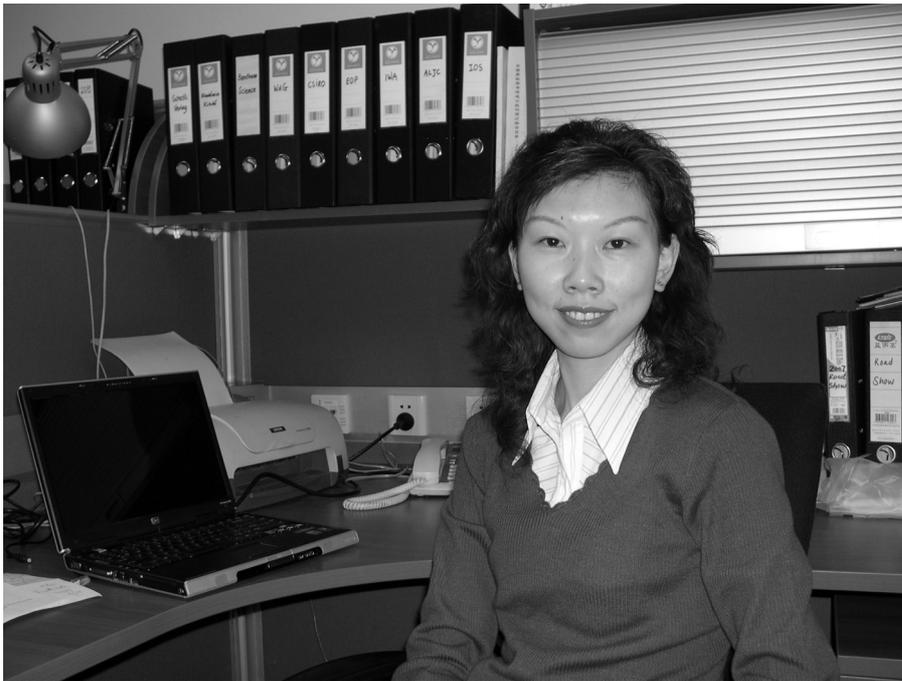


Mini-profile:

a day in the life of a marketing manager in China



HELEN DUAN

Publisher Marketing Manager, Swets' Beijing Office, China

In 2006, I joined Swets' Beijing office, which hosts an extensive Chinese sales force and has a widespread customer network. As the main driver of Swets' 'Gateway to China' program, it is my responsibility to maintain and improve the standard of services provided to those publishers already participating in the program and to look for ways and means in which to further the program and to attract other publishers to work with us in China.

My day-to-day-work, as you would expect for a publisher marketing manager of an international subscription agent, involves regular communication with a number of international publishers. Of course, like most professionals in the world, that means my day starts in the inbox, scanning the avalanche of e-mails that, thanks to the time differences, arrive from Europe and the US overnight. Although they can sometimes take me

quite a while to answer, I'm glad to say that my working day is not completely dominated by e-mails.

Once a week, for example, I attend a meeting with CEPIEC (China Educational Publications Import and Export Corporation), which is our partner and co-organizer of the China Academic Journal Road Shows that we host each year. By bringing high level research, published by international academic publishers, to the attention of professors and researchers in cities across China, these road shows provide a marketing service for international publishers and thereby play a key part in the Gateway to China program.

At the meetings we tend to discuss our progress in recruiting publishers, the exhibition schedules, venues, income and cost, and other related issues like the project plan, and so on. Preparing for the

road shows is a very time-consuming process, lasting almost six months, and takes up a considerable amount of my daily time. I have to answer all sorts of questions from various publishers, chase their application forms, calculate the prices and even, on occasion, remind publishers to send us sample copies on time. The phrase: 'Leave no stone unturned' certainly springs to mind with this project and I have learned a great deal whilst working on it. I'm pleased to say that all the hard work pays off though because, as I write this now, the 2007 road shows have already begun in Beijing. I feel proud and happy that everything has come together at the right moment and it is nice to be able to see your hard work come to fruition. It has been a great experience and hopefully I'll be involved with similar projects again next year.



Helen with Huang Yamei (right) and Wang Yaning (left) of CEPIEC at the China Road Shows in Sichuan University, Chengdu

My afternoon schedule normally sees me in meetings with publishers or visiting customers with our sales staff. I try to meet with customers once a week, in order to get to know and understand the customers' real needs and to be able to provide better feedback to publishers. Today, for example, I visited one of the directors of the CALIS center at Peking University, together with our Business Development Manager, Janet Yang. The main topic on the agenda was to introduce a publisher's online journals and pricing model to CALIS, in the hope that they would agree to organize consortia deals on behalf of the Chinese Universities. The lady from CALIS gave us some feedback on the publisher's titles and the overall situation of

medical titles in China, which was highly valuable. She also expressed an interest in the titles of another international publisher, popular in the US but not currently active in China, so I promised to get some further information on them for her. As soon as I got back in the office I sent a report on the meeting to the publisher whose titles we showcased, complete with the feedback of the customer, and started to do some research into the US publisher that the lady from CALIS was asking about.

Apart from meeting external clients and colleagues, I also spend a fair amount of my working week in meetings and in conversation with colleagues in other Swets' offices, particularly with our headquarters in The Netherlands. My main contact is Karin Jensma, our Manager of Publisher Relations. Karin, who speaks fluent Chinese, used to work in China, spear-heading the Gateway to China program, and I am her successor here. We had a conference call together this afternoon, when we discussed a new idea that I've had for the Gateway to China program. It's still in its initial stages, so I wanted to get Karin's opinion on it. It is good to be able to discuss ideas and strategies with Karin, as she is aware of how unique the Chinese market is. Because of this, the Beijing office often acts as the pioneer for many new programs. We have to be creative and brave, often creating tailor-made marketing activities that differ from those available in other markets. The progress is not always easy and it normally involves a substantial amount of internal communication before we can actually push ahead with any new ideas. Thankfully, the communication channels between different offices are quite good and being at Swets feels like being part of one big family. We are spread out all over the world but everybody works together and helps each other out. I really appreciate and enjoy this kind of culture and I'm glad that I get the opportunity to make my own contributions to the team.

Although working within the Chinese market throws up its fair share of challenges and obstacles, it is nice to feel a part of something really innovative. I feel proud to be part of a program that helps to improve the research levels at a number of the leading Chinese universities.

As my day is just about over now I look up and notice that there are a couple of new e-mails in my inbox. The avalanche has begun. But that's for tomorrow and right now I think I'll just bring this article to a close and head on home.