抢救云南失聪人士的餐厅生意

餐厅生意不佳，要如何“拯救”它的生意？这就是一群新加坡管理大学要进行的社区服务，帮助这家餐厅进行大改革。

这15名一年级的大学生是自费到中国云南省大理市，为当地一间名为“甜点屋”（Sweet Tooth Cafe）的餐厅进行内部改革，希望能改善其销售滞后的现象。“甜点屋”是当地一所专门为听障人士的社会企业，几年前由一群外来的善心人士捐钱投资开设的，主要售卖西式糕点。

不过，由于地方狭窄，餐点种类不多，顾客人流又因季节而不一定，销售量时好时坏，收入不稳定。学生们花了近3个月的时间，为这间餐厅设计了一个专属方案“Project Wings 2008”，其中就抱括了一系列的宣传和行销策略。

参与这次计划的颜嘉慧（20岁）说：“最特别的是这种类型的义工，大概没有多少人做过，挑战性很高。除了想商业点子，我们每一个成员都亲力亲为，很有参与感。”

改革计划包括引进游戏主题餐厅的概念，主要是以一些棋盘或卡片游戏，供顾客玩赏，增添他们的兴趣。学生们也打算传授更多样化的西式点心食谱，以及改良员工的服务水准。
宣传策略则包括到附近的旅游景点及旅馆分发宣传册子，吸引更多顾客群，提高餐厅知名度。他们也正在为餐厅添购一些新厨具进行筹款。

陈泳伶（19岁）说：“希望能通过这个计划，帮助这些听障员工提高他们的工作能力，学会自立，也让他们长期拥有稳定的收入。”

陈泳伶觉得落实计划最大的挑战在于有许多的“不确定性”。她说：“毕竟我们是在本地进行筹划的，大理的风土民情不一样，所以最重要的是要随机应变。”颜嘉慧也认为成功与否还是个未知数，但只要竭尽全力就好。她们也希望通过学生们正面的态度去感染“甜点屋”的员工，提高他们的士气。

颜嘉慧也表示最大的顾虑就是沟通问题，尽管他们之前特地为此上过手语课程。 “我们学的是英语的手语课，所以不知道是否行得通，不过相信通过肢体语言，也能够进行沟通。”

这群大学生原本的社区服务计划其实是为中国一所中学服务。谁知道计划却在最后一关，不被当地批准而泡汤。虽然塞翁失马，但却因此令他们开辟崭新的计划。颜嘉慧透露：“当时我们花了两个月的时间筹备的义工活动不能执行，觉得前功尽弃，很失望，但是还好大家的团结精神挽救了这个局面。Project Wings 2008 终于诞生了。”

这群学生将在4月25日当天，飞往大理，为期两个星期，实行这项计划。

他们也在 omy 设立部落格，去看看他们的每日进展吧。http://blog.omy.sg/wings2008
How do you save your café business when it is not doing well? This is the community service project for a group of Singapore Management University students – to help a café revamp itself.

These 15 first-year undergraduates, who are going on their own expense to Dali old town in Yunnan Province, China, will help the town’s Sweet Tooth Café improve its operations. Sweet Tooth Café is a social enterprise that employs the hearing impaired living in Dali. It started from seed money provided by some overseas volunteers some years ago to sell mainly Western-style pastries and cakes.

However, the café is very small, its menu is limited and it sales and revenue fluctuate with the tourist seasons. The students spent three months to develop Project Wings 2008, a series of promotional and operational plans for the café.

A member of the team, Gan Kah Hwee, 20, says, “This is an unusual kind of community project which has not been undertaken by many people, hence the challenges are tough. Besides coming up with business ideas, there is a strong team-spirit and all of us are putting in our best efforts.”

Revamp plans include introducing a board game café concept, to offer board and card games to guests to encourage them to gather at the café. The students also hope to introduce more Western desserts on the menu, as well as improve the service standards of the café staff.

Students also hope to distribute marketing flyers in nearby tourist attractions and tourist accommodation providers to attract more guests and raise awareness of the café. They are also helping to fund-raise cash to purchase new furnishings for the café.

Aveline Tan Yong Ling, 19, says, “We hope through these plans, we would be able to help improve the work skills of the hearing-impaired staff so they can be more independent and can receive sustainable income.” She feels the greatest challenges are the many uncertainties the team has to face. “Our plans were developed in Singapore, but the local culture in Dali maybe very different from what we expect, so we will have to respond according to circumstances.” Aveline also does not know if their plans will succeed but believes they will put in their best efforts. She also hopes that the team’s positive attitudes will have a good impact on the café staff and raise their spirits.

Kah Hwee highlights that while they have undergone sign-language lessons, communication will be another concern. “We learnt sign-language in English, so we are not sure if it will work in China, but we should still be able to communicate with them using basic Chinese.”

The students had initially wanted to embark on a community service project for a secondary school in China. However, their plans were not approved by the local authorities. They did not let this stop them from looking at other projects to support. Kah Hwee says, “We spent two months planning for that project and were very disappointed when it didn’t come through. But the strong team-spirit turned our efforts around and Project Wings 2008 is finally born.”

The students depart on 25 April for Dali and will carry out the project over two weeks. They have started a blog on omy, go read about their daily experiences at http://blog.omy.sg/wings2008