

## Old China Hand Annie Wu on Hong Kong-China partnership

You might have heard that bribes are a necessity to do business in China. Don't do it, was one of the pieces of advice given by Annie Wu, who spoke to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong on September 24. Her topic was "Hong Kong and China Business Partnership."

Wu, who is Managing Director of the World Trade Centre Club, has a strong background in Hong Kong-China relations with experience as an advisor to the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office, director of Beijing Foreign Enterprises Association and managing director of Shanghai Eastern Air Catering Ltd, to name only a few of her lengthy list of accomplishments.

Regarding bribery, Wu advised companies to stay clear away from it. "The worst thing a company can do is be involved in bribery...Never break the rules of the law, especially in a country where there is not a strong legal system. Just don't do."



Annie Wu spoke to the Chamber in September

Sometimes it's difficult for someone new to doing business in China to know what the right thing to do is since, for instance, bribery is illegal but official commissions are acceptable. Wu suggested keeping a

close association with the Central Government who can advise you of the rules. Another suggestion was to use local staff whenever possible which helps with communication difficulties.

To help crack down on illegal activities, said Wu, China may develop an independent regulating force similar to that which is used in Hong Kong. "It's my guess that in the next three years China will have an Independent Commission Against Corruption...(which will) help to protect foreign businessmen's rights."

Wu also touched on a number of other areas, including the growing importance of Hong Kong as both a gateway to China and as an international gateway for China.

Her prediction for the real estate market in Hong Kong was that it would continue to go up for at least the next three years because of the outflow of money from China.

She also told the audience that Canadian business people need to get more informed and take advantage of the opportunities available in the burgeoning Chinese consumer market. ♦

## New Senior Trade Commissioner

Scott Mullin, the new Senior Trade Commissioner at the Commission for Canada, says he is "delighted" to be back in the territory, which, in 1978, was his first posting.

"Hong Kong has a buzz in the air, it's infectious, invigorating and poses lots of challenges," he says. "I feel like I'm coming home."

Mullin replaces Colin Russel who is now Director of East Asia Trade in the government's Department of External Affairs, and International Trade Canada.

Some of the challenges, says Mullin, include maximizing the benefit to both Canada and Hong Kong. "How do we take the large amount of goodwill toward Canada, and there is a lot, and translate it into business terms?" As well, he says, "we must look at how to further build the Canada-Hong Kong-China triangle."

Canada currently exports C\$1 billion worth of goods (including \$450 million in gold) to Hong Kong with Canada's trade across the Pacific now greater than that across the Atlantic. Hong Kong is, after Japan, Canada's most significant economic partner in Asia.

Despite the challenges both politically and economically facing the territory, Hong Kong may seem like one of the calmer assignments for Scott Mullin.



New Senior Trade Commissioner Scott Mullin

In 1985, he closed the Canadian embassy in Beirut as the windows were blown out and then, in 1988, Mullin was sent by Ottawa to reopen the Canadian embassy in Tehran after it was shut in 1979 following the revolution in Iran. He stayed as Canada's Charge d'Affairs until 1991, spending most of his time on trade promotions.

A Montreal-raised, political science graduate from Carleton University, Mullin, 36, comes to the position of Senior Trade Commissioner with a strong press relations background.

His most recent posting was as the official spokesperson and press secretary to the Secretary of State for External Affairs in Ottawa. "I spent two years on the road practically 'velcroed' to External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall as she attended everything from NATO to G7 summits. It was a fascinating experience," he says. Mullin also spent a stint in 1991 as Director of Media Relations for External Affairs.

Interestingly, Britain's new Senior Trade Commissioner for Hong Kong, Francis Cornish, also has a strong media relations history as former chief of the Foreign Office's News Department.

Mullin says he is looking forward to working closely with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong. "It's great to be in a city which has the largest Canadian Chamber outside of Canada. I'm extremely impressed by the commitment and dedication of the people who are making things happen here." ♦

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