



Daniel de Smeth

Forbes U30 China | Founder and GM at 清刻 Highlite

Phone / WeChat: 0086 156 1834 6292

Email: daandesmeth@me.com

Address: P.R. China, Shanghai, Changle road 339, House 13-2

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

I am a passionate individual with a demonstrated history of working in the Asia-Pacific Food & Beverage industry. Because of my work in this industry, I have developed a comprehensive China-wide network of individuals active in Hospitality, Distribution, Advertising, Supply Chain, Logistics, and Branding. I am connected to anyone that is running or involved with F&B startups in Shanghai, as well as most of the well-known medium- and large-sized F&B companies.

As the founder, I build two companies from the ground up in the last 6 years and have a proven track record in a wide range of areas: Product development, Entrepreneurship, Packaging Design, Graphic Design, International Trade, Public Speaking, Event management, Chinese Food Compliance, Supply Chain management, Beverage Production, and Market Research. I have received extensive training from industry experts in Finance, Accounting, and Forecasting in the area of F&B startups, as well as acted as a consultant in these areas for other startups in this industry.

I am native in Dutch, and have full professional working proficiency in Mandarin Chinese, German, and English. I am one of the few foreigners in China to ever win the prestigious Forbes 30 Under 30 award for my entrepreneurial work in the Greater China market.

EXPERIENCE

清刻 **HIGHLITE – PREMIUM SPARKLING BEVERAGES**

Liquidaction Shanghai Limited

Founder and GM of Sparkling Beverage 清刻 Highlite

Shanghai, China
Aug 2018 - Present

Highlite is a Premium, Small Batch, Non-Alcoholic, Zero Calorie, Sparkling Tea Beverage. Unlike other Asia-Pacific beverage brands, Highlite targets the premium channel to build their brand in the Asia-Pacific market. Highlite currently comes in three delicious flavors; Sparkling Jasmine, Sparkling Maté, and Sparkling Lapsang Souchong (Black tea).

As the Founder of Highlite, I oversaw the brand identity development and packaging design, establishment of the China- and USA-entity, raised the initial seed capital, build the team, and set up the supply chain with production facilities in Hong Kong, Sydney, and Hangzhou (Greater China). I established and managed essential sales-distributor partnerships in Greater China with Woolworth's China (Summergate, +80 person sales team, 30k distribution points, 10 offices) as well as Asia-Pacific with Nimbility Asia (expert Asia-Pacific F&B market- and export-management team, +22 territories).

As the current GM of Highlite, I am in charge of running a 12-person team (main office language: Mandarin Chinese), developing and executing the business strategy (including brand strategy, sales-, P&L-, and CF-forecast), and establishing essential (sales and promotion) partnerships for the Highlite brand.

Notable Highlite clients include: Peet's Coffee, W Hotel, Ritz Carlton, Westin, Sofitel, Club Med, and Swire Hotel Group. Highlite is currently available in all of China's first Tier cities, with City-Wide presence in Shanghai.

HEIKE-MATE - UPLIFTING YERBA-MATÉ TEA

Changzhou Madai Trading

Founder and GM of Uplifting Yerba-Maté Drink 黑客 Heike-Mate

Shanghai, China
April 2016 - Jun 2018

Heike-Mate (pronounce as: Hey-Kuh, meaning 'Hacker') was a carefree pick-me-up based on Argentinean Yerba Maté tea; a type of naturally caffeinated tea from North Argentina / South Brazil. Next to its caffeine properties, Yerba-Mate is also one of the healthiest teas in the World. Heike was the first drink of its kind in China, and found a following in Shanghai's health food restaurants, cocktail bars, and coffeeshops.

I was one of the two founders of Heike and was responsible for the branding, packaging design, promotions and sales. Heike was a small startup, but had a very good presence in Shanghai city centre and managed to build up to 90 points of distribution, and a conservative 10,000 bottles per month in sales.

Notable happenings include sponsorship of Yinyang music festival; the only music festival on the Great Wall of China, as well as a solid presence in the Shanghai electronic music scene; the perfect drink to take you through the night. Heike organized events aimed at the Shanghai startup scene, mainly at programmers; who were big fans of our drink because of its caffeine content.

Eventually the Heike founders split on good terms because of indifferences on where to take the brand next.

THE SILK INITIATIVE

Food & Beverage Brand Agency - China market

Marketing Executive – Marketing management and Analyst

Shanghai, China

August 2015 – March 2016

The Silk Initiative is a consumer goods brand consultancy, with a focus on Food & Beverage brand development in the Greater China market. After finishing my Masters in San Francisco, I wanted to get more experience in brand development, with a particular interest in Food and Beverage brands. I was part of the founding team at the Silk Initiative, and was responsible for the company marketing, as well as analyst work.

My company marketing work included doing in-depth analysis of the Chinese F&B market, as well as writing the weekly newsletter and managing the company social media accounts. During my time at The Silk Initiative, I managed to grow the company newsletter account from 120 followers to 825 followers, with a 20% clickthrough rate on the articles.

I was also involved in writing articles based on my own market research, with my most well-read articles about 'China's F&B celebrity endorsements', 'Cacao in China', and 'Low-quality German import beer in China'. These articles are still readable on my LinkedIn account.

My favorite work as an analyst included two-way mirror focus group research, where we would introduce consumer good products and record the focus group response. This was a great exercise for my Mandarin Chinese, as well as an eye-opener on how the Chinese market looks differently at products from lobsters to cookies, burgers to imported milk.

EDUCATION

HULT INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS SCHOOL

Master of International Business (MIB)

Shanghai, Mainland China

Sep 14 – Aug 15

- Financial Times: World's most International Business School
- Studied at the Shanghai and San Francisco Campus of Hult
- Graduated among the top of my class with honors; 3.65 GPA

GOETHE UNIVERSITY

Erasmus Exchange

Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Sep 12 – Feb 13

- Courses: Finance, Brand Management, Price Management, Markets and Justice

UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN

Bachelor of Business Economics

Groningen, The Netherlands

Feb 09 – Jun 13

- Specialization: Finance and Accounting
- Bachelor Thesis Finance: 'The influence of credit ratings on the return on stock, an event study.'

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

LANGUAGES: Native Dutch, full professional working proficiency in Mandarin Chinese, German and English

CERTIFICATIONS: English TOEFL 113, B2 German language Goethe Institute, HSK 5 Mandarin Chinese

AWARDS: Forbes 30 Under 30