

Understanding China Culture to Build International Relationships

Written by Administrator

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Partnership among PAAN, ICIA and ICLS leads to China Basics Program offerings

An introductory Chinese culture training class -- Exploring Chinese Social Customs -- was offered to Pioneer employees on May 29 to help employees better appreciate the culture of this influential country. As one participant commented, "I really enjoyed this program and learned a lot about the culture of people that I work with. This was one of the best and most useful training programs I have been to -- it will help me with many interactions with various Chinese cultures."

The two-hour class is one segment of a larger China Basics program. A four hour class -- Experiencing China -- goes into greater depth and includes an opportunity to practice dining etiquette. A third segment -- Chinese Culture and Language -- is planned for the beginning of 2009. This will be a series of one-hour classes over a 12-week period and will feature personal mentors to help build student's skills outside of the classroom. All sessions will be recorded and plans are to build online learning courses for employees at remote locations. The Iowa Chinese Language School (ICLS) will also leverage the training curricula and provide similar training to other local business and residents.

China Basics Program Objectives

The program objectives are to:

- Help build/strengthen business relationships with Pioneer's international partners
- Improve the cultural acumen of our employee population
- Enrich employee understanding and appreciation of diversity

Background

Several Central Iowa groups were critical to the development of the series. The idea was first proposed by members of Iowa Chinese in Agriculture and the Iowa Chinese Language School in November 2007. Pioneer Asian American Network sponsored and funded the program, and the Chinese Association of Iowa helped with culture training materials. Several Pioneer

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employees formed a program team in early 2008 to develop the initial training curricula and have also led classes.

Team Support

Team members: Lang Deng, Jennifer Gribble, Jean Liu, Bill Lloyd, Hua Mo, Deping Xu, John Zheng, Jijun Zou, and Lingyu Zhang. Curt Clausen, who was International Operations Director when the program was proposed, served as the initial business sponsor. Kristie Bell presented China Business Overview for the Exploring China Culture class. In addition, the following individuals helped with the proposal review and initial feedback: Arun Baral, Hans Bhardwaj, Feng Han, Jiming Li, David Liu, Guihua Lu, Jennie Shen, Jian Zhang, and Zuo-Yu Zhao.

More Information

For more information about the program, contact [Lingyu Zhang](#) ; or [Jennifer Gribble](#) .