

CHINA CROSSROADS

Thursday, July 23rd, 2020, 19:30 – 20:45

Innovation or Perfection: German Mittelstand Business in the China Market

Sven Agten

President and CEO

Rheinzink Asia-Pacific



Supported by:

The ESSCA School of Management

Kudosbay Startup Services



9 Qinghai Lu / Nanjing Xi Lu (青海路9号近南京西路)

Admission: 100 RMB / One Drink

RSVP to Frank Tsai at editor@shanghai-review.org.



German Mittelstand companies (SMEs) are world famous for their products and quality. Made in Germany stands for perfection and reliability because of decades and generations experience. In the volatile Chinese market, however, where speed is often key, innovation has become a very important part of business reality. This talk will focus on the question of what advantages German Mittelstand companies still have in China, and what their challenges in continuing to thrive. How does German business deal with innovation in China, and how important is innovation for Germany's often traditional companies? What types of innovation are they engaging in? What are the characteristics of German innovation made in China vs. German innovation in Germany? Can Chinese companies top German reliability and perfection?

[Sven Agten](#) is the Asia-Pacific President of Rheinzink, which is a world leader in zinc manufacturing for architectural use and a German multinational SME typical of Germany's Mittelstand. Sven has been living and working in China since 2004. At the age of 24, he moved to China's most northern province of Heilongjiang, where he started to work as English teacher. In 2008 he set up and managed a Sino-Belgian Joint-Venture cement plant in Tangshan, Hebei province. Five years later after selling the entity, he returned back to Belgium to pursue an MBA and after graduation became APAC President of Rheinzink, He is thus in close contact with many German SMEs in China and understands what they offer to the Chinese market. Since Sven held various management positions in different regions, lived in smaller and large cities, speaks fluent Chinese, and is married to a Chinese, he has developed a unique perspective on China. He is author of [So schafft man China](#) (2018) about economic and social trends in modern China and how companies should deal with them.

[China Crossroads](#) hosts talks on all topics related to China, including business, foreign policy, and other areas as they relate to China, the idea being that China is both already a "crossroads" of the world and itself at a "crossroads" in terms of its future global influence. For more information, contact Frank Tsai at editor@shanghai-review.org.