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MEMBER INTERVIEW

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Mr. Stephane Pierron
Managing Director



Global Experience, Local Impact: How Mr. Stephane Pierron, Managing Director of Carlsberg Myanmar, Navigates Myanmar's Business Landscape

Mr. Stephane Pierron, Managing Director of Carlsberg Myanmar, offers a distinctive leadership perspective shaped by his diverse global experiences. His journey from technical precision to operational excellence in both stable and volatile markets has cultivated a pragmatic philosophy focused on distributed resilience and responsible growth.

In this engaging conversation, we delve into his insights on navigating complex regulatory environments, recalibrating risk perceptions between local realities and foreign headquarters, and making a lasting impact through institutional strengthening and regional integration.



Q: How did your early career in IT project management shape your approach to financial leadership later in your career?

A: My background in IT project management has equipped me with vital financial leadership skills, including structured thinking, process discipline, and a strong focus on accountability for results. Through managing intricate technical systems, I learned to break down challenges into smaller, more manageable parts, anticipate potential risks, and communicate effectively with a wide range of stakeholders.

These competencies are directly applicable to financial leadership. I view finance as more than just handling numbers as it involves coordinating integrated systems of people, processes, and priorities. The precision and rigor I developed in IT project management have laid a solid foundation for guiding financial teams through ever-changing business landscapes.

This journey has reinforced my fundamental belief that effective financial leadership demands both analytical expertise and systematic execution, skills that I have refined over the years by successfully delivering complex projects on time and within their defined scope.





Q: Working with global luxury leaders such as Louis Vuitton – Moët Hennessy and Cartier International, what did you learn about operational excellence and brand discipline that later proved transferable to mass-market and FMCG environments?

A: My experience in the global luxury sector has shown me that true excellence is found in the details, whether it's maintaining the integrity of the supply chain or ensuring consistent customer experience. I have learned the importance of upholding brand equity through strict standards.

When I moved into the FMCG sector, I discovered that these principles apply universally. Achieving operational excellence is crucial for driving efficiency in mass markets, while maintaining brand discipline is essential for preserving trust in competitive environments. The underlying mindset remains the same: whether dealing with champagne or beer, consumers need to have confidence in both the product and the company behind it.

Success across various categories hinges on the consistent execution of quality standards and a steadfast commitment to brand integrity.

Q: During your multi-market leadership journey with Groupe Casino in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Vietnam, what was the most difficult governance trade-off you had to make—and what did it reveal about your leadership philosophy?



A: Leading teams in France, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Vietnam has highlighted a significant governance challenge: how to balance global compliance with the need for agility in local markets. Often, strict corporate reporting requirements clashed with the quick decision-making necessary in fast-paced environments.

This experience has influenced my leadership philosophy, which centers on pragmatism while upholding integrity. I believe that effective governance isn't about rigidly following rules; rather, it's about finding a balance between global standards and local autonomy. I've come to understand that effective leadership in different situations requires trusting local insights while still adhering to universal principles.

The key takeaway from my experiences is that successful governance relies on being adaptable rather than strictly following inflexible rules.



Q: You have led across both mature European markets and high-volatility Southeast Asian markets. How do you recalibrate risk appetite and decision speed when context changes, but accountability does not?

A: European markets tend to prioritize a lower risk appetite, favoring careful decision-making that is guided by predictability. In contrast, the volatility of Southeast Asian markets necessitates swift decision-making and a greater tolerance for uncertainty.

To navigate these differing environments, I adapt my approach based on the context. In more volatile markets, I empower teams to take prompt action while providing clear guidelines to keep efforts aligned. Conversely, in stable markets, I focus on long-term optimization strategies. Throughout this process, accountability is constant; it's the rhythm of leadership that shifts according to the situation.

Ultimately, achieving success hinges on understanding when to push forward and when to take a step back to consolidate efforts.





Q: As Managing Director of Carlsberg Myanmar, how do you define “responsible growth” in a market where stability, consumer confidence, and predictability are uneven?

A: Responsible growth strikes a balance between ambition and sustainability. In Myanmar's volatile environment, pursuing growth at any cost is not viable. My framework is built on three key pillars: adherence to local and international standards, investment in our people, and contributing community impacts. Growth should be inclusive, ethical, and aimed at long-term positive impact.

Achieving success involves building trust with consumers, regulators, and employees, particularly in unpredictable conditions.





Q: In the current Myanmar market, which risks do you believe are most misunderstood by foreign headquarters—and how should local leaders recalibrate those perceptions?

A: Foreign headquarters often misjudge the fluid nature of Myanmar's regulations and overestimate the predictability of consumer behavior. Risks here encompass political, economic, cultural, and operational aspects, where sudden shifts in consumer preferences or changes in informal distribution can have significant consequences.

While headquarters may see volatility as a temporary challenge, local leaders understand that it is frequently a structural issue. My role involves reshaping these perceptions: risk is not solely about instability; it also demands resilience and adaptability.

The key misunderstanding is the assumption that Western models of predictability are applicable in this context because they are not. Local leadership must possess strong capabilities in transforming uncertainty into opportunity by implementing flexible systems and setting realistic expectations.

Q: In an environment where talent retention is increasingly challenging, how do you maintain leadership depth, morale, and succession readiness without over-reliance on a few key individuals?

A: Myanmar faces challenges in retaining talent due to both external mobility and internal career aspirations. My strategy focuses on developing leadership at all levels through comprehensive development rather than concentrating on a few individuals.

I prioritize mentorship, cross-functional experiences, and succession planning. Employee morale improves when individuals feel recognized and empowered, understanding that their contributions extend beyond their immediate roles.

To ensure succession readiness, it's essential to cultivate multiple layers of leadership, so resilience does not rely solely on key individuals. My philosophy is to create teams where leadership is shared and distributed, rather than concentrated in a few hands.



Q: Looking ahead, what legacy would you like your engagement with FMCCI to leave—for Myanmar's business ecosystem, future leaders, and the country's integration into regional markets?

A: My involvement with FMCCI is focused on creating a legacy of constructive dialogue and strengthening institutions. I aim to connect local businesses with international standards, showing that leadership in volatile markets can be principled, resilient, and globally engaged.

In the context of Myanmar's regional integration, I aspire to establish the country as a trustworthy partner that attracts investment, talent, and confidence. My ultimate goal is to advocate responsibly, demonstrating that business can serve as a stabilizing force during uncertain times.



Q: Long-distance cycling and scuba diving both demand endurance, preparation, and situational awareness. How do these disciplines translate into how you manage pressure, uncertainty, and leadership fatigue?



A: Mountain biking instills a sense of persistence as it is pushing through fatigue, challenging weather, and tough terrain. Scuba diving fosters calmness under pressure, requiring effective management of oxygen, depth, and unforeseen circumstances. Both experiences have direct applications in my leadership.

In the business world, pressure and uncertainty are ever-present and unavoidable. Endurance helps maintain momentum, while situational awareness allows for adaptation without succumbing to panic.

These disciplines demonstrate that resilience is not about evading pressure or fatigue, but rather about managing them thoughtfully and safely.



Q: As a leader and a parent whose children have built their own professional paths, what advice do you give young finance and business leaders aspiring to international careers?

A: As a proud father of four, I've seen my children forge their own paths, and I've learned that careers are rarely linear. The most important lesson I've taken from this is to embrace uncertainty as an opportunity for growth.

International careers are less about pursuing prestige and more about learning, contributing, and evolving in challenging environments. Achieving success in different countries requires an openness to diverse cultures, systems, and perspectives that go beyond formal education. While technical skills are important, trust and credibility are what truly sustain careers across borders.

Early exposure to a variety of industries, geographies, and roles fosters the agility needed to thrive in complex situations.

