致中国CEO的一封信

不应忽略隐藏在这些领域之中的文化期待，而是应更深一层的文化层面上将创意和人们相连。

这是我们为本杂志撰写的最后一期专栏了，回顾过去10个月的26篇专栏，我们共同探索了很多话题，希望我的一些心得体会可以对你们有所启发。就像你们的成就让我受益匪浅一样。在最后一期专栏中，我想通过激发一群当代的中国创意思想家。所以，我谨在此向当今中国的CEO献上一封公开信。

亲爱的中国CEO们：

记得刚来中国的时候，我曾看到一群在足球场锻炼的上海本地居民。他们双耳紧闭，随鸟的华尔兹流淌而起舞。我不禁感叹他们。我曾和一位记者在一同，在一起时，是说：为什么你们反应如此强烈？因为他们身上有一种特别的希望和尊严。”我紧口而出道。

而到今天我依然这么觉得：中国这个国家拥有深邃的历史和未来，而这里的普通人，这的百姓值得拥有最好的今天，享受他们的现在。我来到中国的时候，就和IDEO的同事们同下定了决心，要让老百姓放在心里。去设计他们生活更美好的产品，服务和体验，给他们优雅的生活。我坚信，我们不只是在为老百姓设计，而是要和老百姓一起设计，这样才能为业界带来更多新创意，更重要的是，创造或超想象的经济和社会价值。

其次，我自认绝非哲学大师，但在中国这段日子，儒家和道家思想大大启发了我，现在我在此是如此。我很早就到会到，在中国，古老的学问和智慧源远流长。学者得到尊敬，世不会被忽视，而是越发被重视。确保你的言行举止能相互关联。事实后，这非常重要，也就是要在创造新事物的同时兼顾中国传统文化。

我们在工作中发现，中国人热衷于新事物，特别是在他们发现新事物与传统文化联系的时候，这种热情就会愈演愈烈。但我们看到，这通常意味着设计工作要建立在对健康、家庭结构、食物、金钱和商业道德的深刻理解之上。也就是说，不应忽略隐藏在这些领域之中的文化期待，而是应更深一层的文化层面上将创意和人们相连。

我作为在中国，有光是不够的，还要深入研究中国古代的伟大设计思想。当然，我不是说所有的美好的东西都要用儒家理论来，不过我发现，那些与我们深厚的古文化的联系和灵感更易与人们产生共鸣。

对中国来说，现在是时候把未来打造或设计文化。回首过去，中国可以说是生发和最具有创新的国度之一。放眼未来，我们同样需要对将来的发展付出同样多的时间和毅力。

在IDEA上海办公室，我们花了很多时间，来确保在引言世界各位精英的同时，注重培养和发展本土人才。因为这些人才之间的合作才是最为激动人心的。看看中外设计师们进行合作，创造出新的灵感，结合美学理念，我们将把工作因此变得更加独特和创新。这也是令人振奋的“中国创造”。为此，我希望中国设计的领域能起到重要作用。大量投入人才，在各个领域创新新的领域。我希望大家能充分认识到，设计创新以及激发创意想象的启发式思维，能够也必将在中国未来各行业的发展中扮演重要角色。

最后，我想借我在这篇专栏里提到的有关乐和主义的主题的话，做一个总结陈词。我想当我说，设计这门学科是关于两个关键条件的交界点——功能与心智。技能既要充实，又要创造现实的能力。实现具体事物的本领，也就是用“双手”去创造。更重要的一点，也要用在设计过程的视角，就是要保持乐观的心态；相信自己能够根据艺术和更好的方向发展，并全力以赴其中，也就是用“心灵”去感受。

CEO们，你们显然都有让自己的未来变得更好的“双手”，希望你们能够得到分享，前途可期。最重要的是，让你们的“内心”充满无尽的快乐。
A Letter To the Chinese CEOs

We should not ignore the cultural expectations already in place around these areas, but instead, should connect our ideas to people on a deeper, cultural level.

This is, I regret to say, my last column for this magazine, so I wanted to say a heartfelt Thank You to both China Business News and to you for supporting me on this journey thus far. Over the course of the last 10 months and in 26 columns, we have explored a variety of topics together and I hope that some of my learnings can be useful to you as many of yours have been to me. I have received a lot of feedback and positive reinforcement for my thoughts and ideas, and am grateful. One thing I have avoided is making too direct a reference to today’s China in my pieces, but in this, my final column, I want to address today’s modern Chinese business thinker head-on. So, if you will indulge me, here is an open letter to the today’s Chinese CEO.

Dear Mr. Chinese CEO,

When I first came to China, the sight of a large group of Shanghai locals, their eyes tightly closed, waltzing in time to the lilting music drifting across Fuxing Park as they did their morning exercise literally moved me to tears. I was with a journalist at the time and she asked me why I was having such an extreme reaction. “Because there is something so incredibly hopeful and dignified about them,” was my immediate answer, and I hold true this thought to today: China is a country with a rich past and a bright future, and your everyday people, your 老百姓, deserve nothing but the best in today, their present. When I first came I was determined, as were my colleagues at IDEO, to keep firmly in our sights and to design products, services and experiences that made their lives better, gave them the life they aspired to and the life that many of them had struggled far beyond our comprehension to achieve. I firmly believe that it is not just designing for, but with your 老百姓, that will unlock business, and importantly, economic and social value beyond your wildest comprehension. Please remember to do this.

Secondly, I do not claim to be a master of philosophy, but Confucian and Taoist theory, amongst others, greatly inspired me when I was in China and continues to do so now. Something I realized very early on is that in China, ancient teachings and wisdom run deep, are revered through many generations and are not seen as something to ignore, but something to cherish. Making sure that whatever it is you say, make and do connects backwards as well as looks forward is critical - building on traditions whilst creating new ones. We found through our work that people in China are excited about new things, but even more so when those things connect backwards to traditions that they can recognize: for us, that often meant building on top of existing notions around health, family structure, food, money and social networks; by not ignoring the cultural expectations already in place around these areas, connecting our ideas to people on a deeper, cultural level. I know this may sound reductive, but to me, having a strategy is not enough in China: I suggest that you think about going deeper, and developing a philosophy. Of course I am not suggesting that everything has to link back to Confucius, but we found that ideas rooted in China’s rich intellectual past tended to resonate deeply with people.

Thirdly, it is time for China to rightfully claim its future as a design culture. Again, looking backwards, China is one of the most innovative cultures ever, and you must invest as much time and energy looking forward. We spend a lot of time at IDEO’s office in Shanghai making sure we are growing local talent as well as bringing in talent from all over the world, and it is the dialog which occurs in the overlaps between them that is most exciting. Seeing Chinese designers work alongside Western, new ideologies, methodologies and aesthetics are starting to emerge, and our work is starting to feel unique and exciting, proudly “Made in China” and enchantingly “Created in China”. I hope that Chinese leadership heavily invests in talent, creating new leadership in all fields, and understanding that design and creative, imaginative and inspirational thinking can and should play a huge role in defining the future of China’s industries and its people’s ability to think, make and inspire new ideas.

So finally, I want to end where I began my first column, on the topic of Optimism. I said then that design is a discipline that sits at the intersection of two critical things – a skillset and a mindset. The skillset is that of pragmatism: the ability to bring ideas to life and make something tangible happen. The Hands. The bigger idea, and how I want to end this, is maintaining the mindset of Optimism: the belief that you can change things for the better and being genuinely excited to do so. The Heart.

Mr. CEO, you clearly have the hands to make your future great, and I hope that your journey is long and prosperous, and above all, filled from your heart, with endless optimism.

Please stay Curious.

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Paul is happy to answer any questions around innovation and design work in his column. Please send your questions to pbennettcbn@ideo.com.