

WHAT IS A PARTNERSHIP?

A partnership is a strategic alliance or relationship between two or more people. Successful partnerships are often based on trust, equality, and mutual understanding and obligations. Partnerships can be formal, where each party's roles and obligations are spelled out in a written agreement, or informal, where the roles and obligations are assumed or agreed to verbally. You may be able to choose your partner or, as is often the case, your partner may be assigned to you.

Partners are often necessary when working in a foreign country, not only to bridge language barriers, but also to help you perform your work efficiently without falling into the traditional cross-cultural traps one encounters in a foreign setting.

Working with Chinese partners allows you to become acquainted with Chinese society rapidly. You will be able to meet the right people quickly instead of spending valuable time building up your own network. Your Chinese partnerships can help you avoid cultural blunders along the way.

Working with a partner is, of course, fraught with dangers. A partnership that has gone sour can cause bitter feelings and spoil your mission or a new business deal. It is important for both parties to be open-minded and accepting of the other's differences. There must be a willingness to learn and adapt. Both partners must be willing to exchange their technical knowledge and their cultural survival skills.