

华尔街有名,因为这里是美国,乃至世界的金融中心。华尔街英语出名,因为这是最高端的英语培训课程。不过,需要说明的是,华尔街英语与华尔街并没有什么关系,而且也不属于美国。华尔街英语的创办者是意大利人 Luigi Peccenni(帕切尼尼)。不过,帕切尼尼先生如今却落户中国。他的办公室就在上海金茂大厦。帕切尼尼告诉记者:“我选择金茂作为上海的第一个中心,是为了向中国人传达一个高品质、形象和信誉度。”

其实,作为华尔街英语的创始人,帕切尼尼已经将全球的华尔街学院出售给了西尔文学习系统公司。但是,1999年他却在中国重新开办华尔街英语。在不到两年的时间里,华尔街英语就北京、上海先后开办了11个中心,学员达到1万多名。当时,帕切尼尼已经59岁高龄。说起来,帕切尼尼晚年选择中国的原因很有趣。35岁的时候,他开始钻研老子的思想。10年之后,帕切尼尼又开始研究佛教和风水。一位风水先生看了他的生辰八字后,说:“你的前生曾是中国人。”于是,帕切尼尼选择在中国度过自己的余生。

创业为了圆大学梦

1973年,帕切尼尼获得了语言和文学学士学位。那年,他已经33岁。在过去的四年里,帕切尼尼就是利用晚上和周末的时间来攻读的大学课程。因为,他此时的身份是COMPUTEX公司的总经理,每天需要花上12个小时的时间来处理公司业务。COMPUTEX公司创建于1968年1月,是帕切尼尼建立的第一个企业,也是意大利第一家给人提供计算机培训的机构,尽管当时计算机行业还处于发展初期。

帕切尼尼经商可以说是为了圆自己的大学梦。19岁的时候,帕切尼尼就以优异的成绩从中学毕业。但是,父亲对他很失望,“我们已经有钱了,可以让你去上大学了。”其实,这是帕切尼尼最担心的事情,也是他能够理解的事情。16岁那年暑假,为了能够完成自己的中学学业,他就开始给附近的一家工厂打工,帮助家里支付自己的学费。但是,工厂恶劣的工作条件,使帕切尼尼决定去当一名工人。他选择了推销员的职业。

几年之后,帕切尼尼已经成为来意一家公司里销售方面的负责人。就当时的情况来看,收入已经相当可观。然而,就在这种情况下,他却毅然辞去了那份工作,转而重新成为一名基层的销售代理。负责上门推销百科全书和语言自学课程。这份工作没有工资,全部的收入就是销售的佣金。帕切尼尼说:“当时我在想象一种生活方式。每天早上醒来的时候,可以自由地决定一天的日程,决定每天该做些什么事情,该如何去做这些事情。我要承担风险并创造自己的生活。我愿意为我的自由付出任何代价。”

如果说销售是承担风险的话,那么创办公司应该是一种冒险,何况帕切尼尼选择的还是计算机培训行业。在上世纪60年代,计算机水平和普及程度远没有今天那么发达,IBM360电脑和橱柜一样大。因此,帕切尼尼的项目在家人、朋友看来,完全是一种冒险。所幸,他成功了。4年之后,帕切尼尼以

帕切尼尼:寻根中国的华尔街英语创始人

100万美元的价格出售给了一家瑞士公司。这是帕切尼尼在培训领域的第一次冒险,而这笔收入提供给他一个更大的投资空间。

EOL 险些让他倾家荡产

1986年,帕切尼尼用最后的2000美元在瑞士一份名叫Lugano的刊物上刊登了一个广告:“寻找一位能够投资15万美元的合作伙伴。”到了4月份,他终于找到了这笔投资。这15万美元帮助帕切尼尼成功实施了EOL(英语在线)项目。

1972年,帕切尼尼创办了华尔街学院,正式进入英语语言培训领域。这应该是他的第二次冒险。当时,意大利国内已经有像里兹等著名的英语培训机构。而帕切尼尼根本没有语言培训行业的经验。为此,他向一些专业人士请教。没想到得到的几乎都是反对意见,认为:“语言培训完全不像计算机技能培训。这个领域不切合你。”但是,帕切尼尼却充满信心。因为在进行计算机培训的时候,他就开发出一套能够将个人指导与教师帮助结合起来的系统。这个方法将先进的多媒体工具与人的交流结合起来。它是一种自主学习进度,高度灵活和十分方便的学习方法。应该说,这是一种真正以学生为核心的教学方法。帕切尼尼希望这一套系统能真正帮助学生学习语言。

帕切尼尼告诉记者:“当时想得很简单,那些大机构使用的都是持续了50多年并且还在继续使用的英语语言培训办法。时代在变化,英语作为一种语言也发生了很多变化。我坚信当时的人们需要一种新的语言学习方法。”帕切尼尼的坚信,带来了英语语言培训行业的一个奇迹。到1978年,华尔街在意大利有了25个学习中心,而到1982年,这一数字又翻了一倍。

但是,帕切尼尼并没有就此满足。1980年,帕切尼尼和技术人员着手开发一种当时最先进的多媒体语言教学程序——EOL。因为早在1972年,他就梦想发明一种独特的教学方法和教学材料,确保华尔街学院给学员提供最佳的学习工具。但是,EOL让帕切尼尼遭遇了又一次挫折。公司投入了全部的资金并向银行和个人投资者借款,想通过大规



模的销售活动让这个系统获得经济上的成功。结果这一新生事物却没有能够得到公众的认可,帕切尼尼背上了沉重的诸多负担。1985年,他不得不关闭在意大利的50个连锁机构以及在法国的一个分支机构,帕切尼尼自己也身心俱疲,给累病了。即使如此,他也没有放弃这一梦想与渴望。

帕切尼尼对EOL的坚持终于得到巨大回报。1990年,华尔街在瑞士建立了15个连锁机构,并且重新获得了对意大利的分支的控制权。到1995年,华尔街已经成功进入了西班牙、葡萄牙、德国、墨西哥和委内瑞拉这5个国家。经历了一个轮回,华尔街重新回到了帕切尼尼手里,帕切尼尼比华尔街变得更加成熟了。

《道德经》的忠实信奉者

在18岁的时候,帕切尼尼问自己:“我是谁?生活的意义是什么?我在世界上应该做什么?”于是,他的一系列经历可以说都在寻找这些答案。直到35岁那年,帕切尼尼在寻找英文辅导材料的时候,无意中发现了英文版的《道德经》。他立刻被睿智的东方哲理给打动了。从此,这个完全不懂中文的意大利人居然成为《道德经》的忠实信奉者。《道德经》的英文译本中的语句时常挂在帕切尼尼嘴边。

“道家的思想是智慧的思想,使用道家哲学将帮助您生活和工作的。道家思想里最重要的原则之一是为别人服务。如果你真的要遵守这个原则,为别人服务,你就必须尽你所能,用你的能力、责任心和爱心去做事情。”这是帕切尼尼对《道德经》的感悟。由此,他对中国也产生了极为深刻的迷恋。

1999年,帕切尼尼终于下决心来到中国,而在两年前,他已经将自己的公司卖给了西尔文学习系统公司。帕切尼尼手里所拥有的只是华尔街英语的中国连锁经营权。当时出售华尔街英语,帕切尼尼想到了退休。同时,华尔街英语需要新的,

大量的资金,才能进一步向前发展。因此,他选择了西尔文这家跨国公司。不过,在退休的日子里,帕切尼尼却仍然思索着自己的未来。“在今后的30年里,中国将成为全世界的‘未来之国’,塑造出未来的世界。”帕切尼尼将来到中国视为一生最后一次历险。当时,中国国内已经拥有相当数量的英语培训机构,也都带着各自的特点。“但他们没有帕切尼尼。”老人自信地说。就是在这种激烈竞争的市场局面下,帕切尼尼带领华尔街整个团队成为中国英语培训市场的一个名牌。

作为一位长者,帕切尼尼的经营管理处处体现出一种道家思想。“你是收到别人礼物时高兴还是送别人礼物时高兴?”这是他经常向身边职员的问题。“如果你有这种特权和能力的时候,当然是在送礼物的时候就觉得是快乐了。对我来说最好的回报就是当我在电梯里或在走廊里遇到那些学生时问他们在华尔街学习开不开心,当然他们并不知道我是谁。他们的回答是肯定的,我也非常开心。我关心他们的健康和幸福。这样我觉得我的生命不仅对我而且对其他人都是有意义的。”帕切尼尼如是说。

采访结束的时候,记者问及那三个问题是否找到了答案。帕切尼尼说:“关于前两个问题,我只找到部分答案。第一个问题:我是谁。我只能说现在我知道我的人生准则,并时刻遵守。第二个问题:人生的意义是什么?这个问题太大,他可以是有关精神上,这真的是另一个层面的问题。我也在不断探索。但是,可以肯定,人生的意义应该包括为人服务。第三个问题:我在这个世界做什么。是的,我找到了答案。我的人生大部分时间都投入了教育事业,我将会继续这样做。除了英语培训,我现在正在计划写一套或者两本关于人的理解和行为的书,是根据我与多人相处和经历了人生的各种情况而写。我相信人际关系将会成为并一直是实现更好的人生和时间的和平的关键。”

Approach the Founder of *Wall Street English China*: Peccenini:

Wall Street is famous as the financial center of the United States and the world. *Wall Street English* is famous for its high-end English training courses. But there is one point to explain: *Wall Street English* has nothing to do with Wall Street, moreover, it does not belong to the United States. The founder of *Wall Street English* is an Italian, Luigi T. Peccenini who is now living in China. His office is in Jinmao Plaza. Peccenini told the reporter: "I chose Jinmao Plaza to establish the first learning center in Shanghai to convey a high quality, a high profile and sound business integrity to Chinese people."

In fact, as founder of *Wall Street English*, Peccenini has sold *Wall Street Institute* to *Sylvan Learning System*. But, in 1999, he re-established *Wall Street English* in China. Within two years, *Wall Street English* established 11 learning centers in Beijing and Shanghai, with its number of trainees totaling more than 10000. At that time, Peccenini was already 59 years old. The reason why he chose to spend his golden years in China is very interesting. At the age of 35, he began to study the thoughts of Lao Tzu. Ten years later, Peccenini began to study Buddhism and geomantic omens. After observing his date of birth and eight characters of his horoscope, a geomantic master said to him: "You were a Chinese in the pre-life." Thus, Peccenini chose to spend the rest of his life in China.

Started his Own Business to Realize his Dream of Studying in a University

In 1973 when he was 33, Peccenini earned a bachelor degree in language and literature. In the past four years before he got the degree, he had been studying college courses at nights and at the weekends because he was the general manager of Computex Company and had to spend more than 12 hours handling the business affairs of his company every day. Computex was founded in January, 1968. It was the first business Peccenini established and also the first institution which provided computer training courses for individuals. At that time, the computer industry at large was still in its infancy.

Peccenini started his business so as to realize his dream of studying in a university. At the age of 19, Peccenini graduated from high school with excellent performance. But his father said to him: "We had no money to afford your college tuition." In fact, he was most afraid of this, meanwhile, he could also understand his parents. At the age of sixteen, he started to do some odd jobs for a factory nearby in the summer vacation in order to support himself to finish his study at high school and to relieve his family of some of the economic burdens. However, seeing the abominable working conditions, Peccenini gave up the idea of becoming a worker. Thus, he chose to be a salesman.

Several years later, Peccenini became the principal of the sales department of a company in Milan. At that time, he got considerable income from the job. However, under this favorable condition, he resigned that job decisively and became a sales representative at the grassroots level. His job was to sell encyclopedias and self-teaching language courses from door to door. This job didn't grant him a stable salary as all his income depended on the commission from the sales. Peccenini said: "At that time, I was imagining a life in which I could freely decide my schedule of a whole day when I got up every morning. By leading such a life, I decided for myself what I should do and how I should do it. I wanted to shoulder risks and explore a brand new life of my own. And I was willing to pay any price for this freedom."

If sales mean assuming risks, setting up a business should be an adventure. It was especially true in the computer training industry. In the sixties of last century, people's computer proficiency and the popularity of computers were much less developed than that of today. IBM 360 was as big as a cupboard. Thus, Peccenini's business was a complete adventure in the eyes of his families and friends. Fortunately, he succeeded. Four years later, Peccenini sold Computex to a Swiss company at USD a million. This was his first adventure in the business circle. And the money he gained from the business provided him with an even more spacious room to invest.

English Online Almost Made Him Penniless

In 1986, Peccenini placed an advertisement with his last USD 2000 on a newspaper called Lugano "in search of a business partner able to invest USD 150,000 in his business". In April, he finally gained this investment of USD 150,000, which contributed to the successful implementation of his project called English Online.

In 1972, Peccenini established Wall Street Institute and made his formal debut in the English language training field. This could be his second adventure. At that time, there had appeared some prestigious English training institutions in Italy, like Berlitz. Peccenini hadn't any experience in the language training industry. So he asked the opinions of some professional advisors. Out of expectation, almost all of them were against his idea. They explained: "language training is completely different from computer skill training. This field doesn't suit you." Despite the discouraging words, Peccenini was full of confidence because he had developed a special learning method which could combine individual instruction with teachers' help when he was engaged in computer training. This method combined advanced multimedia tools with people's communication. It was a highly flexible and convenient learning method characterized by a custom-made learning schedule. It should be admitted that it was also a teaching method which put students at the center of the learning process. Peccenini earnestly hoped that such a learning system could really help students in their language learning.

Peccenini told the reporter: "What I thought was actually quite simple. Those large

institutions still practiced the English language training methods which sustained for more than 50 years. Time is changing. English, as a language, has also undergone many changes. At that time, I was deeply convinced that people did need a new language learning method.” It was Peccenini’s confidence that brought about a wonder to the English language training industry. In 1978, Wall Street English boasted 25 learning centers in Italy. In 1982, this figure was doubled.

Peccenini didn’t stop his efforts at the sight of the above success. In 1980, Peccenini worked together with his technicians in order to develop advanced multimedia teaching software— *English Online*. As early as 1972, he dreamed of inventing a unique set of teaching methods and teaching materials so as to ensure that *Wall Street Institute* could provide the best learning tools to its trainees. However, Peccenini was again frustrated by the failure of English Online, in which he invested all the capital of his company and the loans borrowed from individual investors. He had hoped to achieve an economic success through the sales of this learning system, however, it turned out that the system as a new invention was neither recognized nor accepted by the public. Consequently, Peccenini got into deep debt. In 1985, he had to close the 50 chain training institutions in Italy and a branch in France. He was so exhausted both physically and psychologically that he finally came down with a severe illness. Even as things got this far, he didn’t give up his dream and aspiration.

Peccenini’s adherence in English Online finally got huge return. In 1990, Wall Street English set up 15 chain training institutions in Switzerland and regained its control over the branches in Italy. By 1995, Wall Street English has been successfully introduced into five countries including Spain, Portugal, Germany, Mexico and Venezuela. After this process, Peccenini regained the control of Wall Street English and made it even more mature.

A Faithful Follower of Tao Te Ching

At the age of 18, Peccenini asked himself: “Who am I? What do I live for? What am I supposed to do in this world?” His strings of experiences may provide answers to these questions. At the age of 35 when he was searching English tutorial materials, he accidentally found an English version of Tao Te Ching. Reading few lines, he was immediately moved by the insightful and profound oriental philosophical thoughts. From then on, Peccenini, as an Italian who doesn’t know any Chinese became a faithful embracer of Tao Te Ching, the English lines of which often linger on his lips.

“The thoughts of Taoism are full of wisdom. The philosophy advocated by Taoism will help you with your life and work. One the most important principles of Taoism is serving the people. If you really observe this principle and serve others, you must do what ever you can to do things with your capabilities, sense of responsibility and a caring and loving heart.” This is what Peccenini got from Tao Te Ching. Thus, he was also deeply captivated by the charisma of China.

In 1999, Peccenini finally decided to come to China. Two years prior to his arrival in China, he had sold his company to Sylvan Learning System Corp. What was still left in his hand was the franchise operation of Wall Street English in China. When he sold Wall Street English at that time, he thought of retirement. Meanwhile, Wall Street English needs large amounts of capital to develop further. Thus, he chose the multinational company —Sylvan Learning System Corp. Even during his retirement period, Peccenini still pondered his future: “In the coming thirty years, China will become a country of the future in the world, and it will shape the future world.” Peccenini regarded his arrival in China as his last adventure in life. When he arrived, there have appeared numerous English training institutions of their respective features in China. “But they didn’t have Peccenini,” he said confidently. It was in this highly competitive market environment that Peccenini led the team of *Wall Street English* and developed it into a name brand on English training market in China.

As a senior, Peccenini also integrated the philosophical thoughts of Taoism into his daily management and operation of his company. “Do you prefer to receive gifts from others or to give away presents to others?” This is a question he often asks his employees. “If you have the privilege and ability, you will certainly be pleased when you give away gifts to others. When I meet with those learners on the hallway and ask them if they are pleased with their learning at Wall Street English without being known who I am, and they give me an affirmative answer, I will be very pleased. I am concerned about their health and happiness. Thus, my life is meaningful to me as well as others,” said Peccenini.

At the end of the interview, the reporter asked whether he had found answers to the three questions he previously asked himself. Peccenini said: “As for the first two questions, I only found parts of the answers. The first question is: Who am I. I can only say I now know the guiding principles of my life and observe them strictly. The second question is: What is the meaning of life? This question is too general. So it may be concerned with the spiritual aspects. This is really a question of many dimensions. So I am persistently exploring it. But one point is certain. That is the meaning of life should include serving the people. The third question is: What should I do in this world? I have found the answer to this question. I devoted the most of my life to education cause. And I will continue to do so. Besides my work in English training, I am writing a book or two on human understanding and behavior according to my communication and association with people and various situations I experienced in life. I am convinced that interpersonal relations will become and will always be the critical element for the realization of a better life and peace.