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AUSTCHAMKOREA
Australian Chamber of Commerce in Korea
DownUnder Update

AUSTCHAM'S NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JESSIE IM



This month the DownUnder Update talks with AustCham's new Executive Director Jessie Im. We spoke to her about her plans for AustCham and how she feels about her new role.

1. Jessie, thanks for your time! Could you please tell us a little about the new Executive Director of AustCham Korea?

I come to AustCham possessing a range of experiences both in Korea and abroad. I was educated in Korea at both the high school and tertiary level and speak Korean. I have held many roles and responsibilities in my previous lines of work ranging from key account manager, marketing manager and project manager. In turn, I have a diverse range of work experience over the past 10 years and I will bring a strong ethic to my new role as Executive Director of AustCham.

2. How has your previous work experience prepared you for your role with AustCham?

First, as previously mentioned, I have been educated and have worked in Korea. As a result I have a strong understanding of the Korean business environment and culture. For example, my experiences at Pearson Korea, Oxford University Press, and Compass Media have provided strong foundations for developing my skills and my ability to work in many different business settings. I have also held a range of diverse roles and responsibilities and this level of expertise and adaptability is something I am looking forward to putting in place when working at AustCham. I also speak English and Mandarin as well as Korean.

Continued on page 2

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Through my various work with multiple groups and organisations, I feel as if I have built good communication skills which should help me in my position. My capacity to speak other languages gives me the opportunities to engage with multiple cultures in my time as Executive Director of AustCham. I hope this is something that can be of benefit to AustCham's members and also contribute to AustCham successfully accomplishing its objectives in promoting Australian business in Korea.

3. What is your connection to Australia?

I have long held an interest in Australia. Holding an education background, I have researched and learnt extensively about the Australian education system. The longstanding commitment to education in Australia is something I admire and in my view will present the country with many opportunities for foreign engagement in the years to come.

The Australian culture is also something that is attractive to me. During my travels to Australia I was surrounded by many friendly and warm hearted people and grew fond of the culture while I was there. I have also worked with many Australians in my lines of work and thus have been exposed to many stories about Australia.

4. In your eyes, what are the major challenges facing AustCham in the mid to long term?

In terms of challenges, my primary focus is to do everything possible to help our members achieve their goals and objectives in Korea. In what can be a tricky market for foreign companies, AustCham's greatest challenge in my eyes is to ensure that all members achieve success in Korea.

5. What future do you envision for Australia in Korea?

I feel as if Australia's role will only continue to be both more active in Korea. The growing engagement of Australian

companies and individuals in Korea has paved the way for an increase in Australians coming in and doing business in Korea for the future. The Korea-Australia Free Trade Agreement will have huge benefits for cultural and economic ties and I can see this facilitating the development of a stronger bond between the two countries.

There are also signs of increasing interest in Korea from both students and tertiary institutions. As a result, I anticipate that Korea will develop in importance for the emerging pool of young professionals and emerging businesses in Australia.

6. What advice would you give to Australian companies looking at entering the Korean market?

I would advise Australian companies to take the time to build trust and relationships with their Korean counterparts. A considered and patient approach is crucial in succeeding in the Korean market, and whilst this can be challenging for some, the establishment of meaningful relationships and partnerships often leads to strong trust and transparency between parties, so be patient. I would also stress the need to understand cultural sensitivities and to adapt to Korean customs. Once these unique features of Korean society are understood, relations between outside businesses and their Korean counterparts are able to develop with far more ease.

7. What would you like to say to all AustCham's members and the wider Australian community in Korea?

I would like AustCham's members to know that I will continue AustCham's longstanding tradition of promoting Australian businesses in Korea as well as working closely with members and individuals to help them achieve their objectives in the Korean market.

Thank you for your time!

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