



nexus

INSIGHT ... FOCUS ... CONNECT

APRIL 2015



Photo: Solar Impulse, Revillat, rezo.ch

STUDENT DELEGATIONS ENCOUNTER SOLAR IMPULSE EVENTS SWISS INNOVATION TOURING THE WORLD

During the on-site seminars of Insight China, Focus India and connectUS earlier this month, the delegations repeatedly encountered the Solar Impulse Round-The-World flight*. In India, China and the USA, seminar participants witnessed landings and preparations for workshops and symposia which exhibited how science addresses sustainability and innovation: Two themes that chimed with the student seminars.

The around-the-world-tour as well as the landing of the Solar Impulse offered an excellent platform for Switzerland's official representations in India to launch the year of Swiss Innovation 2015-16. According to Aaron Egolf, Public Diplomacy Officer, "the Solar Impulse project embodies features that characterise Switzerland as a global leader in

innovation, pioneering spirit, entrepreneurship, excellence in research and development, and highly educated and well trained people.

"Additionally, it highlights the well-functioning collaboration between the private sector, academia and government in Switzerland in order to realise a world-changing project", Egolf adds. Despite ranking highly in terms of innovation and competitiveness, analysis revealed that India does not grant Switzerland such attributes. Hence, the year of Swiss innovation aims to correct this misperception.

During the year of Swiss innovation a series of symposia, workshops and panels are planned, which address topics such as renewable energy,

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Nexus (meaning connection, tie, link) is the joint newsletter of the three Bachelor student seminars Insight China, Focus India and connectUS. It features news, highlights and information about the On-site Seminars which bring together high calibre organisations, experts and professionals with participating students and lecturers from various FHNW schools.

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sustainability, innovation and science. Furthermore, travelling exhibitions as for instance the virtual bird flight simulator named "birdly", presented to the Indian public in Chennai and Bangalore, attracted not only a lot of visitors but also obtained great media coverage.

Promoting and increasing the recognition of the image 'Switzerland' in terms of innovation is one aim, the other is to strengthen relations between businesses and academies in India and Switzerland, Mr Egolf stated. To what degree the above-mentioned measures will impact the attractiveness of Swiss products in India is difficult to quantify however, Mr Egolf outlines: "We anticipate reinforcing the perception amongst the Indian public and business that Switzerland produces high-quality, precise and state-of-the-art technology products, which Switzerland is generally well-known for around the world." ● KS

SUPPORTING SWISS INNOVATION

● For Swiss companies seeking support to enter the US market both Swiss Consulates and Swissnex are the best addresses (see also p 4). Daniel Bangser, Director North America for Switzerland Trade & Investment explained how the Swiss Consulate acts as a consulting firm. It supports companies find distributors and investors in the US and helps them gather marketing intelligence. One example is the event planning firm called Zkipster, which provides a guest list app. The Swiss Consulate helped this Swiss company based in New York to improve their website marketing. Mr Bangser also highlighted that the US market is the fourth biggest export partner for Switzerland after Germany, Italy and France. Especially because of the CHF and Euro issue, Swiss companies prefer to settle in the USA.

But Switzerland is also an attractive place for corporate investments. Currently, there are 1600 American entities in Switzerland. The Swiss Consulate could convince Kayak, the American based online travel

** Solar Impulse, piloted by the pioneering Bertrand Piccard and André Borschberg, aims to fly around the world without fuel or polluting emissions. The Solar Impulse, fuelled only by solar power, landed in Ahmedabad and Varanasi in India in March (when Focus India was there), and then departed for Chongqing and later Nanjing - where Insight China delegates saw preparations for the landing. In May, Solar Impulse will travel to USA territory - the connectUS delegation saw preparations were well under way for receptions there.*



The Solar Impulse crew visiting ABB in Shanghai Kangqiao, the same day as the Insight China delegation. Photo: ABB China



Delegates Martin Schneeberger (left) and Andreas Hefti at the Swiss Consulate in New York. Photo: LV

agency to base its headquarter in Zürich in order to access the EU market.

From the US market perspective Switzerland is a highly valuable trade and investment partner. Thanks to Switzerland's top position in innovation the Swiss Consulate could already exceed its annual target for revenue from Swiss SMLs by the end of March 2015.

● AY

WEALTH MANAGEMENT IN RISK-AVERSE INDIA AND BANKING CASTLES IN CHINA

● Wealth management in India and China is gaining significance since the number of millionaires is increasing. Not only the boom in the economy, but also the rise in income levels has favoured this trend. FI delegation participants heard of the specific wealth management challenges relating to foreign banks in India and the Indian risk-averse approach. The IC delegation, on the other hand, was introduced to a Swiss bank's approach to Chinese banking.

Wealth management services provide benefits with two core objectives: growth and security of their current portfolio. In India, there are currently three types of wealth management service providers: banks, brokerage firms and boutique advisory firms. Whereas banks and brokerage firms focus on converting large investments into diversified and return promising portfolios, boutique advisory firms provide customised financial solutions.

Even though the Indian government liberalised the banking sector, the regulation constraints for foreign banks are still a high barrier to entry, according to Narasmha Rao, Managing Director of Burckhardt Compressions. He added that the newly elected government with Prime Minister Narendra Modi pursues a policy to not only to keep but also to attract new foreign banks in India. Government regulations pose an issue in China, too." In order to be eligible for a Chinese banking license, UBS had to open its first ground-floor branch in APAC in the East of Beijing," stated Chua Yeong Wei, Vice President & Chief Operating Officer at UBS (China) Ltd.

In terms of wealth management services, Prof. Debraj Ghosal, Faculty General Manager of Somaiya Vidyavihar University highlighted that Indian customers are highly risk averse and prefer investment portfolios with debt securities. Therefore, it is very difficult for banks in India to offer products which generate moderate returns and at the same time comprise low risks. According to Arunkumar



Prof. Debraj Ghosal, Faculty General Manager of Somaiya Vidyavihar University, emphasised the risk aversion of Indian consumers. Photo: JH

Dubey, lecturer at Somaiya Vidyavihar University, India's High Net Worth Individuals (HNWI) favour foreign banks as they perceive those services as more up-to-date and globalised. Chinese's wealth, according to Chua, comes mainly from entrepreneurs, who wish to actively participate in investments. Not only does Chua see a trend towards diversification of portfolios, but also he also emphasizes UBS China's engagement to involve the customer via internationality seminars, for instance. In addition to that, UBS China Ltd will expand to Shanghai by opening up a castle branch, Chua announced. ● JN/KS



Wei Tjin Khoo (left), Project Manager at UBS China, shares interesting information about the company's expansion plans. Photo: LE

HOW TO NETWORK - INPUTS FROM SWISSNEX



Swissnex is a subdivision of the general consulate of Switzerland and managed by the State Secretary for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI). Its core business is divided into four sections; academic relations, sciences and arts, entrepreneur and innovation. There are 6 Swissnex divisions in the world: at Bangalore, Shanghai, Singapore, San Francisco, Boston and Rio de Janeiro. Additionally, at 18 locations around the world there are Science and Technology Councillors, which are SERI affiliates.

● “No one ruins your reputation but you”. This is how Jodi-Tatiana Charles, a brandographer and speaker at Swissnex Boston started her presentation about networking and relationships. For her “networking is about going towards people at events with the mission of collecting as many business cards as possible. From such relationships you can expect support at any time.” Here are her most valuable networking inputs:

She recommends always having all accounts (LinkedIn, Xing, etc.) updated and professional, because people always first research a person on Google before meeting him or her. Furthermore, she said, “It is up to you what you want to put down on your CV and LinkedIn page. Just be real”. Before going to an interview you should make sure to limit Facebook access to friends only.

When you look for a job, search first in your own circle of family, relatives, friends, alumni, former peers and teachers. Moreover, find great headhunters and become friends with them. Mrs Charles developed a technique, which she calls the triangle, which helps when networking at events. She recommends finding a child of 8 to 12 years, a senior of over 60 years and an international person and telling them what you do. Because you practise pitching yourself to these different targets, this experience will enable you to go anywhere in the world and present yourself in the appropriate manner. For example, the title doctor is not translated everywhere in the world, so it might be that you use the word PhD to explain what you do.

Additionally, you should spend 60% of your visits at events that are related to your career niche and spend the other 40% at events on topics which you do not know well. This way you not only expand your network but also push your knowledge boundaries. Finally, she explained that a career niche makes you more valuable and gives you a competitive advantage on the job market. For example, there are thousands of Brand Marketers, but only a few Brandographers in the world. ● AY



Balz Strasser, CEO of Swissnex India talked about their activities to support Swiss entrepreneurs to enter the Indian market. Photo: JH

SWISSNEX INDIA

According to Balz Strasser, CEO of Swissnex India, at the moment there are not that many Swiss entrepreneurs who seek business opportunities in India. However, if a business considers expanding its activities to India, Swissnex supports start-ups by providing valuable connections, offering coaching and training. In addition, an office is at their disposal within Swissnex premises. Strasser also mentioned that networking is rather informal in India compared to Switzerland. Usually business seekers exchange and network at so-called start-up festivals. Strasser added, that Bangalore is a very energetic place. There is a new generation growing that is full of energy to achieve something. Another subject that is of major importance to Swissnex, is gender equality. “We put a great deal of effort into the enlightenment of women’s position at workplace”, said the CEO. ● KS



Jodi-Tatiana Charles, Brandographer and speaker at Swissnex Boston. Photo: LV

FACING EMPLOYEE RETENTION ISSUES



www.insightchina.ch



Insight China delegation members are impressed by the high quality products of the Zhongbang Group. Photo: LE

With the rise of non-state owned enterprises in China, security of employment is no longer guaranteed. On the one hand, this presents possibilities to companies to plan work more flexibly, on the other hand it also provides more change options for employees. The IC delegation participants learnt first-hand how Chinese and Swiss-Sino enterprises approach employee retention issues.

"Without fighting, hunting and trying there is no winning," stated Kangying Cheng, CEO of Basch, China's leading high end security printing equipment provider. Basch was among the first private enterprises to be established when it was founded in Beijing in 1990, continued Cheng. However, on its expansion to Shanghai, Basch acquired a state-owned company. According to Cheng, the workers from the acquired Shanghai company cannot be dismissed by regulation which reduces Basch's flexibility in work planning.

North West Yongxin Group, another example of a state-owned company in Lanzhou, diversifies its product range from coatings on Chinese medicine products. They are about to launch a lily drink in a drive

to both keep profitability and keep employees. Unlike the Basch and North West Yongxin Group cases, employee retention in non-state owned companies is a priority item on the HR agenda.

"We will go forward like horses, we are dedicated to our career, we are struggling for our families and our means for success is our feet," were the inspirational words from the board chairman of Zhongbang Group, Jin Yinqiang. The Lanzhou-based company produces special heat resistant cables. The Zhongbang Group lives up to this mission by providing on-site housing for its employees. The company, founded in 1999, has already equipped the Jiuquan 5 & 6 spacecrafts and will build a 300 meter tall landmark building in Lanzhou. By receiving a quality award from the Gansu provincial government, the Zhongbang Group feels ensured that the enterprise can compete even though it is in private hands.

The IC delegation was informed that if Chinese companies work to their best, they can expand to other countries. Zhongbang demonstrated their perfor-

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Kangying Cheng, CEO and founder of Basch shares his experience in employee retention issues.

Photo: LE

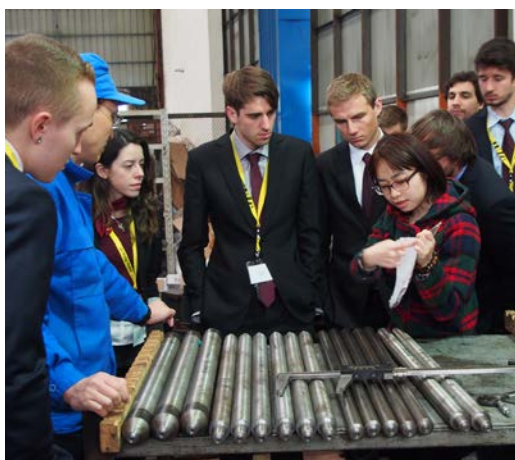
«The world's second largest economy, China will certainly play a greater role in international affairs. The awareness of this importance can be reflected in the launching of the strategy "one belt and one road", with "one belt" indicating the "Silk Road Economic Belt", which is an expansion of the traditional Silk Road, and "one road" denoting the "Maritime Silk Road of the 21st Century", which could be considered an extension of the route Zheng He travelled with his "Armada" during the early Ming Dynasty.»

Yufan Yang, Head of Insight China Delegation

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mance in that they are now present in the Middle East, Africa and other Asian countries. The group's presence as well as its origin in Gansu province reflect the "One belt, one road" initiative.

The Insight China delegation visited the silk producing company, High Fashion (China) Co., Ltd. in Hangzhou, which lies on the famous Silk Road. The company pro-



Delegates on the factory visit at Basch inspecting the printer roller production process. Photo: LE

vides Chinese silk products, still a major export product of China, to well-known fashion companies. High Fashion (China) Co, Ltd is currently undergoing a shift from a production site to a silk town, in which dormitories for 60% of the workers are provided. 张芸 (Sina), the company's Vice General Manager, mentioned that the company tried to lower the fluctuation rate among employees by automation and by involving the blue collar workers in the designing process. Sina continued: "young Chinese people do not want to do this repetitive work."

Geberit uses two instruments to avoid that its employees feel ungratified at work. Firstly, Geberit grants rewards for employees' improvement ideas and secondly employees can change posts on the assembly lines. Furthermore, Geberit fosters daily meetings which enhances the problem-solving.

To sum up, employee motivation through a strong mission, providing natural remuneration in form of dormitories or lunch, pursuing a global strategy, diversifying work tasks and integrating the employees in innovation are all successful activities undertaken by Chinese or Swiss-Sino companies to retain employees.

● JN



David Hehlen is in the last semester of his BSc International Business Management. Photo: LE

"The seminar is a great success story and gave me valuable insights into a country I barely knew before. Before this experience I was not really aware of the competitiveness of Chinese companies and their commitment to high quality. I was also impressed how the "Chinese way" works and to catch a glimpse of the possibilities in China."

His dream job: Financial Supply Chain Manager



Rita Vida finishes her Bachelor degree in International Management this summer. Photo: LE

"The on-site trip to China gave me a great insight into the business world abroad. I could speak with managers of the companies we visited and get good inputs and impressions concerning my future business career. Insight China was an amazing experience and I recommend every student, who aims to work abroad in the future to participate in this program."

Her dream job: Export Manager

More Participant Profiles can be found under

WWW.INSIGHTCHINA.CH

INDIA'S FIGHT AGAINST 'TRASH MOUNTAINS'

○ In India a rethink must take place since illegal landfills threaten not only the environment but also public health. "During monsoons the waste is floating away into the groundwater, the consequences are disastrous," stated Diyva Tiwari, head of the non-profit organisation Saahas - 'Zero Waste' Solutions. She added that the state must take greater responsibility and exert more pressure on society in order to safeguard the environment. "In schools for instance", Tiwari explained, "the children receive very little information about waste segregation and the aftermath of littering. In order to generate a greater impact, institutions would need to educate and train the youth properly".

Considering the pollution through garbage in India, the efforts of Saahas seem like a drop in the ocean. Nevertheless, the organisation's activity significantly contributes to dealing with the city's waste which amounts to 3000 tons per day. The organisation Saahas - 'Zero Waste' Solutions, founded in 2001, segregates 1.5 to 2 tons of waste per collecting point per day, Tiwari explained. The garbage is separated into wet, dry and toxic waste by female employees and afterwards is transported to a composting plant outside the city. In connection with the waste issue, the delegation afterwards visited such a composting plant. ● KS



A state owned composting plant was inspected by the delegation after the visit of Saahas. Every day, around 20 trucks arrive at the plant each carrying on average 11 tons of waste. Wet and dry waste are mixed and stored for three to four weeks until it is shredded and used as compost. This compost is later sold to local farmers to use as fertilizer for their land. Photo: SB



Female employees of Saahas segregate the garbage by hand into dry, wet and toxic waste before it then is transported to a composting plant outside of the city. Photo: JH

IMPRESSIONS - PARTICIPANT MARTIN SCHAUB

○ Martin Schaub, environmental-engineering student from Brugg and delegate of Focus India 2015 shares his thoughts about the visit of the collecting point and the composting plant.

What impressed you most during the visit at the Saahas Centre?

I was particularly impressed what impact such a small organisation has with limited resources and basic techniques. Thanks to Saahas, the amount of waste that otherwise would land on illegal landfills is reduced by 80 percent.

What are your thoughts about the compost plant?

Even though there was a lot of plastic in the input material of wet waste, they are able to sort it by using a sorting machine and can then sell the product as valuable fertilizer to the local farmers. That closes the natural cycle.

Where do you see the opportunities in India with regards to waste management?

In order to reduce the huge amount of garbage produced every day, the government needs to start taking more responsibility. A small organisation like Saahas is not capable of managing such an amount alone. Besides that, the Indians need to be more conscious about their behaviour with resources.

What inspirations or ideas do you transfer into your future professional life?

A solution that works in Switzerland does not necessarily work in another country too. In my opinion, only when applying a combination of different approaches that respond to the context of an emerging country such as India, can you achieve good results here too. ● KS



www.focusindia.ch



Alexandra Borner is in her third year of Applied Psychology.
Photo: MB

"The on-site seminar has influenced my professional mindset in so far as I am now more relaxed regarding potentially stressful situations at work due to seeing various attitudes and approaches in India, which helped me to look at these situations from a different perspective."

Her dream job:
Head of safety department



Moritz Widmer is graduating this summer as Mechanical Engineer.
Photo: MB

"I learned a lot about the differences of another culture regarding technical, business and social aspects. The on-site seminar gave me the chance to get a feeling of acting in an international context. I am convinced that I will benefit from this experience in many future professional situations."

His dream job: Engineer

ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA: SWISS TEXTILE DESIGNS



Leather, cotton or linen processed to bags, cushions and shirts and decorated with digital prints or dyed yarn are only some examples of the product mix that Damian and Franziska Carnevale produce on their production site in India. Not only Swiss retail stores such as Globus or Interio fancy their products but also well-established international brands such as Zimtstern and Billabong.

"India's long tradition in textiles craftsmanship was a crucial factor to set up the business in India", said Franziska Carnevale. Therefore, in 2010, Damian and Franziska founded the Pvt. Ltd. 'beyond fashion' in Bangalore. Both, Damian and Franziska Carnevale have a fashion design background and had been engaged within the Indian market before they settled and launched their business. "The network we established through our former positions smoothened the start," Damian commented. The combination of both the know-how of the two entrepreneurs and the Indian traditional craftsmanship paid off and the couple has now been successfully operating in India for five years.

However, Damian admitted, that they still face a lot of challenges. "There is a lack of skilled and loyal labour forces and due to the poor infrastructure logistics are difficult. For instance, transporting material from the north of India to Bangalore requires a lot of time. Nevertheless, it is a wonderful experience to see the business slowly but steadily developing. This motivates us to continue and develop further". ● KS

FEMALE TEAM LEADER IN MALE DOMINATED FIELD

Being a woman in a male dominated field brings along certain challenges. However, Keerthana Mahadevappa, software engineering team leader at Accenture, believes such challenges can be overcome. She also recognises that in recent times men have started to change their mind-sets about women in leading positions. According to her, female supervisors are accepted as equal to their male colleagues. In her career Mahadevappa has supervised male colleagues and has not encountered major difficulties.

Regarding salary differences between women and men, she said that in India salaries amongst working colleagues are not openly discussed, which seems similar to the situation in Switzerland. Thus Keerthana commented: "I cannot tell whether there is a discrepancy." At Accenture, she adds, all freshers (university graduates) start at the same basic salary and afterwards wage increases depend on performance.

The company, as the delegation learnt from its visit at one of nine branches Accenture is operating in Bangalore with 10'000 employees, invests significantly in workforce diversity. The company tries to obtain a 50 percent equality of female and male at the engineering department. ● KS



Keerthana Mahadevappa, software engineering team leader at Accenture.
Photo: JH

SUSTAINABILITY VITAL FOR GROWING ENERGY DEMANDS

“Embracing the new era of Energy” is Schneider Electric’s slogan. Indeed, this American energy management company lives and breathes according to its slogan. To achieve ground breaking energy use, especially in buildings, Schneider Electric not only invests in its R&D but also itself operates in a very impressive sustainable way. Advancing technologies, digitalization, industrialization, urbanization and the high demand for energy cause a lot of emissions. Ed Mueskes, Vice President & General Manager at the Schneider Electric Boston ONE Campus says : « The world will spend more money on energy in the next 40 years than it has in the previous 400 years”.

Currently, there are two approaches to this issue. In order to reduce waste and pollution we should either consume green, which means using renewable fuel resources, or consume lower carbon fuels such as shale gas. According to Schneider Electric, because of the growing population demand, neither of these approaches will really work in the long term. Therefore, Schneider Electric follows a new energy efficiency paradigm that combines IT with energy consumption and provides sustainable solutions for homes, companies, industries and cities. It uses real time data and information through its digital system to integrate and combine energy programs for a whole building or a whole city.

With the use of smart devices and big data, Schneider Electric provides its customers full services to reduce their energy consumption, CO2 footprints and operating expenditures. By reducing a firm’s overall costs it can then invest the money saved in more productive units. With Schneider Electric’s provided and adapted digital systems, the customer can understand, control, shift and share its energy

consumption. This adapted service enables customers to have an overview and decide in real time where their energy consumption is most or least needed.

Schneider Electric not only sells products and services, but also implements a vision and a culture. During the Boston ONE Campus tour, the connectUS 2015 delegation members could witness this culture. The company’s R&D labs consist of a discovery center, a struxure lab, network lab, electrical room, DCI and a data center. Thanks to these labs, the company is able to act innovatively, green and reliably and thus fulfill its own promise. The delegation watched an experiment for efficient energy use in a hospital, they had the opportunity to see how Schneider Electric’s servers worked and how their whole infrastructure and systems are maintained and controlled as well as connected to local natural resources. ● AY


www.connectus.ch



Ed Mueskes, Vice President & General Manager at the Schneider Electric Boston ONE Campus. Photo: LV



Nikolina Fuduric, Imanol Schlag and Dominique Maschke from the connectUS 2015 delegation members and an employee of the Schneider Electric R&D Lab. Photo: SW



Thomas Kohler is finishing his Bachelor in Business Administration this summer. Photo: DM

"During the ConnectUS on-site seminar I learned how important a reliable network is to develop your business and your career."

His dream job: Controller



Hung Tran is in his last year of his degree in International Management. Photo: DM

"The connectUS on-site seminar affected my professional mind-set. Especially the great story of Dave Radparvar from Holstee about finding his own path and following his passion in founding his own company was very inspiring and fascinating."

His dream job: in Finance Industry

THREE RULES FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP

● Bettina Hein, the CEO and founder of Pixability, was a student when she decided to become an entrepreneur. Though entrepreneurship is still not a mainstream topic in Switzerland where society is rather conservative, she decided to launch an organization called Start, which fosters entrepreneurship and innovation. She founded it 20 years ago to understand how to become an entrepreneur, because there were few recipes or guidelines around.

In her presentation to the delegation on Three Rules for Entrepreneurship, she claimed that anyone could become an entrepreneur. So she gave us first hand inputs about the skills that an entrepreneur needs to have. These are *naïveté*, *chutzpah* and *perseverance*. Naïveté does not mean not having a plan but rather approaching existing industries from another fresh perspective. She recommended challenging the status quo by working in different sectors and using these experiences for an idea and a business plan.

Chutzpah means to be audacious and to put yourself out there. She claimed: "For those of you who think they are introverts and they can't possibly put themselves out there, it is not true. If you believe strongly enough that what you are doing is the thing you need to be doing in life, you will find the energy within your-

self". But Bettina also warned that Chutzpah does not mean to be unprepared. As she was talking about her own story of how she founded Pixability, a YouTube ad buying and video marketing platform, she underlined how important preparation actually is for success. "If you put the preparation into things, you will be better than 80 to 90% of people out there, because a lot of people do not understand, even when they are smart, that they need preparation", she said.

Last but not least, an entrepreneur needs perseverance. This does not mean acting obstinately but rather being flexible enough to improve your idea and business model and adapt it to the market's needs. As for Pixability, which enables agencies, brands, and marketers to run better YouTube campaigns, this meant going through four iteration stages before actually becoming what it is today. It started by providing a platform where people could create their own video in three steps. Then it changed to a video editing service supplier for companies. Afterwards, it provided video software marketing services. Now the final version of Pixability is to provide YouTube advertising technologies by collecting users' data. Perseverance means to "say goodbye to things you love and find passion in new things", Bettina said. ● AY



Connections between USA and Switzerland:

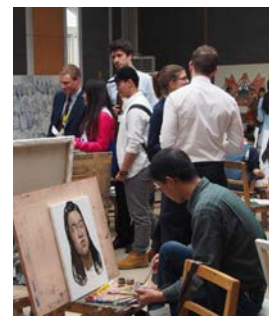
- Switzerland based its Constitution on the U.S. model of a two-chamber legislature.
- Switzerland is home to 70,000 Americans.
- Benjamin Franklin was inspired by Swiss direct democracy and federalism.
- One million Americans have Swiss roots.



Source: Switzerland: Your Partner in a Global World from Swiss Consulate



IMPRESSIONS FROM THE ON-SITE TRIPS





**... MORE
IMPRESSIONS**



ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE: KAIZEN AND PITCHING

INDIA: HIERARCHY AND KAIZEN

● In many ways, business structures mirror Indian society. Both are extremely hierarchical in nature, where people have allotted positions which they do not attempt to overturn. It is absolutely essential to understand how deeply these hierarchical thought-processes impact Indian attitudes to business; if not considered working in India can become much more costly and inefficient.

According to Mr Narasimha Rao, Managing Director at Burckhardt Compression in Pune, "it is important to advance employees and to provide them with titles in order to establish a certain affiliation with the company to maintain higher retention rates". Thus, Mr Rao outlined, companies tend to be run by one very strong individual who will issue direct instructions down the chain of command. Everybody expects that these instructions will be given in a fairly authoritarian manner and that those will follow them unquestioningly further down the chain. People do not question either their position within the organisation or the validity of decisions taken - greater forces (karma and dharma from Hinduism) prescribe these attitudes, he continued.

Another aspect, however, was elucidated by Mr Vinit Padalkar, Assistant Manager Manufacturing at Sulzer Chemtech, also in Pune. Indian employees, he explained, are highly involved in the decision making process. The practise of Kaizen is used in almost all the Swiss companies visited and refers to activities that continually improve all functions and involve all employees from the CEO to the manufacturing workers. This hierarchical approach means that when doing business in India it is usually necessary to liaise as near to the top as possible. Padalkar mentioned that many multinational companies try to introduce a flatter, more egalitarian structure to their Indian subsidiary in order to align it with other offices in the group. This approach, according to Padalkar, may be difficult in a country where hierarchy is unquestioningly accepted and requires a great deal of explanation, retraining and patience. ● KS



Vinit Padalkar, Assistant Manager Manufacturing at Sulzer Chemtech, outlined the involvement of Indian employees in the decision-making process. Photo: KS



Narasimha Rao, Managing Director at Burckhardt Compression, explained the hierarchical structures in Indian companies. Photo: KS

Organisational Culture continued

USA: NETWORKING AND PITCHING

● Working in the US, whether as an employee or as an entrepreneur, requires some cultural knowledge. World-renowned universities such as Harvard and MIT show how important education and forward thinking are in the American culture. Jodi-Tatiana Charles, a brandographer, stresses the importance of having a broad network and relationships to succeed in the US job market, as competition is higher than in Switzerland. Furthermore, compared to Switzerland, where networking mostly takes place through family and friends, in the US the distances and the fast paced lifestyle require more superficial but in-depth networking abilities.

While pitching in front of strangers, using direct language, making a point, and being initiative are perceived as normal and valuable in the US, Swiss people have difficulties behaving in that manner due to their cultural norms. These cultural traits can be seen

in the different networking hubs such as at the Varick Street Incubator and at Impact Hub, both situated in New York, as well as at the Cambridge Innovation Center in Boston. At the latter, for instance, there is a Venture Café explicitly for networking purposes. And at the Varick Street Incubator the connectUS 2015 delegation members had the opportunity to experience two different business idea pitches, each only 10 minutes long.

Daniel Bangser, Director North America of the Switzerland Trade & Investment Department of the Swiss Consulate in New York, said that although Switzerland is the worldwide high tech and low tech innovation leader, Swiss people do not know how to sell themselves. He recommends learning this skill in order to succeed in the USA and explains: "US people work on a different clock. They are watching their watch before you started talking". ● AY



Daniel Bangser, Director North America of the Switzerland Trade & Investment Department of the Swiss Consulate in New York. Photo: LV

US SOCIAL MEDIA CULTURE

● Social media in Switzerland is not yet widely used but is one of the most powerful communication tools in the USA. Therefore, Swiss organizations in the US have swiftly adopted this trend. For instance, the Consulate General of Switzerland in New York uses various tools such as Facebook and LinkedIn to regularly keep people up to date with new information. They employed an American expert for this task and have noticed increased brand awareness and more subscribers. Moreover, the Facebook fan page is used to either draw attention to new events or post meaningful and relevant statements to remind people of the organization's work. ● HN

MOVING AWAY FROM "SWISSNESS" BRANDING



Punit Gupta, Managing Director of Blaser Swisslube in New Delhi spoke about Blaser's positioning strategy. Photo: JH

● A vast majority of Swiss companies fail within a short period to establish themselves within foreign markets (see NEXUS, 2015, issue 1). It strongly appears that "made in Switzerland" is not the ultimate unique selling proposition anymore. Various Swiss companies visited emphasised their shift to other branding propositions.

"Blaser Swisslube does not want to be seen simply as a supplier of lubricates but be recognized as a reliable and trustworthy partner," as Punit Gupta, Managing Director said. First and foremost, Blaser aims to enhance customer retention and therefore introduced a productivity trophy award in 2014. This award is granted to beneficiaries of Blaser's liquid tools, which increased both their productivity and efficiency. The ceremony attracts a lot of attention and additionally it creates public awareness among potential customers.

Franke on the other hand, does not pursue an own brand strategy. The acquired company Faber was established within the Indian market before the merger. "Due to the Faber's brand recognition", Alok Misra, Head of the Plant remarked, "Franke promotes its products under the Faber label and thus neglects the Swissness ingredient".

Global players such as ABB do not rely on their Swiss background. "Having the entire value chain in China

is our competitive advantage", stated Said Zahrai, Global R&D manager, Packaging Technology at ABB Engineering (Shanghai) Ltd. ABB moved the global robotics headquarters to Shanghai in 2006 and with the recent launch of the dual arm collaborative robot "YuMi" at the Hannover Messe, it seems that designed in China is as innovative as designed in Europe. Zahrai added: "In Europe everything that is possible is done already whereas in China everything is possible". Therefore, China is definitely a good playing field for an innovation driven company such as ABB. According to Zahrai, the Chinese central government and industries want to invest in automation in line with the current shift from manufacturing to services. ● JN/KS



Said Zahrai, Global R&D Manager at ABB, talking about the differences between Europe and China. Photo: LE

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