



2008-2009 Awards for Program Excellence

SUBMISSION FORM

Program Title Certificate in Canadian Business Management Essentials			
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Please consider my submission in the following category:

- Local/Regional**
 National
 International

SUBMISSION COMPONENTS

Please include the following in your submission:

1. This submission form
2. An abstract (not exceeding 200 words)
3. The program description, **not exceeding 6 pages** (Be selective; please do not include a detailed curriculum or all the course materials.)

METHODS OF SUBMISSION

Electronically – E-mail the submission form, abstract and program description (one document) to kradway@ryerson.ca Be sure to include one weblink in your submission if you would like us to consider a piece of promotional material.

Fax – Fax the submission form abstract and program description (one document) to Ken Radway 416-979-5277.

Mail – Send **six copies** of the submission form, abstract, program description and one brochure or flyer to:

Ken Radway, Program Director
 Ryerson University, The G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education
 350 Victoria Street
 Toronto, ON, M5B 2K3

(check) I understand that if this submission wins an award, it will be posted on the CAUCE website

Deadline: Monday, March 3, 2009
Late Submissions will NOT be Accepted



2009 CAUCE Program Awards

Certificate in Canadian Business Management Essentials University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies

Abstract

In 2006, the University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies partnered with Sing Tao Newspapers (Canada 1988) Limited to develop the **Certificate in Canadian Business Management Essentials**. This five-course, 150-hour certificate is the only university-based business education program in Canada taught entirely in Cantonese. The courses, which are offered in condensed form, cover the concepts, skills, and strategies that are fundamental to Canadian business. The certificate has attracted adult learners whose origins are primarily in Hong Kong and Mainland China, the majority having lived in Canada fewer than 10 years.

Instructors are key leaders in the Chinese-Canadian business community. They bring both academic credentials and extensive Canadian workplace experience to the classroom. Instruction is in Cantonese, while English-language materials are used in every course. Learners may submit their assignments and write their final exams in Cantonese or English; they may also apply their credits towards advanced standing in the School's Certificate in Management Fundamentals. To date, more than 650 individuals have registered for courses, and 51 individuals have graduated.

Program Description

Value/Service

Knowledge is the key that opens many doors. Language should not be a barrier. Learning in Cantonese ensures those doors are fully open for these students.

– Andrea Chun, SCS instructor, lawyer, and news commentator with Fairchild Media

Context. According to Statistics Canada, the Chinese community in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) numbers over 500,000 members. By 2017, the GTA's Chinese population is expected to reach approximately 735,000 people, nearly 40 percent of the Canadian total. Like other groups that self-define by culture and language, Cantonese-speaking members of the GTA's Chinese community desire high-quality, in-depth education in subjects beyond English as a Second Language.

Recognizing this unmet need, the University of Toronto (U of T) School of Continuing Studies (SCS), in cooperation with Sing Tao Newspapers (Canada 1988) Limited (hereafter referred to as Sing Tao), developed and launched the Certificate in Canadian Business Management Essentials in spring 2006.

Purpose. The Certificate in Canadian Business Management Essentials meets a clear educational need among Cantonese-speaking GTA residents who do not speak English fluently: to acquire knowledge that will help them to flourish in business in Canada. The certificate is also aimed at providing a highly practical approach to employee training for the many small- and medium-sized businesses in the region's Chinese community.

Components. The program covers the skills and strategies that are fundamental to the way business is practised in Canada. It comprises five 30-hour courses in a 10-week format:

- Financial Accounting (SCS 1779)
- Business Law (SCS 1780)
- Marketing: An Introduction (SCS 1781)
- Business Strategy (SCS 1782)
- Organizational Behaviour (SCS 1783)

These courses cover the same material as the equivalent courses offered as part of SCS's English-language Certificate in Management Fundamentals. To qualify for a certificate, learners must complete the courses within three years of beginning their studies.

Stakeholders. The Certificate in Canadian Business Management Essentials was developed with four main groups in mind:

- Cantonese-speaking business professionals working in Canada who want to advance their understanding of essential Canadian business terminology, practices, and legal issues
- Foreign-trained Cantonese-speaking business professionals who intend to do business in Canada
- Cantonese-speaking university and/or college graduates – principally, but not exclusively, from Canada – who wish to add business and management components to their knowledge and skills portfolios
- Cantonese-speaking adults who want to improve their employment opportunities and/or begin new careers in Canada

The certificate has proven beneficial and accessible to all stakeholder groups. Taosheng Lu exemplifies this result for the first group. As an engineer, university lecturer, international business director, and the holder of a master's degree from China, Lu registered for the certificate because he knew that a Canadian education is necessary to succeed in business in this country. Furthermore, because he is working full time, our certificate is an accessible and effective alternative to an MBA program.

Positive Impact. The Certificate in Canadian Business Management Essentials went from concept to full market acceptance in its first semester. During the initial two semesters, the courses continued to be fully subscribed and we had to create a waiting list. To ensure quality, enrolment was capped at 50 students per course.

Since its inception, the program has achieved more than 650 registrations; among these, there has been a near even split between learners whose origins are in Hong Kong and Mainland China. To date, 51 people have graduated from the program. While completing their studies, the majority of learners are employed full time in business-related occupations, including sales, accounting, banking, other financial services, information technology, and human resources. The certificate has also attracted several independent business owners and a handful of retirees.

Winnie Luong's story illuminates the motivated population we serve: Winnie always longed to attend university, but never had an opportunity to do so while living in China. Upon immigrating to Canada, Winnie put this dream aside – until she read about our program. Curious, yet a little hesitant, Winnie signed up for one course to test the waters. Receiving instruction in Cantonese proved to be the catalyst for her success. Now a graduate of the program, Winnie reports she is more effective at work and better understands Canadian society. She also tells us that, equipped with knowledge of Canada's laws and regulations, she feels she can contribute more to her adopted country. Winnie is now considering what English-language continuing education studies she will pursue at SCS.

Course evaluations and focus groups ratify Winnie's experience by consistently revealing heightened understanding of Canadian business theory and practices among program learners. Nearly 100 percent of respondents to course evaluations report that their course(s) were "high quality" and had positively influenced their knowledge development. For example, Ching Yee Hun, a learner in the Business Strategy course, credits her studies with increasing her understanding of Canadian companies, upgrading her communication skills, and stimulating her to think more creatively. Learners also tell us that the program empowers them both to further their careers and to participate more fully in Canada's business sector and public life.

Complexity

Strategic Community Partnership. Developing the Certificate in Canadian Business Management Essentials involved entering into a mutually beneficial partnership with Sing Tao, which is part of Hong Kong-based Sing Tao Newspaper Group Limited and the publisher of *Sing Tao Daily News*, the oldest and largest Chinese daily in Canada. Sing Tao also publishes a free weekly newspaper and is responsible for 40 hours of programming each week on CHIN Radio, the GTA's leading multicultural radio broadcaster.

SCS's strategic alliance with Sing Tao has been key to the success of the certificate and the learners who are pursuing it. A number of years ago, Louis Cheng, president of Sing Tao, completed a variety of our business courses. Cheng's first-hand experience of the School's high-quality, learner-focused approach to continuing education inspired him to contact Marilyn Booth, director of the School, to discuss linking with SCS to address the compelling desire and need in the GTA's Chinese community for advanced, Canadian-focused business education. Out of these discussions it became clear that our organizations shared a philosophy of engaged public education; in particular, both SCS and Sing Tao are committed to meeting the learning aspirations of new and emerging communities.

By working closely with Cheng and his Sing Tao team, we gained insider understanding of the Chinese-Canadian community and its educational ambitions. Sing Tao identified the course topics that would be most useful for aspiring business practitioners. Sing Tao has also shouldered most of the costs and tasks associated with promoting the program, undertaking a two-pronged marketing approach – aimed at individual learners and potential sponsoring employers – that has been critical to the certificate's success.

For our part, the School developed the curricula for each course. We also take responsibility for instructor hiring (Sing Tao helps us to identify suitable candidates), learner registration, course delivery, space management, and course/instructor evaluation.

Ingenuity and Innovation

To our knowledge, the Certificate in Canadian Business Management Essentials is the only university-based continuing education business program in Canada taught entirely in Cantonese. Learners may apply their credits towards advanced standing in the School's Certificate in Management Fundamentals.

Allying with the most significant Chinese newspaper in the GTA has been vital to insuring the program's development and healthy registrations. In particular, this partnership has given us unmatched marketing reach into the region's Chinese population.

Another major innovation included recruiting instructors who combine academic credentials and practical Canadian workplace experience. These people are leading figures in the Chinese-Canadian community who embody and put into practice SCS's philosophy of learner-focused education. In the view of Peter Yung (a retired Canadian Tire executive), who teaches the introductory Marketing course, learners value their instructors' Canadian experience above all else. Our focus groups with learners also illuminate the fact that employing instructors whom learners know, respect, and trust has significantly bolstered participants' comfort with the educational process and the acquisition of new knowledge.

Innovation in Delivery

Instruction and Learning Materials. Cantonese is the language of instruction; however, English-language materials (e.g., textbooks, case studies) are used in every course. Learners may submit their assignments and write their final exams in Cantonese or English.

The combination of Cantonese-language instruction and English-language materials provides learners with the opportunity to make a bridge between their studies and the real-world Canadian business environment in which they want to succeed. In their evaluations, program participants repeatedly stress the positive impact learning in Cantonese has on making concepts "easier to understand" and "erasing barriers to raising questions." Given the importance of active discussion and inquiry in adult education, the latter comment is especially heartening.

We were initially surprised, but gratified, by the very high level of support learners express for using English-language materials. Learners tell us that this component is essential for understanding the relevance and applications of their new knowledge and skills.

Assessment. We have also endeavoured to ensure that our methods of assessing learners' progress are well suited to their needs. For example, Andrea Chun (the instructor quoted at the outset of this submission) set her Business Law final exam as a multiple-choice test entirely in English because English-language legal terms cannot be easily translated into Cantonese; meanwhile, the multiple-choice format helps learners focus on concepts and their applications without worrying about spelling difficult terms.

Location. We launched the program at U of T's St. George campus in downtown Toronto, which is situated on major public transit routes (many participants take public transit to class). In May 2007, we began offering the certificate courses at U of T's Scarborough campus (UTSC). This expansion increased the program's accessibility for learners from the GTA's eastern suburbs, in which large numbers of Chinese newcomers reside. Holding courses on campus also nurtures learners' sense of membership in the broader University community.

Support. For learners – prospective and current – who want further information about the program and about continuing education opportunities in general, Cantonese-speaking staff members from SCS’s Business and Professional Studies division are available to answer questions by phone, e-mail, and in person.

Profile of Continuing Education

The Certificate in Canadian Business Management Essentials has enabled SCS to expand awareness of the power of continuing education beyond traditional markets into one of the most dynamic, learning-hungry populations in the GTA. To this end, our strategic partnership with Sing Tao has been essential. In cooperation with our Marketing and Communications team, Sing Tao has published stories promoting both the concept of lifelong learning as well as the specific program to the Chinese community.

Louis Cheng, his colleagues at Sing Tao, and program participants also inform us that there have been ripple effects across the GTA’s Chinese community, wherein members are gaining new insight into knowledge development opportunities outside their conventional educational, professional, and cultural-linguistic spheres. In this regard, we have found that SCS is playing an important bridge-building role between the higher education sector, the Chinese community, and mainstream public life in Canada.

In discussions with Sing Tao and certificate participants, we have also found that this program has proven beneficial not just to learners but also to business owners who are now able to draw on the expertise of more knowledgeable employees. In turn, these business owners report a stronger awareness of the impact of continuing education on their commercial prosperity.

The Certificate in Canadian Business Management Essentials is a replicable model of community-based adult learning. It has reinforced the value of engaging the broader community in helping identify the learning needs within diverse communities, and it has taught us a great deal about how best to respond to the needs and aspirations of multicultural communities while maintaining the highest quality teaching, learning, evaluation, and promotional standards. Based on the success of this endeavour, we are working with Sing Tao to develop additional programming, thereby extending the reach of continuing education business studies deeper into the GTA’s Chinese community. Further, the lessons we are learning about how to understand, reach, and serve this population will, we are confident, eventually lead to the creation of additional culture- and language-attuned continuing education programming in other disciplines and for other groups.