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INTRODUCTION

“We’re a public and in-house financial training organizer based in Hong Kong and we’re presently looking for suitable Financial Modeling trainers to conduct public (and possibly some in-house requests) training courses on Financial Modeling for 2008.”

That was the opening sentence from an email I received from Fiona who reached out to me for assistance. It was November 12, 2007, and the email was entitled Financial Modeling Training enquiry.

The email continued, “We’re presently looking at short, three to five-day modeling courses in and around Asia. You may visit our website below for more information about us and what we do.

“If you’re interested, please do let us know your training fees.”

Reading the email, I was certain that this had to be some kind of scam. I’d never spoken to Fiona before and the request was so completely out of the blue, I was convinced it couldn’t be real. After all, we were a small firm in Perth, Western Australia, with no previous experience in Asia. I looked at Fiona’s website and was astounded to see it looked genuine, well-crafted and very professional.

Still not satisfied, I paid AU\$22 to do a company search on her business name to see whether this was a real company. Much to my surprise, it was. It was only then that I realized this was a real enquiry! OMG! Someone was actually proposing to fly me from Perth to Hong Kong to run a training course. Amazing!

Fiona and I exchanged a few more emails, negotiated a fee, worked out the dates, signed a contract and I booked the time in my diary – then promptly forgot about it as I really didn’t think anything would come of it.

But, much to my surprise, a few months later Fiona was back in touch. Eight people had registered for the course and she asked me to let her know my flight preferences so she could book these along with the 5-star hotel accommodation.

“Wow! This is really happening,” I thought, and it was all very exciting, so I immediately shared the news with my wife.

Once the excitement dissipated, however, I was immediately filled with self-doubt and fear. Could I do this? What would the attendees be like? What if they’re all super-smart?

As I later found out, all my negative thoughts and worries were for nothing. The tickets arrived, I flew over, ran the course for her and the feedback was great. Luckily, my wife was able to take some time off work, so she came with me.

We added a few extra nights to our stay and had a mini-vacation where we visited Hong Kong Disney as both of us had been wanting to visit a Disney theme park ever since we were kids, faithfully watching their programs every Sunday night on TV, but we’d previously never had the opportunity. We also went to the Peak, Kowloon, Lantau Island, Ocean Park, and many other places.



We wanted to cram everything in as we didn't think we'd ever be coming back.

It was only when I got home that it occurred to me that this training thing could be a great way to "mix business with pleasure" and could be the path to a life I'd never previously dreamed possible. In addition to running well-paid training courses, I could also have continuous holidays where the majority of the costs were all paid for by someone else.

Welcome to the life of an international trainer.

I worked with Fiona every year for over 10 years, until she wound her business back during COVID and moved to North America. Together, we ran courses throughout Asia and the Middle East.

I never realized that one, short email would be the start of an amazing new life.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

My story tells of a lucky accident, and, in speaking with other international trainers, I learned that many of them had gotten started via a random email or LinkedIn message as well.

While it's a lovely surprise if this happens to you too, there are some deliberate steps you can take if you want to get into this area. It's a shame this book didn't exist back in 2007!

You don't need to be the world's most amazing trainer to run courses overseas. I'm certainly not! There are many trainers who are far better than I am and have been delivering training for much longer.

Yet, in many areas of expertise, there's just a small pool of trainers who are willing and able to go overseas. Trainers just like you are already doing it. All you need is a few pointers and the confidence to begin.

Being an international trainer does require a particular mindset plus some tools and resources, but there is a pathway from dream to reality and that's what this book is all about.

The goal of this book is to share what I've learned on my journey (excuse the pun!) to becoming an international trainer and inspire you by sharing some of the fascinating experiences I've had along the way. Most importantly, with this book I want to empower you to harness the knowledge I've gained and apply it to your career and business.

Delivering training to people from other nations and other cultures is enriching. It builds confidence and it provides great enjoyment because you're often working with people who are incredibly appreciative that you've come to their country to share your knowledge.



TAKING OFF ON A JOURNEY TOGETHER

When I go traveling, I usually post photos. Many people who have seen these or read stories about the adventures I've posted on social media often ask how they can do similar things. This book answers all the questions I could think of about getting started, keeping going and expanding your international training career.

It's always better to learn from others' mistakes rather than your own wherever possible, so I've included stories that inform on both what to do and what not to do. In addition, there are photos and insights that I hope will inspire and encourage you to take some steps outside your comfort zone and go further than perhaps you thought you ever could.

In this book you'll find:

- ✓ Useful insights about the business of international training: how international training works, how to negotiate fees, how to break into the sector and how to be successful.
- ✓ A travel guide: how to plan your journey from being a trainer within your home country to becoming an international trainer; things to do, things to consider, helpful tips, plus information about some of the risks, dangers and annoyances.
- ✓ Inspiration: lots of beautiful pictures and stories that are designed to make you want to go traveling, like when you're reading National Geographic.

However, please do not expect instructions on how to become a better speaker, how to tell more engaging stories or how to tell funnier jokes. I'm assuming you already know how to speak and probably have some pretty good jokes by now since you are a trainer.

Nor does this book teach you how to build your personal brand or improve your social media presence. We'll touch on these subjects but they're not the main focus of this book.

Lastly, this book won't attempt to help you improve your training courses, invent new games or facilitate better workshops. This is not a Train the Trainer book either, and there are many excellent books elsewhere on all these subjects.

This book is written in three parts.

In the first part, *Living the Dream of Working as a Traveling Trainer*, we'll look at what mixing business and pleasure has meant in my experience in order to give you a taste of what is possible. I reveal stories and illustrations of the breadth and range of work that you could encounter when working in this arena. I also reveal how I came to do this work and what I have learned about preparing for life as a traveling trainer – literally – moving from spreadsheets to hotel bedsheets across a multitude of countries and hotels.

In the second part, *Becoming an International Trainer*, we'll examine the factors that determine whether international training suits you and some practicalities of reaching this goal. After all the images and stories from Part 1, we also examine the less glamorous side of international training and how the industry of training works at the global level. We also take a deep dive into the marketing aspects of being an international trainer and identify the key drivers to success.



And in the third part, *Surviving and Thriving as an International Trainer*, I share what I have learned about traveling to often far-away places and where unexpected challenges – and pleasant surprises – can confront you. Importantly, I dissect the future of the training industry and show you how training is evolving and provide strategies for success in your international training arena.

So, let's take off on our journey together and set sail for your international training career.

What could it look like?

Just imagine you're sitting in your office in January and already you have bookings to run training courses in Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Brunei, Hong Kong, Dubai and Bahrain – and that's just the first half of the year!

Does that sound unrealistic? Too good to be true?

Well, I'm actually not making this up because that's what is in my diary ... and your diary could be the same!

When you put on your international wings, start to get some bookings and you have some of your own adventures, could you do me a favor? Could you share your stories, photos and videos, and tag them #TravelingTrainerLife please?

You'll inspire us all!

