



ETP participant interview



Participant name: **Alexander de Laiglesia**

Company and title: **Santander, Managing Director, Asset Management, Asia Pacific**

ETP cycle: **ETP Japan 6 (1986 – 1987)**

'The ETP provides a very solid foundation for any professional who wishes to do business in Japan or Korea in terms of language and communication, market knowledge, work experience and networking.'

Q. You are one of the ETP graduates who are still active in the Asian market. After finishing ETP 6, you stayed in Japan for several years and built an impressive career there. Do you think that you could have had such success in Japan without having done ETP?

A. Clearly the ETP provided me with a very solid foundation to become a 'Japan Expert' and this greatly influenced the development of my career for many years after completing the programme. After the ETP I remained in Japan for several years but then returned to Europe and spent almost a decade on work unrelated to Japan. However, throughout this time I was still regarded as a 'Japan expert' and as soon as a new opportunity arose at Santander, I returned to Tokyo and spent another 6 years there on secondment to Shinsei Bank.

Q. You are now Managing Director for Asia Pacific at Santander. Would you say that the ETP Japan helps one to do business all over the Asian continent?

A. Even now, though I am based in Hong Kong and am responsible for the entire Asia Pacific region, Japan remains one of my priority markets and I remain close to the ETP and the ETP graduate network. Indeed, I was one of the founders of the ETP Alumni Association since I have always recognized the value of this network which is now present all over the world, not just in Japan and Europe.

Q. To what extent does an ETP graduate in your team or the organization help to do business in Japan or Korea?

A. The ETP provides a very solid foundation for any professional who wishes to do business in Japan or Korea in terms of language and communication, market knowledge, work experience and networking. ETP graduates acquire some very important skills and experience that provide great value to any organization wishing to develop its business in these countries.

Q. What was the most interesting and rewarding part of the ETP training for you?

A. Being able to live comfortably in any part of Japan because I could speak the language and understand and appreciate the local culture and customs.

Q. Do you think the ETP was instrumental in developing your network of business contacts in the Asian markets?

A. Yes, and more broadly, the ETP has facilitated the development of my business and social network throughout the world and not just in Asia.

Q. What did you enjoy most about living in Japan?

A. Japan is one of the most civilized countries in the world based on genuine respect for one another. Tokyo remains one of my home bases. My wife is Japanese, my sons have Japanese passports and although I am currently living in Hong Kong, I have a home, a car and a business in Japan.

Q. In your opinion what is the most interesting aspect of Japanese culture?

A. Simplicity taken to sublime perfection.



Q. Favorite Japanese food?

A. Sushi.

Q. Most interesting place to visit in Japan?

A. There are many for very different reasons such as Kyoto, Hiroshima, Sapporo and Sado Island to name just four.

Q. What would be your recommendations for future participants in the ETP and for their sponsor companies?

A. It is a huge advantage to be able to speak and read Japanese or Korean. So immerse yourself in the language as much as possible.

