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Australia Week in China – Mandarin Interpreters a Central Plank

Anyone attending or viewing video or pictures from this major Australian influx to China in April 2014 will be struck by the presence of Mandarin Interpreters. There is hardly an image without interpreter impact – whether simultaneous listeners seen with headphones – or an interpreter on the stage beside the Minister – luckily interpreters were all over the event! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rc43NeXMDI8 and http://www.chincommunications.com.au/gallery/2014_Aus_Week_China/122.php

From Bo’ao to Beijing – the engagement was underpinned by Mandarin-English interpreters. During this visit, I was at the side of Trade and Investment Minister Robb, but was also called on to interpret PM Abbott’s important lunchtime address to 1800 guests in Shanghai – more about that later.

I had the chance to observe other ‘interpreters’ in action. Where they do a good job it appears seamless; however I must comment on some appalling work. Jeremy Oliver is very popular in China. He is an engaging raconteur and does an amazing job promoting Aussie wine. However, up on the stage, his ‘interpreter’ was reading from a different page – completely and without a note book. For those speaking two languages it was obvious; for the Chinese listeners present – did they get full value from Jeremy?

ANZ’s new branch opening in Shanghai’s new Free Trade Zone was a text book case of where a good interpreter should have been used. Instead what the large audience got were mispronunciations of ANZ, and the CEO’s name was absolutely lost – unforgiveable!

So if you are a business person visiting China or one of the 800 delegates on the next trip, how do you make sure you get a good interpreter?

• Get in early – good interpreters are busy and booked well ahead.
• Brief your interpreter – provide them with background information on your business, your aims and any specialised lingo.
• Be proactive at networking events and use your interpreter to help you work the room.
• If you are having important meetings, take your own interpreter. Whatever you do, don’t rely on your counterpart’s interpreter – they are working for the other side!
• Don’t rely on local hires either, and here’s why: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lPTqGf-NnXs#t=59

The important messages you want to get across might be lost – the lack of Aussie-fication is noticeable in interpreters without solid Australian experience. The other thing to bear in mind is interpreters are not walking dictionaries; preparation and briefing are important. Like anyone not privy to your aims and without knowledge of your offering and its specific language, they will struggle. Brief them and provide them your story well in advance.

For a speech or major event – all the more vital. I was asked only one hour before PM Abbott delivered his keynote address in Shanghai – not much notice, but the other interpreter had ‘politely declined’. I was able to use that time to carefully read and deal with the sensitive wording around the Malaysia Airlines plane. Not ideal preparation in the middle of a lunch, but luckily the speech came across well.

Australia Week In China marks an important step in the relationship with China and a huge effort by Austrade and DFAT staff, in particular. So many attendees – congratulations! The importance of good interpreting was recognised and a major contribution to success.

Interpreter mispronouncing her employer’s company name and forgetting the boss is not a recipe for a successful event.

The New Gold Rush

China’s Demand For Dairy Products is Predicted to Soar

Cairns Number One Destination

Cairns is Poised to Become Australia’s Number One Destination for Chinese Tourists

Trade & Investment Minister Andrew Robb meeting Chengdu Mayor GE Honglin - what a lovely tie!

A marvellous launch for ANZ in Shanghai’s new Free Trade zone marred by poor interpreting.

Australia is Open for Business – the hardworking Austrade and DFAT team in Shanghai.

Traditional red lanterns welcoming Chinese New Year, Jade Island, Beihai Park, Beijing.
A curious client recently raised an interesting query. They asked us if they should make an effort on Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and push their ads out using the Chinese search engine Baidu to reach the local Chinese community in Australia.

To Australians, the behaviour of Chinese consumers inside and outside China may just be passed off as nuance. In fact, while mainland Chinese can only rely on Baidu to get their search results (Google is banned in the country), Chinese residents in Australia prefer Google to Baidu for most of their research needs.

After a meeting with the client to understand their objectives, our intercultural communication specialists advised them to use different platforms like WeChat while maintaining Google SEO to maximize their market reach to the Chinese community in Australia.

This is an example of intercultural communication – communication between different cultures. In this case, it is the subtle difference in communication of mainland Chinese and Australian Chinese. It is not only the language, but also the medium and the social norms.

Though language is definitely an important part of communication, it is not the sole tool to convey the right meaning of your messages to your audience in this increasingly globalised world. That is especially true of business communication. If the message is interpreted the wrong way or worse – appears to be offensive – it will backfire quickly and even become a disaster for the company. The market is littered with headlines of big brands that got it wrong and suffered repercussions.

Whether you are looking to break into a foreign market or engage with local communities from different cultural backgrounds, it is essential to have someone with intercultural competence to advise on your communication strategy. Intercultural communication skills can’t simply be picked up by reading books or watching TV. It takes years of real-life experience, exposure and practice.

Intercultural communication is the strength and the central tenet of value-added services at Chin Communications. With Australia’s largest in-house team of translators and interpreters, as well as specialists from diverse backgrounds who have lived for substantial periods of time in China, Hong Kong and Singapore, our expertise in different fields and experience from different parts of the Chinese diaspora delivers significant value to our clients.

Read the full article here
The Hidden Cost of Chinese Brands and their Registration (or not)

佳 可 宝 – three Chinese characters to represent a well-known Australian brand appeared on the product beverage label destined for China. During our back-translation process, we pointed this out to the client who had no idea.

It happens all the time, I told her, Chinese distributors do the labelling and the exporter and brand owner has no idea. Is it a good name? What does it mean? Who owns the name? These are all critical questions. What if your brand became popular in China – that would be brilliant, wouldn’t it. Isn’t that what we are all striving for! Penfolds found out the hard way when an enterprising Chinese person registered the now ubiquitous “bēn fù 奔富” or “racing to wealth”. The brand was adopted by the public and became famous; Penfolds had to get it back in a legal wrangle we assume at significant cost.

We’ve worked with other clients who have faced the same problem and it can cost millions to buy your own brand; others we know went out of business.

So, getting back to my client: I explained what the characters meant (佳: Excellent; 可: Can; 宝: Treasure – combined: an excellent choice that you can treasure). As to who owns it or whether this is another costly problem, we will have to wait and see. The client made the best call: “Put the English brand name back on and we’ll go through a proper branding process so that we have control and own the name”.

IP Australia’s website has plenty of information about “Protecting your IP in China”. China is no longer the culprit it used to be, in fact it is higher on the list for enforcement than Australia. “Protecting your IP should be a top consideration when entering any foreign market including China”, say the IP experts.

We advise clients to go through a proper process to devise a number of options for a Chinese brand name and to keep it close. Then use a trademark attorney to secure it. Consider all relevant classes, including defensive ones (eg a wine brand might consider registering in other beverage classes). This all takes time and may involve opposition from other trademark owners in China. It is important to act quickly when you are thinking about the China market, not after you’ve started operations there, or have distributors on the patch. When your drink labels are printed is definitely too late.

Read the full article here

Marketing Case Study: Business Events Geelong

Business Events Geelong is hoping to attract more Chinese business visitors to Geelong in order to showcase the great conference facilities and tourism destinations around the Bellarine Peninsula.

Geelong has a multi-award winning convention bureau, great venues and function spaces, abundant accommodation and transport options and free management services to deliver wonderful business events.

Chin was engaged to develop a Chinese brand name and logo to bring the opportunity to the Chinese audience in a clever and fun way.

The Chinese brand and logo created for Business Events Geelong.

Our client had already been “given” a couple of options for a Chinese name.

One was more like an invitation to meet up and, to us, was ordinary and rather weak in its impact.

The other had an aura of romance around it and therefore might work for a tourism offering, but wasn’t suitable for a business brand.

Chin’s marketing and branding team set to work and arrived at a bespoke brand name and logo, through our tailor-made branding process.

The look and feel of the English brand mark, colouring and playful style were replicated in our Chinese version and we commissioned one of our calligraphers to ‘brush stroke’ the final characters – jovial, fun and fresh – but also functioning within the rules of Chinese calligraphy

For more case studies, please click here

1. Characters have been changed for confidentiality reasons
Chinese New Year - Mice Play in 2020

The Rat may not be well regarded in the West, but in Chinese culture it is an honour to be born a Rat as they symbolize good luck and fortune. The Rat is the first in the twelve-year cycle. The story goes that Buddha invited all the animals to a meeting and only 12 came. Buddha asked them to swim across the Heavenly River and the order they arrived became the order of their signs in the Chinese Zodiac. You are probably wondering how a tiny rat beat such animals as the horse, ox and tiger across a raging torrent! Well, the Rat is always one to find a way around a tricky situation; he climbed onto the back of the ox and got ahead in the Rat Race coming first and not wanting to miss out on anything (FOMO). Buddha then assigned the characteristics to each animal and its year.

As the Year of the Pig has ended in such dire circumstances with the fire catastrophe in Australia dominating world news, we are looking forward to the Rat with a get things done attitude. However, as we wrote twelve years ago in this newsletter, the predominant issue affecting all of us is climate change. Twelve years ago, Rat Al Gore was in the headlines with his Inconvenient Truth movie and road show. The Rat can foretell danger and will abandon the ship. Harnessing the leadership capabilities of the Rat, together we need to get off the rodent wheel and make changes before the ship sinks (Titanic sank in a Rat year).

This is the year of the Metal Rat and such years can be more combative, so we may see protests and unrest – the Vietnam War and Boxer Rebellion started in Rat Years.

Metal symbolises structure so we ought to think about creating a framework for the twelve-year cycle ahead.

The Rat will start to play on 25 January 2020 and will be quiet again when the Ox charges on 12 February 2021

RAT PACK

As is evident in the enterprising way the cunning Rat got across the river, he is a great opportunist who is always on the lookout for more wealth and generally has plenty of financial acumen, is courageous and not one to shirk responsibility. In fact Rat is one of the hardest working and most ambitious creatures with a streak of the perfectionist and consequently can be intolerant of others.

There is an old Chinese saying: those who hoard grain have much to lose (all who covet must lose - 贪多必失). If things get tight, Rat will always find a way out. The Rat likes to spend money on himself and his family and close friends and be surrounded by nice things and fashionable clothing. Status, money, title and recognition are all important to Rat.

As the Rat is the first year in the cycle, it is a good year for new beginnings and to leave past disappointments behind. A good year to get married, launch a new product or make a fresh start – to make the most of every opening but to be quick and clever about it.

Change in the world is ripe in this first year and technology will likely dominate – perhaps not in the way we might think though – there could be some backlash as more data leaks and privacy issues emerge;

China has introduced a new Encryption Law from 1 January 2020 which means China will have control of all passwords and this may impact anyone with dealings in China, even from overseas. With a US election, there is going to be increased scrutiny of social media and fake news.

As the GFC started in a Rat Year, we
need to take care and beware of instability in financial markets.

China-Australia diplomacy ought to and needs to take a positive turn – it was in a Rat Year that Australia and China established Diplomatic Relations.

RATTING ON
Charismatic and charming with a good sense of humour, Rat makes friends easily and likes a good party. Rats have a keen sense of smell and know how to survive.

They are also very private and do not like people prying or ratting on them. Rat can get stuck into a few too many projects and if they only focused on one thing their success rate would soar. As born leaders able to adapt to any environment, we’d do well to follow them out of the maze.

Thrifty is an apt description of Rat and they have a gift with money making them good financial advisers and savers and, if one wanted to be unkind, mean. As winners they can use their manipulative skills and diplomatic tongues to good effect on the international stage too.

Rats are prone to gossip and criticism and also trying to get a bargain; their tendency to hoard can drive people up the wall!

OF MICE AND MEN
A better boss than employee, rats are creative in literature, music or art, they also make good journalists and broadcasters, financial advisers, entrepreneurs, politicians, stand-up comedians, historians, racing car drivers, detectives, accountants, engineers, pathologists and spies!

RATATOUILLE

— 袋鼠 Ñáishù, literally “pocket rat” or kangaroo
— 胆小如鼠 dǎn xiǎo rú shǔ, a gall bladder as small as a rat / as timid as a mouse
— 猫鼠同眠 māo shǔ tóng mián, cats and rats sleeping together / corruption so bad that criminals and police are in collusion
— 猫目寸光 māo mù cùn guāng, a rat’s eyesight is one inch of light / cannot see beyond one’s nose
— 猫哭老鼠 māo kū lǎoshǔ, the cat weeping over the dead mouse / shedding crocodile tears

RAT’S TAIL

Legend has it that in the reign of Qianlong, in 1774 to be precise, Mr Cheng, a county magistrate (mayor), lived in Huai’an in present-day Jiangsu Province. He was a kind-hearted man (unlike many in his profession) who forbade anyone in his office from killing creatures – even rats. He even had one room in his house given over to little creatures where he would leave grain every night. Hundreds of rats came to eat leaving Mr Cheng and other residents in peace.

One night when Mr Cheng was asleep downstairs he felt something painful biting his feet. What a shock to see his entire quilt covered in rats chewing on him. He exploded in anger and shouted at them to leave, even taking a stick to them. The rats fled upstairs and Mr Cheng went back to bed. Not for long, the rats came back and continued to plague him. With a stick in one hand and candle in the other, he chased them up the stairs. No sooner had he reached the second floor than a tide of water washed away his bedroom in a flash flood. With a sixth sense, none of them became drowned rats. This story about rats returning a kindness has been passed down through the ages.
SMELLING RATS

Cambodia has the highest ratio of landmine amputees per capita in the world, and has started using ‘hero rats’ to sniff out unexploded landmines.

The intelligent animals, which possess some of the most sensitive noses in the animal kingdom, have proven to be a faster and safer means of locating the hidden weapons. At a weight of one kilogram rats are too light to detonate the mines and they are more efficient than metal detectors. They sniff out TNT.

Theap Bunthourn, operations coordinator for the project said, “If you take 200 square metres of land, the rats can clear it in 20 to 25 minutes whereas if we used the manual method it would take two or three days.”

Cambodia is one of the most heavily mined countries in the world after decades of civil war. Six million mines are believed to still be in the ground, with over 67,000 people being killed or injured since 1979.

The animals are put to work six days a week in three hour shifts, darting between two handlers standing five metres apart while attached to a harness.

In their downtime, the rats are kept in individual cages and receive regular exercise, and, we hope, some treats for their Year!

Source: (independent.co.uk/)
Read the full article here
Why You May Need to Reconsider Your China Marketing Strategy

In 2014, Uber entered China with an ambition to dominate the ridesharing market in the country, just as it did in the US. But instead, a cash-burning fight with the local rival DiDi ended bitterly for the company. Uber bowed out of the Chinese market in 2016, killing off its Chinese dream in only two years.

Two years later, the reverse happened in Australia. DiDi, now the world’s largest ridesharing company, launched its service here in June 2018, taking on the Australian market that Uber has ruled since 2012.

Uber’s China tale serves as a reminder to Australian businesses that are trying to break into or expand their existing operation in China: even if you have a great product, a tested marketing model, and a proven track record in Australia, there is no guarantee you will succeed in the Chinese market.

A common mistake international brands make is underestimating the complexity of the Chinese market, which is different in nearly every way, and thus lacking a suitable marketing strategy. Chinese marketers have come up with unique approaches tailored to Chinese consumers. They are vastly different from traditional Western marketing methods as we know, and yet extremely effective. And in some ways, they are way ahead of us.

To successfully market products or services to the Chinese market, it is crucial to understand the difference in Chinese consumer behaviour and purchasing habits, the Chinese marketing mindset as well as viable methods and channels.

Venturing to China is an exciting journey, but it is also a daunting task. If you ask any Australian business that has been successful there, you are going to hear the same answer: it is not easy.

If planned right, China can become a lucrative market. But without a well thought through strategy, your budgets can blow out rapidly even before you can reap any returns.

To make sure you don’t repeat the mistakes that many international businesses have made, getting to understand how the Chinese market works before going in is key. You can get help right here in Australia through experienced marketing and language experts with connections in China. Government support is also likely available with subsidies, expos, or missions for you to learn about the market first-hand. And don’t forget there is already a savvy Chinese audience in Australia who can help spread your word.

Want to find out more? Our Chinese marketing experts are just a phone call away.

Read the full article here
May 2014

Chin Communications

– have played a major role in boosting Southern, China Eastern and Cathay Pacific direct flights to Cairns – including China visitors – and recorded rapid growth in the market share of inbound Chinese Far North Queensland already have 31% arrivals.

more adventurous Chinese travellers are travelling – here at Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park, Cairns.

Herald 28 January 2014)

years. Nearly 100 million Chinese tourists estimated bonus of $85 million from this all around the world and brought an

time the Australian Tourism Exchange is aimed at meeting the huge Chinese

Aquis casino and tourism resort, which

reportedly the largest investment in Australian tourism infrastructure: a Hong

difference to pulling power – over 60% of

Queensland. In late 2013 Rob Giason

the bold claim made recently by the

Park, Cairns.

time the Australian Tourism Exchange

Amaroo casino and tourism resort, which

standards and gaming products specifically

strategy is to attract more Chinese tourists, reported saying the casino's deliberate

fearful that the tourists will not need to

Asian gamblers. It will be a self-contained

rapiddly growing numbers of Chinese and

international – competition to attract the

is linked to growing regional – and

Australian tourism infrastructure: a Hong

We've assisted a number of operators with

cater to the needs of Chinese visitors.

since October 2012 the increase in

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Australia from China – an increase of 14.5%;

with 860,000 visitors; in total expenditure;

• 20% of all first time holiday visitors

• In 2014 so far an increase of 27%

• They generated $4.8 billion

picturing the China market!