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IN FOCUS

ENTREPRENEURSHIP + INNOVATION

From Silicon Valley to Truffle Farming

A fervent curiosity pushed Robert Chang to work and learn German as part of the Robert Bosch Foundation Fellowship Program in 2002-2003. That decision led the Stanford grad with postgraduate degrees in electrical engineering toward a unique career path that led him to start the American Truffle Company in 2007.

Truffles, you ask? He first tasted the delicacy at an Italian bistro in Munich during his fellowship year. His company, which partners with people willing to invest in and grow truffle orchards in North America, has been a resounding success.

"Starting my business had everything to do with international experience," said Chang. "I would not have gotten into the truffle business without being a Bosch fellow spending time in Germany."

▼ **Robert Chang**
Bosch alumnus and founder of American Truffle Company ►



I"International experience is valuable in entrepreneurship in two significant ways. First, entrepreneurship is ultimately about making a business out of the new ways of doing things. International experience exposes one to new perspectives, new ideas and new opportunities otherwise largely beyond reach. My Bosch experience directly resulted in my seeing an opportunity and bringing new scientific ways of growing truffles to North America, which had never been done before here. Second, international experience sensitizes one to building a global business from the ground up, avoiding incurring significant costs later in localization and internationalization. As a result, I have built my business with global branding and infrastructure from the outset, ready for a global market."

ABOUT THE ROBERT BOSCH FOUNDATION

Since 1984, the Robert Bosch Foundation has enabled young American professionals to gain an in-depth understanding of the political, economic, social and cultural environment in Germany and Europe through an intensive year-long fellowship program – from high level internships in government and the private sector to attendance at numerous seminars throughout Europe.