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AROUND TOWN

ShanghaiBeat



Change and innovation, key to any successful business, can come in the form of renewal rather than replacement - that is, returning to the tried and true. In Shanghai this past month, we saw China's first foreign watch brand introduce a new watch based on an old design; the 2007 Special Olympics pick a producer of past Olympics; a conference revisit the topic of CSR with fresh views; and a Bund venue share its plans to keep its theme in a new location. Also, we review a new book on China and visit the new office of a consulting firm. By introducing the former manager of Wham, we also introduce a new mini interview series called The Five.

Guest Lecture

University President Speaks of 'New Era'

It's good to know public candour remains a valued attribute in academia at a time when political rhetoric appears to overwhelm the sound waves. "We are not, in American universities, sufficiently focused on global issues," said Lee C. Bollinger, President of Columbia University, speaking on 4 April at the Shanghai Gallery of Art at Three on the Bund. Even though Columbia, he said, was the earliest American institution to have an East Asian studies programme, its academic focus, as that of many American universities, has turned inward over the last 25 years, having "very little to do with what is going on in the outside world."

"We, in the past decade, have entered a new era," said Bollinger, noting the effects of globalisation on the world economy, democratic movements and the development of communications technology that necessitate a corresponding change in the academic landscape. Then, there's China. "We

cannot be an academic institution without having expertise about contemporary China," he said.



According to Bollinger, who was the President of the University of Michigan prior to joining the New York City Ivy League school in 2002, Columbia will aim to develop "a global talent pool" in order to establish itself as a global university. It currently offers a Summer Business Chinese and Internship Programme in Shanghai, while the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) offers a programme in conjunction with Beijing University.

The Five

Wham Rap

Simon Napier-Bell is the former manager of English pop group Wham. In 1983, he began a two-year odyssey to arrange the first western pop concert in China. In April 1985, after several preparatory visits and scores of meetings and business lunches, Wham took to the stage in Beijing. Napier-Bell recently visited Shanghai to promote his book, *I'm Coming to Take You to Lunch*, an amusing memoir about the planning processes for Wham's China concerts. He answered the following question:



What were the key lessons you learned about conducting business in China?

1. If you're in a hurry, go and do business somewhere else. Don't count on getting the deal done this side of Christmas.
2. Get to the point as slowly as possible and with as much socialising as possible. If you can go so slowly that the Chinese want you to go faster, you're half way to a deal.
3. Be content with lengthy memorandums of agreement that actually agree to nothing. They, at least, guarantee that both sides will come together again for further negotiations.
4. Take your business as far as possible, and get your counterparts as involved as possible, before confronting them with a question that requires a straight yes or no answer.
5. Never bargain with 'a take it or leave it' attitude. Propose ultimatums simply as a way of getting things resolved quickly. Your counterpart can then turn them down, yet still ask to talk further.