

Culture tech isn't all about technology – it isn't a single, distinct industry. Culture tech means something die Tc 0.0ng .474 TD[m]0.5 (e)0.6 (a)0.5 (n rt)0(slmc)0.6 (omt)46.f-0.01 5cslmcisn72.9804 0 Gn e

What is culture tech?

“Culture tech is where the arts, creative design and technology meet, all with the end goal of coming up with new and innovative ways to improve different aspects of people’s lives in a digital, interactive or immersive way. Any part of our daily experience has the potential for the ‘culture tech treatment’,” Joanne explains. “It’s not just about improving our enjoyment of museums, art galleries, stage performances, video entertainment or gaming; culture tech can be applied to your home, car, community, even retail and healthcare experiences. We’re constantly finding new ways to connect culture tech to different parts of life.”

Joanne admits, however, that ‘culture tech’ is a problematic term. Due to its ‘newness’ and the fragmented nature of the industry, it can be hard to grasp what it is and how we can connect with it.

“The culture tech industry is an emerging one. It’s new, it covers a lot of ground, and it’s very interdisciplinary. However, its elements – such as visual design, immersive technology, laser



“Culture tech is where the arts, creative design and technology meet.”

projection, LED, computer animations, motion capture technology – have been around for decades. Look around the world, and you’ll find dozens of different terms to describe roughly the same thing – from ‘digital culture’ and ‘createch’ to ‘arts, entertainment and sports,’” Joanne says. “That’s why, in China, we decided to align with UNESCO’s definition, which is already used in some European countries and is making headway globally. For an industry focused on cross-industry collaboration and ideas exchange, it helps if we all know what we’re talking about.”

Standardisation is important, but what is really helping culture tech take off is its growing presence in sectors like cultural tourism. TCDIC is responsible for bringing together suppliers, designers and organisers of digital art exhibitions and cultural tourism attractions around the world and is showcasing how culture tech can impact people’s lives.

Equally important is TCDIC’s work in educating others about culture tech’s potential. Their growing range of B2B events are essential for showcasing new culture tech solutions. At the same time, these events bring together solution providers and the companies they wish to work with.

Education leads to expansion

Culture tech is poised for a boom in China. As Joanne explains, the speed and scale of culture tech’s growth in China is connected to Generation Z’s technology use and cultural consumption.

“Gen Z has grown up with smartphones and tablets in their hands. Whatever you hope to show them – whether it’s a commercial product or a cultural experience – you cannot rely solely on traditional methods to appeal to them. They want to feel immersed in the experience,” she says. “Educating the next generation about Chinese heritage is an important task, but museums and art galleries understand that their exhibits cannot

be static; they must offer interactivity, excitement, and something that connects their audience with the narratives they are to sharing. This same applies to commercial ventures – the ‘brand story’ holds more weight with Gen Z, and culture tech is helping brands tell stories in new and engaging ways. That’s the true core of culture tech – creative storytelling.”

For Joanne and TCDIC, the future of culture tech is a series of expanding networks, where cross-industry connections create new opportunities as the successes of one sector influence others.

“Our role is to bring everyone and everything together – capital, creative technologies, experience designers, solutions providers and buyers – to create value. We’re dealing in highly bespoke experiences and setups, often with no precedent, so it’s easy to see why stakeholders might be nervous,” Joanne explains. “This is why it’s important to create ‘industry-standard’ culture tech experiences. We want to show people the kind of model that can be standardised and widely rolled out.”

A foot in both camps

Joanne exhibits no shortage of optimism about culture tech. Her experiences underline the open-mindedness of both Chinese consumers and businesspeople in understanding and connecting with this significant trend.

“In my industry, it’s important to have a foot in both the business and creative worlds. It’s often difficult for people from creative, cultural industries to forge connections with those who have little understanding of what they are trying to achieve,” Joanne says. “This is a big part of why I wanted to do a Global EMBA. It was important to get a better sense of how people from outside the culture and creative industry see it. I want to know what they think about culture tech, and how we can work to develop a next-generation creative economy.”



■ By Cameron Wilson

The pandemic has brought massive global changes to life and work in new and unforeseen ways. It has also impacted numerous industrial shifts which were already underway before the virus struck at the start of 2020. CEIBS MBA 2016 alum Asier Guevara reveals how COVID-19 has affected the world of sports marketing, and why he plans to continue his career in China.

Based in China for 13 years, Asier has developed considerable experience helping foreign companies expand into the country. Last summer, he joined Media Pro, a visual production company. Media Pro sells the rights for Spain's La Liga and other top football leagues around the world. Asier heads the company's China office, where it has a contract to produce content for the Chinese Super League (CSL). The company is also involved in China's domestic basketball competition, the CBA.

China's sports market has grown significantly in recent years. Chinese football, in particular, enjoyed something of a boom towards the middle and end of the last decade, as the government announced a comprehensive plan to overhaul football in the country. A number of major Chinese conglomerates such as Evergrande and Suning also poured money into the game. World famous football stars such as former Manchester City striker Carlos Tevez, ex-Chelsea midfielder Oscar, and Brazilian international Hulk were just some of the huge names to sign for Chinese football clubs.

However, shifting national priorities and the pandemic have since

ILLUMINA Greater China GM: Three turns from regional sales manager to global senior VP



As a veteran engaged in healthcare industry for nearly three decades, Illumina Senior Vice President and General Manager of Greater China and CEIBS EMBA 1999 alum Li Qing has experienced three major transitions during his career.

Illumina, a global leader in DNA sequencing, came into spotlight in 2020 when a medical research team from Shanghai Public Health Clinical Center of Fudan University decoded and published the world's first genomic sequence of the COVID-19 pandemic using MiniSeq, a sequencing device developed by Illumina.

Though the company hadn't just emerged from nowhere, the level of brand exposure that followed was unexpected. Fueled by increasing demand from institutions for genetic testing reports, the

penetration rate of Illumina's sequencing equipment in China's market reached about 70% during the pandemic.

Expanding partnership network

Li joined Illumina in 2019 and took over its Greater China operations just before COVID struck. While coping with the anxiety caused by the pandemic, Li focused on turning the crisis into an opportunity to drive change.

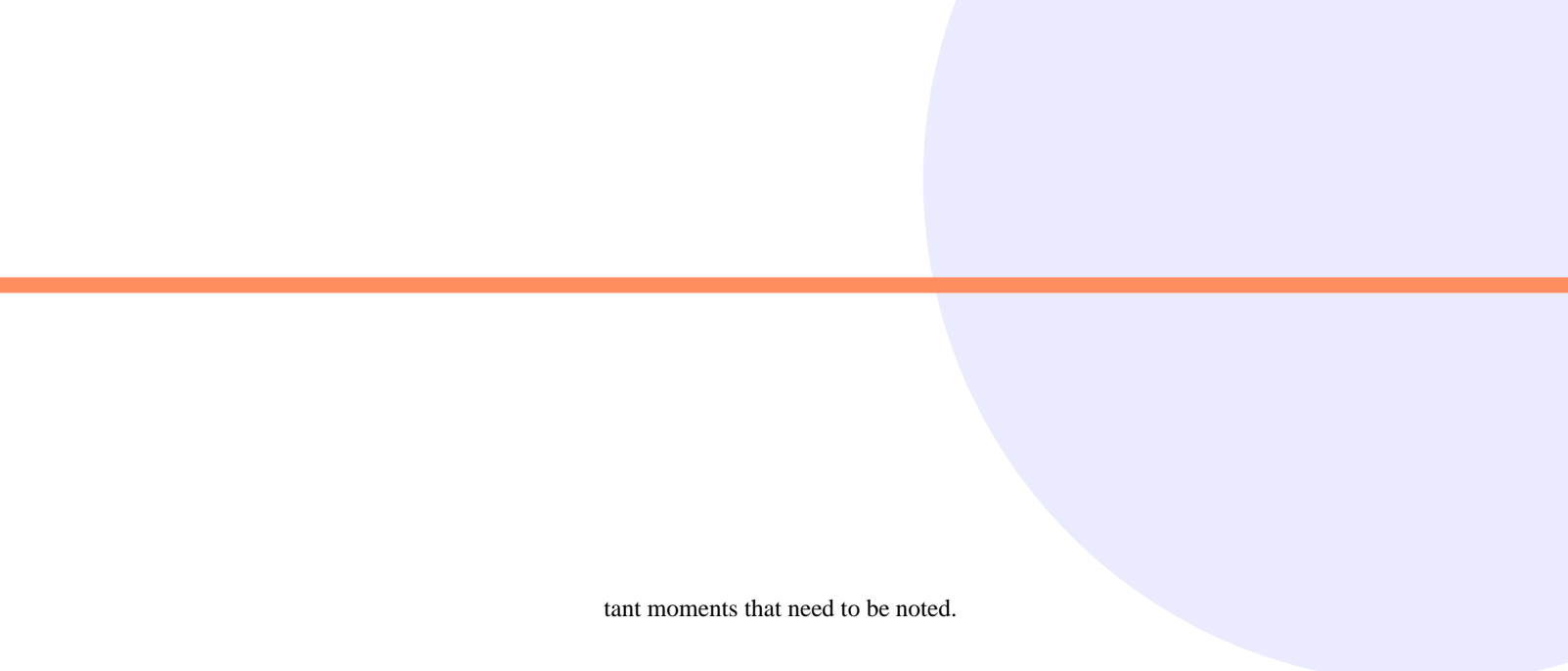
"Though the pandemic is a global crisis, it is also an opportunity for the DNA sequencing sector, an opportunity to make new technology available to the public, and an opportunity for professionals to drive the implementation of many applications," he says.

China, as Illumina's second largest mar-

ket at the time, is particularly important. However, the country's regulations on foreign-invested companies have prevented overseas companies like Illumina from investing or participating in genetic testing services, making 'co-operation' the key word.

In China, Illumina's clinical interests include malignancy, non-invasive prenatal testing, genetic diseases and pathogenic microbiology. It provides sequencing technologies to its partners, who then provide genetic testing for diagnostic purposes to hospitals and patients.

Li has focused on two main things over the past two years: one is helping Illumina learn more about China and how it can incorporate the market into its global strategy; the other is helping Illumina establish a more forward-looking roadmap in the clinical field. In doing so, the



company has expanded its partnership network to attract more genetic testing service providers to develop more and better applications. At the same time, it has introduced new sequencing technologies and platforms to hospitals trusted by the public to promote quality applications.

After joining the company, Li also began a series of localisation endeavours, including opening a new office for Illumina's Greater China headquarters in Shanghai, launching RMB-based businesses, and establishing an intelligent healthcare genomics incubator in collaboration with leading investment firm Sequoia Capital China.

Three major transitions in the healthcare industry

Looking back on Li's 30 years in the healthcare sector, there are three impor-

tant moments that need to be noted.

The first came in 1998 when, while working at Solvay Pharmaceuticals, Li went abroad for the first time. He was impressed by his visit to the University of Vienna, and was inspired to become a different person.

In 1999, Li enrolled in the CEIBS EMBA programme, where he was exposed to a new world with people from different industries and with

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How did a century-old sewing machine maker extend its reach into airplanes?

With a history dating back to 1919, Butterfly was China's first home-grown sewing machine brand. In the 1980s and 1990s, it was one of the major marriage must-haves for young couples.

However, as the ready-to-wear market took off in the late 1990s, fewer people sewed clothes at home. Meanwhile, as private businesses swarmed into the sewing machinery industry, China's domestic manufacturers began to struggle. With the market declining, Butterfly cut production several times. At its lowest point in 2000, it began selling off factories.

In July 2004, CEIBS (Switzerland) DBA student Zhang Min was appointed as Chairman and CEO of ShangGong Group. Faced with intense competition, the company formulated a strategy focused on quality, differentiation and globalisation. Cross-border M&As were

machine maker. The deal was deemed risky as Dürkopp Adler was in the red back then.

“ShangGong Group had to borrow money from shareholders and banks to secure the deal. If Dürkopp Adler had continued to lose money, within a year or two, both companies would come to a dead end,” Zhang recalls.

Nevertheless, ShangGong Group showed robust growth in production following the integration of Dürkopp Adler, and its products gradually took hold in the Chinese market. The company swung into profit the following year.

Expanding from sewing clothing to sewing airplane equipment

M&As helped ShangGong Group achieve breakthroughs, but they don't

“It's not enough to just sell products.”

reveal the whole picture of the compa