

London

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My working day



China expert Jeremy Gordon shares a typical working day with Yintong Betser.

The first thing I do is check my various social media accounts such as Twitter and LinkedIn, and read through the posted information and news from the people that I follow in China. Being up to speed with all that has happened overnight in China is very important for my consultancy work, and helps me to look after my clients.

Then I have breakfast – usually coffee and toast. I normally save the mornings for writing reports or managing consultancy projects.

My main business, China Business Services, is an independent, research-driven consultancy that delivers integrated business solutions to companies in China. Making phone calls or talking with people in China is part of my morning routine. Areas we cover include risk management and strategy. We have a specialist network in China enabling us to provide clients with specialist, localised services.

I am also a director of China Edge, a consultancy focused on marketing to Chinese consumers. We run regular briefings on key issues as well as providing luxury brands with training programmes and customised advisory services.

I have worked with government departments, financial institutions and major corporate on strategy, risk and business development in China for the past 20 years. First in Hong Kong as an officer with Britain's Brigade of



Gurkhas, I gained China trade and investment experience with a diversified Hong Kong-based group, and set up China Business Services in 2002.

While I always dedicate some time during the day for my research work and writing, I sometimes go out for business lunches, or even spend the whole day out of the office, meeting clients and business prospects. If I do have a business lunch, my first choice would always be Chinese food (ideally a Sichuan restaurant). Otherwise I usually have a sandwich at my desk with some Chinese tea – which usually lasts the whole afternoon.

I have to travel from time to time, and try to go to China whenever I can. I have been to China many times over the years and always try to include some time for a short break as well as work, so that I can maintain a balanced view of what is happening there. On my last trip I managed to fit in some sightseeing when I was in Kunming, including West Hill and the Stone Forest.

In addition to my business, I am a trustee of a charity called Mother's Bridge of Love which was founded by the well-known author Xinran and supports disadvantaged Chinese children. We just celebrated its 10th anniversary with a day of Chinese cultural activities at the V&A's Museum of Childhood. I have also been the Honorary Secretary and a Committee Member of the 48 Group Club, and have worked as a China Business Specialist at UK Trade & Investment.

Taking advantage of the time difference, I normally work on various issues I discussed with my Chinese colleagues throughout the day. I try to get answers to and feedback from China before the end of the day so that my Chinese colleagues receive my emails first thing the next morning. In this way, we can make our time work efficiently.

Over the past six months I have spent a considerable amount of time burning the midnight oil while writing my book *Risky Business* in China, a Guide to Due Diligence which comes out this month and is published by Palgrave. Risk is a major reason that companies fail in, or fail to enter, China, and I hope this book will demonstrate how a strategic and localised approach to due diligence can reduce business risk, provide excellent business intelligence, and help people to sleep at night! The book is intended to be a practical guide for managers who have to deal with China, and includes real-world case studies of failures and successes, as well as a 'road map' to avoiding some of the common, and increasingly serious, issues faced by international businesses.

Many China-related events take place in the evening, and I often attend these and network with my friends and associates on the China circuit. With the book coming out, I have also been speaking at events about risk in China, including a recent Chopsticks Club event. I will launch the book with a talk at Asian House on 10 September.

Unless there is a pressing deadline, I usually call it a day around 11pm.

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Yintong Betser is a marketing and communications specialist in the Anglo-Chinese community and the author of a series of books on doing business in China and the UK. She is managing director of ACTIVE Anglo Chinese Communications

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LCCI trade missions

United Nations

Monday 13 October - Wednesday 15 October 2014

City: Geneva

This trade mission offers you an excellent opportunity to meet procurement officers from the key UN organisations in Geneva. Sectors: medical equipment, water and sanitation supplies, generators, communications equipment and vehicles, corporate training, communications skills and specialised consultancy.

Contact: Marta Zanfrini Tel: 020 7203 1822

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Qatar

Sunday 2 November - Thursday 6 November 2014

City: Doha

Contact: Ruma Deb Tel: 020 7203 1949

Email: rdeb@londonchamber.co.uk

Thailand and Myanmar

Monday 24 November - Friday 28 November 2014

Cities: Bangkok and Yangon

Both regions maintain an open, market-oriented economy and view foreign investment as a means of promoting economic development, employment and technology transfer. The governments in Thailand and Myanmar also offer a range of tax incentives, support services and import duty concessions.

Opportunities for UK companies in Thailand include agriculture, automotive, ICT, energy, engineering, environment, healthcare, education, food and drink and tourism. Opportunities for UK companies in Myanmar include: oil and gas, telecoms, ICT, financial and professional services, education, infrastructure and manufacturing.

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