The Opportunities and risks for the U.S. educators of exhibition majors entering the China education market

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THE OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS FOR THE U.S. EDUCATORS OF EXHIBITION MAJORS ENTERING THE CHINA EDUCATION MARKET

By

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ABSTRACT

The Opportunities and Risks for the U.S. Educators of Exhibition Majors Entering the China Education Market

By

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This paper provides a general introduction for American exhibition educators who are interested in launching joint programs with or exporting certifications into China. The study describes the status of exhibition and tourism education in China, and then presents an analysis of the exhibition certification programs of both China and the United States. Based on a comparison of the two systems, recommendations are made regarding American educators could use this study as a reference for introducing their certification or higher education programs into China.

Keywords: Meeting Incentives Convention Event (MICE), Higher education, Certification, Joint Program
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Part One

Introduction

The first Chinese tradeshow-- Export Commodities Fair took place in Guangdong in spring of 1957 (Canton Fair Online, 2010). The convention industry education has 8 years history when the first formal educational program in the convention industry opened in Shanghai in 2002 to comply with the fast growing industry in China. Relatively speaking, the schools having the programs in U.S. or Europe are much more developed and professional than those in China (Wu, 2006).

The convention industry in China, which has existed for over two decades, now enjoys large-scale facilities and increasing numbers of tradeshows and conferences, but lacks qualified talent (Su, 2007). The educational programs that prepare the workforce for this burgeoning industry are relatively undeveloped. In countries like the United States, where the convention industry is well developed, the educational programs in this area are much more advanced. This article analyzes the differences between exhibition education in China and in the United States. For the U.S. educators, there is a great opportunity to collaborate with the corresponding Chinese program providers and launch U.S. training certifications or teaching models in China.

Purpose

Statement of Problem

An analysis of the various exhibition programs in higher education and certifications in China shows that there is still a big gap between the graduated exhibition major students or certification holders and qualified professionals. This is attributable to flaws in the education
system that trains the exhibition workforce. In the Chinese public schools, the programs related to the convention industry are either too academic or too general to apply to the real world. Furthermore, they do not have qualified educators to train the students. Certification programs available in the China market lack specialty courses, and those classes contents are overlapped (Wei, 2008).

Statement of Objective

The paper’s objective is to discover the possibility of forming joint exhibition programs or exporting exhibition certifications to China through analyzing the Chinese and U.S. education systems. The study could be used as a reference for American practitioners of exhibition education, particularly those interested in setting up programs in China. Opportunities and risks will be illustrated in this paper as well.

Justification

At the first sight, it seems that the convention industry education is enjoying prosperity and coming into a peak time in China. Actually, it has many problems, and many factors challenge the education system, such as the low employment rate of the convention management program graduates. The education system currently is unable to provide the talents that the convention industry market demands (Wu, 2007). Obtaining qualified graduates from convention industry education programs is crucial for the sustainable development of the Chinese convention industry. The United States has a very developed system for training exhibition industry practitioners. Master degree, bachelor degree and certification programs are suited for the industry and individual need. It is a crucial time for us to learn the successful education
models from abroad, optimize the Chinese education resources, develop exhibition industry education further ahead, transform the status of education system which falls behind exhibition industry’s growth in China and be a strong participant in the world exhibition economy (Yu, 2008).

Constraints

The convention industry is a fast-growing industry with trends that have not yet been systematically studied and reported in literature. Some of the information and data are collected from the Internet, so it is very hard to prove its reliability. Furthermore, much of the available information comes from conversation with the professionals working in the education, training or event planning industries, not necessarily from written material. This makes it very difficult to track the source and confirm data.
Part Two

Introduction

In this part, this paper will give a brief introduction to the current situation of the Chinese Meeting Incentives Convention Event (MICE) industry and the industry’s demands for qualified professionals. MICE management education both in higher education and certificate training programs in China will be discussed too. This part will also describe certificate and bachelor degree programs in the U.S. Then the weaknesses of the Chinese MICE education will be elaborated through the comparison of China and the U.S. Since this paper is aiming at providing suggestions regarding cooperative joint programs between the U.S. and China, especially giving more information about China to the U.S. educators, a brief illustration of joint programs of exhibition/tourism available in China will follow at last.

Literature Review

*Exhibition industry development in China: The three exhibition center areas*

The exhibition industry began to develop when the open door policy was established in China. It has 20% growth each year and is becoming a new industry in China (Wang, 2009). Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou are the three main exhibition centers in China. Because of their strong economies, they are also the centers for the three well-developed areas: Bohai, the Yangtze River Delta, and the Zhu Delta (Jiang, 2009).

Beijing is the center for the Bohai Area in terms of the exhibition industry. The Beijing International Manufacturing Technology Show, the China International Textile Machinery International Exhibition, and the China North Printing Equipments & Materials Exhibition rank
in the top 4 in the respective industry trade shows. Beijing is also maintaining its No.1 position for branded tradeshows, as recognized by the Union of International Fairs (UFI) in China (Zhang, Wu, Xue, 2008).

The Guangzhou exhibition industry enjoys a 25% development rate, which exceeds the 20% average in China. Eighty-four exhibition companies reported a revenue of $700,000 in Guangzhou (www.cces.org.cn, 2010), the center point of the Zhu Delta Area, in 2007. The well known China Import and Export Fair, which was also the first trade show in China’s history, takes place in Guangzhou each year.

The Yangtze River Delta Area is comprised of 16 cities. It covers 1% of the land of China, 5.8% of the Chinese population and 18.7% of the GDP. It contributed to 22% of China’s income in 2002 (baby.icoupon.com.cn, 2007). The Yangtze River Delta Area is the fast development model in China. Either due to the scale of development or government financial investment, this area is affected largely by Shanghai. The Bohai Area attracted foreign capital of $4 billion in 2002, which accounted for 7.75% of the whole nation; meanwhile, the foreign investment in the Yangtze River Delta Area was 4.37 times that of Bohai (baby.icoupon.com.cn, 2010). Shanghai is a melting pot between China and Western countries. It has many old buildings like the Grand Garden and Shanghai Old Streets, as well as new architecture, such as the Oriental TV Tower and the Shanghai Museum. Shanghai is a city with a long tradition and modern atmosphere, and the unique environment makes it an ideal place for special events. The Shanghai World Expo will happen in one month in Shanghai; the city estimates it will attract 70 million visitors (en.expo2010.cn).

After Beijing successfully hosted the 29th Olympic Games in 2008, the economy was boosted. At the same time, tradeshows’ scales and numbers enjoyed an increase. Shanghai holds 5.5 trade shows per week, on average. An international show calls for 89 to 90 professionals.
This means that when the Shanghai World Expo opens, it needs 100,000 professionals (arts.51job.com). At present, the qualified professionals are very crucial to the whole industry development in China.

From the tourism point of view, instead of forming a partnership, Beijing Tianjin and Hebei are developing individually. Actually, Beijing attracts the talent from the nearby area. Professionals and all types of resources assemble into the city, which is a factor contributing to the slow development rate in tourism in the other two cities. Thirty-two counties and 3,798 villages in Hebei are on the poor counties and villages list of China. In addition, the city of Beijing has more restrictions on cross-city tourism cooperation than Shanghai does. Furthermore, Beijing has plenty of historical attractions. In contrast, Tianjin and Hebei are weaker and enjoy fewer economic benefits than Beijing does. On the other side, Shanghai has adopted the “market direct and government assist” policy, which enables collaboration in tourism among the 16 cities. Many parks in Shanghai, like Oriental Pearl and Waitan, have their own themes. The nearby cities like Hangzhou and Suzhou each have their advantages (www.china.com.cn).

**Government functions in MICE industry development**

Unlike the government’s role in the MICE industry in the United States, government enacts legislation that controls the industry. This system restricts the healthy development of the Chinese MICE industry. However, in the past 20 years, the Chinese government has devoted much effort to supporting and leading the MICE industry, thus enabling the society to realize the potential economic impact an exhibition can make on a city. At present, since the MICE is becoming a prosperous industry, like all the other industries, it demands corresponding public services and an inspection system. Different levels of the Council for the Promotion of International Trade are in charge of authorization of the trade shows. Different from the industrial associations in the U.S., which are comprised of the practitioners and professionals
from the field, one of the main functions of the council is to facilitate the relations between the government and the corporations. However, the councils in China do not understand the real needs of this industry and how to regulate it either. Although the China MICE industry is experiencing a development period exceeding that of any other industry, numerous companies registered and closed in the past decade. The China exhibition industry is in a reshuffling time (Ma, Liang, 2007).

Exhibition and tourism education’s current situation in China

Fast development of the MICE industry could not last long without the participation of qualified practitioners. At present, many management-level practitioners working at the exhibition companies come from state-owned companies formed within the last 10 years. It is very hard to find practitioners who have knowledge in financial management, international business events, planning and corporation operation. Also, most of the staff were transferred from other industries and could not take on projects smoothly. There is a very big gap between the demand of the MICE industry for professionals and the availability of qualified practitioners. For instance, in Beijing, one of the top convention cities in China, the ratio of the industry professionals’ demand to the applicants is 8 to 1 (Wang, 2008).

There are 29 colleges or universities in China that offer bachelor-degree-level meeting and event management programs. Approximately 80 colleges or institutions have classes related to MICE, and 26 vocational/private schools have MICE major programs (Qi, 2008). At the same time, exhibition companies have a high demand for training their employees too. A survey conducted by an affiliate unit of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade shows 77% of the professionals in the management levels of exhibition companies want to participate in certificate training from overseas exhibition corporations. Sixty-eight percent of them want to learn how to apply the exhibition knowledge or theories in practice and make them
compatible with China’s environment. Seventy percent of them are eager to attend short-term training programs (China exhibition industry economic development report, 2005). The Shanghai World Expo will open in one month. It is urgent to acquire qualified professionals who could work in this booming industry after the Expo (baby.icoupon.com.cn). The survey conducted by the Shanghai Expo demonstrates that the Shanghai exhibition industry has a high demand for the professionals with exhibition operation knowledge, which includes event planning, languages, public relations, event operation services, and decoration engineering.

**Higher education development in China exhibition industry**

The schools adding event programs are increasing every year. Just like the immature industry, the Chinese exhibition education system is also in the development phase. Exhibition programs of higher education are offered at several different levels. There is no exhibition Ph.D. program in China, and only 15 schools offer Ph.D. programs in tourism management, the closest major to event management. Only Huadong Normal University and Shanghai Normal University have master-level programs in event management. At the bachelor-degree level, 29 universities have event majors, which is about 30% of the higher education institutions with event majors. Vocational schools account for most of the higher education event major training market in China (Qi, 2008).
Figure 1 Exhibition Programs in China from 2002 to 2006

Figure 1 shows that among several thousand colleges and universities in China, only twelve of them had event-relevant programs in 2002; this number increased to 60 in 2004 and reached 90 by 2006 (Yu, 2008). The programs from these schools fall into four categories: business management, foreign trades, tourism and art decorations. The curriculums’ designs are based on pre-existing programs, professors’ specialties and other school resources. Among all the programs that exhibition education builds on, the management program is the most popular and a large percent of management courses connect with tourism management. This is because tourism and the exhibition industry are closely related, and the professionals who work in these two industries have many things in common. In terms of tourism management, 352 schools offer tourism management majors nation-wide; 16 of them are in Beijing; 13 of them are in Shanghai; around 30 of them are in the Yangtze River Delta area, which is 11% of the schools in China; and 10 of them are located in Guangdong (gkcx.eol.cn). Among the 29 schools that offer bachelor’s degrees related to event management, 4 of them are in Beijing, 6 in Shanghai, and 1 in Guangdong (gkcx.eol.cn).
Shanghai Foreign Trade University is the first college in China to offer an event management program. The China Central Academy of Fine Arts renamed as Academy of Arts & Design Tsinghua University was the first one to have an exhibition design program. A Bachelor of Science program was established by the Shanghai Institute of Foreign Trade, where 57 students were the first event management program B.S graduates in China (www.crs.jsj.edu.cn)

Problems existing in exhibition major of higher education

From the employment rate of event program graduates, the numbers are not very inspiring. The human resource departments of the exhibition companies explained that they prefer to hire graduates of IT, printing, English or mechanical programs instead of event major students. A statistic on the 2008 graduates of the meeting and event management program of Shanghai Normal University shows the employment rate was 96.51% as of July 15, 2008, two of them entered the graduate school and another two chose to study abroad); in contrast, only 18.07% of them work in the event industry (Wu, 2009).

The schools that have event-related majors explore their own advantages and strengths based on what programs and professors they have before. There is no standard evaluation system that could give a general curriculum within which the schools could develop their special subdivisions. Many exhibition education programs overlap with other majors’ programs, as evidenced by the fact that the events planning program is often created underneath economic management or tourism management department (Xiao, 2004)

Regarding the textbooks used in the event management major in China, due to the lucrative profit of publishing textbooks, many publishers published MICE textbooks without carefully evaluating the quality. Lack of exhibition industry standardization is another reason
contributing to this phenomenon. The textbooks are either too academic, without providing real world cases to help students to apply principles, or too shallow, without profound understanding of the industry. In general, both the systematic and research depth need to improve in the textbooks (Wei, 2008)

The exhibition industry is a new creature compared to other industries in China, so relevant professionals, materials and resources are scarce. The education and MICE industry do not communicate and collaborate very well, which is the main reason for the lack of practical applications and deep insight in the textbooks. Some schools use translated textbooks from overseas that cause difficulties for the students due to the differences in social system, culture, ways of thinking, educational focus and so on.

The number of professors who could teach exhibition majors cannot catch up with the increasing numbers of students. According to a survey conducted in Beijing, Shanghai, Zhejiang, Guangdong and 14 other institutes in China, the professor-to-student ratio in event management major is very tough. In all 14 institutes, there are 162 professors in total; 85 of them comes from the 6 schools offering bachelor degrees, and 42 of them are from 6 schools offering associates degree programs (Yu, 2009). Aside from the shortage of educators for the students, many professors teaching exhibition majors either do not have professional training themselves, or they have worked in the industry for several years but do not know how to teach. The exhibition industry calls for qualified graduates, and qualified students need good teachers who know how to impart their knowledge but also have plenty of practical experience. With that said, the high recruitment rate makes the educators fully occupied, so they do not have time and energy to participate in the real projects.
Instead of having passion for or really being interested in the event major, many students choose to take the major because the mass media exaggerates the event major’s future and explains how much money the graduates could make. In addition, after China adopted the one-child policy, the only child became the focus of the family. Under pressure from their families, many students choose exhibition as their major. This mismatch between inclination and career choice causes problems with performance later.

*Higher education joint programs in China—Event Planning and Tourism Management*

Joint programs started in the late of 1980. The statistics show there were 71 joint programs in 1995 in China. This number rose to 712 at the end of 2002, and by late 2007, there were 1,000 joint programs in the Chinese training market. The joint programs are in a fast growth period (Lin, 2006). In the following part, two successful joint programs in China will be described. One is an event management major from Shanghai Foreign Trade University, and another is a tourism management major from the Tianjin University of Commerce (www.crs.jsj.edu.cn)

*The first event management program offers degree in China*

Shanghai Foreign Trade University was the first university to offer a four-year bachelor degree joint program of exhibition management. The joint program started in September 2004, and the cooperation is between Shanghai Foreign Trade University, University of Applied Science Osnabrueck and The Hanover Company China Center. Tuition is $2,200 per academic year. Only students who pass the college entrance exam and get admission from the university are qualified for this program. The program has 40 new enrollees each year (www.crs.jsj.edu.cn). In this program, three or four courses are taught by the German professors each semester, and one third of the students are selected as exchange students. The students have to participate in
many discussions and make presentations in the classes, which is different from the traditional teaching method in China. The professional paper/thesis has to be written in English and the defense is conducted in English. A company is set up for students in this program, and a skin care product tradeshow happens each year. Students are the main organizers of this event (www.shift.edu.cn). After graduation, the students work in different associations and event planning companies. Graduates from this program have kept a very high employment rate till now. Aside from the event management joint program, the school also opened five other cooperative programs with Australia, Canada and U.K.

*The successful tourism management joint program offers degree in China*

Tianjin University of Commerce and Florida International University (TUC-FIU) formed a hotel management bachelor degree program in 2004 and established the TUC-FIU cooperative school in 2007. Tianjin University of Commerce opened a tourism management bachelor program in 1985, which made it one of the first schools to have tourism majors. Tuition is about $3,600 per academic year. In the joint program, fundamental classes and English classes are taught by professors of TUC. TUC invested $32.3 million and built a campus based on the requirements of FIU. A wine tasting laboratory, auditorium rooms and multimedia rooms with full equipment are featured in this campus. Juniors’ and seniors’ teaching and administration are under FIU, and the teaching method is the same as with the students from FIU, which includes using imported textbooks. Professors from FIU teach the classes. Also many discussions and presentations are involved in the student learning classes. TUC-FIU is the only training base for the Marriott group in China. The school maintains relationships with the Continental group, Ritz-Carlton and many other cruises or hotel groups. Twenty-one of the first graduates from 2008 are enrolled in graduate schools in the U.S., for example, Cornell University and UNLV, and the others are all working in well known hotel companies. Among 166 graduates in 2009, 46 of them got graduate school admission in the U.S., Australia, and Switzerland, and the others work in the hotels and cruise companies (www.tuc-fiu.cn).
Exhibition education distribution in China

Same with the three exhibition centers in China, the three MICE education centers are also focusing on Beijing, Shanghai and Carton. The Yangtze River Delta Area is comprised of 16 cities, and Shanghai as the economic center has a very large effect on the other cities. The Yangtze River Delta area ranks No.1 for China exhibition higher education, exceeding Beijing and Guangzhou. Sixteen colleges located in this area have exhibition-related education programs, which is 60% of the programs nation-wide. The student recruitment rate for exhibition education program in Hangzhou was 16.5% in 2004 (baby.icoupon.com.cn).

The certification training programs in China

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certification</th>
<th>Issuing Agency</th>
<th>Sponsor/Organizer</th>
<th>Certification Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certified in Exhibition Manager</td>
<td>International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE)</td>
<td>IAEE</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>China Council For The Promotion Of International Trade</td>
<td>Registration Fee:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>JingMu International Exhibition Corp., Ltd</td>
<td>$1441 (including textbooks and lunch)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.jingmu.com">www.jingmu.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Exhibition Planner</td>
<td>Ministry Of Labor and Social Security, PRC</td>
<td>Ministry Of Labor and Social Security, PRC</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>China’s employment training center</td>
<td>Jihua Training Center in Guangzhou China</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Certified Exhibition Business Executive</td>
<td>China Business Manager Association committee for the examination and appraisal of national business operation and qualifications of professional technique</td>
<td>Shenzhen Meeting &amp; Exhibition Industry Association</td>
<td>Certified Assistant of Exhibition Business Executive/Entry Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Certified Exhibition Business Executive</td>
<td>China Business Manager Association committee for the examination and appraisal of national business operation and qualifications of professional technique</td>
<td>Shenzhen New Resources enterprise management and consulting Ltd</td>
<td>Certified Exhibition Business Executive/Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Certified Exhibition Business Executive</td>
<td>China Business Manager Association committee for the examination and appraisal of national business operation and qualifications of professional technique</td>
<td>Shenzhen New Resources enterprise management and consulting Ltd</td>
<td>Certified Exhibition Business Executive/Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition Contract Manager</td>
<td>The Committee of Chinese Talent and Personnel Professional HK China International Vocational Certification Guidance Center</td>
<td>The Committee of Chinese Talent and Personnel Professional Personnel Professional Department (Some Regions)</td>
<td>Exhibition Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition Contract Manager</td>
<td>The Committee of Chinese Talent and Personnel Professional HK China International Vocational Certification Guidance Center</td>
<td>The Committee of Chinese Talent and Personnel Professional Personnel Professional Department (Some Regions)</td>
<td>Senior Exhibition Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition Contract Manager</td>
<td>The Committee of Chinese Talent and Personnel Professional HK China International Vocational Certification Guidance Center</td>
<td>The Committee of Chinese Talent and Personnel Professional Personnel Professional Department (Some Regions)</td>
<td>Assistant Exhibition Contract Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition Contract Manager</td>
<td>The Committee of Chinese Talent and Personnel Professional HK China International Vocational Certification Guidance Center</td>
<td>The Committee of Chinese Talent and Personnel Professional Personnel Professional Department (Some Regions)</td>
<td>Senior Exhibition Contract Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition Operation Planner</td>
<td>Ministry Of Labor and Social Security.PRC</td>
<td>Shanghai Labor and Social Security(Trial Operation)</td>
<td>Exhibition Operation Planner( Level 5 to Level 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition Operation Planner</td>
<td>Ministry Of Labor and Social Security.PRC</td>
<td>Shanghai Labor and Social Security(Trial Operation)</td>
<td>Exhibition Operation Planner( Level 5 to Level 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition Manager Certification</td>
<td>Shanghai Professional Testing Authority</td>
<td>Shanghai Professional Testing Authority Eastern China Normal University Exhibition Department</td>
<td>Assistant Exhibition Manager Certificate Exhibition Manager Certificate Senior Exhibition Manager Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition Manager Certification</td>
<td>Shanghai Professional Testing Authority</td>
<td>Shanghai Professional Testing Authority Eastern China Normal University Exhibition Department</td>
<td>Assistant Exhibition Manager Certificate Exhibition Manager Certificate Senior Exhibition Manager Certificate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exhibition Manager Certification</td>
<td>Shanghai Professional Testing Authority</td>
<td>Shanghai Professional Testing Authority Eastern China Normal University Exhibition Department</td>
<td>Assistant Exhibition Manager Certificate Exhibition Manager Certificate Senior Exhibition Manager Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition Planning and Operation</td>
<td>Shanghai Talents for high demand Training Office</td>
<td>Shanghai Talents for high demand Training Office Shanghai Tourism Training</td>
<td>Assistant Exhibition Manager Certificate Exhibition Manager Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition Planning and Operation</td>
<td>Shanghai Talents for high demand Training Office</td>
<td>Shanghai Talents for high demand Training Office Shanghai Tourism Training</td>
<td>Assistant Exhibition Manager Certificate Exhibition Manager Certificate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Among all the certification training programs, the only internationally recognized one is Certified in Exhibition Management (CEM). CEM was created by the International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE) in 1975 to provide a professional designation for individuals in the exhibition industry (www.iaee.com). In 2002, CCPIT introduced the CEM program from the International Association of Exhibition Management in the United States to China (www.jingmu.com.cn). Because of previous cooperation with CCPIT, Jing Mu Corporation was chosen to operate the program in China on behalf of CCPIT. The CEM training program has been taken in Shanghai, Beijing, Nanjing, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Aomen, Qingdao, Changsha and Chengdu twelve times altogether, and 600 people have participated in the program until 2009. The participants came from different organizations and associations, such as the China International Exhibition Center Group, the Chengdu Exhibition Group, the CCPIT Mining Industry Association, the China Foreign Trade Guangzhou Exhibition Corporation, and Yiwu China Commodity City Exhibition Co. Ltd.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certificate</th>
<th>Testing courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition Operation Planner</td>
<td>Level four and three: Exhibition studies, Exhibition planning, Exhibition sales, Exhibition operation/management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition Planning and</td>
<td>Exhibition Manager Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exhibition studies, Exhibition English, Exhibition Design, Exhibition Management/Operation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2  Testing courses comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certification</th>
<th>Admission Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition Operation Planner</td>
<td>Level 4:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. The Level 5 certificate holder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Vocational school graduate or equivalent degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Above Associate degree (for any majors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. College/university current students (relevant majors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e. Seniors in the vocational school (relevant majors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition Planning and Operation Manager</td>
<td>Exhibition Manager Certification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Associate degree or vocational school graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. At least graduate from Assistant Exhibition Manager Certificate for 2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Sophomore/Junior/Senior year students in the college/university</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 Admission requirement for exhibition certification test takers

From the above two tables, it is obvious that the two certifications are very similar with regard to the requirements for the candidates and the training/test courses. There are six major exhibition training certifications in the Chinese market (see Table 3). The certificates’ issuing agencies are different, and sponsors and organizers are from different cities and regions. There is no one head authority which could supervise the certificate training system in the convention education field available in China. Some certificates only existed for several years and had to recede from the market because of being less competitive. It is another reason that no one “made in China” exhibition certification could get popular.

Another weakness for some of the certification training programs is that they are neither cooperative with the companies of the exhibition industry nor with the associations. For instance, for the Exhibition Operation Planner Certificate, the Exhibition Manager Certificate and the
Exhibition Planning and Operation Certificate from Table 3, both the issuing agencies and sponsors/organizers are either from the government or public schools.

Certification training programs in the U.S

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certification</th>
<th>Issuing Agency</th>
<th>Fees</th>
<th>Who is it for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certified in Exhibition Management</td>
<td>International Association of Exhibition and Events</td>
<td>CEM Advanced</td>
<td>IAEE provides leadership, service, education and benefits to professionals in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(CEM)</td>
<td>(IAEE)</td>
<td>$250 Members</td>
<td>the exhibition industry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$400 Non-Members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(<a href="http://www.iaee.com/cem/2010_course_schedule">http://www.iaee.com/cem/2010_course_schedule</a>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certified Meeting Professional (CMP)</td>
<td>Convention Industry Council</td>
<td>MPI Member training</td>
<td>Three years of work experience in the industry Or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(CIC)</td>
<td>program: $2470</td>
<td>Applicants with a degree in meeting, event, exhibition, or hospitality/tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(<a href="http://www.mpiweb.org/Education/GlobalTraining/">http://www.mpiweb.org/Education/GlobalTraining/</a></td>
<td>Non-Member: $2875</td>
<td>management may apply after two years of work experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Programs/CertifiedMeetingProfessionals.aspx)</td>
<td>Members: $299</td>
<td>Full-time instructors who have taught for three years in a meeting/hospitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Members: $399</td>
<td>university program And</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 or more from the same organization: $249 each</td>
<td>Completion of twenty-five hours of continuing education Or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Completion of approved internship/apprenticeship in the industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Certification in</td>
<td>Meeting Professionals</td>
<td>Application Fee - US$75 for MPI members,</td>
<td>Management-level Minimum of ten years experience All aspects of meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Management</td>
<td>International (MPI)</td>
<td>US$125 for non-members Training Fee -</td>
<td>management including logistics, budgets, people, legal/contracts, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(CMM)</td>
<td></td>
<td>US$1,800 for MPI members, US$2,200 for</td>
<td>marketing and communications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>non-members (<a href="http://www.mpiweb.org">www.mpiweb.org</a>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification Program</td>
<td>Associated Organization</td>
<td>Application Fee</td>
<td>Requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certified Special Events Professional (CSEP)</td>
<td>International Special Events Society (ISES)</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td>A minimum of three (3) years employment experience in the special events industry*&lt;br&gt;Current, full-time employment in the special events industry*&lt;br&gt;35 professional industry points (see the CSEP points itemization list for more details)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certified Professional Catering Executives (CPCE)</td>
<td>National Association of Catering Executives (NACE)</td>
<td>Application Fees (includes the Study Guide)&lt;br&gt;$395 members&lt;br&gt;$495 nonmembers&lt;br&gt;Study Guide - $99&lt;br&gt;Fast Track Program - $100 for 7 sessions/$20 if purchased individually&lt;br&gt;Exam Retake Fee - $145 members/$195 nonmembers&lt;br&gt;Recertification Fees&lt;br&gt;$195 – members&lt;br&gt;$295 - nonmembers</td>
<td>Above 60 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association of Destination Management Executives (ADME)</td>
<td>Destination Management Certified Professional (DMCP)</td>
<td>Enroll+application+Registration&lt;br&gt;For Member: $450&lt;br&gt;For Non-member: $650</td>
<td>You must have been in the industry for 3 years, or have a bachelor’s degree with an industry related major from a major university.&lt;br&gt;You must be employed in the industry when you take the exam.&lt;br&gt;You must have a minimum of 90 points out of a possible 150 as a result of your program management experience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 Certification programs in the U.S.

While there are many certifications provided by different associations in the U.S., this table shows the main ones.
Certified Meeting Professionals (CMP) started in 1985. “Unlike today, with over 10,000 Certified Meeting Professionals, fifteen or twenty years ago there were less than a few hundred. Then, it was necessary on many occasions to explain just what the CMP was all about” (http://www.conventionindustry.org/cmp/emervitus_essays/joseph_bow.htm).

“Destination Management professionals who earn their Destination Management Certified Professional (DMCP) designation demonstrate the highest level of knowledge and commitment to the destination management profession. To earn the DMCP designation, an individual must have years of experience in the field, active involvement in continuing education programs and have passed an exam that covers the body of knowledge of all aspects of destination management. This certification is good for five years; recertification requires continuing demonstration of active involvement in the destination management community and continuing education in all aspects of destination management” (www.adme.org/dmc/why-dmcp.asp). This statement from Association of Destination Management Executives website describes the certification’s function, test takers’ requirement and expiration time.

In the table four, we could see that most of the certifications belong to different associations, except for CMP, which is from CIC. Each certification has its own focus area; for instance, CEM is for exhibition people, CMM is for meeting professionals, CMP is for people mainly in conventions, CPC is for catering executives, CSEP is for people working in special events, and ADME is mainly for those in the tourism destination area.
The recognition of American MICE education in China

The occupational training system in the United States is well organized. There are four characteristics in the occupational training system of the United States: the training system is mature; the associations are mainly in charge of issuing the certifications; there is a clear division between meeting, event and exhibition, and tradeshow; and there is a focus both on study and operation (Wang, 2002). This is published in *Tourism Tribune*, which is a magazine mainly for enterprises, professors and students, corporations and academic people in the tourism industry (Tourism Tribune online mission, http://lyxk.qikan.com/Introduce.aspx). The MICE education in the United States ranges from the certification-awarded programs to bachelor or master degrees. There are over 75 universities in the United States offering meeting event- or convention-related degrees or classes, including George Washington University, Cornell University, University of Nevada Las Vegas, University of Houston, Oklahoma State University, Northeast State University, and so on (Wu, 2007). In the “MICE Management Education of U.S.A. and Its Implication on China,” the authors compare the MICE educational systems in terms of the educators, school specialties and resources provided to the students. This article also gives some suggestions to the MICE educators about what to learn and how to localize the U.S. model. In general, MICE education in the U.S. has a very positive reputation among China’s education practitioners.

Conclusion

The exhibition industry is still an emerging industry in China. Correspondingly, the exhibition industry education programs that were recently launched in China are growing quickly. This fast development has two sides. One is that the number of schools with exhibition-related programs
is rising. People have started to realize the bright future of the industry. The more negative side is that among the many programs in higher education, not many of them are high quality. When the Chinese exhibition academics and professionals take a look at the U.S. programs, the gap and differences are apparent. What could Chinese exhibition educators learn from the U.S.? Are there any opportunities for U.S. educators, and what are the risks? The paper will elaborate much more in the following part.
PART THREE

Introduction

The paper described the exhibition education in China in the second part. At present, exhibition education is becoming more popular, both in the formal higher education area and in the certification training market. This is a reflection of the China exhibition industry’s prosperity. As a developing country, China is absorbing advanced ideology, technology and knowledge from other developed countries. This is happening in the education field too. Chinese and U.S. schools have over 30 years’ history in setting up joint programs in China (Lin, 2006). More and more certifications from America are launched China too. For those practitioners in the exhibition education field who are considering bringing a program to China, what are the right things to do and what are not? How can they meet Chinese schools’ expectations and not compromise their own benefit at the same time? A comparison between Chinese and American schools’ expectations for joint programs will be made in this part of the paper. Some suggestions will be provided through analysis of the data and information from the second part.

Results

The exhibition education is important to industry development

The China exhibition industry has over 20 years of history, and exhibition education started 10 years ago. The China exhibition industry needs two types of professionals: executives with a wide range of knowledge in international business, finance and corporation operation, and professionals with specialized knowledge in certain areas. As one of the busiest event centers, Beijing has a very high ratio between the exhibition industry demands for professionals to the
Opportunities and Risks for the U.S. Educators

applicant---8 to 1 (Zhang, Wu, 2009). From this number, two things could be discovered. One is that the China exhibition industry is developing very quickly. The second is that the current exhibition education could not match and satisfy the market demand. In the first place, the China exhibition industry is still a very new industry compared to other fields. Especially at the beginning, Chinese tradeshows were almost entirely controlled by the government. The government organized the first export and import fair in Guangzhou, which boosted the local business and strengthened the communication between China and the overseas countries. The government also invested money to build facilities and add responsibilities to the economic promotion department to take care of the exhibition-relevant regulations and authorization of businesses. When industrial associations, exhibition companies and event planning companies came into being, many people worked for the government before transitioning to the private companies. Most often they are in very high positions. Their experience in the government and familiarity with the regulations could help them understand the situation of the companies much better. But operating businesses and serving in the government are two different things. Their weak operation and financial management skills are the biggest obstacles when they work in the exhibition companies. To the people with many years’ experience in the industry but without any event major degrees, certification programs are very good for them to get immediate, practical, systematic training in operation and management. For event major students with specialized knowledge such as design or economic management, schools are opening event majors with design and economic management concentrations. It is apparent that the Chinese exhibition industry has prompted exhibition education’s birth and development, and that the education programs’ growth has influenced the industry’s redevelopment and direction.

Exhibition joint programs benefits for Chinese educators
1. To catch up with the demand of exhibition major development

First, let us look at the situation of higher education in China. The number of students enrolled in higher education increased from 1.08 million in 1998 to 5.04 million in 2005, which was 4.7 times the students in 1998. Until 2005, there were 23 million students in the higher education schools. Regarding the number of students in the colleges, China ranked No. 1 among all nations in 2007(Yang, 2007). The event major schools in China grew from 12 in 2002 to over 90 in 2006. However, the quality of higher education is decreasing with the increase in numbers of students in schools. The rate of students to professors rose from 8:1 to 22:1 (Lin, 2006). As mentioned in the second part, many event majors are built under tourism management or economic management department. The professor might face the problem of teaching two different classes with similar textbooks.

A joint program with U.S. schools is a very effective way to compensate for the lack of education resources in China. In a joint program, the imported textbooks and professors from the U.S. could bring the developed models to Chinese educators directly. Chinese educators just need to localize the imported resources and make them adapt to the Chinese situation.

2. A successful event joint program could bring direct financial benefit to the school

The China education department has established an auditing and hearing system for the China higher education school in terms of how much tuition they could charge the students. The China higher education regulation says the higher educational school’s founding should not be based on financial purpose. In the joint program, there is flexibility for the schools in charging tuition. On average, the joint program tuition is 5 times that of the regular programs in China.
One academic year tuition in TUC-FIU is $3,600. The exhibition management joint program in Shanghai costs $2,200 for each academic year. In comparison, public school tuition is around $700 for each academic year.

So aside from importing advanced educational philosophy, models, textbook systems and management methods for forming joint programs with overseas schools, it is also a better way to respond to the government regulations for higher education.

3. To meet the central government new reform in education

In addition to the consideration of improving a school’s financial status, learning the advanced educational philosophy and management system is a tendency for China higher education. A joint program provides an excellent platform for Chinese educators to see and experience the difference between China and the U.S. on teaching methods, textbooks, management models, and so on. The teaching method adopted by Shanghai Foreign Trade University from their overseas partners is a very good supplement for traditional Chinese education. Instead of just learning to be a good student (defined as keeping silent and doing good on the exam), the students in this joint program have to discuss in the class with other fellow students and learn how to make presentations. As future event coordinators or other professionals in the exhibition industry, team work and organization skills could contribute a lot to career success. This is also the Chinese education system’s biggest challenge. A joint program is an effective way to improve the situation.

4. To improve the schools’ reputation and recognition
Tianjin University of Commerce does a very good job in the joint program with Florida International University and is getting its recognition in China. First of all, the TUC utilizes the resources of FIU very well. The professors from FIU bring current content to the students. At the same time, just as FIU does in Florida, TUC cooperates with international brand hotel groups. Students of the joint program could decide either choose to pursue graduate study in the U.S. or work in a hotel. Those are important factors that influence the program’s reputation. A good joint program will positively affect the school’s image.

5. To strengthen the international activities and communication between China and the U.S.

A joint program in the convention industry could not only introduce an advanced management model in convention business and teaching philosophy, but also help smooth the communication in the convention industry. CEM is a very good example here. This certificate is for those professionals who have been working in this industry for several years. The instructors for this certification are from the U.S. When professionals of the same industry from different parts of the world get together and exchange their thoughts, it is very beneficial for the international business in the future.

Exhibition joint program benefits for U.S. educators

Financial benefit is the primary reason for the U.S. school cooperating with the Chinese school. In most of the joint programs, the curriculums are provided by the U.S. schools. The U.S. side also sends professors to China and brings the management system to Chinese schools. Sometimes U.S. schools invest money into the joint program. Under this circumstance, they get benefit from the profit(Tao,2008). Since there is no standard for the joint school to gauge how
much they should charge from the students, the tuitions of the joint programs are five times that of the regular programs from the Chinese higher educational schools. In some cases, the tuition is over ten times of those Chinese programs.

Another reason for the U.S. school to form cooperative programs with China is to bring school brand recognition to the Chinese students. International students pay almost triple tuition of the local students. It is a very effective way to recruit more students through the joint programs.

Many public universities and colleges in the U.S. are facing the struggle of budget cuts from the government in the economic downturn. China, however, has a very big education market. Exporting education resources to diminish the gap between China and U.S. could benefit both countries.

By forming a joint program with China, U.S. educators could widen their knowledge about China, and strengthen their realization and awareness of globalization. It is very popular for many U.S. universities to offer overseas class trips for the students. In a joint program, the Chinese partner would open the door for the U.S. school, so they could establish more contacts and network with the Chinese government or organizations. In view of the globalized economic and tendency, the U.S. school could set up more classes or even internships for U.S. students.

**SWOT analysis for launching joint program/certification for U.S schools/associations in China.**

**Strengths**

1. For certification import to China
a. The MICE industry has a longer history in the U.S. than in China. The associations play a very important role in supporting the industry. Through a certification import project, the U.S. could also help Chinese improve their association management system through networking opportunities, online study programs, creation of local chapters, certification renewal requirements.

b. CEM has been in China for 10 years, and it is the only certification export from U.S to China which has very high recognition in the exhibition education sector.

c. The partner of CEM in China has kept a very good relationship with exhibition organizations, the government economic promotion department and industry associations. So the recruitment rate is very stable.

d. The classes are taught twice each year—Summer and Fall. The instructors go to China twice a year. From the logistics point of view, the teacher’s flight fees and accommodations are lower. It is a good way to keep the cost low and increase the profit.

2. For U.S. schools interested in firming cooperative relationships with Chinese schools.

a. The event major has existed for almost 40 years. From curriculum development, and teaching methods to student practice and cooperation with the event planning companies or other relevant organizations, U.S. schools have much to share with Chinese educators.

b. The event major’s joint programs are still very new in China. Only one school has offered a bachelor’s degree so far. The joint programs market is an important sector in the huge China training market. Event majors are also becoming popular
in China. Furthermore, the joint program of Shanghai Foreign Trade University is getting a reputation.

c. Similar to launching certification in China, U.S schools could export teaching methodology to China along with exporting textbooks, creating relationships with hotel groups, establishing internship and mentoring programs for the students.

d. A joint program’s tuition is five times that of regular programs of the public schools and half price of the tuition charged in the U.S. In addition, the living cost in China is another big saving for the students’ education.

e. To the students who want to go abroad to study in the U.S. graduate schools, more and more of them are interested in the joint program. Four years of study in the joint program is a stable transition time for them. They could sharpen their English skills and get familiar with the U.S. class atmosphere.

Weaknesses

1. China is different from the U.S. in culture and tradition. When the program is launched in China, it might meet some culture shock.

2. There are not many professors in the U.S. who both understand Chinese culture and U.S. event education.

3. Cooperative programs need the professors in the U.S. to go to China to assist in the teaching. The cost is much higher.

4. U.S. educators are not very familiar with school structure in China. Actually, many continuing departments do not belong to school, and the students they are recruiting do
not pass the college entrance exam line. The graduated students will influence the joint programs’ reputation.

Opportunities

1. The three economic and exhibition centers are the three biggest training markets in China. The first cooperative schools appear in those areas too. Shanghai has the most event-related majors and the Yangtze River Delta Area has many well known schools; it is also the strongest economic area in China.

2. Joint program between Shanghai Foreign Trade University and German school shows the opportunities

3. The 29th Olympic Games in Beijing and the Shanghai World Expo are very good catalysts for joint programs’ development. The market needs comprehensive professionals.

Threats

1. The Chinese government prohibited authorizing any joint program and cooperative schools in China for four years and the joint programs just restarted two years ago. Considering the government in China is still in the dominant role, it is the biggest challenge for the U.S. schools.

2. The education department stipulates that Chinese education should be based on nonprofit and public service. It does not include any guidance about how much tuition a program should charge the students. Would this happen in the future?
3. The joint programs are carried out between the U.S. and China. The political relations of these two countries largely influence the programs’ popularity and outcomes in China.

Conclusions

China’s MICE industry is behind the industry in the U.S. MICE education programs in China cannot satisfy the market demand. Joint programs or cooperative schools are a very contributive way to meet the Chinese market demand. For the U.S educators, there are plenty of opportunities for them to form partnership with Chinese associates. At the same time, risks have to be weighed. In another words, opportunities and risks are side by side when the educators seriously looking for launching joint programs in China.

Recommendations

Future research on the cooperative models, based on what is available in the China or U.S market, together with the MICE industry’s financial prospect, is recommended. Furthermore, how to recruit the students, who pass the college entrance examination, with very strong financial background family is another topic worth to be discussed.
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