**UNIT 1. BUSINESS COMMUNICATION**

**Task 1. Read the questionnaire and tick the sentences which are true about you. Discuss the questions.**

I’M STUDYING ENGLISH BECAUSE…

* for my work or studies □
* so I can read foreign magazines and newspapers □
* so I can use it as an international language when I travel □
* so I can communicate with foreign visitors to my country □
* so I can use email / chat online □
* so I can surf the Internet and read websites □
* because I have to □
* for other reasons □

**Task 2. Match the statements 1 – 6 with the responses a – f. Then list the words and expressions connected with**

▪telephoning

▪the Internet

▪email

▪letters and faxes

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. This website takes a long time to download. | | | a) He’s probably chatting online. | | |
| 2. Would you like her mobile number? | | | b) No, send it as an email attachment. | | |
| 3. His line is still busy. | | | c) Hold on, I’ll put you through to her extension. | | |
| 4. Your fax isn’t very clear. | | | d) Yes, there are too many images. | | |
| 5. I’d like to speak to Gemma, please. | | | e) Would you like me to send it again? | | |
| 6. Shall I print this letter and post it? | | | f) Yes, please – I’ll send her a text message. | | |
| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |

Which ways of communicating do you use regularly?

**Task 3. Complete the sentences with the words from the box.**

|  |
| --- |
| training native course knowledge skills official common fluent |

1. If you improve your language \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, you’ll be able to get a better job.
2. Even though Antonia is completely \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in English, she still has a strong Spanish accent.
3. SVTech is a Swedish multinational whose \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ language is English. This means English is spoken in meetings and used for all company documents.
4. Have you ever thought of doing an evening \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ after work?
5. My firm hopes to do more business abroad, so plans to introduce language \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for all its staff.
6. She has a good working \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Chinese and communicates easily in everyday situations.
7. Someone who is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ speaker, speaks a language as their mother tongue.
8. Heinrich is German and Stella is from Argentina; fortunately they have French as a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ language.

**Task 4. Read the facts about the English language. Why has it become so successful?**

**A FEW FACTS ABOUT ENGLISH**

* 80% of the world’s electronically - stored information is in **English.**
* Three - quarters of the world’s mail is written in **English.**
* **English** is the main language of books, newspapers, airports and air – traffic control, international business and technology, diplomacy, sport, international competitions, pop music, and advertising.
* **English** has official or special status in at least 75 countries, with a total population of over 2 billion.
* A quarter of the world’s population, 1.2 billion to 1.5 billion, speak **English** to some level of competence. By 2050 this will have grown to 50%.
* There are around 320 to 372 million native speakers of **English** in the world, and **English** is spoken as a second language by around 235 to 370 million people.
* Over two – thirds of the world’s scientists read in **English.**

**Task 5. Translating and interpreting costs in the European Union are hundreds of millions of euros. Is it time to have a common European language, or a common world language? Which language would you choose? Please, support your opinion.**

**Task 6. Work in pairs. Read the situations below about involving language problems in British companies.**

1. What big mistake do you think was made in each?
2. What should British companies learn from this?
3. British businessman in Germany was told a meeting was at *halb neun* (half nine) so he arrived at 9.30.
4. A British firm produced 15, 000 leaflets in Spanish to send to Brazil.
5. A British advertising agency prepared a “before-and-after” type advertisement to sell washing powder in the Arab world. The “before” picture with dirty clothes was on the left; the “after” picture was on the right.

**Task 7. Read the text about A&C Exports, a small company which has done well as a result of improving its language skills.**

1. Decide if these sentences are true (T) or false (F), supporting your answers with information from the text.

a) A&C managed to sell potatoes to Italy. …..

b) A&C wasn’t happy with using an interpreter. …..

c) A&C thinks that cultural differences are unimportant. …..

d) One person was at the centre of the changes. …..

e) Karen was already a fluent Italian speaker. …..

f) Karen knows how to maximize her language learning. …..

g) Customers laughed when she first tried to communicate in Italian. …..

h) Karen’s work has affected the staff at all levels. …..

1. What could other small export companies learn from A&C’s experience?

**EXPORTER ENJOYS THE FRUITS OF LEARNING FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

Trying to export potatoes to the land of pasta would seem crazy to some people, yet one small company was successful after it had taught its staff to speak foreign languages.

A&C exports has seen its annual export sales rise by 40% since it improved its foreign language skills. When the company first targeted Italy it used an interpreter, but this was very frustrating. A middleman, however fluent, can’t hope to establish relationship in the way a committed member of the company can. A&C also takes great care to respond to the cultural requirements of its customers, for example by choosing the right colour for packaging. This approach has doubled sales to Germany.

Karen Burdett, a language specialist who joined A&C eighteen months ago, is the key to the firm’s export success. When Burdett was appointed, she spoke Spanish and French fluently, but her knowledge of Italian was limited. In the four weeks before she took up her new post, she set about improving it. She listened to Italian while she was driving, cooking, dusting, and sleeping. She watched Italian videos. She read newspapers, magazines, pizza packets, shampoo bottles, and jars of pasta sauce.

Her reward came with her first phone call to Italy. I explained that I was learning their language, and asked our clients to be patient with me if I made mistakes. Far from being critical, they were delighted, and from then on a strong relationship was established”, she says.

Burdett is teaching Spanish to senior staff, and she says she’s going to have a working knowledge of German by Christmas. More importantly, staff at all levels can now handle simple telephone enquiries in French, Spanish, and Italian. Now they are all quite confident that export sales will continue to rise.

**Task 8. In groups, list ways you could improve your English. Then compare your list with the one of other groups. Say which suggestions you think are practical, and which ones are impractical or impossible.**

**Task 9. Complete the text of how Graham Baldwin managed to develop his German language skills with the verbs in brackets.**

Two years ago, Graham Baldwin’s firm 1 ………………… (make) the mistake of sending him to Germany. Although he studied German at school, he soon 2……………….. (discover) that he 3……………….. (can not) remember much. He 5 ……………….. (miss) an important meeting because he 6 ………………… (forget) that *halb neun* in German 7 ……………….. (mean) half past eight in English. So, while he 8……………….. (have) his breakfast, everyone else 9 ……………….. (be) in the meeting. When he 10 ……………….. (arrive) ”on time”, the meeting 11 ……………….. (already finish). Back in England, Graham immediately 12 ……………….. (join) an evening course in German. Every day on the way to work he 13 ……………….. (listen) to cassettes. He 14 ……………….. (improve) his grammar and now he 15 ……………….. (know) how to tell the time! Right now he 16 ……………….. (study) hard for an examination. Next year Graham 17 ……………….. (spend) his summer holiday in a language school in Munich. After that he hopes that his company 18 ……………….. (send) him to Germany again.

**Task 10. Read about Cassia Printing Presses and identify what important problem the company faces.**

CASE STUDY

Cassia Printing Presses is based in Leipzig in Germany. Recently, it has opened assembly plants in São Paulo in Brazil and Salamanca in Spain. As there is no official company language, the local languages, German, Portuguese, and Spanish, are used in all of the plants. Instructors from the headquarters in Germany visit the other offices to train local technical staff to install Cassia printing presses to train local sales staff to show customers how to operate them. This can be a difficult job when everyone speaks different languages! There are also frequent breakdowns in communication at the switchboards. The company realizes that it needs to do something about its language policy so that staff in these areas can work more efficiently.

**Most staff at Cassia have English as their second language. Cassia has brought in a language training organization to test employees’ knowledge of English. This is their report.**

**Summary of language analysis**  **P**restige **L**anguage **T**raining

**OFFICES WORLDWIDE**

**Technical staff**

Most have very little knowledge of English (level 1)

**Instructors**

Most are able to take part in very basic communications in English (level 2). A few of the more experienced staff can communicate more easily (level 3).

**Telephone and reception staff**

They vary between level 1 and level 2. To take basic calls they need at least level 2, in two or three languages.

**Language training**

It takes 150 hours (75 hours of classes + 75 hours of self-study) for the average student to progress from one level to the next. The cost for courses is 25€ per person, per hour. For classes of more than five people, a reduced rate of 20€ per person per hour is offered.

**Task 11. Read what the staff have been saying about the language policy in the company.**

**a) Decide which comments were probably made by:**

* a member of management ( Marketing Manager)
* a union representative
* someone from the main German branch (secretary, German branch)
* someone from the overseas branch (printer, Spanish branch)

**b) Tick (V) the opinions you agree with.**

**WHICH LANGUAGE?**

“The company should choose English as its corporate language, because it is an international language and we hope to expand into other markets.”

“Cassia is a German company; so German should be the official language of the group.”

“The companies should use their local languages and the German instructors should learn to speak Portuguese and Spanish.”

**WHO SHOULD LEARN?**

“Language training should be part of the staff development of all members of staff, not just a selected few.”

“Only the instructors need language training.”

“All Cassia’s technical staff should be able to communicate comfortably in the same language.”

“It is important for the “first contacts” of the company, the reception staff, to be able to speak all company languages.”

**WHEN AND HOW?**

“Language training should be in work time and paid for by the company.”

“It should take place during staff’s personal time.”

“Language courses should take place at the companies.”

“Staff from overseas offices should be sent to the USA or the UK to study English”.

“Selected staff from your overseas operations should spend a year in Germany and receive technical training in German.”

**Task 12. Senior management has asked a group of you to have a fresh look at the problem and to make some recommendations. Based on the opinions you ticked in 10 B) above, make a list of recommendations about the following which you all agree on.**

* Which language/languages should Cassia adopt?
* Who should receive urgent attention and how much language training will they need?
* How and where should language training be organized?