

CHINA LEADERSHIP DECISION GUIDE

CHINA GM EVALUATION

Istheproblem theGM,
the mandate, or headquarters?
A 10-minute first-pass diagnostic for CEOs and APAC leaders.

THREE POSSIBLE SOURCES. ONE EVIDENCE-BASED REVIEW.

THE GM

THE MANDATE

HEADQUARTERS

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CHINA GM EVALUATION

Is the problem the GM, the mandate, or headquarters?

A 10-minute first-pass diagnostic for CEOs and APAC leaders.

How to score

2 = clearly true | 1 = partly true or unclear | 0 = not true. Score from evidence, not reputation or frustration. If an answer is unknown, investigate it before deciding.

1. Is the Operating Environment Enabling Performance?

#	Statement	Score 0 / 1 / 2
1	China performance expectations reflect current market conditions—not an earlier China cycle.	_____
2	The GM has a small number of measurable business results for the next 12 months.	_____
3	Those results are within the GM's authority, or the required HQ decisions are explicit.	_____
4	Budget, pricing, hiring and investment decisions are made at the speed the market requires.	_____
5	The team, budget and access to HQ expertise match the results expected.	_____
6	HQ priorities are consistent and local decisions are not reversed unpredictably.	_____
7	The GM can deliver unwelcome information without political or personal penalty.	_____
8	The mandate is revised when market conditions, strategy or ownership materially change.	_____

SYSTEM SCORE: _____ / 16

System score	Category	What it suggests
12–16	Supportive	The operating environment broadly supports performance.
7–11	Mixed	Some conditions help; others materially restrict execution.
0–6	Constraining	The mandate, resources or HQ system is a major obstacle.

2. Is the GM Delivering?

Evaluate observable results, judgment, leadership and control—not personality, nationality or presentation style.

#	Statement	Score 0 / 1 / 2
1	The GM is delivering measurable progress against the agreed business results.	_____
2	Decisions become owned actions, deadlines and completed follow-through.	_____
3	Persistent bottlenecks are removed or escalated with clear options.	_____
4	The GM explains China conditions accurately, specifically and without distortion.	_____
5	Plans are prioritized, financially coherent and executable with available resources.	_____
6	The GM changes course when evidence changes and does not conceal earlier mistakes.	_____
7	Direct reports are capable, accountable and clear about decision ownership.	_____
8	Bad news and contrary views reach the GM early.	_____
9	The organization is becoming stronger, more transparent and less dependent on personal loyalties.	_____
10	Reporting matches source records; HQ has independent access; conflicts and material risks are disclosed; controls operate without interference.	_____

GM SCORE: _____ / 20

GM score	Category	What it suggests
15–20	Strong	The evidence broadly supports the GM's ability to deliver and protect the business.
9–14	Mixed	The picture is uneven. Specific gaps require a time-bound test.
0–8	Concern	There are material capability, execution, leadership or control problems.
Control override Any verified deception, obstruction, undisclosed conflict or retaliation requires independent investigation. Do not average it away in the score.		

3. What Does the Result Mean?

Result	What to do
System supportive / GM strong	No clear case for replacement. Protect what is working and raise the performance bar.
System supportive / GM concern	A leadership problem is likely. Verify the evidence and prepare leadership options.
System constraining / GM strong	Repair the mandate, authority, resources or HQ decision process before judging the GM.
System constraining / GM concern	Both require action. Protect control and continuity while addressing the system and leadership.
Either score is mixed	Set three measurable 90-day results, provide the required authority and resources, then review again.

Red Flags That Override the Score

☐	Reporting does not match source records.
☐	The GM blocks HQ access to finance, customers, key employees, distributors, agents, suppliers or records.
☐	Conflicts of interest, related parties, litigation or material risks are not disclosed.
☐	Controls, approvals, audit or whistleblowing are obstructed or retaliation occurs.

If any is present, obtain independent evidence before making an employment decision.

If the Answer Is Still Unclear

Run a 90-day test

Set three measurable results. Confirm the authority, resources and HQ support required. Agree the evidence that will be reviewed and the decision date.

Before You Replace the GM

Be able to state: (1) the three business results that must change, (2) the authority and resources the role requires, and (3) the evidence showing that leadership—not the operating environment—is the principal constraint.

Need an independent second view?

I help CEOs determine what must change before they decide whether to replace a China GM. Michael Whelan | 40 years in Asia | 28 years conducting senior executive searches | thepaliogroups.com

This is a management decision aid, not legal, accounting, employment or investigative advice.