

POLISH MARKET

ECONOMIC MAGAZINE

PUBLISHED SINCE 1996
No. 235 / 2015 :: www.polishmarket.com.pl

SPECIAL EDITION



BUSINESSWOMAN

DOROTA HRYNIEWIECKA-FIR





Photo: Rafał Niedzielski, www.niedzielski.tv

MY EXCLUSIVE “KNOW HOW” IN MAKING VALUABLE CONTACTS

Diana Cichy, Director of CICHE IT&I talks to Polish Market.

PM The company CICHE International Trade & Investment Co. Ltd. is a platform for contacts between Poland and China. How did you start working with Chinese representatives?

In 2008 I moved to China to be a volunteer for the Beijing Summer Olympics. I didn't know the Mandarin language at the time and so I signed up to the language school in Beijing in January 2008. My dream to work for the Olympics didn't come true, instead I joined a Microsoft team testing Windows 7.

That time I realised CHINA WAS AN EMERGING MARKET GIVING MANY POSSIBILITIES for international business development even for young professionals. At that time I was still a young graduate! Chinese culture also impressed me a lot and I quickly made my decision to stay, pick up the language and use the wide opportunities China offered. I can say I was in the right place at the right time. I had a positive attitude to China and I felt good there. I was social very active, and established new Chinese and Polish contacts during the international meetings organized by the Chinese or events in the Polish Embassy in Beijing. My father is a businessman and he also kept me occupied with searching for new business ideas and exploring new opportunities. We are from the Silesia region in Poland, the Coal Mining Industry area; it was naturally the first sector to start with. Even if I had arrived with a million dollars of capital to spend in China it would not help me establishing business contacts because in China you first need to become friends with the Chinese. I met a few Chinese who worked within the Coal Mining. I also linked with the Trade & Investment Promotion Section at the Polish Embassy in Beijing, as a consequence I closely cooperated with the counselor Mr Robert Góralczyk during promotion events, seminars, and fairs. This is how business is done in China. It's called GUANXI, and it means relationship or connection. Once you meet a person who is in a good relationship with another person who is within the same industry and then that person connects the next person. It takes time, many meetings, a lot of food and wine consumed, and many songs sung in karaoke together. Chinese needed to accept

me first as a person then I no longer had to search for business. It's actually the Chinese who connect me with people. This is my exclusive “know how” in making valuable contacts.

PM You are the Director of CICHE IT&I. How did your Chinese counterparts respond to cooperating with a very young woman, that held such a high position?

Yes, I am the director of the company but I must say I have attended business meetings with my father in the beginning, as he is a General Manager of the company. Usually people saw my father and myself together at meetings. It was at the time when we were making those initial connections that his presence and mine were very solid. I felt confident and therefore I never felt a strange reaction to the fact I'm a female entrepreneur. I think people were amazed to learn I own a company in Hong Kong and this also helped. It was indeed a tough school for me, I HAD TO LEARN QUICKLY HOW TO NEGOTIATE WITH CHINESE COUNTERPARTS.

PM CICHE IT&I from the very beginning is connected with the wider range of mining industry. Do you think there is a great demand for Polish machinery? Which companies do the best sell?

There is a great demand for Polish machinery in China. Polish mining equipment is well known worldwide for its highly developed technology and innovative products. Polish and Chinese coal mines have to deal with hazardous environments such as methane gas, deep mine, humidity; hence solutions that pass the safety certification in Poland can be used in China too. To date two Polish factories have created joint venture with factories in China: Fasing Capital Group producing chains and Kopex Group producing shearers. Other companies also sell monorails, air-coolers, roof supports, engines etc.

PM Do you see any chance to establish contacts in the new sectors of the industry?

The vision for my company is to develop cooperation with China and other emerging countries in other industry sectors as well. In particular

we have plans in the food industry. We have a network of local buyers and are currently working on it. Also knowing that Chinese are becoming richer, not only the western food has future in China but also Polish luxury goods, such as clothes and furniture present an opportunity for my business. I have just had a Chinese delegation interested in investing for constructions in Poland within Green Power Energy Sector.

PM How do you rate the visit of the President of Poland Andrzej Duda in China? Have you established a new and promising contacts?

Unfortunately, I could not be present at the Polish President's visit to China. At the time I was attending the 2015 Women's Entrepreneurship Day in the UN headquarters, New York, as a representative of the Polish Network of Women Entrepreneurship Ambassadors. I am planning to co-organise next year WED events in Poland and abroad. However, the General Manager of CICHE IT&I was attending all meetings of the delegation with the Polish President in China. We believe this trip created great prospects for the future Polish-China cooperation. As the political support for business with China is a crucial factor, President Duda's last visit to China is expected to have paved the way to even greater cooperation in different industry sectors. There are still political efforts that must be put in place, for example to lift the existing bans on importing Polish products. The Chinese President Xi Jinping was very grateful seeing Mr Duda in China within his first months of presidency. Business is closely connected to Government in China, so, consequently, we can start to see huge traffic of Polish products to China. I expect more export opportunities for Polish producers to arise in the near future, and I will be able to provide my best services for them. ANYONE WISHING TO COOPERATE BETWEEN POLAND AND CHINA, OR OTHER EMERGING MARKETS SHOULD CONTACT ME! During previous trips CICHE IT&I representatives established many promising contacts and with time we will show how fast we can become close friends with new associates. □