



Doing business smarter – Queensland's multicultural advantage

Marketing and Communication Officer Ellen Buckle

Diversity wins Queensland Chinese contracts

“Relationship management is the primary focus in dealing with the Chinese culture.”

A State Government business unit has used its in-depth knowledge of Chinese culture and business customs to secure a major international training contract worth around \$30,000 for Queensland.

“The Department of Primary Industries’ Centre for Food Technology has secured an agreement to provide food safety and dairy technology training for the Shijiazhuang Professional Education Centre in Hebei province in northern China,” Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities Henry Palaszczuk announced recently.

An International Business Officer with the Department of Primary Industries’ Centre for Food Technology Ross Naidoo met China’s representative Mr Peng Naiyan on his arrival in Brisbane, observed traditional Asian business customs, made his guest feel at ease and guided the whole relationship building process.

The Chinese representative was seeking assistance in food safety training in preparation for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

When Mr Peng Naiyan met with Centre for Food Technology’s training experts, the organisation called upon its Mandarin speaking staff to further explain the centre’s potential to work in China.

Mr Peng Naiyan’s visit led to the centre contracting to provide food safety and dairy technology training for the Shijiazhuang Professional Education Centre.

“Relationship management is the primary focus in dealing with the Chinese culture,” Centre for Food Technology Marketing and Communication Officer Ellen Buckle said.

“At the end of the day Mr Peng Naiyan was satisfied both with the product being offered and with the personal relationship being developed.”

“The centre’s reputation for technical expertise is now being promoted through a sophisticated on-line marketing approach aimed at capturing overseas business – this was what attracted the first inquiry from China,” Ms Buckle said.



“This human potential combined with the organisation’s government base and its service flexibility, provide a distinct comfort level to international clients,” she said. “Many of the centre’s inquiries come from countries with centrally planned economies.”

“Until recently, the centre had the technical skills and the reputation, but didn’t have people on the ground in potential market areas. In 2002, we conducted a gap analysis and identified potential niche markets,” Ms Buckle said.

The Centre for Food Technology also works in partnership with the Department of State Development.

“State Development’s representatives in China assisted in securing the two additional Chinese contracts,” Ms Buckle said. “Through their personal interaction on the ground they sourced the contacts, created links, closed the gaps in culture and facilitated the business opportunity.”

“This initial success has snowballed proving the centre’s strategy for international business development is working – an additional contract has now been signed with Shandong Province in China and negotiations are also underway with Malaysian interests,” Ms Buckle said.

“At this rate of development there is potential to conduct six to ten international food safety courses in the next 12 to 18 months, worth around \$300,000.”

The Centre for Food Technology is one of Australia’s largest commercial providers for food testing, research and development, quality assurance, auditing and training services to the food industry.

It has gained recognition internationally in Malaysia, the Middle East, Pakistan, the People’s Republic of China, Thailand and Vietnam.

The organisation employs 85 specialist staff with a mix of scientific and industry backgrounds, many of whom are from diverse backgrounds or have studied and trained overseas.

Collectively, the Centre for Food Technology staff are fluent in more than seventeen languages covering Europe, Africa, India and Asia.



The Business Development and Food Risk Management team

Productive diversity snapshot

- **Employing staff with knowledge and understanding of different cultures is critical to securing overseas contracts.**
- **Staff who are multilingual are an effective business tool for communicating with world-wide customers.**
- **An understanding of market needs, traditions and cultural values adds to the bottom line.**
- **Diversity has developed the Centre for Food Technology’s strength and innovation.**