

Mandarin is a Piece of Cake for Swiss Confectioners

Bachmann is a renowned Confiseur and the **leading confectioner** in the city of Lucerne, Switzerland. It can now also stake its claim as an innovator in the way it trains its employees.

Belinguo, together with **Rissip**, developed a blended-learning Mandarin course to support the Bachmann **salesforce**.

During three evening workshops the whole team successfully learnt how to greet, serve, and say good-bye to Chinese customers.



Mandarin Training to Strengthen Sales Competence

Lucerne is a popular tourist destination, particularly for visitors from the Far East, and **Jacqueline Di Marco** - member of the Executive Board and responsible for training and further education at Confiseur Bachmann - was looking for a **highly effective training solution** for the sales team. She comments, "Our objective was **to quickly increase the sales competence** of the salesforce so that we could profit from the rise in the number of Chinese customers visiting our stores. We ultimately also aim to make the customer experience enjoyable for everyone, no matter where they come from."

A short survey amongst the workshop participants identified that the sales team is in contact with Chinese customers on an hourly basis. With this in mind we jumped straight in, and after a few minutes the classroom started to move and the participants could greet each other in Chinese. There were "Nihao"s left and right and plenty of laughter.

The decision of the management team to invest in their employees (see also Matthias Bachmann in the [Luzerner newspaper](#)) was complimented by the commitment of the employees to learn.

Thema ist bei uns sehr aktuell», sagt [Mitinhaber Matthias Bachmann](#). Bei Bachmann frequentieren Touristen aus China insbesondere die «Chocolat World» am Schwanenplatz regelmässig. «Wir beschäftigen dort auch Mitarbeiterinnen, die Mandarin sprechen.» Weitere Mitarbeiterinnen werden zurzeit in internen Kursen geschult. «Wir haben sehr positive Rückmeldungen

Chinese is a completely new language for most people and can be daunting for many Westerners. However, according to Marion Gioda from Belinguo, Mandarin is not as difficult as a lot of people think it is; "There are, among other things, no tenses and no conjugation."

Our skilled teacher, who learnt Chinese as a foreign language herself, was quick to tackle the fear of the language. This meant the participants were motivated and made fast progress. Jacqueline Di Marco was also delighted; "It's the first time that I have experienced such an **enthusiasm and motivation** coming from the employees during a training. The **emulation** can even be felt in the shop."



Blended Learning

The support from Belinguo doesn't end with the **workshops**. Participants also have access to an **online course** where they can review all important content anytime, anywhere. And with the combination of didactic tricks and **interactive activities**, Marion helped them to overcome their initial fear.

Customers are Amazed

The sales team immediately applied the lessons learned in the training sessions to their daily lives in the Bachmann shops and cafés. Desi Piazza talks about how she uses the first words she learned to greet guests in the

cafe; “It’s so nice to be able to welcome people in Chinese. And it’s rewarding to see how happy our customers are to have found people who speak their language so far from home. They always greet me back and have kind words to say.”

It’s no wonder that when we get to the second lesson the participants already have a list of words that they want to learn.

Goals Reached

According to Jacqueline Di Marco as she concludes the training session, Mandarin was surprisingly not the only purpose of this event; “The idea is that we can politely serve Chinese guests without being shy, with a smile, and a few Chinese words. We aim to reduce the barriers to communication so that we can more effectively interact with this important customer group.”

Our happy participants received their certificates during the short closing ceremony, and the management happily declared:

“This was the best investment we have made this year.”



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