



Working with businesses

Harnessing links to increase
language awareness

What is the RLN?

- First point of contact for all language and culture-related enquiries in West Midlands
- Work primarily with businesses
- Database of interpreters, translators, language trainers and cultural consultants
- Individuals – help with language careers, jobs and training
- Business Language Champions

Advantages of linking with business

- Students see value of language skills beyond the classroom
- ‘Outsiders’ can be more inspiring!
- ‘Real world’ perspective
- Access to authentic language tasks
- Creating a long-term partnership

How to make contact?

- Best method of contact
- Who to ask for – Export Manager, etc
- Timing of your call - avoid end of month, financial year, etc
- Different working environments/schedules
- REMEMBER - those involved in international trade often spend a lot of time out of the country!
- Need to follow up!

Ways to engage businesses

- Visits to school
- Presence at Parents' Evening – it's not always the pupils who need convincing!
- Site visits – where possible
- Work experience
- Setting authentic language tasks
- Mentoring
- Role-playing, mock interviews, etc

What's appealing?

- Potential earnings of those with languages
- Having someone to aspire to – e.g. Angela
- Hearing about opportunities – to travel, both for work and pleasure
- Amusing language-related anecdotes
- Getting stuck in to a 'real-life' language task- e.g. translating corporate brochures, designing foreign adverts, posters, etc

It's not just translation...

- What businesses want – not pure linguists but employees with languages alongside other skills
- No need for perfection – basic conversational ability reaps rewards
- Having language skills does NOT limit your career options it broadens them!
- Can study languages alongside other subjects



Business Language Champions

Using language ambassadors to
influence uptake

What is BLC?

- Nationwide programme designed to bridge gap between school and workplace and increase uptake of MFL
- Encourages partnerships with local businesses
- Languages at work/beyond the classroom
- Funded by DCSF and run by RLN

Impact of BLC 2007-08

- Increased uptake at 50% of participating schools
- Maintained languages uptake at 25% of schools
- Introduction of new language courses
- Changes in student/staff/management attitudes towards languages
- Press coverage – 26 articles published
- Development of new materials

What can we learn from these partnerships?

- Requires co-operation from other departments and senior management
- Activities ideally scheduled in advance of option decisions, or to lower year groups
- As much about raising awareness as raising numbers
- Sessions must be tailored to age group
- ‘Success through collaboration’

Where to go from here?

- BLC resource bank
- BLC case studies and reports – ideas and inspiration
- Sign up for RLN ezine!
- RLN website – www.rln-westmidlands.com
- Keep languages ‘real’
- Make use of existing contacts, parents, etc