



Eeye Hsu makes connections, on screen and off

## CONNECTING FOR SUCCESS

*Eeye Hsu, CCTV host, mom, and entrepreneur on the art of networking*

*For the past six years, Eeye (pronounced Yiyi) Hsu has been bringing her warm and inquisitive personality to CCTV-9's Up Close and Cross Over, where she has interviewed the likes of actor Jet Li, primatologist Jane Goodall, and researcher/IT executive Kai-fu Lee. Those who have seen her show know her friendly, easygoing on-screen personality, but what they might not know is that her career did not start in television, but in management consulting. Hsu believes networking was one key factor in making that career change, and sat down with **Agenda** between tapings to talk about the art of the networking, how it changed her life, and how it can change yours.*

**When you first arrived in Beijing, how did you get to know people?**

*"The people I met through ORIENTED have not only had a direct impact on my career, but many have also become great friends that are some of my closest in Beijing"*

Before I came to Beijing, I was organizing the ORIENTED happy hours in Tokyo, so it was quite natural for me to join the Beijing team. Christine Hsu is the founder of ORIENTED and a long-time friend of mine, so I got involved with the Beijing group within the first few weeks of landing here in 2003. The people I met through ORIENTED have not only had a direct impact on my career, but many have also become great friends that are some of my closest in Beijing.

**How has networking affected your career?** The woman who eventually led me to CCTV was actually someone I met at an ORIENTED Happy Hour. She was hosting a show called "Dialogue" and CCTV was interested in developing a new show with her as the host. "Up Close" was born, and

she invited me to write for the show. She left CCTV about a year later, and one of the producers asked if I was interested in hosting the next show. The very next day, I was up on stage, and the rest is history. You never know when opportunity is going to come knocking!

**Why do you enjoy talking to people?** This is going to sound weird, but I love listening to people talk about themselves. I find people to be so dynamic and interesting – the infinite number of perspectives out there astounds me. I suppose it is natural that my professional life has always involved working with people – whether it's management consulting or media.

**How do you deal with stage fright?**

Instead of focusing on the millions of people behind the camera, I try to feel like I have a very important houseguest. Usually the guests are more nervous than I am, so I try to spend a few minutes chatting and joking with them before the cameras start rolling. It relaxes all of us.

**What's your top strategy in interviews, and how can we apply this to networking?** Be an active listener!

Listening is not a one way street, it's a two-way dialogue. A great interview doesn't seem like an interview, it just seems like a great conversation. I try to engage my guest by asking questions, understanding what they say, and interpreting their response.

The same rule applies to networking – it's a time for you to have a two-way discussion to learn what other people are doing, and let others know what you are doing. You can try tactics like paraphrasing what the other person just said, to simply let them know you heard them. Body language is important too: people pick up on this intuitively so don't look around the room while someone is talking to you or look down in your drink. Get engaged and make eye contact. And don't interrupt in the middle of a thought.

## How do you make people feel at ease when talking to you?

I try to make conversations, not interrogate people. It's not about barraging the guest with questions, but rather it's about having a meaningful dialogue. Networking events are also about making conversation. But remember that good conversations are two-way. When you finish talking, show the other person you are interested in hearing what they have to say by asking a question. The worst conversations are ones where one person dominates and the other person just can't wait to get away.

**What's your favorite icebreaker at networking events?** I don't typically have anything "canned" or a question that works for every situation, but as a rule of thumb, anything related to

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small children (three and one) who we adore, so we spend a lot of time at home and around town as a family. We love the outdoors - Side Park and Ritan Park are amongst our favorites. I like keeping busy and am working on a new project - a baby boutique selling imported, high-quality products called Counting Sheep Boutique.

You can often find us at kid-friendly restaurants such as Chef Too or Ding Tai Fung. For a special weekend treat, we sometimes hit the hotel brunches like the JW Marriott or the Westin. We recently discovered

born baby can be so overwhelming - trust me, I've had two! We want to help make things easier for new parents by providing safe and well-designed products from trusted baby brands. When I was a new parent, I found myself excited about my baby, but confused by all these new brands and questions around what was best for my newborn. We are looking to not only alleviate some of that stress, but also make it fun by providing great service and top-notch brands from all around the world.

**Counting Sheep Boutique** 1) 10am - 7 pm. 17 Gongtibeilu (in the Bodhi building), Chaoyang District (6417 7622) 朝阳区工体北路17号 2) 9am-9pm. In the Blueberry Owl store. Pinnacle Avenue, Linyin Lu, Tianzhu, Shunyi District (6457 1480) 顺义区天竺镇丽苑街荣和商业中心21号楼

**Mosto** Daily noon-2:30pm, 6-10:30pm. 3/F, Nali Patio, 81 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District (5208 6030) 朝阳区三里屯路81号那里花园3层

**Sureño** Daily noon-3:30pm, 6-10:30pm. B1/F, The Opposite House, Sanlitun Village, 11 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District (6410 5240) 朝阳区三里屯路11号三里屯Village瑜舍地下1层 www.surenorestaurant.com

**Ristorante Sadler** Daily (closed Mondays) 11.30am-2pm, 6:30-10:30pm. Chien Men 23, 23 Qianmen Dongdajie, Dongcheng District (6559 1399) 东城区前门东大街23号

**Hatsune** 1) Daily 11.30am-2pm, 5:30-10pm. 2/F, Heqiao Bldg C, 8A Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang District (6581 3939) 朝阳区光华路甲8号和齐大厦C座2层 2) Daily 11.30am-2pm, 5:30-10pm 58-30 (opposite Element Fresh), Bldg 8, Sanlitun Village South, 19 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District (6415 3939) 朝阳区三里屯路19号三里屯Village南区8号楼58-30

**Tori Tei** Daily 11am-midnight. 8, Xinyuanli Zhongjie, Chaoyang District (6461 4513) 朝阳区新源里中街8号

**Capital M** Mon-Fri 11am-2:30pm, 6-10:30pm, Sat-Sun 11.30am-5pm, 6-10:30pm (afternoon tea between 2:30-5pm). 3/F, 2 Qianmen Pedestrian Street (southeast of Qianmen), Chongwen District (6702 2727) 崇文区前门步行街2号3层

Interview by Jennifer Thomé

"This is going to sound weird, but I love listening to people talk about themselves. I find people to be so dynamic and interesting - the infinite number of perspectives out there astounds me"

Beijing or China is a good starter. It gets the conversation going, and can lead down several interesting paths. Try to go beyond the basics to get people to open up like asking a personal question. Sometimes "how long have you been in Beijing?" can get old.

**Have you ever asked a question that you later regretted?** No, but I have regretted not asking a question. There have been a number of questions that I was afraid to ask because I thought they were too personal. Sometimes guests would tell us in advance that they don't want to talk about themselves, but I find that my audience often wants to get to know the person behind the curtain.

**What do you like to do in Beijing when you're not hosting your show?** My husband and I have two

a wonderful hotel breakfast at China Grill in the Park Hyatt - the food was great, most items made-to-order, and you simply can't beat the view.

We love Japanese. Hatsune is always a great choice, but one of our all-time favorites is Tori Tei by the Yuyang Hotel. We have been going there for seven years, and the owner, who we call *Lao Pang*, loves to sit down and have a sake with us. We've had many long nights there.

On date nights, we enjoy Mosto, Sureño, and if we're going higher end, Sadler. On our anniversary or for a special event it's nice to go to someplace like Capital M or the Legation Quarter - but in the end, my favorites are casual places where you can wear jeans, be relaxed, and laugh loudly.

**Tell us a little bit about your new adventure, Counting Sheep.** Getting everything prepared for a new-