



Aleph

Beijing, Hangzhou & Shanghai

March 8-13, 2026

A global digital advertising and payments powerhouse, explored China's tech ecosystem to unlock new growth opportunities

A leadership expedition by
nexworks

Welcome

Once again, we are happy to take you on a new transformative learning expedition we organised for Aleph Group at the start of 2026 towards the heart of China's digital revolution: in Beijing, Hangzhou and Shanghai.

In this 'tour journal', you'll find real-world insights on how China's technology giants are scaling at breathtaking speed and how they completely reshape global business models in payments, commerce, AI, and beyond.

This experience would not have been possible without the brilliant leaders who joined us and the inspiring companies who opened their doors. A big thank you to you all!

We hope it sparks new ideas, challenges assumptions, and helps you shape your company's Day After Tomorrow.

Enjoy the read!

the nexxworks team



What's Inside



A quick guide to what's inside, so you can easily find what matters most to you.



[click to jump!](#)

This program	04
Crafting the storyline	05
Why China was the obvious choice	07
Meet the moderator Pascal Coppens	08
Where content ends and commerce begins (Ocean Engine)	10
From fridge to fintech (JD.com)	11
Paying is no longer a step (TenPay)	12
The Search Engine that looks like social media (RedNote)	13
About nexxworks	15

This program

When a global digital advertising and payments powerhouse, present in 130+ markets, takes its leadership team to the heart of China's tech ecosystem, you know you're on the verge of transforming the way you think about global business growth.

The mission? To understand how China's digital giants operate, scale, and innovate - and what that means for Aleph's own Day After Tomorrow.

Inside the breakdown:



The core mission



Building the storyline

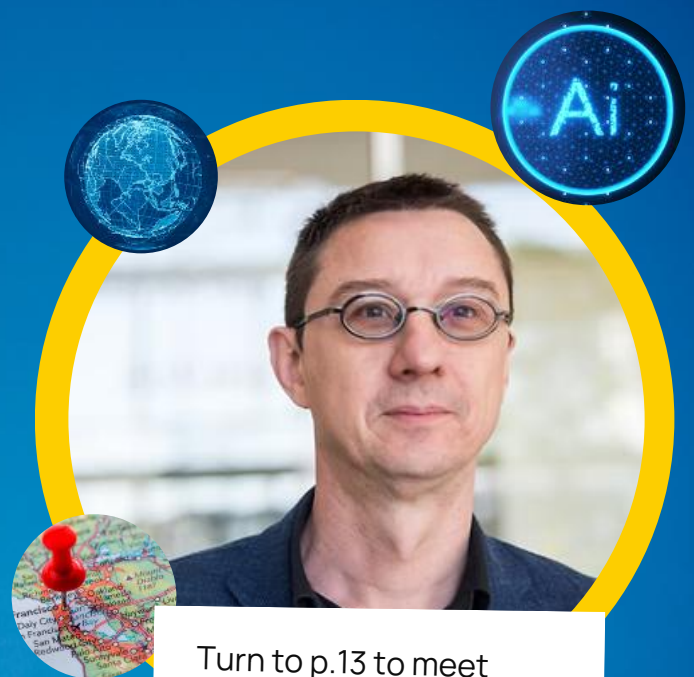


Why it earned the spotlight



Our **expert moderators** are more than hosts, they're catalysts.

They connect the dots, push thinking further, and turn insights into action.



Turn to p.13 to meet **Pascal Coppens**, our incredible moderator.

Crafting the storyline



Before mapping the itinerary or confirming the speakers, we co-designed the ambition.

The program was built around three defining topics:

- ✓ **Understanding the China Code**
What does it really take to succeed in and with China?
- ✓ **Meeting the Digital Powerhouses**
Which Chinese companies are shaping global digital trends today and tomorrow?
- ✓ **Turning Insight into Impact**
Seeing is one thing. Translating it into concrete, actionable takeaways you can apply immediately.



Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
Beijing	Beijing	Hangzhou	Shanghai	Shanghai



The itinerary

Each visit, each voice, each session was chosen to spark new thinking and challenge old assumptions. Together, we decoded how world-class companies are navigating disruption.

Three powerhouses defined the scale of China's digital economy: **Alibaba, Ant Group, JD.com and TenPay** - infrastructure built at a billion-user level.



We saw how **Unitree, Rednote & Ocean Engine** are all rewriting the rules of robotics, social discovery and digital commerce.

We explored Shanghai's buzzing retail streets to feel the new **consumption wave** firsthand, and crossed cities by bullet train to experience the **sheer force of China's societal progress** in motion.

Why China was the obvious choice



Aleph chose China for this learning expedition because no other market combines digital scale, payments innovation, and outbound growth ambition at this speed and intensity – all areas directly relevant to Aleph's core business.

Here's why it earned the spotlight:

The world's largest digital payments ecosystem, processing trillions annually through WeChat Pay and Alipay

Home to giants (Alibaba, JD.com, Tencent) and bold disruptors (Unitree, RedNote, Ocean Engine)

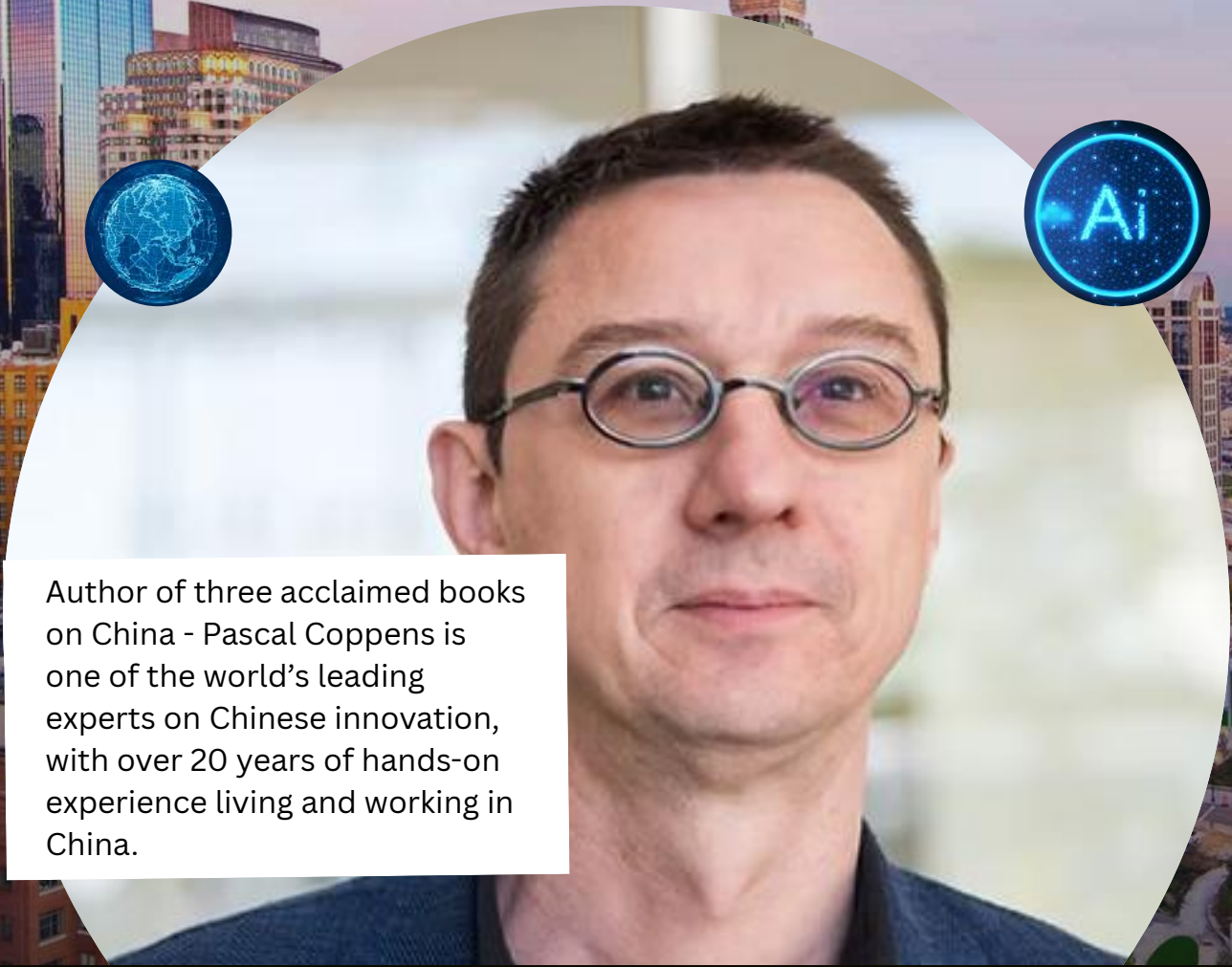
A culture of relentless iteration: where speed of execution is a competitive advantage, Chinese brands are going global – and they need exactly what Aleph offers: payments infrastructure, media access and local market reach across 130+ markets

A mindset of applied innovation: China doesn't just build technology, it deploys it at civilizational scale



Meet the moderator

Pascal Coppens



Author of three acclaimed books on China - Pascal Coppens is one of the world's leading experts on Chinese innovation, with over 20 years of hands-on experience living and working in China.

Pascal is a sinologist, entrepreneur, author, speaker & partner at nexxworks. He lived in China and San Francisco for 20 years where he first worked for MNCs and later on founded and ran multiple software companies in both Silicon Valley and Shanghai.

Pascal Coppens offers deep insights into China's business, innovation, and societal landscape, drawing from 20 years of experience in the country and frequent visits each year. He serves as a trusted advisor to boards and management teams, helping organizations navigate China's dynamic market.

He writes extensively about Chinese innovation and society, providing a nuanced perspective on the country's evolving business environment.

He frequently shares the latest China developments and expert analysis on the country's global impact.

From hundreds of options to one unforgettable week

Curating the perfect learning expedition isn't about packing in visits – it's about finding the right rhythm. We carefully choose from a global pool of cutting-edge companies, visionary leaders, and bold experiences to build a program that flows and inspires.

With our worldwide network, we unlock access others can't: behind-the-scenes labs, honest talks with disruptors, and moments that shift your thinking. Every stop fits the story and leaves a lasting mark.

Explore the schedule



Sun Kickoff	Mon Beijing	Tue Beijing	Wed Hangzhou	Thu Shanghai	Fri Shanghai
	Ocean Engine	Bluefocus	Alibaba	TenPay	Keynote Philippe Snel
	Peking University Business School	JD.com		RedNote	Closing Keynote Pascal Coppens
Program kick-off	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
Keynote Pascal Coppens	iQIYI	Flight to Hangzhou	Unitree	VML Asia	EY China
Dinner & connecting	Dinner at Argentina Embassy	Dinner	Train to Shanghai	Dinner	Closing Dinner



Where content ends and commerce begins

Monday, 9.00 - 10.30 AM

At Ocean Engine, ByteDance's advertising arm, the group got an inside look at how Douyin has become something far more powerful than its Western counterpart TikTok – a fully closed-loop platform where content, search, commerce and payments converge in a single user journey.

The team challenged a common assumption: Douyin is not a short-video app with a shop attached. It is a discovery and conversion engine where the algorithm rewards business outcomes, not just attention. Content that drives clicks, completions and revenue gets more reach, meaning the platform is structurally wired to make commerce work.

They pushed on the scale of what that means in practice: 150 million daily active users in the in-app mall alone, over half of all users having purchased through a livestream, and delivery within 24 to 72 hours backed by China's logistics infrastructure.

★ Signature session

 Ocean Engine



From fridge to fintech

Tuesday, 2.00 - 3.30 PM

★ Spotlight



JD.COM

At JD.com, the group quickly discovered that the label "e-commerce platform" dramatically undersells what this company has become. Starting as an offline electronics retailer in 1998, pivoting online during SARS, and listing on Nasdaq in 2014, JD has since built one of the most vertically integrated digital empires in the world – spanning logistics, fintech, healthcare, cloud and industrial supply chains.

The numbers reframe the story entirely. USD 187.2 billion in 2025 revenue. Ranked #44 on the Fortune Global 500. 700 million active users. Same-day or next-day delivery reaching 98% of China's population through a fully owned warehouse and delivery network. This is not a marketplace that relies on third parties – JD owns the infrastructure end to end.

The team pushed on two themes with direct relevance for Aleph. First, international expansion: JD is entering Europe through its retail brand Joybuy, building local warehousing in the UK, France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg rather than opting for lighter cross-border models. Second, fintech at scale: JD's financial services unit serves 500 million users, and is already exporting white-label payment infrastructure into emerging markets – with Myanmar as a flagship case where its partner became the country's number one mobile payment app.



Paying is no longer a step

Thursday, 9.30 - 11.30 AM

★ Spotlight

Tenpay Global

At TenPay, the group came face to face with what happens when payments stop being a transaction and become infrastructure. As the financial backbone of Tencent's WeChat ecosystem, TenPay doesn't sit at the end of a purchase journey. It runs through everything: e-commerce, social interactions, mini-programs, offline retail, peer-to-peer transfers and on-demand services, all connected by a single QR code.

The team put the numbers in perspective. WeChat Pay serves over 1 billion users. Digital payments penetration in China exceeds 85 to 90% of the population. More than 80% of offline transactions in major Chinese cities are already cashless. This is not a fintech trend. It is a settled reality that has quietly made China the largest digital payments market in the world.

What stood out most was the concept the TenPay team kept returning to: payment as infrastructure. Rather than a checkout step bolted onto a service, payments in China are embedded so deeply into daily behaviour that friction has effectively disappeared.

For global business leaders, the provocation was clear: in most Western markets, payments are still an afterthought. In China, they became the architecture. That shift in thinking – from feature to foundation – is perhaps the most transferable lesson of the entire visit.



The Search Engine that looks like social media

Thursday, 1.00 - 3.00 PM

★ Spotlight



At RedNote, the group encountered one of China's most quietly powerful platforms – a product that started as a shopping PDF in 2013 and has since evolved into something Western platforms are still struggling to become: a trusted, peer-driven lifestyle search engine with 350 million users.

The team dismantled the assumption that RedNote is simply China's Instagram. More than 70% of all user actions on the platform involve search behaviour. People come to RedNote not to be entertained but to make decisions: where to travel, what to buy, which restaurant to book, what skincare routine to follow. With 90% of content created by users and 9 million new posts published every day, the platform has built a level of organic trust that paid advertising alone can never replicate.

What makes RedNote structurally different is its distribution logic. Unlike follower-driven platforms where reach is tied to account size, RedNote distributes content based on quality and engagement. A post from an unknown user can outperform a brand with millions of followers if it resonates better. Authenticity is not a marketing strategy here – it is the algorithm.

For global leaders thinking about influence and consumer behaviour, the lesson was sharp: the future of marketing may not be louder campaigns or bigger budgets. It may be earning a place in the conversation that people are already having with each other.



Conclusion

Tailored program to Aleph's business context

An immersive learning expedition isn't just about what happens in the room. It's also about the moments in between – the conversations over lunch, the ideas sparked during dinner, the shared experiences that bring people closer and turn our participants into co-creators.

From carefully chosen restaurants that encourage real connection to hands-on activities that bring the mission to life, every detail is planned to deepen engagement and make learning stick. Nexxworks is not a travel agency, we design learning experiences for leadership teams that create real business transformation.



Interested in how this could work for your organization? Let's chat!



Nils Demanet

Business Development @ nexxworks

[Book an intake call >](#)

[Send an email >](#)

About



At nexxworks, we don't predict the future—we dive straight into it. The world is shifting fast, and outdated strategies won't cut it.

We challenge leaders to unlearn, rethink, and embrace what's next.

We skip the dull lectures and take you to the heart of disruption. Our learning expeditions throw you into real-world innovation—**meeting pioneers, disruptors, and visionaries shaping tomorrow.**

How are we different? We curate chaos. We make you question assumptions, debate with the best, and rethink everything—no fluff, no filters—just raw insights that push you forward.

Buckle up!

[Explore our approach >](#)



What we offer



Tailor-made Programs

We co-create **fully customized programs to tackle your specific business challenges**, from immersive learning expeditions and strategic offsites to in-company masterclasses tailored to your needs.



Open Programs

Ideal for individuals or small teams, our open programs take you to the frontlines of innovation. Join expeditions to global innovation hubs like Silicon Valley or Singapore or attend one of our forward-looking masterclasses.



Keynote Speakers

Our world-class speakers, including Steven Van Belleghem, Nancy Rademaker, Rik Vera and others, **bring bold energy and razor-sharp insights to your stage.**

Curious in how this could work for your organization? Chat with us!



Nils Demanet

Business Development @ nexxworks

[Book an intake call >](#)

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Tailor-made programs



No two companies are the same – and neither are our tailor-made programs. At nexxworks, we don't believe in off-the-shelf inspiration. Our tailor-made programs are co-created with you, built around your strategic goals, cultural DNA, and leadership ambitions.



Who's already rewiring their **Day After Tomorrow**?



Discover our **tailor-made solutions** for leadership teams

[Learn more](#)



We'd love to stay in touch!
Whether you have questions or just want to
share your thoughts & challenges, don't
hesitate to reach out.

