



INNOVATION continues...

Innovation is not a one-off process. Nearly two centuries since Edison's invention, the light bulb has been through various adaptations with improved efficiency.



If there is ever a key to successful innovation, Christine Brendle, departing president of The French Trade Advisors in Hong Kong, says it's persistence.

recently happened upon an inspiring blog post from Sir James Dyson, suggesting that creativity and innovation are not cultivated in meetings and brainstorming sessions – but that they emerge from the desire to solve a specific problem combined with the stamina to be persistent in doing so. Famously, Sir James doggedly tested more than 5,000 prototypes, before finally solving the conundrum of ever-clogged vacuum bags.

Persistence was a focal point this month for the French Trade Advisors in Hong Kong, as the second edition of the exhibition So French So Innovative opened. Organised by the French Trade Advisors in conjunction with the French Consulate and The French Chamber, the exhibition attracted some 20 companies, representing 5 areas of French “tech”. This year, the exhibition took place in the IFC atrium, drawing large numbers of visitors from the business and academic communities, as well as the public at large. This auspicious event was widely covered by media. The Consul General of France, Eric Berti and Hong Kong Chief Secretary, Carrie Lam, delivered special messages to remind attendees the importance of technology and innovation in the creation of value and employment opportunities.

This month also marked the completion of my 3-year mandate as President of the Hong Kong Chapter of French Trade Advisors. I would like to take

this opportunity to sincerely thank all those who have helped make this chapter younger, more feminine, and more widely representative of the French economy in Hong Kong (see list of French Trade advisors on next page).

The CCE HK Chapter is now in the capable hands of my successor Frederic Guiral, who was unanimously elected as President by the newly composed CCE HK bureau. This bureau comprises 9 members as follows: Vice-Presidents, Jacques Boissier and Marie Helene Prevot; Treasurer, Paul Yang; General Secretary, Rebecca Silli; Members of the bureau, Christine Brendle, Paul Clerc-Renaud, Karine Hirn, Jean-Benoit Kaepelin and Beatrice Remy.

If the increase of incubators, shared workspaces and entrepreneurs' networks are anything to go by, innovation and creativity will continue to flourish in Hong Kong. Ever more people are working to harness the creative power of digital technologies and inject revitalising innovation into established businesses.

A culture of innovation has to be welcomed and supported. Regina Dugan, the first woman to head DARPA - the organisation that is widely credited for bringing about many of the most influential innovations of the past 50 years – summed it up perfectly. “What would you attempt to do if you knew you could not fail?” is what DARPA scientists are encouraged to ask themselves.

This is the state of mind we want to encourage in our schools and business organisations! **E**