



# Tommy's Protection Racket CASE STUDY UPDATE

At the end of 2007, we contacted some of our business case studies to learn how they were getting on since we had met them. Here is the first update.

Protection Racket, a small company with six employees, specialises in the manufacture of gigging musicians' instrument cases, including luggage and back packs. Exports to the US, Australia and Europe accounted for 25% of its sales, and they wanted to break into the Japanese market.

In 2006 Tommy Armstrong, the Export Sales Manager, (*pictured right*), secured a last minute place on a trade mission to Japan and a meeting with senior executives at Yamaha. UKTI directed him to RLN SW and had his business cards and marketing materials translated into Japanese. He also met with an advisor for "one on one" business and cultural training. In Tommy's view, it was the time he spent with the cultural consultant sourced by the RLN that really made the greatest difference.

Tommy knew that you really only get one opportunity to make a good impression. By taking time to prepare he was able to act appropriately, use the correct language when responding to questions and accept the Japanese use of silence in negotiations.

"Indeed, silence during my meeting would have irretrievably unsettled me, had I not been prepared for it!" he said. The training also boosted his confidence that he would be able to deal successfully with a potential business partner.

Following his visit, Protection Racket won a contract with Yamaha. Tommy has since returned to Japan, "business is growing well", he says. Yamaha have reported a doubling in their forecast for Protection Racket sales, mainly due to Tommy's continued contact and attention to detail in their specific market requests.



Tommy simply puts success down to a basic element in deal signature - "Preparation" - as provided by RLN SW.

Japan is a very different culture, and meetings can take a long time. Yamaha is very precise in its requirements and needs a lot of information before making a decision. Nevertheless, Tommy remains delighted that they have broken into this market.

Due to their increasing business, Protection Racket are now in the process of recruiting someone to deal specifically with their overseas orders. Tommy reiterates: "More contact with RLN SW will be necessary to establish the same principles in different, worldwide markets. The service was exclusive in providing important, essential information to someone not experienced in different world markets and needing cultural and market-specific knowledge. Three more jobs will be created in the next two years to deal with our expanding export business. For us, the future requires assistance from Regional Language Network - Rock and Roll!"

[Read more about Protection Racket](#) and other South West case studies. Visit the Protection Racket website at [www.protectionracket.com](http://www.protectionracket.com)

## Question Time!

In December, Dr Peter Gold, Director of RLN SW's West of England Hub, (*back row, 2nd from left*), took part in a "Question Time" session chaired by Peter Sissons, (*centre*), former BBC presenter and chair of the topical TV show.

He was invited to join a prestigious panel at the International Trade Forum, advising some 120 local businesses on a range of aspects on doing business overseas.

Peter answered questions on the language and cultural aspects of international business. He



explains, "Organisers find that this topic generates a high degree of interest and participation.

"A company's competitive advantage can often depend on knowing how to make best use of the buyers' language and put an understanding of their business culture to good use."

# RLN Information Resources available to business

## Podcasts

The Regional Language Networks across the UK have been working together to establish a dedicated website where businesses can listen to or download podcasts for over 20 countries.



Through the new website, which can be personalised according to region, businesses can access a range of resources to help them successfully trade overseas through a greater understanding of the market and their customers' culture.

The website includes:

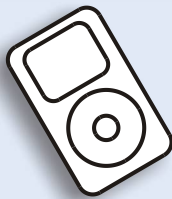
**Podcasts** - advice on cultural and business etiquette; a chance to learn some basic words and phrases to get by, and information on how others have gone about doing business overseas.

**Plus:**  
Cultural Briefings - as downloadable PDFs and "Talk the Talk" - a downloadable language PDF

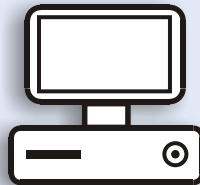
Once signed up as a user of the website, businesses will have free and unlimited access. The podcasts can either be listened to on-line, or downloaded to an iPod or MP3 player. For those not familiar with the technology of podcasting, there is an explanation on the website.

To find out more, and to register to test out the Podcasts, visit: [www.rlnpodcast.com](http://www.rlnpodcast.com)

### 3 Ways to Listen to our Podcasts



Upload to your iPod via iTunes



Play directly on your pc/laptop



Upload to any MP3 player

## Culture Reports

The RLN East has prepared seven Business Culture Reports which are available through the RLN SW website.

The latest addition is an in-depth report covering the French market, whilst other countries include: Denmark, India, Japan, Russia, Saudi Arabia and South Korea.

To view these reports, visit [www.rln-southwest.com/Publications/cultural\\_briefings.aspx](http://www.rln-southwest.com/Publications/cultural_briefings.aspx)



## Contacting RLN SW

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The RLN SW is financially supported by the South West RDA



## Forthcoming Events

**January - March 2008**  
**"Tools of International Business"**  
**UKTI Market Research Seminars**  
Twelve free market research seminars being held at various venues throughout the South West.

**Sat 2 Feb - Thurs 7 Feb 2008**  
**Trade Mission to Libya**  
Organised by The Middle East Association.

**Tues 26 Feb 2008**  
**Devon International Trade Forum**  
University of Exeter, from 6.00pm

For full details of these and other events, visit the Events page on our website:  
[www.rln-southwest.com/Events/](http://www.rln-southwest.com/Events/)