

The prospect of rapid economic growth, attractive new markets, and innovative outsourcing opportunities, has stimulated many businesses to jump into the Asian arena without even starting to understand its specific characteristics, practices, and challenges. What many of them found out too late is that getting a solid foothold in Asia takes a sound understanding of how things work in the Asian business environment.

*Big in Asia: 25 Strategies for Business Success*, written by business analyst and columnist, Michael Backman and INSEAD research manager, Charlotte Butler helps close this gap. A diverse collection of articles, case studies, suggestions, and stories, this comprehensive digest tells Western businesspeople what they must know in order to succeed in Asia.



The strategies covered in the book are grouped around five major areas: “Hit the Ground Running”; “On the Ground”; “Building Up”; “Staying Up”, and “Staying Clean.” They steer readers through the cliffs of early engagements and help them understand how to build the foundation for a lasting presence in the region. Countless subjects across a wide range of topics are addressed: the implications of dealing with family-owned businesses, how the business purpose of Asian

companies often goes beyond profit-making, which factors are critical for effective partnerships, what to look for when sending people to the region, the intricacies of running audits in Asia, pitfalls in mergers and acquisitions, and so on. Along the way, most of Asia’s major economies, among them India, China, Japan, South Korea, receive at least some consideration, striking a careful balance between giving universal advice for the region and describing country-specific practices and influence factors.

What makes this book particularly valuable is its comprehensive analysis, paying attention to cultural aspects as well as to government influences, trade practices, legal frameworks, and many other factors. Another noteworthy and respectable characteristic of this book is that its authors won’t shy away from the ‘hot irons’ of conducting business in Asia. Chapters discussing ethical traps or how to deal with corruption practices warn foreign businesspeople and prepare them to handle such challenges effectively and without creating tension with their Asian partners.

*Big in Asia* is a rich source of insights and perspectives for Westerners with a business interest in the region, from expatriate managers to business travelers looking to leverage the opportunities presented by Asia’s economic boom.

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