

# Learn how to protect yourself against Chinese stratagems

Many Companies which are doing business in China have to face unprecedented problems in dealing with their local partners behavior, which is often puzzling, sometimes disconcerting, in some cases seriously harmful. Even to countries very familiar with deception – like Italy – the number of stratagems nonchalantly employed by the Chinese is a new and quite unpleasant experience. Large multinational companies as well as small enterprises which chose to expand their business in the Far East have suffered heavy financial setbacks caused by the ambiguous, enigmatic and insidious attitude of their Chinese partners. They had also the chance to learn how insufficient is the legal protection China is able or willing to offer to their business.

However, there is a very special knowledge, which is completely ignored by a large part of managers and companies. This is the knowledge of the traditional Chinese strategic thinking and use of deception. It's not just a matter of bargaining skill and shrewdness, neither of competence in preparing your offer nor of diligence in redacting contracts. Beyond the linguistic and cross-cultural differences, there is a further chasm to be bridged in order for us to understand the words, the intentions and the actions of our Chinese partners. This knowledge is collected and preserved in very ancient books, and many of them are nowadays easily available in libraries and bookshops.

You can read them all to the last page, and check the commentaries written by strategists, sinologists, and marketing experts. You can learn and quote them by heart. Nonetheless, it's not so simple to learn and use this knowledge. Many are persuaded that learning Chinese language is sufficient to understand the risks and opportunities of that rapidly expanding market, which is regulated by few effectively enforced rules and by many others which cannot be explicitly declared. The truth is that speaking Chinese does not imply that you know the Chinese strategy and deception: instead, it may put you into a position of psychological weakness vis-à-vis your Chinese counterpart.

In order to learn how to use the ancient Chinese strategic knowledge, it's necessary to learn

how to “think by stratagems”. The first step is to know the Chinese strategy. The second step is to know the stratagems. The third step is to learn how to implement your strategy by using stratagems. The final step is to learn how to detect your adversary's deception and to counter it effectively by using stratagems. Once you have developed this skill, then you know how to “think by stratagems”.

The basic course is similar to the Basic Deception Training for Managers. It will offer a preliminary understanding of deception issues. It is a 3-day course and provides participants with an overview of the Chinese strategic thinking. It will also address the intimate connection between strategy and stratagems in Chinese culture. Those who happened to have already attended the Basic Deception Training for Managers may access the Intermediate Course.

The Intermediate Course is a 4-day course and it will deal with the problem of detecting and identifying the stratagems used by the Chinese counterpart (counterdeception) and analyzing the interaction which the deception creates. Participants will be given some additional negotiation training, with regard to the Chinese codes of communication. A practical exercise will focus on participants' company vulnerability to Chinese deception. Day-4 will be devoted to the critical review of participants' accomplishments.

The Advanced Course is a 7-day course and will offer participants the chance to learn the most suitable bargaining techniques when dealing with Chinese negotiators. Furthermore, it will increase their ability to conceive effective strategies to protect their companies in long-term business relations. Participants will be requested to plan and execute a deception operation involving a (real) Chinese partner. The last day will be dedicated to the review of the results.