



## Bridging the Worldwide Business Gap

By Aricka Flowers, China Daily  
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Siva Yam knows business - especially when it comes to US and Chinese relationships.

For the past 10 years, Yam has been president of the US-China Chamber of Commerce (USCCC), which focuses on fostering trade and investment activities between the two countries.

During his stint as president of the USCCC, Yam, born and raised in Hong Kong with an MBA from Duke University, has seen the economic and business landscapes of the US and China change tremendously.

"For the US economy to get back in shape, it's important for manufacturing to come back," he says. "I'm not saying all the jobs should come back, but the US needs to invest in manufacturing high, value-added products. Not things like toys and shoes."

Yam believes much of the problems businesses encounter when investing overseas stems from a lack of hands-on exposure to the new market. Often, according to Yam, US company officials never travel to China prior to investing in the country. Because of this shortcoming, organizations such as the USCCC try to act as a liaison to bridge the gap between the two countries.

"For a business to be successful, the owners need to understand the culture," he says. "They need to understand the commercial requirements and the needs of both sides. Then they have to find a way to accommodate them and build a structure in which both sides can benefit. If you do not have a platform to work on, it will be very difficult."

The USCCC holds numerous conferences throughout the year geared toward promoting US and China business relationships. In November, the USCCC held its 9th Annual US-China Trade Conference. The theme, "Is China the Key to Success in the New Economic Era?" focused on the changing economic landscape.

Louisiana's Governor Bobby Jindal was the keynote speaker for the event. He encouraged companies to invest in Louisiana and noted an established relationship between Chinese businesses and the state.

"We've got many historic relationships, especially with the food exports into China," said Jindal. "We're beginning to hear of more interest in investing in Louisiana and we want to build on that. We know there are some companies considering automotive investments and we're very interested in that."

Yam says the success of the US economy is extremely important to China, which means the \$800 billion stimulus package and Big Three bailouts are being carefully scrutinized. He says the Obama administration should make sure to invest in the future as it cleans up the mistakes of the past.

"More money needs to be put in innovation, research and development. Even if the results are not tangible, it's the long-term result that is key to the survival of the US economy," Yam says. "The problems with the US economy are not an American problem, it's a global problem, and we need everyone to work together to find a solution."