

CHINA CROSSROADS

Saturday, October 23rd, 2021, 15:30 – 17:30

Trial and Error with M&A in China: Cautionary Tales

Ian Anderson

Managing Director

Synthomer China

Wooden Box | 9 Qinghai Lu close to Nanjing Xi Lu
150rmb including drink ticket | FREE for members
RSVP to Frank Tsai at editor@shanghai-review.org



This talk will discuss the speaker's experience trying to buy private, mainly owner-managed companies on behalf of his UK-listed MNC employer. From 2016-2019, he tried to purchase five firms (suspended with four and failed with one) and engaged in other speculative JV discussions involving business partners (suppliers, distributors), as well as other opportune/inopportune encounters. These efforts spanned many parts of China (East, North, South) including Yunnan, Dongbei and Taiwan. The speaker will discuss his failed attempts with amusing anecdotes to illustrate the pitfalls, hurdles, and "do-nots" (and some "dos"), while also explaining why he still can't resist the siren call to crash into further Chinese corporate rocks. An underlying theme will be that private Chinese companies are not fertile hunting ground for a Western company, but how else to set up in China, 20 years too late?

[Ian Anderson](#) is a graduate of Cambridge University with a major in European Languages. He has worked in the chemicals industry since 1978, initially in international sales and marketing positions based in the UK, then moving into general management, based in the last 10 years in Germany and China. He has experience of leading up to 1000 people across all major economic regions and has sat on joint-venture Boards in Finland, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Ian has worked in Shanghai since 2014 leading the Chinese operations of a UK based multinational chemical company with two own factories, two local manufacturing partners and a large import business from Europe, USA and SE Asia. He is the only foreigner in a team of 150 and has significant experience of M&A, actively pursuing opportunities with Chinese private companies as well as integrating the Chinese subsidiaries of global acquisitions made by the parent company. Ian sees his current major challenges in China beyond the core of profitable growth as enabling and developing greater self-sufficiency in his China team, building bridges of trust and understanding between a dispersed "HQ" and a divergent China, and preparing his own succession as he looks forward to his Third Age.

[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.