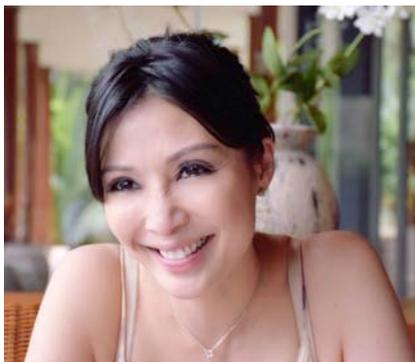


# South China Morning Post Interview with Alexis Wong, CEO & Founder of blinq - Female Entrepreneur GirlBoss Breaking International Barriers By Jennifer Cheng

Everyone remembers Alexis after meeting her, and probably more than a few have fallen under her spell (count me guilty as charged), if they are strong enough not to be intimidated by her beauty, brains, and business instinct. I met and immediately became enamoured of Alexis' spirit, enthralled with her energy and became her ipso facto little sis upon our first meeting a couple years back. Despite an already formidable track record of success and accomplishment (Alexis founded and at one point was the CEO of 3 companies concurrently), she exudes passion and utilizes a refreshingly proactive hands-on approach when it comes to matters of business. She's naturally vivacious and charismatic and it's these qualities, coupled with the fact that she has accomplished so much, that impels people, business, brands, and her teammates to gravitate toward her and follow her lead. Here's a peek at the background of the powerhouse that is Alexis Wong:



Prior to her current venture Blinq, Alexis' founded and was CEO of Prometheus Partners and was involved with many cross-border advisory and M&A initiatives between China and US. She also founded AGI Capital and AGI Avant, a real estate development and investment company that has overseen more than \$1.5 billion USD in projects, investments under her lead, as well as partnered with CalPERS, which manages more than \$290 billion USD in assets. (Alexis remains Chairman of AGI). For her work and over the years, she has been appointed to many boards and commissions including the California Real Estate Advisory Board, COIN Advisory Board, California World Trade Commission, Asian Pacific Islander Affairs Commission, and more. She's been recognized as one of the "Top 100 Most Influential Women in Business", "Top 50 Asian Americans in Business in the U.S." by the San Francisco Business Times and the Asian Economic Development Center in New York respectively. Outside of business, Alexis is a prominent philanthropist who gives back, including for New Hope Home which aids medically challenged orphans, and the Oakland-China Wildlife Preservation Foundation, where she worked with Bill Clinton and Congressional leaders to obtain approval from the Chinese government to grant a pair of Giant Pandas to the city. Alexis put herself through school while raising 2 younger sisters (she's the oldest of 4 sisters) and holds a Bachelor's in Marketing and an MBA in International Management from Golden Gate University where she graduated Magna Cum Laude.

Flash forward to the present day, when having survived a scale up, then cutback, then scaling again, we had a chance to catch up, and through this all, knew we would be fast friends and people who, united through some twist of fate, were meant to change the world together for the better. We found synergies in our companies and went forward, inking and implementing our partnerships and campaigns across 2 continents. My Company, Glam-it! ([Glamit.com](http://Glamit.com)), is about streamlining women's lives with Glampact the first light up all-in-one customizable makeup compact, and other fashion and beauty technology products that save them space and

time. Alexis' Company, Blinq ([GetBlinq.com](http://GetBlinq.com) , [Blinq.cn](http://Blinq.cn)) is the world's first O2O (online to offline) total solution platform in metro stations, and it's core is about Sales, Marketing, Social Media and Commerce and combining them to empower busy people and growing brands who are targeting them. Alexis, her team, and the community they have built and continue to build, help forward-thinking Brands and Consumers who want to find each other connect in a borderless way, and transact easily across all delivery platforms encompassing the mobile, physical, virtual, online, payments spheres. I'm proud to say that Glam-it! is now launched as a partner of Blinq in China and is currently live in metro stations in and in selected San Francisco BART stations. Full Disclosure: Glam-it! And Blinq will be partnering at even more fundamental levels in the near future, as we are both Advisors and Ambassadors to both Companies. ( Alexis is an Equity Advisor to Glam-it!.)



1. What moment or epiphany was the impetus for you to start Blinq?

The whole idea started over 8 years ago when I was still mostly living in SF. I grew up in HK and found the BART system frankly boring. The metro network in any major metropolitan city in the world is a metaphoric artery, and one with immense monetisation value and a captive audience. I had a more or less gradual but sudden realisation that these were people with time on their commutes who were under utilising their time and going back to the grand artery of the metro system these consumers are like blood cells inside the body getting transported. All we needed to do was to just pump in some oxygen and activate them, invigorate them, bring them back to really living and experiencing life. I didn't want to waste time (it's my most valuable resource), so I launched in China first with Shanghai metro and then came back round and launched in the US with BART, where I ultimately had the idea in the first place. At the crux of it, Blinq is an omnichannel omnipresent total solution sales, marketing, payment solution empowering Brands and Consumers to find each other at the right time. Ultimately we are a lifestyle portal and platform because we connect consumers and brands across a lifestyle spectrum and make their lives easier and more interesting with products that enhance living. We essentially help people to focus on what matters and to go back to living their lives in a meaningful manner. We deliver on the Blinq promise, you get your life back, streamlined, and then some!



2. What was it like going through school and also working throughout? What was your biggest learning and take-away from your MBA Program?

During that time, because I was on a full scholarship program, I didn't have a choice but to go to school full time while also working full time to support myself. The school I went to while not IVY league, had quality curriculum and great professionals who were all real life practitioners as they are all or have been working professionals in addition to being on faculty so I was able to have very meaningful discussions to learn from their experience. In balancing work and school, I learned to be efficient, extremely efficient with my time and multi-tasked effectively being full time student and working 50 hours a week. These skill sets save my days even now allowing me to handle multiple roles at the same time without losing focus or my sanity. So the biggest takeaway was not rhetoric. It was about reality of life and how to make the best out of it.

3. Your background is real estate, finance, deal making. It's obvious you've always had a passion for business. What made you decide to strike out on your own and be entrepreneurial?

I'm way too rebellious to hold a job. It wasn't a choice. It wasn't an option because I don't think anyone would hire me. While I was in school, I was already my own boss within real estate. I was working for a management consulting firm overseeing their asset management business on my own stake and created my own business product for them. I've always been independent and marched to the beat of my own drum. I naturally and have been conditioned to push my own limits and boundaries and those of others so much that I wouldn't fit in your traditional corporate environment. I'm Founder & Chairman of AGI Avant which is a real estate development company in partnership with Calpers. I founded Prometheus Partners as an Advisory Firm and I still am a stakeholder in the company. However, my focus these days is with Blinq where I'm both Founder & CEO, because it's frankly impossible and would be spreading myself too thin to be the CEO of 3 Companies at once as the Company reaches the next stage of rapid growth and tackles critical scaling up milestones. In essence, since we have both Blinq US and Blinq China entities, it often does feel like I'm running 2 companies. I'm also the mother of an 8-month old baby girl which in and of itself is a full time job. Soul, my daughter, has revealed bits of her to a little bit of a business protege, as well as a natural grace for coming out parties including for the requisite seasonal, social and fashion debuts. As she's done a bit of business travel with me, she's basically embarked an informal internship program for entrepreneurs, even before enrolling in formal academic schooling.



4. Starting out, growing a company from zero, what was your biggest challenge? What is your challenge at this stage now?

Every business is about people and about quickly building a network of the right people around you comprising the right of mix of talent, mindset and fit. I like to quote one of my favorite books "Good to Great" when I say that I feel like I'm a bus driver transporting this bus driving people around towards my destination. It continues to make stops, I've picked up people and dropped off people. Probably 3 rounds of people. Anyway it's an ongoing process. Anyone who runs a business would know that talent and the right people make the biggest difference in terms of execution. The most brilliant idea is just an idea. Brilliant execution makes brilliant businesses.



5. Where do you see Blinq in another 3-5 years?

We want to be the benchmark of O2O ushering a new era in for business and commerce. We are pioneering cross bidding business, communication, and accessibility for consumers and brands in some of the biggest markets and we are making vast inroads in terms of multimedia, payments, cross border eCommerce, m-commerce and the convergence of the virtual and physical spheres. The future of all brands is an international and we are spearheading the convergence of cross border communication, commerce, and content to help them embrace the challenges of being everywhere for everyone; at the same time, we are enabling and empowering our community of users to take their lives back and to ultimately live better as we optimise a flow of curated services, goods, and content to them that save them time.

6. What's a typical day for you like? How do you manage your time amongst a few hundred employees?

Too much to condense into one sentence. In no particular order, here are the day to day activities I'm engaged in simultaneously: Wechat, email, whatsapp, Facebook, LinkedIn, Skype, meetings, and feeding my baby girl who is in the process of weaning, taking her first steps, eating solid foods. Since my team at Blinq is based in the US and in China, frequent travel is a given, and I find myself invariably traversing both time zone whether I'm on a plane or at the office, especially as when one of my teams is winding down for the evening, the other team is getting ready for their day to start. As their leader, I'm never really "off the clock!". I might be physically off the grid from time to time, or recharging my batteries, but I'm always "on" in every sense of the business and charging forward. The balance comes in the form of a "snooze or off button" when to stop checking my phones, when I'm with my family so that I don't sacrifice my precious moments with them.



7. What do you enjoy doing in your down time? How do you achieve a work life balance?

I try to savor and enjoy each moment I spend working and each moment I spend living. For me, work and life ultimately meld together, because my passion for both unites these spheres. However, I do find that it's

important to get quality time in with family and friends, those I care about, and preferably while eating delectable food. Those are my necessary ingredients for achieving balance. Actually, you can break down my secret recipe to this simple formula: Love + Delicious Food = Endorphins & Happy Entrepreneur.

8. Have you encountered any challenges as a female founder and in your career such as discrimination or any setbacks that are unique to being a woman?

Challenges, always. We as women entrepreneurs want to change the world, but we don't NEED to change the world. What we need to do is do what we do well and not have to prove anything, and let our actions and results speak for themselves. Instead of focusing on the challenges female entrepreneurs and professionals face, I urge all female entrepreneurs and professionals to help our own and to be the better at what we are and what we do. Lead by example. Focus on the execution. Do what you can control and ignore naysayers and noise.

9. Is there any advice you would give to the next generation of female entrepreneurs, investors and girls entering the business world?

Pay it forward. If you are in a position to help someone, help someone. My pet peeve is time-wasters and those who conversely, don't pay it forward. You aren't doing anyone any favors, least of yourself. Maybe I'm naturally impatient, but frankly life is too short to waste, and time is too precious a resource, so make every moment count. Your network and friendships are similarly precious - upgrade the relationships worth having and develop them and don't be afraid to cut someone off who isn't reciprocating.

10. Is there anything on your wish-list? Something that should exist now to help you achieve more faster?

Cloning would be ideal and very much needed. Time travel and teleportation would be welcomed as well. I've been looking for awhile so let me know if you find any options.

Alexis, thank you so much for your valuable time. I look forward to our companies' continued cooperation and value your friendship and mentorship to me, and have taken every word and interaction with you to heart as a learning experience.



Glam-it! Channel and Products are available in China and US (Bling App on Mobile) and here:

USA App Link: <https://www.getbling.com/>

China App Link: <http://www.bling.cn/>

China and USA Ecommerce Link: [http://www.yesstyle.com.hk/en/glam-it/list.html/bpt.299\\_bid.313943](http://www.yesstyle.com.hk/en/glam-it/list.html/bpt.299_bid.313943)

