

Mando Mandarin Paves the Way for Others to Harness a Productive Relationship with China

There's been much talk over the past few years of how important China has become to the future of our global economy. Mike Cheng, originally on a quest to learn more about his heritage, is working to connect U.S. citizens to China through his business Mando Mandarin.

Mando Mandarin teaches Chinese as a foreign language to American schools, businesses and individuals, but it's about much more than that. Mike says, "What I've found out is that most people don't know much about the Chinese, the way they think, or about their culture. And sometimes we see this lack of understanding lead to fear, or worse, aggression. We see this happening in the world today between various countries. My personal goal in life is to help preserve balance and a peaceful relationship between the United States and China, and by extension, the rest of the world. I believe in bringing people together by building bridges of understanding and opening channels of communication, by connecting people through language and culture first. Now, more than ever, we need to inspire more people to become unofficial ambassadors of cultural awareness. It's really about bringing people together and creating relationships on a grassroots level."

To be a Mando Mandarin teacher, one truly has to be the best of the best. To recruit them, Mike and his team network with the top universities to create hiring and internship programs. After being hired, Mando Mandarin teachers go through an extensive training program. All of their teachers are certified and most are physically located in China.

Mando Mandarin teachers use webcams and distance-learning software, and all lessons are taught in real-time. According to Mike, "This makes our classes much easier, more fun, more engaging, and much less intimidating than other programs out there. Many other programs force learners to spend a lot of time self-studying, often using boring or outdated materials. We won't let that happen, because Mando Mandarin's highly trained teachers will make sure you receive all the inspiration and motivation you need to continue learning. On top of that, all our lessons are recorded; so if you ever have to miss class, you have the option of reviewing your lesson recordings later on at any time. We work very hard to ensure that you don't fall behind your learning goals."

Mando Mandarin has already experienced success in schools across the country, teaching Mandarin Chinese to K-12 students. The New York City school district is the largest school district in the nation and using Mando Mandarin in its schools. Currently in forty schools in twenty states, it's projected that by September 2012, Mando Mandarin will be in 350 schools nationwide. As its educational programs take off, the company also plans to expand its reach to other types of clients—those in the business community and government entities. Mike says, "We have a systemized teacher hiring and training process and we've come to the point where it's time to grow. We're ready to explode."

Our programs are really effective and we have the best of the best testimonials. I'm excited about what lies ahead.”

In 2002, it would have been hard for Mike to imagine that he would be running a business that exposes Americans to the Chinese culture and language. A New York City native, he wanted to get more in touch with his roots. He began hearing more about China's role in the world and wanted to see what all the hype was about since he'd never been to the country himself. He began taking regular trips twice a year and became fascinated with his heritage. At the time, Mike had a successful career in real estate, but says “I felt like I had learned all I was going to learn in that career path. I needed to do something I was more passionate about.”

This dream led to a decision to live in China for a year in 2007. He moved to Shanghai, the cultural center of the country, which was appealing to him because of its similarities to New York City. Mike recalls with a laugh, “My Mandarin was terrible. There were over thirty language schools in Shanghai, but frankly I didn't find the programs effective. Simply put, they were boring and just not engaging. I realized that there's a big demand for people to learn Chinese and that I couldn't be the only person who was frustrated with the lack of effective, affordable options.”

Mike began to look into the possibility of opening his own school to teach Chinese in a way that would keep people engaged. After a little while, he says it became apparent that “an online school made more sense. I really understood the consumer market for an effective Mandarin language program because I had been a consumer in that market myself.” Shortly after, Mando Mandarin was born. The company started out as one-to-one web-based tutoring program for American professionals such as bankers or lawyers who needed to learn the language for business purposes.

Things changed for Mando Mandarin when the foreign language teacher at the St. Gertrude School in Cincinnati, Ohio, spent a summer taking online lessons with Mando Mandarin. Geoff was so impressed, that he asked Mike if he could tailor Mando Mandarin so he could teach it at St. Gertrude. After being introduced that school year, it quickly became the talk of the school. It's these kinds of results and testimonials that led to a shift in focus to the educational arena.

With school budgets nationwide being slashed dramatically, one of the biggest perks of Mando Mandarin is its affordability and the way the company stands behind its work. For example, each new school client is offered a free ten lesson course with no obligations. If a school decides to move forward with Mando Mandarin— which almost all of them do— then the program can be tailored to work with each school's budget and schedule.

While still expanding the number of schools Mando Mandarin serves, the company is now at a point where it's planning to focus more on the business community. According to Mike, this is very timely as China surpassed Japan in 2010 to become the second largest economy in the world. “Opportunities in the U.S. are somewhat limited right now with the economy being what it is. There are skillsets that are taken for granted in the

U.S., but still valued in China. Opportunities do exist there. It's an exciting and fun place to be right now, as their culture is developing and evolving so quickly," Mike says.

Even for those who don't wish to move to China, learning more about the language and culture will still prove beneficial. There are nearly 1.4 billion people in China. By learning Mandarin, business professionals can expand their reach into a whole new marketplace. There are two-hour, ten-hour and twenty-hour Mando Mandarin courses available to individuals. The two-hour course is designed for someone just wishing to "get their feet wet" as Mike describes it. The ten-hour course is dubbed as survival Chinese, meaning that anyone who was taking a quick trip to China would be able to get around after completing the course. The twenty-hour course is for those wishing to learn how to make phone calls and conduct business in Mandarin. With the two-hour course tuition at just twenty dollars, Mando Mandarin is not only effective, it's also affordable. In addition, Mando Mandarin courses can be tailored to a specific client's industry. For example, if the client works in the auto industry, then teachers will teach the student terminology that is particular to the auto industry.

With eventual plans to expand his business to other languages and countries, Mike is now content knowing that with Mando Mandarin "he's improving the world through education." He says, "I've accepted the challenge to make the world a better place and do my part to improve lives. I believe learning Mandarin is indispensable to the education of our children so that they may harness a more productive relationship with China than previous generations."

However, Mike has many long-term goals. He's interested in becoming an urban planner for developing countries. Since he was born and raised in New York City, he has a vested interest in the city's well-being and plans to run for office on a local community level. Also, through his travel to China, Mike says he's realized how privileged Americans are. "Not everyone has the chance to dream. Eventually, I'd like to help build schools for underprivileged kids around the world."

Although it's hard to believe that Mike has free time, when he does he enjoys exercising— particularly running, basketball and mixed martial arts. He also likes to read, play video games and spend time with friends, family and his bearded collie, Duke. Least surprising of all, Mike likes to travel and learn other languages.

Taking his own advice, Mike describes himself as one of the unofficial ambassadors of socio-cultural exchange between countries. Still traveling to Shanghai twice a year, he is building a Sino-American business network. Most importantly of all, he's building understanding. He says, "When there is understanding between people, there is less room for fear and a much higher chance for synergy and progress. That's what it's all about."

For more information, or a free demo, contact:

Mike Cheng

Founder & President, Mando Mandarin

Office: (888) 516-2636

Email: support@mandomandarin.com

Web: <http://www.mandomandarin.com>