

The Top 10 Things I Learned After Living 10 Years in Ningbo



A few days ago, I had received the invitation from the Youth Entrepreneurship and Innovation Center of China (Ningbo) central and Eastern Europe to give a speech to young business elites from all over the world at the "International Business Exchange Conference". To share my experience living ten years in Ningbo, I shared my thoughts and experience with budding entrepreneurs. I have gained some unique language skills during my 10 year in Ningbo. I can speak Chinese and some Ningbo dialect. During my speech I shared a useful phrase in Ningbo dialect for the listeners. I runs a design company in Ningbo helping local companies design international brands.

I came to Ningbo in the 10 years ago, and established the first company in 2014, now I have a belongs to own design company in Ningbo, and today is for young people who was from all around the world, so I want to share ten things I have learned in Ningbo by this decade, I hope it can help you a lot.

*By Steph,
Lead designer of the Demarsh Design company*

01

Don't be a perfectionist. execute.

This is just my personal advice. I'm not a super successful business man or anything like that, my company is very small but we are trying our best. I think everyone is trying to be very successful but it's not easy, we try our best and we slowly building our team and adding new members and trying to do our best. This is actually what I learned in China that you don't have to do everything a hundred percent. Do it seventy percent and let it grow, whether is a business idea, a company or a project. It's better start earlier and complete the details later, instead of thinking about it too long. I learned this from my Chinese clients, they just like launch stuff, my friend opened his store even there is no sign on the store. The store is open and the product was inside. When I said you should give your store a name, he just said: "later". We should just do it, instead of thinking about a company name for six months.

02

Keep your relationships balanced.

We are a service based company, therefore, a lot of my customers are local manufacturing companies. If you meet someone, and he takes you for dinner, the relationship will be un-

balanced, you have to do something to balance it up. I will do something to keep the relationship balanced, such as giving him a gift. If the relationship is unbalanced, it's not a good thing. The relationship is sensitive and gift giving is usually a very good way.

03

Have gifts ready at all times.

In my opinion, gifts should be prepared in office at all times, prepare the package, print your logo, and put the gift inside. Even if it is a pen or a small thing, usually, I often send wine to my customers, even the first time we met. The gift can help them to remember you, therefore, I think gift giving is very important.

04

Speak loud and clear.

I am a naturally a very loud person, when I was in Canada, my mother is always telling me to speak softly, but in Ningbo, I can speak out loud. I feel it is specifically for Ningbo, instead of other cities in China. I think in Ningbo, if you speak loudly and confidently, people will believe that you are saying what you mean. If you speak softly, people will think this guy does not mean what he is talking about, you are not reliable if you speak too softly. Of course, this is my personal opinion.

05

Don't get drunk at dinner or other gatherings.

Drinking is fun, but don't get drunk. In Chinese dinner parties, people often urge people to drink. In China, people are quite competitive, especially business men, they will take their competitiveness into every area. So control yourself and never get drunk.

06

Never double book an evening.

This is another important point, if you have dinner with Chinese people. Don't book anything else this night, just leave the whole night to him. Because if you had a good dinner, maybe you will go to other place. If you have another thing to do, it will break the pleasant atmosphere of the dinner and it will break the relationships of you and your customers.

07

Speak Chinese but don't show off.

I know that many of you speak Chinese very well, and so do I. But do not show off your Chinese in your life. When other people says: "Wow, you speak such good Chinese", actually, the balance of the relationship was broken, people are just complimenting you. So, learn Chinese,

speaking Chinese, but don't show off.

08

Keep your international thinking and vision.

In my personal opinion, if you want work for local company, you can start a small consulting firm, and work with them. In China, you need to maintain your own opinion, your special point of view. If you work for these company as an employee, your mind will be limited and assimilated. You need to keep your international thinking and vision.

09

Embrace the local culture but keep your roots.

I have been Ningbo for ten years, I actively embrace the culture here. I think embracing the local culture is very important, but also keep the identity of your own culture. You should also share your culture with the local people.

10

Learn a few phrases in Ningbo dialect.



Scan the QR code,
learn some Ningbo dialect.