

Newcomer takes language course to help restart career

Posted on **August 1, 2014**

Business executive from China learns about culture and communication aspects of Canadian business workplaces

After 10 years of working in international business sales for a machinery import/export company in Shanghai, China, Eli Sun decided it was time for some global experience in his personal life. So he and his wife decided to move with their 13-year-old son to Canada last spring.

“I think we should do our best to have different experiences in life,” says Sun, 40.



— Eli Sun

“The student says he gained many valuable insights from the course about how to interact with others in Canadian business workplaces.”

After settling with his family in Richmond Hill, Ontario, a city just north of Toronto, Sun planned to build on his considerable business experience

and his Masters of Business Administration degree to resume his sales and marketing career. However, he realized he was at a disadvantage because he knew very little about Canadian business culture. But he soon discovered a great course to learn about it: Workplace Communication Skills for Entrepreneurship and Sales & Marketing.

This free business course focuses on understanding business workplaces in Ontario; effectively interacting with others at work; and developing strong career-building skills. Designed for internationally-educated professionals with training or experience in running a business or in sales and marketing, the course features many opportunities to practise common on-the-job communication skills.

Sun took the sales and marketing communications course part-time last fall at Seneca College, and says he gained many valuable insights about how to interact with others in Canadian business workplaces.

“I learned about business idioms and slang, body language, how to leave a voice message, and a lot more. It teaches newcomers step by step about the workplace culture,” Sun says.

He says he also appreciated the opportunity to network and share career strategies with the other internationally experienced businesspeople in the class who came from countries such as Iran, Korea, Russia, Colombia, India, Ukraine, Peru and Brazil.

Since completing the course, Sun has found work as a financial advisor at a major financial institution. He credits the OSLT course with playing an important role in helping him secure his job and perform on the job.

“A lot of things I learned in the course can be used in the workplace,” Sun says. “I gained the language skills I needed to manage in business,

which has helped increase my confidence.”

The course is part of Occupation-specific Language Training (OSLT), a series of free English language training options for permanent residents or protected persons that provide relevant and practical workplace communication skills. Funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and coordinated by Colleges Ontario, these 180-hour part-time and full-time courses, some of which are offered partly online, are geared to a range of occupations within seven employment areas including business, health care, child and youth work, construction and technology (see www.co-oslt.org for more details).

By Sharon Aschaiek (www.cocoamedia.ca)