



## The Parallel Lives Of Our IPs #9

Pet food and sailing yacht leasing in Singapore!

Matthias Koch has recently joined a-connect Asia's pool of Independent Professionals. He has a strong background in retail, e-commerce and FMCG. In this article, we find out a little more about Matthias and how he's finding life as an IP in Singapore.

### 1. Matthias, we're glad to have you as part of our IP pool. What brought you to Singapore?

I have been an Asia enthusiast for a long time. My interest was sparked during six months in India, where I was doing research on success factors of German companies in India for my PhD thesis. Afterwards, I took every chance to gain more experience in Asia. For example, I lived in Shanghai for one year during a consulting assignment in Shanghai and Hong Kong. However, the center of life for me, my wife Rebecca and my three-year-old son Leopold had always been Germany.

Then, one day, my wife brought home an offer from her American employer to take over a position in Singapore. Despite the fact that I would have to give up my job in Düsseldorf – where, at the time, I was heading the corporate development of Europe's leading pet supplies retailer (Fressnapf/Maxi Zoo) – I knew it was a dream come true. So, six months later, our whole life was packed into a 40-foot container and shipped to Singapore. And we have really settled down – our second son, Julius, was born at the end of May this year, and he has Singapore as the place of birth on his passport.

Through my former contacts at a-connect Germany, I got in touch with Vincent Casanova, Head of Asia at a-connect, when I arrived in Singapore. Right now, we are working together on a project in the real estate industry. As I founded a PropTech company in Germany five years ago, it is a perfect match.

I love the current lifestyle of being an a-connect IP. I have the flexibility to combine my intense a-connect project schedule with family time and my own projects.

### 2. Congratulations on the birth of your second son. When you are not working as an IP, what do you do?

Right now, I do a lot of babysitting... Apart from that, I'm using the time between projects to start my own business in Asia. By leveraging my connections from my time at Fressnapf in Germany, I'm able to import premium German pet supplies. My own brand is currently in the development phase. While I was at Fressnapf, I worked closely with the successful founder and CEO, and consulted many clients in retail and FMCG for nearly six years.

But now I get a completely new perspective, mainly on the operational challenges, such as organizing containers, selecting (and paying for!) the assortment, and chasing compensation for articles that were broken during transportation in the vessel. Despite these challenges, it is a great experience to actively be part of the growing Asian market.

Additionally, I love sailing. Ten years ago, I took the chance to sail across the Atlantic Ocean, crossing the equator from Spain to Brazil in four weeks. The hobby turned into a project – I now run a small leasing company, leasing sailing yachts to operators in the Netherlands and Germany. These operators maintain the boats and rent them to sailors for cruises or vacations. This gives me the opportunity to regularly spend a weekend on one of the sailing boats and cruise in the IJsselmeer...

### 3. **How is life with a young family in Singapore?**

Oh, right now it is the perfect place for us, as long as you can stand continuous temperatures of above 30°, and the humidity of a Turkish bath. Seriously, Singapore is a very convenient place for a young family, as it is safe and kid-friendly, and it is easy to get the support you need. Plus, since we send our son to a local kindergarten, he is exposed to a mélange of different cultures, and is learning English and Chinese just by playing with his friends. He absolutely loves it. And we love it too!



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