas business schools. Building on a wealth of two decades' international management education experiences, this one-week programme offers a panoramic as well as an insider's analysis of the developments of the Chinese market, covering such important areas as business strategies, marketing, human resources (cross-cultural management), finance, and the economic and political environments in China. The programme is also flexible, making adjustments to meet the specific needs of different participants.

Ever since its first introduction, "China Week" has attracted EMBA participants from leading international business schools which include IESE from Spain, Rotterdam School of Management and Nyenrode University from the Netherlands. Some business schools even include the "China Week" in their lists of required courses.

A typical day in this one-week programme usually starts with lectures in the morning, followed by visits to local enterprises in the afternoon, and ending up with networking activities or city tours in the evening. Classroom learning, field visits, and cultural exposure are combined to help the participants understand the business practices and cultural environment in China in the shortest time possible.

Until today, CEIBS is the only business school in China that has offered the "China Week" programme. To ensure the benefits of such a programme, a business school must enjoy a high international reputation, a wealth of experience in executive education, and a faculty team who is well versed in both international and Chinese business practices. As a forerunner of business education in China and the leading business school in Asia, CEIBS boasts all of these three advantages.

Besides the "China Week", CEIBS also offers a variety of other international programmes targeting expatriates doing business in China, among them are the China International Executive Programme, CEIBS-Columbia Business School Joint Advanced Marketing Management Programme, and the forthcoming CEO Programme in cooperation with Harvard Business School and IESE. For any overseas business school or any multinational company who wants understand China, CEIBS would automatically be their first choice. **THELINK**