



Pascal Coppens

AUTHOR · BUSINESS LEADER

Most Western boards make capital allocation and supply chain decisions about China using mental models that are a decade out of date. The country has moved from manufacturing replica to setting the innovation standard in whole categories, even as its political and economic logic remains opaque. The result is a steady stream of strategic misjudgements at the moment when getting China right matters most.

Pascal Coppens helps Western boards make better decisions about China, drawing on two decades as a sinologist and technology entrepreneur who built and competed with Chinese innovators in Shanghai and Silicon Valley.

Pascal Coppens's 2026 Biography

Why organisations work with Pascal Coppens

- Twenty years building tech businesses in Shanghai. Coppens founded Letsface, co-founded Polycore Software, and built Sinnolabs as a growth accelerator for European scale-ups entering China.
- Three books with a developing argument on modern China. *China's New Normal* (2019), *Can We Trust China?* (2022), and *China's Next Miracle* (2025) give buyers a thinker with sustained intellectual commitment to one country.
- A track record of predictions that landed. The 2019 forecast that China would set the innovation standard across multiple sectors by 2025 was borne out by Huawei, BYD, DJI, TikTok, TEMU, BGI, and Ant Financial.
- A nuanced reading in a debate dominated by extremes. The eight circles of trust framework in *Can We Trust China?* gives Western leaders analytical ground that neither cheerleads China nor reduces it to threat.

Biography highlights

- Author of three books on modern China: *China's New Normal* (2019), *Can We Trust China?* (2022), and *China's Next Miracle* (2025).
- Master's in Eastern Languages and Cultures from Ghent University and Business Engineering degree from Solvay Business School (Free University of Brussels).
- Twenty years living and working in Shanghai and Silicon Valley; founder of Letsface, co-founder of Polycore Software, co-creator of Sinnolabs.
- Partner at nexworks; delivers close to 100 keynotes a year, with clients including Mastercard, Microsoft, Salesforce, Huawei, Walmart, P&G, S.W.I.F.T., Rabobank, EY, PWC, London Business School, and CEDEP.
- YouTube channel *Pascal's China Lens* with 65,000+ subscribers and 4

AVAILABLE FOR

- After Dinner Engagement
- Consultancy
- Panel Participation
- Speaking
- Training and Workshops

PASCAL'S SPEAKING THEMES

- Artificial Intelligence & Generative AI
- Economic Trends & Global Markets
- Geopolitics
- Innovation & Disruption
- Supply Chain Resilience

LANGUAGES: English

million views; regular guest on Belgian public broadcaster VRT; co-host of the *Radar* podcast with Peter Hinssen and Steven Van Belleghem.

Biography

Chinese companies now lead in electric vehicles, mobile payments, social commerce, drone manufacturing, and consumer AI. The country has moved past the cheap-factory phase that defined Western mental models for thirty years. Western executives are now competing against or partnering with companies whose innovation logic they were not trained to read.

Coppens has spent two decades operating on both sides of that gap. He began at Alcatel in Shanghai and moved to Silicon Valley for Wind River Systems before co-founding Polycore Software. He then returned to China and founded Letsface, an offline community platform for premium global brands. His primary sources became the Chinese innovators he hired and competed against.

Three books trace a developing argument. *China's New Normal* (2019) mapped the sectors where Chinese companies would set the innovation standard, with predictions on Huawei, BYD, DJI, TikTok, and Ant largely borne out. *Can We Trust China?* (2022) tackled the trust deficit fuelling Western fear, building an eight circles of trust framework as an analytical handle on a polarising question. *China's Next Miracle* (2025) describes the next phase. It tracks the shift from market innovation to intellectual property creation, with implications for capital, supply chain, and competitive strategy.

His operating position now is unusually broad for a country specialist. Coppens delivers close to 100 keynotes a year for Fortune 500 audiences and advises boards on de-risking and supply chain. He runs the *Pascal's China Lens* YouTube channel for 65,000 subscribers and co-hosts the *Radar* podcast with Peter Hinssen and Steven Van Belleghem. The argument he is making now: the rules of global business are being rewritten in Chinese, and Western companies have less time to adjust than they think.

Key speaking topics

- China's innovation model
- Geopolitical risk and US-China-EU dynamics
- China's economic transition
- Chinese business ecosystems
- Supply chain de-risking and "China plus one"
- Generative AI in China
- Cross-cultural business with Chinese partners
- The multipolar world order

Ideal for

- Boards and executive committees facing strategic decisions on China exposure
- CSOs, transformation leads, and innovation heads benchmarking against Chinese competitors
- COOs and procurement leaders rethinking supply chain after the end of cheap globalisation
- Senior leadership teams in industries where Chinese companies are moving from supplier to direct competitor (automotive, consumer

electronics, retail, pharmaceuticals)

Audience outcomes

- A clearer reading of China's current strategic intent, separated from both the threat narrative and the market opportunity narrative
- Working knowledge of how Chinese innovation ecosystems generate speed and scale, drawn from named cases (WeChat, Alibaba, Haier's micro-enterprise model, the EV supply chain)
- A view of which Chinese competitors and partners are most relevant to their sector, and which are noise
- Sharper questions for their China strategy: whether to de-risk, where to compete, where to partner, where to learn from
- A current map of China's AI position relative to the US and Europe, including the policy and infrastructure context

Pascal Coppens's 2026 talks & topics

China's New Normal

Maps the sectors where Chinese companies have set the global innovation standard, and the operating logic that got them there.

Key takeaways:

- Where China now leads, by sector, with the named companies driving each shift
- The 15-year arc from copycat to standard-setter, and what it tells you about pace
- The window Western companies have before China hits its 2030 innovation leadership target

Can We Trust China?

Works through eight circles of trust to give Western leaders an analytical handle on a country whose internal logic is usually misread.

Key takeaways:

- How Chinese citizens, companies, and government see their own system, and why
- Where Western fear of China is well-founded and where it is shaped by media framing
- A nuanced position on China that holds up in board-level conversation

China's Next Miracle

Describes China's shift from market innovation to becoming an intellectual property creator, and what that means for capital, supply chain, and competitive strategy.

Key takeaways:

- The new Chinese innovation model: directed autonomy, industrial ecosystems, breakthrough technology
- The implications for industries where China is moving from supplier to standard-setter
- Practical “red pills” for executives, investors, and policymakers preparing for the next phase

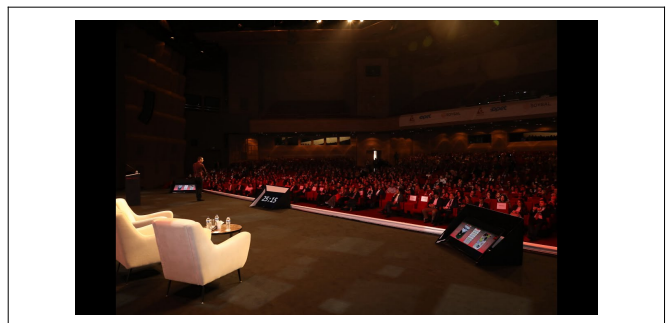
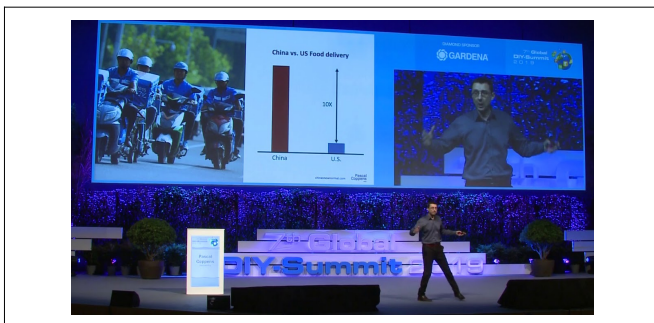
Decoding China

Reads modern China as an operating environment, covering the different generations of Chinese business leaders and the geopolitical context they sit within.

Key takeaways:

- The cultural and political dynamics that shape how Chinese companies actually behave
- Common Western misreadings of Chinese business and where they cost real money
- A workable approach to commercial dealings with Chinese partners and competitors

Pascal Coppens's Videos





What Pascal Coppens's clients say

Pascal's contribution to our Leadership Meeting was incredibly fruitful for bringing up for discussion the 'never normal' strategies of the world's leading countries, in particular China, due to his vast experience with it. He has shown our company through a very engaging and interactive keynote that leadership is more than social skills and ambition, and that it is also about artificial intelligence, rapid development, solution-oriented thinking and taking risks. What most appealed to us during his speech were his applied examples to each argument and his guidelines that we could further implement within our own culture.

EMIA leader, Bridgestone

At several events, Pascal Coppens managed to inform and inspire our customers and partners on China's 'New Normal', and how European companies can play their role.

Microsoft

Pascal inspired the full PG organization with his keynote that was delivered in Sept19. After the keynote a group of young, talented people teamed up to relook at some processes, principles, way of working to challenge those and update them based on what they had learned during the presentation.

On a regular basis the PG New Normal team comes together and presents the plan to the Belgium Lead team to further optimize the way we work!

Thanks a lot for inspiring us!

Mathias Lambers

Country Leader Belgium/Luxemburg, P&G

Thanks to his longlasting experience in both working and living in China, Pascal offers us an extraordinary baggage and exceptional expertise on the country and its people.

Europe CIO, luxury house

I would like to thank you for your participation as a speaker to the International business Coaches Meeting earlier this week. Your amazing presentation has been very much appreciated!

Maria Collura

Senior Country Advisor, BNP Paribas Fortis

As part of the SAS Virtual Friday series we had the pleasure to welcome Pascal to talk about what the West can learn from China in these unprecedented times. During his talk Pascal explained how China succeeds in tackling volatility and uncertainty, making it one of the most innovative countries today. Thanks a lot, Pascal and always looking forward to your next innovation stories.

Ivy Vanderheyden

Marketing Director, Benelux, SAS

ARTICLES AND PODCASTS



[The China-Taiwan Conflict: Expert Perspectives on the Threat and Global Impact](#)

Pascal Coppens's 2026 speaking fees

Specific fees fall within the ranges shown. These are presented as a guide only and are subject to change without notice.

	EUR	GBP	USD
Home Country	Under €12000	Under £10,000	Under \$15000
Asia Pacific	€12000 to €40000	£10,001 - £35,000	\$15000 - \$50000
Europe	Under €12000	Under £10,000	Under \$15000
Middle East & Africa	Under €12000	Under £10,000	Under \$15000
South America	Please enquire	Please enquire	Please enquire
United Kingdom	Under €12000	Under £10,000	Under \$15000
US East Coast	€12000 to €40000	£10,001 - £35,000	\$15000 - \$50000
US West Coast	€12000 to €40000	£10,001 - £35,000	\$15000 - \$50000
Virtual	Under €12000	Under £10,000	Under \$15000