



## Let there be light:the NVC story

**By Ashis Chakrabarti, Mweey Wang**

NVC Lighting Technology Corporation, a professional lighting company that handled research, manufacturing and sales of lighting products, plunged into darkness in 2005. The bitter dispute between Wu Changjiang and used up its working capital and the company's survival was at stake.

What happened next was the story of one woman, the courage of her ideas, her professionalism and her belief in her ability to change things.

Monita grew up in Hong Kong and studied business at City University in New York. When she graduated in 1983, she joined the taxation division of the Arthur Andersen accounting firm and became its first senior female employee with a bilingual and bicultural background.

Her skills and experience brought her to the attention of senior management at Arthur Andersen and she took charge of its Greater China business. In 1987, she worked with Brilliance Auto

**Despite all of its problems Monita believed there was an opportunity to turn NVC into the leading player in its industry-one worthy of investment.**

to raise capital through an initial public offering on the New York Stock Exchange, the first by a mainland Chinese company.

During the next decade, Monita became one of the few "trusted" advisors to Taiwan and Mainland US institutions in dealing with sensitive US issues. It was a unique role as sides tried to establish a business foothold in the US. She also started to advise US institutions on China investments.

In the following years, venture capital began to flood into the Chinese market and an energetic Monita enjoyed working in this new and dynamic environment. She became the CFO of 8848.net, the largest e-commerce company, and raised 342 million yuan worth of venture capital over six

months. She brought the company to the brink of a NASDAQ public offering, but it was canceled due to weakening market conditions: this in spite of having a green flag from the regulatory commission.

Then came her involvement with



NVC.

With the lighting company struggling with a lack of capital and shareholder problems, Monita entered the scene, almost by accident.

Wu Changjiang was at a loss as to how to ensure the company's survival. One of his friends, a journalist named Yao Xiaohong, approached Monita to find out if she could help Wu out of the mess.

As founder of Ascend Capital

Partners, Monita had helped others in various ways. But she did not know Wu. However, once she got to know Wu and his company, she wasted no time in making her decision.

NVC had a huge capital deficit and lots of problems; but despite all of its problem, Monita believed there was an opportunity to turn NVC into the leading player in its industry-one worthy of investment. In February 2006, she and her friends lent NVC 20 million yuan and started to get involved in its revival. The loan carried a high risk as NVC could have gone bankrupt if Monita failed to turn it around.

After bankrolling NVC, Monita and her Ascend team helped Wu and his company step by step: they took part in management, operations consulting. The Ascend team invested another 72 million yuan in June bumping out the last two shareholders.

In August 2006, NVC obtained its first outside investment when SAIF Partners invested 150 million yuan.

Monita and her team found many problems working in NVC, but they worked to bring in talented people - including the CFO of a well-known Hong Kong listed company, former senior management from Philips and lighting experts - to turn it around. They also completed four acquisitions for light source, ballast and lighting fixtures.

Today, NVC generates 10-15 percent of its sales in European and American markets. While less than 10 years old, it has become China's top lighting manufacturer, surpassing state-owned peers like Yankon and Foshan Lighting. NVC's net profits climbed from 48 million yuan when Monita got involved to 308 million this year.

Its stunning turnaround attracted a 253-million-yuan investment from Goldman Sachs, a leading investment firm, on September 25, 2008. SAIF partners increased their existing investment by 68 million yuan.

The company's success has a message for other enterprise mired in the current gloom: Good choices, good decisions and a good attitude can make all the difference between darkness and light in both life and business.