

# The building blocks of the client experience

Hong Kong Partner Daniel Yeh explains what great client service looks like to him.



## 2025 STRATEGY

### The building blocks of the client experience

**F**or Hong Kong Partner Daniel Yeh, delivering a client experience that sets the Firm apart from our rivals is a complex and continual building process.

The inspiration for Daniel's analogy comes from a recent trip to Greece, which gave him a strong appreciation for ancient architecture and the lessons it can teach us.

He says: "It struck me that these ancient walls were built with a combination of stones of many shapes and sizes, some huge and obvious, some less conspicuous, but all working perfectly together to hold these impressive structures in place for millennia."

"I think that philosophy applies today, even in the way we support our clients because a great client experience comes from the sum of all its parts, woven carefully together."

Daniel uses our relationship with private equity fund Hillhouse Capital as a good example.

He explains: "The distinctive partnership we've grown with them over the years is built on our ability to execute venture capital investments to multi-billion-dollar auction bids, all across multiple jurisdictions and coupled with our knowledge of Asia investor expectations and concerns."

For example, when Hillhouse's portfolio companies (some of which are inexperienced with European buyouts and other cross-border transactions) needed big-deal-quality service on smaller bolt-on acquisitions or joint ventures, Hong Kong partners Will Fong and Paul Tang and London partners Marc Israel and Mike Weir, together with others, raised their hands, and invested their time on multiple deals to 'lift boulders' for deal sizes that on their own wouldn't have warranted such efforts.

Daniel says: "The components of the distinctive client experience we've created for Hillhouse are comprehensive, diverse and fortified through individual and collective contributions that we put into the relationship every day."

Hillhouse was founded in 2005 and is reported to have amassed US\$200 billion in assets under management across the world. Its ambitions are global, spanning a variety of asset classes and investment strategies.

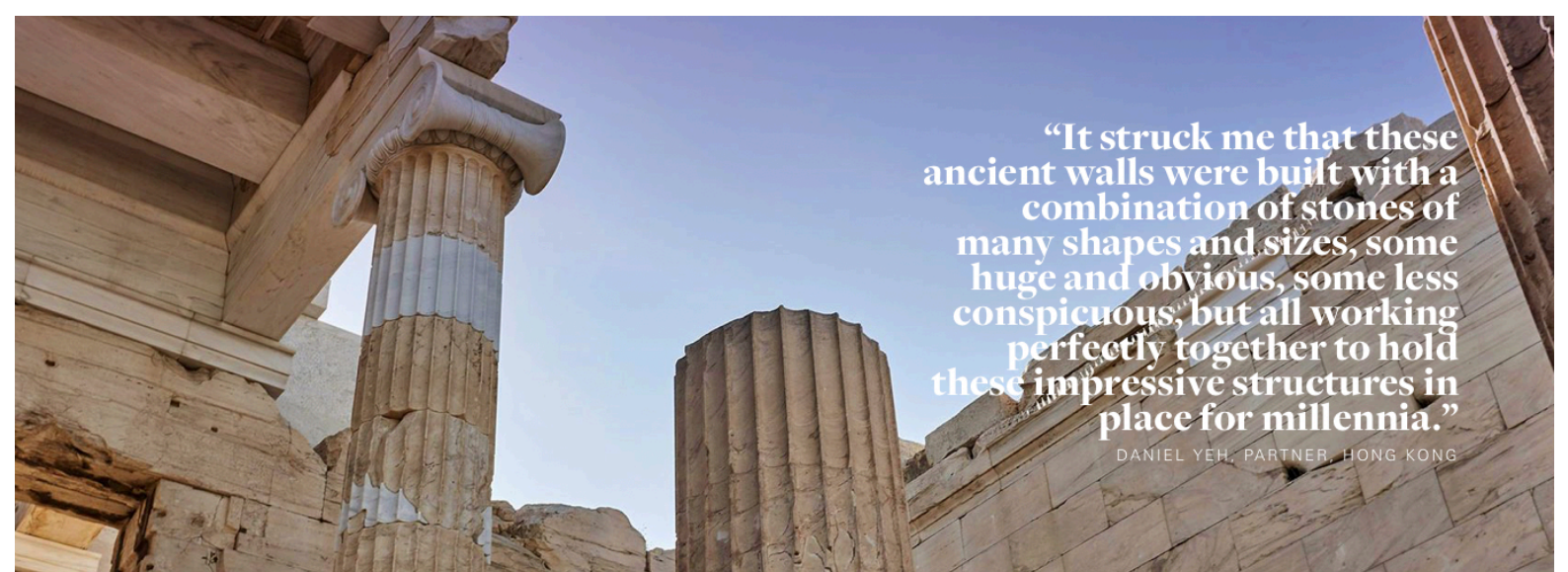
The Firm began building momentum with the client at a time when the client's footprint was increasingly global and, since then, the relationship has flourished.

"One early project in Asia involved a buyout in the United States," says Daniel. "They wanted same-time-zone execution capabilities with their deal team in China, which was an easy fit for White & Case."

"Since then, the relationship has expanded to involve dozens of partners across offices in Asia, EMEA and the United States in a broad range of practices."







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DANIEL YEH, PARTNER, HONG KONG

Daniel believes the secret of this growth has been a unified and selfless approach across practices and regions. He says: “I think what sets us apart is our ability to achieve uniformity in quality across a diverse range of practices and jurisdictions. Like building a wall that spans miles stone by stone, this isn’t an easy feat and collaboration is essential.

“Regardless of who is working with the client, it’s not about who might get credit, whose deal it is, or whose team members are staffed on the matter. What we care about is ensuring we bring the right expertise and are committed to the same excellence to each task at hand.

“Our priority is offering first-in-class client service across all relevant time zones – anything we can do to give the client an advantage in a highly competitive market with intense time pressure.”

This has helped the Firm rank among Hillhouse’s top legal service providers in 2021.

Daniel says: “In the past year, 70 partners have billed time on one or more Hillhouse matters, showing the diverse work we do and the truly global nature of our partnership with them.

“We’ve built an impressive foundation and we’re optimistic that we’ll continue to develop our relationship as Hillhouse continues to invest around the globe.”

A recent situation in Germany showcases one of the ways we’ve gone above and beyond for the client.

Daniel explains: “Hillhouse has been actively pursuing several opportunities in Germany. On a recent deal, the team was so keen to engage Partner Stefan Koch in Frankfurt for the transaction that they reached out before a sale process had even commenced. We were unfortunately (for Hillhouse) already mandated by the sell side.”

“But, in a stroke of distinctive client experience genius, Stefan offered Hillhouse the opportunity to preview the asset with our client. This offer, which was enthusiastically accepted, prepared Hillhouse for the imminent competitive process and also helped our client, the seller, because Stefan was able to use the opportunity to give Hillhouse context and comfort on diligence issues that may otherwise be overblown.”

Being able to tailor the Firm’s combined expertise for specific situations also helps, as Daniel explains. “On one deal, the client was considering Chinese and international banks for financing, so they appreciated the way we were able to quickly form a team comprised of Partner David Li in Beijing and Partner Dan Abercromby in Hong Kong, together offering both local and international expertise as well as years of experience working with the debt finance team at Hillhouse.

“Their active relationships with a diverse range of potential lenders also made them a perfect fit for the client’s needs.

“This is a great example of the Firm’s ability to find the right team for cross-border situations, which is a sweet spot for White & Case.”

Because of their increasing focus on Europe and their participation in several highly competitive auctions in various European countries, Hillhouse has also benefited from the Firm’s presence in countries including Finland, France, Germany, Sweden and the UK, as well as our local counsel relationships in the Netherlands.

Daniel says: “At the client’s request, our EMEA offices mustered resources and coordinated across these jurisdictions to survey key auction deal terms and provide insight into what sellers care about and how Hillhouse could differentiate itself from other similarly deep-pocketed, and aggressive private equity sponsors. Brussels Partner and Global Co-Head of Private Equity Thierry Bosly and his team have also offered to speak to them on this survey and broader trends. Look out for a thought leadership piece on this subject.”

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Daniel describes another example of the Firm's 'extra mile' approach on a multi-jurisdiction transaction in the consumer health space where, while the target's assets are mainly concentrated in a few jurisdictions in Asia, the business has various connections in Europe.

He says: “On this transaction, deal dynamics required that we steer clear of as many regulatory filings as possible. Bolstered by the persistence of Local Partner TY Seow in Asia, our diligent and zealous regulatory team in Europe, including Partner Orion Berg in Paris and Local Partner Jakub Gubanski in Warsaw, went to a pharmacy in Warsaw, bought a box of the target-branded healthcare product and analyzed the precise manufacturing information on the box. This was then shared with the client and other parties through high-definition image files, convincing ourselves, the client and other parties that no regulatory filing was needed in Poland.”

Daniel believes this ability to think on our feet and provide a rapid, unified service across jurisdictions is another key to differentiating ourselves.

He says: “The excellence of our international coverage and the breadth and depth of our expertise create a compelling opportunity to set ourselves apart from many of the best firms in our markets, but the key is that we strive to deliver our excellence and expertise in a seamless and consistent way.

“As with those Cyclopean walls in ancient Greece, the little things also are critical to hold boulders together. So, when we heard that a Hillhouse team, including their General Counsel Adam Hornung and Senior Counsel Rachel Chen, were visiting New York, our team across offices and practices went out of their way to meet with the client and get to know them.

“Hong Kong Partner Steve Sha flew in from California, Washington, D.C. Partner Farhad Jalinous arrived by train, and together with Chair Hugh Verrier, Global Head of M&A John Reiss and others, they had a vibrant and engaging discussion with the Hillhouse team.

“New York Partner Joel Rubinstein and a few other partners who happened to be in the office added to the greetings. Later in the day, Head of Americas M&A Chang-Do Gong, and New York Partners Eliza McDougall, James Hu and Mike Deyong, as well as Steve Sha, hosted the Hillhouse team at an intimate dinner to conclude the evening.

“While that may seem like a small thing, putting time and effort into the relationship, particularly after a period where travelling and meeting face to face has been rare, is invaluable.”

Daniel believes sharing ideas and best practice is vital as the Firm continues its 2025 Strategy to set itself apart through a differentiated client experience.

He says: “According to the client, last year we tied another first-tier firm to round out their top five legal service providers and our realization was the highest among these firms (which means they asked us for the least write-offs).

“With contributions from many of our industry groups and practices across the globe, we’ve built an impressive foundation with Hillhouse.

“They’ve just raised another US\$20 billion and we are optimistic that we have an unmatched and compelling proposition to keep building with them around the globe, stone by stone and mile by mile.”

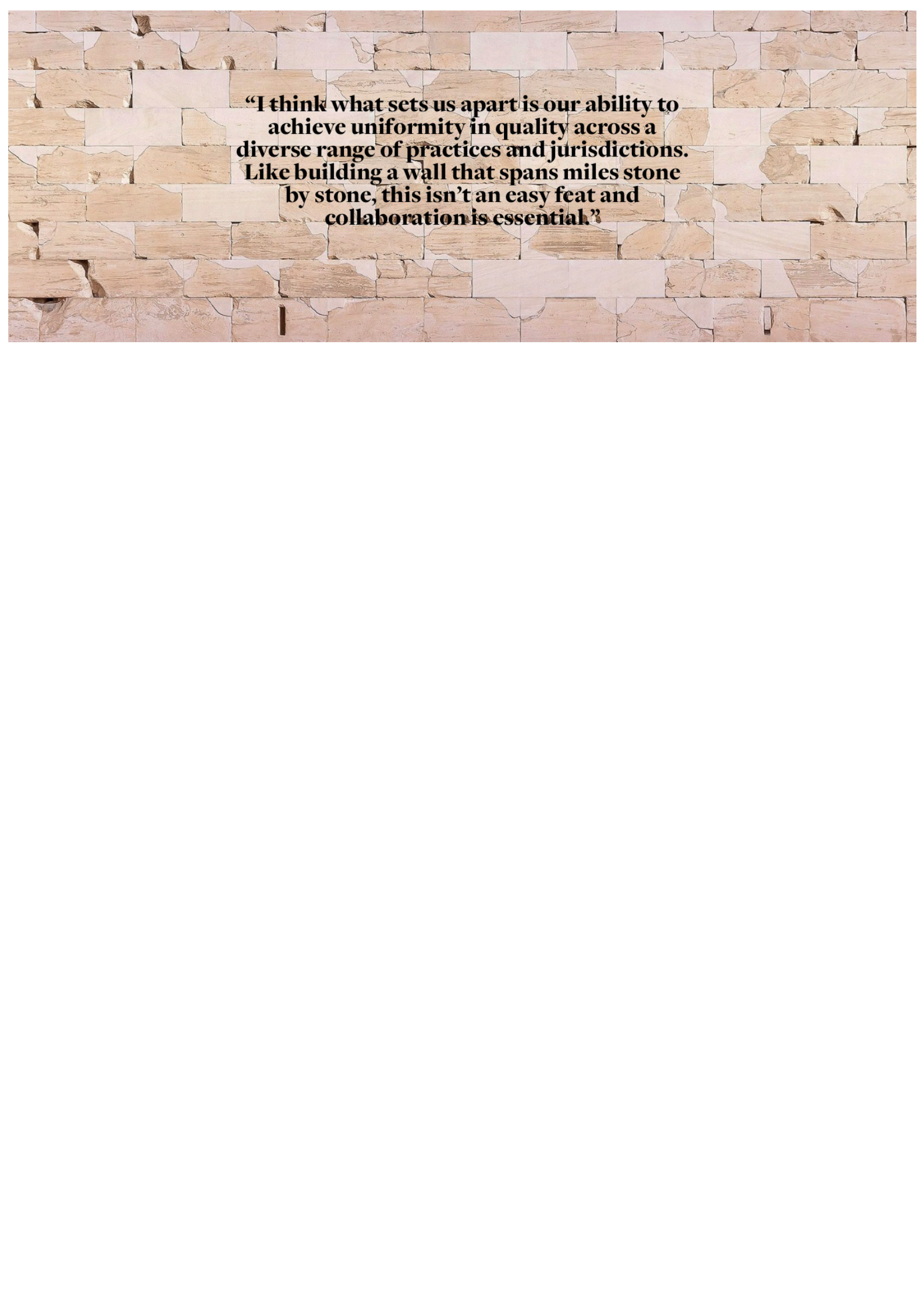
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The background of the image is a wall constructed from numerous irregular, light-colored stone blocks. The stones vary in size and shape, creating a textured, mosaic-like appearance. The colors range from pale cream to light tan. The wall is composed of several horizontal courses of stones.

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