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IM Global Seeks China Sales Partners



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Int'l sales powerhouse looks to Asia for position, partnerships

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TORONTO – [Stuart Ford's IM Global](#) is seeking Chinese strategic partners to join its newly expanded Beijing sales operation.

“We are looking to align with someone with projects and talent, who can navigate the local industry and provide a degree of trust,” said Ford. “In return, we bring infrastructure and know-how on a truly global basis.” The model for this is Mundial, the Latin American joint venture that IM Global launched last year with Mexico’s Canana.

IM Global, which had two films in Venice and is screening six in and around Toronto, recently opened a Beijing office for its [Apsara](#) Asian distribution operation, hiring staff previously employed at Huayi Brothers Media and internet giant Tencent. The Beijing office is seen as IM Global's East Asian headquarters, it services IM Global's existing Asian clients; supports the company's own movies released in China; and supports Apsara.

IM Global is currently lobbying Chinese regulators and state-owned distributors to give revenue sharing releases to upcoming titles "Walking With Dinosaurs" and "Justin Bieber's Believe."

Apsara typically buys South and East Asian rights to films on 12-20 year licenses. These are sub-distributed in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka by Reliance Entertainment, which also handles theatrical product for DreamWorks. In Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia and the Philippines, the titles are pushed through a 10-14 film or three-year deal with Buena Vista International.

Over time the activities of the Beijing unit may be expanded through involvement in Chinese and Asian co-productions, and into local Chinese distribution, when regulations permit.

The company was founded in 2007 by Ford, former co-head of international at Miramax Films and one-time president of First Look International, with backing from German public company Internationalmedia AG. In April 2010 a majority stake was sold to Reliance Entertainment, part of India's Reliance ADA Group, which also has a major investment in DreamWorks SKG. In 2011 IM Global claimed gross sales of some \$170 million.

Link:

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