

张冰姿教授对外经贸英语书集

客商经验谈

(修订本)

BUSINESSMEN TALKING about BUSINESS

张冰姿 编著



对外经济贸易大学出版社

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我很高兴看到张冰姿教授继《温哥华来客》和《出访英伦》两本商业英语教材后又推出了这本新的高级商业英语材料。在这本新材料中,英国石油公司、美国 IBM 集团等 19 家大公司的总经理、各级负责人、专家向广大中国听众和读者介绍了他们从事国际贸易的经验。这对于我们从事对外经贸工作的职工和经贸院校的学生是一个难得的开拓眼界,汲取经验,提高经贸业务能力和商业英语水平的很好机会。

我很高兴向大家推荐《客商经验谈》这本书。希望大家能通过学习,提高英语水平,增长业务知识,为推进我国的对外经贸事业和本世纪最后十年的现代化建设多做贡献。

李佩清

序

张冰姿同志是北京对外经济贸易大学的资深教授。她从事英语教学四十余年,积累了丰富的教学经验。她辛勤耕耘,敬业奉献,为我国培养了一批又一批对外开放所需要的外经贸英语人才。她所编著的《温哥华来客》、《出访英伦》、《客商经验谈》和《电视外贸英语》都是从她亲身参加过的外贸谈判和外事活动的实例中精心提炼出来的。这四本书由她本人在中央人民广播电台和中央电视台主持播讲以后,在社会上引起了良好反响,受到广大听众、观众的欢迎和赞赏,对提高广大外贸工作者的英语业务水平起到了积极的作用。

我国已成为 WTO 成员,面临着比以往任何时候更多的机遇和挑战,我们需要尽快地培

养出大量政治素质高、熟悉 WTO 规则、外语水平过硬的工作人员。目前从事外经贸工作的广大干部职工也迫切需要提高自己的业务和外语水平。这四本书的再版适应了我国加入世贸组织的现实需要,可谓正逢其时。它们不仅语言地道,而且实用性和针对性都很强,学了就用得上。我希望大家通过学习这套教材,从中受益,为我国外经贸事业的发展做出更大的贡献。

石广生

前 言

这 21 篇经验谈,都是由国际上享有声誉而且同中国又有长期业务关系的公司、商社的人士和与国际贸易紧密相关的各行业的专家提供素材的。这些著名的人士和专家来自英国石油公司、英国戴维公司集团、美国工商五金公司、美国通用电器公司、美国 IBM 集团、德国曼内斯曼集团、德国金陵巴斯夫树脂有限公司、日本丸红株式会社、丹麦宝隆洋行、加拿大北方电讯公司、澳大利亚 BHP 国际控股有限公司、美国格杰律师事务所、英国司力达律师事务所、美国大通银行、美国辛克国际货运公司、英国塞奇维克国际保险经纪集团、香港 DDB 尼德汉姆广告社、英国航空公司和美中贸易全国委员会。

这 21 篇经验谈,内容覆盖面较广。里面既谈到他们开展国际业务所遵循的一些原则,又谈到他们取得事业成功的基本经验;既谈一般经商之道,也谈如何把一般经商之道运用到与不同文化背景的国家打交道上来。这些人士和专家根据他们多年来的实际观察,对我们在贸易活动中反映出来的一些问题提出了一些看法和改进意见。他们的谈话可能对我们有所启发。

从学习英语的角度上来看,他们有的人说英国英语,有的

人说美国英语,有的人说加拿大英语或澳大利亚英语。有的人虽然英语不是他们的本国语,但是都具有丰富的使用英语进行国际贸易的经验。收听这套广播节目的同志,可以听到不同国家的人讲英语。这对于训练我们的听力,使我们适应与不同国家的商业人士用英语进行贸易活动,也是有好处的。

为了便于不同英语水平的同志学习这些谈话,每篇之后均列有详细的词汇表,供查阅。练习的设计:一是学一点口语常用语;二是做点笔头练习,再通过练习巩固所学的有关主题的关键词汇和用语;三是做点翻译练习。练习附有答案,翻译附有参考译文。只要熟读译文,就能做好每课的练习。

在本书编写过程中,化工、机械、五金、技术、仪器、轻工进出口总公司和贸促会的同志热情推荐各国商界人士和专家为本书提供经验之谈;国际问题研究所研究员宋以敏同志认真协助翻译、审校本书的中文稿;本书最先连载于《国际商报》四版,国际商报社副刊部的于又燕、胡明、杜实京、彭晓先、潘继红等同志为本书的出版做了大量的工作;中央人民广播电台的张力同志也为本书的编写提供了宝贵的意见,在此一并表示感谢。没有他们的帮助,本书是不能及时和读者见面的。

张冰姿

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Unit 1

BP - an International Oil Company

—Interview with Mr. Brian Outlaw of BP

Bingzi: Hello, everyone. Welcome to the first programme in a new series called “Businessmen Talking about Business”. In the series I will be talking to a number of English speaking businessmen and women who have business interests in China. After each talk I will review the language that they used. In that way, I hope that you will learn more about the English language and, at the same time, something of interest about our friends who are doing business with China.

My first guest is Mr. Brian Outlaw, the general manager and chief representative of the British Petroleum Company, BP, in China. Hello and welcome to the programme.

Outlaw: Hello, it's a pleasure to be here.

Bingzi: Firstly, let me tell the listeners why I asked BP to be my first guest. I wanted to talk to a British company first as English is their native language. I know that BP is Britain's biggest company and the third largest oil company in the

world. Apart from exploring for and producing oil and gas, the company refines and markets petroleum products around the world. It is also a very large chemicals company and a major supplier of animal feeds and animal breeding stock. BP has been in China for some time, and so I thought that they would be a good company to talk to.

Mr. Outlaw, can I ask you first about your name, which is very unusual. I'm sure you're not an outlaw, someone who is outside the law, a criminal. Where did the name come from?

Outlaw: The simple answer is from my father, but how my family got the name, I really don't know. I believe that many years ago the name used to be spelt with a final "e", but this seems to have been lost somewhere around 400 years ago. It's a very uncommon name - and I have to be careful that I am an outlaw in name and not in nature. The advantage of the name, though, is that people remember it easily.

Bingzi: Oh, yes indeed. How long have you been in China?

Outlaw: I've been here for just over two years, long enough to appreciate how little I know about the country.

- Bingzi:** Before you arrived here for the first time, I am sure that you had some ideas about what it would be like to work here. Were those ideas proved right?
- Outlaw:** Some of them were, but I also had a lot of misconceptions. I read several books about how 'different' China is from the west. Some of these books gave the impression that the Chinese are very cunning and play lots of tricks in negotiation. One even listed a hundred or so tactics that you use in meetings. For example, it suggested that the important decision maker would often keep very quiet in the background - I haven't found that to be the case at all.
- Bingzi:** I think some of us may have similar misconceptions about foreigners too, due to lack of direct contact.
- Outlaw:** I'm sure that's right, and I think that the truth of the matter is that people seldom play tricks when negotiating serious contracts. It's essential that both sides feel that they have done well in a negotiation. The concept of mutual benefit is very important. If one wins a contract through trickery, the chances of getting a second or third contract are much reduced.
- Bingzi:** That's certainly true. What about the people,

do you find us Chinese very different from the English?

Outlaw: Clearly there are differences in culture, but there are many similarities, too. I think that the Chinese and the English consider themselves to some extent reserved. Neither of us likes to show too much emotion in public, and we are both rather formal.

Bingzi: But we are not formal all the time!

Outlaw: Of course not - and neither are we, but I think that we are both more formal than some other people at similar occasions. However, we do like to let our hair down under the right circumstances, don't we? To answer your question, though, I think that there are many similarities, as well as differences between us, and it's the similarities that I think are important.

Bingzi: We obviously agree about many things. Tell me, Mr. Outlaw, what is BP doing in China?

Outlaw: We are doing quite a lot. We are exploring for oil and gas, trading chemicals and licensing chemicals technology and we are also involved in a number of nutrition projects.

Bingzi: Could we talk a little about the exploration activities? How long have you been exploring in China?

Outlaw: We have been exploring offshore China in cooperation with the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) for about 10 years. We signed the first contracts awarded in the first round of offshore bidding in 1983, and have had a variety of exploration contracts ever since. Up until now we have drilled more than 20 wells in China and that has meant that we have spent a lot of money.

Bingzi: Have you made any discoveries in China?

Outlaw: Not yet, exploration is a high risk activity and so far in China our efforts have not been successful, but we continue to learn more and more about the geology and we hope we will get some success in the near future.

Bingzi: I don't know much about how foreign cooperation works in the oil business in China. Could you explain it for me?

Outlaw: It's very similar to the situation in many other countries. The government invites international oil companies to bid for areas to explore. The companies carry out an agreed work programme and they pay all the costs. In the event of a discovery CNOOC may participate in the development of the field and pays its own costs for that.

Bingzi: Excuse me for butting in, but I'm not sure that

I understand exactly what you mean by development?

Outlaw: I mean the design and building of the production platform and pipelines and the drilling of the wells to produce the oil from the field. Once under production the revenues from the field are used to recover the development and exploration costs and then the remaining oil is split between CNOOC and the foreign companies in an agreed way. We then pay tax on the profits that we have made from the venture. That's an oversimplification, but it's along those lines.

Bingzi: So the Chinese get some of the production?

Outlaw: Certainly, then we make our big discovery in China, it will be good for both of us.

Bingzi: I hope you are successful soon.

Outlaw: So do I.

Bingzi: I'd like to hear more about BP later, but first, there is another question that I'd like to explore with you. Over the past few years I understand that the oil price has moved from high to low and recent events have caused it to increase again. What do you think will happen to the oil price over the next few years?

Outlaw: The oil price is set by the price that the market will pay. Over the last ten years or so the world

oil market has become extremely sophisticated and very sensitive to changes in supply and demand throughout the world. If the supply decreases, prices will go up, but then the market will tend to cut back on the use of petroleum products and, at higher prices, alternative fuels etc. become economically attractive.

Bingzi: But do you think that the price will go up or down?

Outlaw: To answer that I would need a very good crystal ball, and if I had such a thing I could become a very rich man. I think that, given the likely growth in demand, the oil price will tend to increase from the levels at the start of the 1990's. With that, and the need for continued investment, a price of around \$ 25 per barrel seems about right. However, there will always be some price fluctuations, especially at times like now when there is political uncertainty in the world.

Bingzi: Thank you, I think that we have covered enough ground today and I suggest that we close on that point. In our next talk I would like to find out more about how an international organization works. In the meantime, thank you.

Outlaw: Thank you, I look forward to our next talk.