

Beyond the Bow

by Sharon Roberts

At J-Biz, learning the Japanese language is a fascinating path of understanding Japanese culture.



Japanese is a language comprised of characters completely different from English, French, Italian or German, and can be intimidating. And if you have to leave for Japan in a few days, arming you with some tips on Japanese culture will be more useful than trying to learn the language overnight.

This advice comes from Ms Kazue Kaneko, founder of J-Biz Pte Ltd, a Japanese training consultancy. J-Biz provides Japanese language courses, Business Japanese course and the popular 1-day Japanese Culture Seminar.

Although most business meetings today are conducted in English, knowing a little Japanese does help to break the ice as it shows sincerity and interest in the person. "It's even more important to understand Japanese business style," says Ms Kaneko.

"To know the Japanese gestures is the key to understand what they are thinking. Also, in meetings, Japanese tend not to speak much. But if you know they are comfortable being silent, you don't worry or wonder what he is thinking.



Ms Kazue Kaneko

"You can avoid embarrassing yourself or your host if you have prior knowledge that the Japanese are not comfortable talking about personal matters in the first meeting, like marital status or kids."

Other cultural nuances like dining etiquette where the Japanese find it's polite to finish everything on their plate when someone is giving them a treat or to place chopsticks horizontally, not vertically, are shared during the language courses and cultural

workshops. J-Biz customises their course contents according to the corporate needs. The ideal class size is 10.

INTERACTIVE LEARNING

J-Biz has been providing quality training since November 2006 and its clients include Citibank, Panasonic, Nippon Express and Fullerton Fund Management.

Ms Kaneko leads her team in training. She is a qualified trainer, having completed the Japanese teaching methodology intensive course in Bryn Mawr College and obtained the Master of Arts in Japanese Applied Linguistics from the University of New South Wales, Australia. She is a member of the Japanese Language Teachers' Association and the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and has taught Japanese at the polytechnic and university level.

J-Biz has adopted a dynamic methodology of imparting their knowledge to their students. Although they are teaching adults, the use of picture cards, photographs, slides, videos and even Japanese pop music are used as interactive and stimulating exercises. Listening sessions and role-plays help to reinforce the learning process as Ms Kaneko believes "this will allow learners to become better listeners, then better speakers."

The consultancy offers online support to their students as well as progress and evaluation reports should clients require it.

PACE YOURSELF

J-Biz currently offers 12 core courses and will work together with clients to determine the most suitable selection. All courses are carefully planned and paced in order to achieve maximum results.

As Ms Kaneko reiterates that "Japanese language and culture are closely related", to communicate effectively, one should also be aware of the appropriate customs and etiquette required. The 1-day Japanese Cultural Seminar will cover aspects such as features of the language, characteristics of Japanese, business perspectives and cultural aspects including history, religion, festivities and table manner.

Language courses last approximately two hours per session and range from 10 sessions for a Conversation Course to 20 sessions for a Beginner's Course. Lessons are held at the client's premises and lesson hours are flexible. Classes can be arranged from Monday through Saturday from 8 am to 8 pm. Such measures are taken to ensure convenience and satisfaction without extra costs and disruption to their clients' busy schedules. ☎

J-Biz Pte Ltd
9 Shenton Way #04-01 Singapore 068813
Tel/Fax: 6534 8027
E-mail: info@jbiz.com.sg | Web: www.jbiz.com.sg