

# Case studies

listed by Best Practice in a type of international communication skill

NB. Some companies appear more than once

## TRANSLATION

2. Amber Films
3. Analox
5. Beat Suite
7. Canford
8. Cleveland Cascades
10. Entek
11. Trelleborg-Epros
12. Hexatec
14. L2
15. Masterlube
16. Metal Spinners
19. NTE
21. Perry Process
22. Roman Showers
25. Solar Solve
26. Walker Filtration

## CULTURAL AWARENESS TRAINING

1. 3 Tier Systems
11. Trelleborg-Epros
23. RTR

## WEBSITE LOCALISATION

5. Beat Suite
10. Entek
17. MKW

## LANGUAGE COACHING

4. Assessment North East
6. Border Consultants
13. IDS
15. Masterlube
17. MKW
18. Multichem
21. Perry Process
23. RTR
24. Seen and Heard

## EMPLOYING LINGUISTS

3. Analox
7. Canford
9. Elfab
20. Osborne Engineering

# Case studies

listed by UK Trade & Investment sector

## AGRICULTURE, HORTICULTURE & FISHERIES

6. **Border Consultants**

## BIOTECHNOLOGY & PHARMACEUTICALS

13. **IDS**

## CHEMICALS

18. **Multichem**

## COMMUNICATIONS

19. **NTE**

## CREATIVE & MEDIA

2. **Amber Films**

5. **Beat Suite**

14. **L2**

24. **Seen and Heard**

## EDUCATION & TRAINING

4. **Assessment North East**

## ELECTRONICS & IT HARDWARE

7. **Canford**

## MARINE

25. **Solar Solve**

## MECHANICAL, ELECTRICAL & PROCESS ENGINEERING

3. **Analox**

9. **Elfab**

10. **Entek**

11. **Trelleborg-Epros**

15. **Masterlube**

17. **MKW**

21. **Perry Process**

22. **Roman Showers**

23. **RTR**

26. **Walker Filtration**

## METALLURGIC PROCESS PLANT

16. **Metal Spinners**

20. **Osborne Engineering**

## PORTS & LOGISTICS

8. **Cleveland Cascades**

## SOFTWARE & COMPUTER SERVICES BUSINESS TO BUSINESS

1. **3 Tier Systems**

12. **Hexatec**

## 1. 3 Tier Systems

3 Tier Systems, founded in October 2000, provides innovative and technological leadership in the field of Internet based software. Its core business is designing, developing and maintaining Internet software applications that meet the challenges of large-scale deployment and high user numbers.

### Identification of challenges

3 Tier is working on a medical system with a Japanese company, Kinesio, which will enable doctors to measure lymphoedema in cancer patients who have had lymph nodes removed. 3 Tier Systems and Kinesio's joint venture is to be rolled out internationally.

### Aims

Kevin Anderson, Managing Director of 3 Tier Systems planned to visit Japan to discuss the launch plans but was aware of the potential for communication problems, and the need to overcome them.

### Solution

Having discussed his forthcoming meeting with a representative from Regional Language Network, Kevin decided to have cultural awareness training prior to his meeting.

### Results

After his meeting in Japan, Kevin reported that the cultural awareness training had been "fantastic" in preparing him to communicate effectively in the Japanese business environment.

### Next steps

Having seen the benefits of being able to communicate in the international market place, the company is now working on a product that will enable other organisations to do the same.

**Best practice in** Cultural awareness training

**Number of employees** 6

**Location** Newcastle upon Tyne

**Website** [www.3tiersystems.com](http://www.3tiersystems.com)



## 2. Amber Films

Amber was established in 1968 as a co-operative of filmmakers and photographers telling the stories of working class people in North East England. From the late Sixties and through the Seventies, Amber concentrated on Tyneside. In the Eighties, the focus switched to the diminishing Durham coalfields and the fishing communities of North Shields.

Amber produces films and exhibits photography at The Side Gallery in Newcastle upon Tyne.

### Identification of challenges

Amber Films has been involved in the Locarno Film Festival in Switzerland with its film *Shooting Magpies* and is aware that French speakers are more receptive if recognition of their own language is shown.

### Aims

The company will continue to work on subtitling the film in German, Spanish, Italian and even English – for those who cannot understand the County Durham dialect!

### Solution

Amber Films decided that the best way to overcome any potential communication issues was to work with Regional Language Network to translate the film's dialogue and add French subtitles.

### Results

The company was thrilled at how well *Shooting Magpies* was received in Switzerland.

### Next steps

Amber Films has a longer term interest for getting its website localised, thus increasing its international outlook and promoting global interest in the company, and North East England.

**Best practice in Translation**

**Number of employees** 8

**Location** Newcastle upon Tyne

**Website** [www.amber-online.com](http://www.amber-online.com)

The logo for Amber Films, featuring the word "AMBER" in a bold, white, stylized font with a black outline, set against a solid black rectangular background.

### 3. Analox

Analox designs and manufactures gas sensors and analysers. The company is acknowledged as the authority on the monitoring of gases in all branches of the diving industry, from leisure to military applications.

#### Identification of challenges

The company is constantly looking at new markets and is now working in Italy.

#### Aims

The company exports 60 per cent of production, making sales to Finland, France, Germany, Spain, China, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, and Russia. Analox is committed to improving its language skills for the benefit of its international trading. This has included translating documents, taking interpreters to exhibitions and recruiting staff with language skills.

Analox is aiming to incorporate this level of commitment to win repeat custom in the Italian market.

#### Solution

Analox recruited an Italian speaker to help drive market development in Italy. The new team member is investigating the market potential for Analox products and giving an insight into Italian business culture.

#### Results

An Italian speaker enables Analox to research the market in more detail. This has involved visiting exhibitions to meet potential customers and suppliers, writing case studies and providing news releases for the Italian press.

Promotional documents and presentation packs have been translated and Italian content has been added to the website. Meetings with potential customers and suppliers, sales calls and mailshots can all now be conducted in Italian.

Analox was supported in undertaking a significant amount of translation work with assistance from Regional Language Network.

#### Next steps

The continued dedication of the Analox team in the variety of markets that the company serves, along with continued emphasis on effective international communication skills, sees communication barriers experienced in the past being broken down. This has opened up real opportunities for Analox in fertile markets.

**Best practice in** Employing linguists/translation  
**Number of employees** 48  
**Location** Middlesbrough  
**Website** [www.analox.net](http://www.analox.net)



## 4. Assessment North East

Assessment North East offers people-based organisational development tools such as Investors in People and a suite of models of good practice and training programmes in leadership, recruitment and selection and work-life balance. Assessment North East holds a licence to offer an assessment service to organisations seeking the Investors in People Award in North East England. It also has a subsidiary company International Quality Centre, which is involved in the development of Investors in People internationally and has customers in 75 different countries.

### Identification of challenges

The company has responded to a demand from overseas to translate the Investors in People scheme into their home markets, using the same standards. "A key element of our international business is building relationships and dealing with people. We recognised that we could only do this if we had certain language skills and as an internationally trading organisation we agreed that we should all develop our language proficiencies," said Robert Macleod, Director.

### Aims

Staff within International Quality Centre recognised the importance of being able to communicate, even if only on a courtesy level, with any international client. They have developed relationships with companies in countries such as Italy and Spain by being able to greet and exchange pleasantries with the customer in their own language.

### Solution

Assessment North East contacted Regional Language Network for advice and was directed to an approved language supplier and received coaching.

### Results

The company's international clients have enjoyed their relationship with International Quality Centre and responded positively to the efforts that were made to learn their language. Robert added: "It has not been easy to learn another language but the real return was the enthusiasm that our in-country contacts and clients greeted us with, when they learnt we were learning their language."

### Next steps

Assessment North East is now working through International Quality Centre with customers in 75 different countries. They can also foresee a need to translate their literature, website plus employ people to help them with interpreting and cultural awareness.

**Best practice in** Language coaching

**Number of employees** 27

**Location** Sunderland, Tyne and Wear

**Website** [www.aneltd.co.uk](http://www.aneltd.co.uk) and [www.iqcltd.com](http://www.iqcltd.com)

## 5. Beat Suite

Beat Suite offers a website through which customers gain access to a royalty-free music library with high-quality music tracks, music loops and sounds for the multimedia, broadcast and computer games industry. Beatsuite.com receives more than 600,000 hits per month from specialists, such as video producers, web and flash designers, audio post-production, radio production, advertising agencies, and creative agencies.

### Identification of challenges

With more than 90 per cent of sales generated overseas, Beat Suite understood that its sales were hugely reliant on its ability to communicate successfully with its international customers.

### Aims

As a purely web-based company, Beat Suite investigated the value of website localisation and translation with the aim of winning new customers. Their main sales are to America, but European sales are mainly to France and Spain, so Beat Suite felt these two countries should be their initial focus.

### Solution

Having discussed its aims with Regional Language Network, Beat Suite had its website translated and localised for the French and Spanish markets.

### Results

Beat Suite saw sales from the Spanish market increase immediately after it translated and localised the website.

### Next steps

Having seen such instant results from website translation and localisation, Beatsuite.com Music Library was ready to do the same for its German and Italian customers. It is also expanding the business with a distribution deal with a Korean company, and is looking into setting up an American office.

**Best practice in Translation/website localisation**

**Number of employees** 2

**Location** Newcastle upon Tyne

**Website** [www.beatsuite.com](http://www.beatsuite.com)



## 6. Border Consultants

Border Consultants manages woodlands in North East England, mainly those used for investment, sport or native woodland establishment and regeneration. The company also advises forestry organisations in Estonia and Latvia. Moreover, it advises and acts as a conduit for international and local companies looking to invest in forestry.

### Identification of challenges

Border Consultants has been involved in international trade for more than ten years and about half of its sales are overseas.

### Aims

In order to better serve and understand the existing markets in central Europe, Felix Karthaus, the company's Chairman decided to learn Estonian and Russian.

### Solutions

Regional Language Network provided Felix with assistance in sourcing quotes for language training in both Estonian and Russian.

### Results

Felix started with Estonian language training immediately and is now at a proficient level. He thoroughly enjoys the classes and has now visited Estonia to put his skills to the test.

### Next steps

Border Consultants strongly believes that developing international communication skills adds value to its business. It found the service of the Regional Language Network team very helpful and would always recommend it to other organisations. Estonian is only the first step.

**Best practice in** Language training

**Number of employees** 5

**Location** Belford, Northumberland

**Website** [www.borderconsultants.co.uk](http://www.borderconsultants.co.uk)



## 7. Canford Audio

Canford Audio was established in Newcastle upon Tyne in 1978 as a one-stop-shop for the supply of components such as speakers and headsets, for the radio industry. Its first catalogue was produced in 1982, since when it has become the “bible” for the broadcasting industry.

### Identification of challenges

In the early Nineties Canford started developing its export business, having previously been purely passive in its approach to export. On researching the global scene, the company discovered that to break into the French market successfully, an ability to do business in French was vital.

Recognition of a proactive export strategy meant Canford was better placed to expand into international markets.

### Aims

To increase the in-house language capabilities of Canford Audio’s staff.

### Solution

Employment of multilingual speakers. Canford has invested significantly in boosting its in-house language skills base. About five per cent of the 185 strong workforce is fluent in at least one, and often two other languages. A further five per cent is able to understand at least one other language than English.

Having made the steps to employ multi-lingual staff, the company made plans to support this by translating marketing literature into key European languages. Canford now translates into Italian, Spanish, French, German and Dutch.

### Results

The French market has become vital to the business, in that this market acts as the proverbial Litmus test. Chairman Hugh Morgan Williams says: “We said that if we could make things work in France we could make them work anywhere, because it is a difficult market. France has become a test bed – if it works there, it’s likely to work anywhere.”

### Next steps

The company offers online trading in sterling and Euro from its UK website and Euro trading via its French language site. Canford can additionally trade by direct contact in US Dollars, Swiss Francs and Danish Krone.

**Best practice in** Employing linguists/translation

**Number of employees** 220

**Location** Washington, Tyne and Wear

**Website** [www.canford.co.uk](http://www.canford.co.uk)



## 8. Cleveland Cascades

Cleveland Cascades Ltd is a world leader in the manufacture of bespoke bulk material handling equipment for loading dry bulk materials onto ships.

Based in Middlesbrough, the company employs the original inventors of the Cleveland Cascade system, and together with a team of experts in design, manufacture, assembly and commissioning, Cleveland Cascades has manufactured its bulk material handling equipment for companies around the globe.

### Identification of challenges

Acknowledging the need for effective communication with its current customers, of which 97 per cent are international, plus any new international customers won through business development.

### Aims

Cleveland Cascades trades extensively with countries across Europe, including Norway, Russia and Lithuania. It also has customers as far afield as Cuba and the Middle East. The company therefore needs to invest heavily in improving its export communications to satisfy the varying needs of its customers.

### Solution

Given the linguistic diversity of the company's target markets, Cleveland Cascades needed to consider translating essential documents, sales literature, brochures, letters and company profiles for its overseas customers.

With the continuing need to keep in touch with all its customers, Cleveland Cascades identified a need to make its website available in other languages.

### Results

Cleveland Cascades was supported by Regional Language Network to undertake almost £3,500 worth of translation work. The development of its international communications strategy has enabled Cleveland Cascades not only to consolidate existing contracts but also to develop new business in new markets.

This has included getting its website translated into five languages – French, German, Russian, Spanish and Italian – as well as many other essential items such as tender documents and marketing collateral.

### Next steps

Cleveland Cascades has translated essential company literature into French (March 2009) and is planning to also create a Norwegian version soon.

### Best practice in Translation

**Number of employees** 8

**Location** Middlesbrough

**Website** [www.clevelandcascades.co.uk](http://www.clevelandcascades.co.uk)



## 9. Elfab

North Shields-based Elfab, a leading supplier of pressure-relief systems, works with some of the world's most prestigious companies including GlaxoSmithKline, Siemens, BASF and Nestlé. Central and Eastern Europe are new markets for the company following recent GOST-R (trade agreement) approval, a certificate of conformity enabling approved products to enter Russia.

### Identification of challenges

Elfab operates in a global market, exporting over 60 per cent of production to customers outside the UK, trading in some 70 countries in 2008, mainly non-English speaking. Elfab is constantly looking for ways to differentiate, grow and develop.

### Aims

Elfab has watched sales grow in countries across the world and wants to maintain the leading edge within its markets. It acknowledges that customers place a high value on being able to do business in their native tongue and sees the development of multi-lingual communication skills as the most effective investment to achieve this.

### Solution

The main solution is to employ multi-lingual speakers, and the company now has a customer support team capable of communicating in six languages. Elfab also employs foreign nationals as field sales managers across core European markets and have recently opened a Technical Information centre in Singapore to further support customers and for increased growth in the Asia – Pacific region.

### Results

As a result of Elfab embracing an international outlook, the company has received two awards – North East Export Communicator of the Year 2005 and North East Export Achievement 2006.

### Next steps

Elfab recognises that its customers value the ability to do business in their native tongue and has reaped the rewards of investing in language expertise. Elfab is continuously looking to develop its in-house language capabilities. As the number of countries grows in which it does day-to-day business, Elfab will continue to increase the number of languages spoken at its North Shields head office.

**Best practice in** Employing linguists

**Number of employees** 65

**Location** North Shields, Tyne and Wear

**Website** [www.elfab.com](http://www.elfab.com)



## 10. Entek International

Entek International LLC produces RhinoHide® PE battery separators for starting, lighting and ignition (SLI) lead-acid batteries. RhinoHide® battery separators are used in car, truck, bus, tractor and motorcycle batteries manufactured by the best lead-acid battery companies around the world.

### Identification of challenges

Entek has encountered some communication barriers when dealing with international customers, from which 99 per cent of sales are generated. For example, Customs officials can mistake “polyethylene” for “polythene” and impose an incorrect import tariff on the company’s export goods.

### Aims

Entek wants to continue developing its communication capabilities in an effort to improve relations with its international markets. This will minimise miscommunication with current customers, offer a higher level of customer service and support business growth in potential new markets.

### Solutions

Entek has innovatively developed German communication skills to improve relations with former Soviet Bloc customers as many inhabitants speak German as a second language. It has also introduced basic Russian language training to appropriate staff.

The company has improved signage at Entek for overseas visitors, benefiting customers visiting the premises and overseas drivers making deliveries.

Entek also worked with Regional Language Network to assist in plans for extensive localisation and translation work for the company website, specifically for the Japanese, Russian and Spanish markets.

### Results

Since reviewing the success of its international communication skills and taking steps to improve them, Entek has seen increasing web enquiries and orders, particularly from Russia. In total there has been growth of 20 per cent in turnover from former Soviet territories.

Entek’s dedication to developing international communication skills has been recognised, with its International Sales Manager winning the North East 2006 Export Communicator of the Year award.

### Next steps

Entek is looking to further exploit new opportunities in the former Soviet Bloc and has identified areas for improvement that will help to achieve it. Specifically, helping staff to continue to improve German and to begin learning advanced Russian.

**Best practice in** Translation/website localisation

**Number of employees** 162

**Location** Newcastle upon Tyne

**Website** [www.entek-international.com](http://www.entek-international.com)



## 11. Trelleborg-Epros

Trelleborg-Epros GMBH is a major player in the pipe repair and sewer rehabilitation markets. The company headquarters is in Germany but it has a North East office in Gateshead and a distribution centre in St Albans as well as international offices in Singapore and the USA. Its partly patented methods result in perfect trenchless sewer pipe repairs.

### Identification of challenges

With its head office Germany, Trelleborg-Epros was aware that a vital organisational need was to communicate effectively with its German colleagues. As the company expanded into other countries, such as Finland, France, Italy, Japan and Spain, plus South East Asia, the requirement for multi-lingual skills became more important.

### Aims

Trelleborg-Epros takes pride in being a very language-conscious company with an ever expanding international market. The company realises the importance of communicating with its customers in their own language.

### Solution

Trelleborg-Epros has translated its website into French, German and Spanish and translated all its corporate literature into the language of its target markets. The company invests in language training for staff, has employed native speakers and has put engineers through cultural awareness training.

Trelleborg-Epros knows it needs to be aware of

global cultural differences to ensure smooth communication.

### Results

Trelleborg-Epros has opened offices in United Arab Emirates, Singapore and the USA.

### Next steps

Due to its expansion, Trelleborg-Epros moved its manufacturing base to the North East in 2007 to cope with new orders, creating new job opportunities in the region.

**Best practice in Translation/Cultural Awareness**

**Number of employees** 9 UK, 35 Germany, 3 Singapore and 4 USA.

**Location** Gateshead, Tyne and Wear

**Website** [www.epros.co.uk](http://www.epros.co.uk)



## 12. Hexatec

Hexatec, of Hexham, Northumberland, is one of the UK's leaders in industrial software solutions. The company was founded in 1982 and now employs a small team developing software and support for customers, which include many blue chip companies, such as BP, Coca Cola, Nissan and Shell.

### Identification of challenges

Hexatec is exporting to China, Finland, France, Germany and the Netherlands and plans to expand its international operations, having received a number of enquiries from, for example, Iran and South America.

### Solution

Regional Language Network has advised the company on international communication skills development, assisting Hexatec to source a comprehensive list of quotes for translations and information on German language coaching.

### Next steps

Hexatec valued the support of Regional Language Network and has been encouraged to further develop its international communication skills.

**Best practice in Translation**

**Number of employees** 2

**Location** Hexham, Northumberland

**Website** [www.hexatec.com](http://www.hexatec.com)

### 13. IDS Ltd

IDS Ltd is a specialist in immunoassay and manufactures cell diagnostic kits. These plastic containers or “wells” have an antibody coating on the inside and are usually used for blood or urine samples, typically in hospitals or research laboratories.

#### Identification of challenges

With offices in the UK, USA and Germany, IDS is naturally keen to have an international outlook on its business dealings. The company is also encouraged to interact with its overseas counterparts, where there is already a greater awareness of language skills.

#### Aims

The company has a very healthy approach to international communications and when the German office opened last year, finance director Paul Hailes organised German language training for UK employees with the help of Regional Language Network.

#### Solution

IDS feels that the language training proved a big success and helped to ensure the new office felt like part of the overall team.

#### Results

Recognition of the company’s dedication to improving customer service internationally came in 2006 when IDS received a Queen’s Award for Export in the International Trade category.

#### Next steps

Having successfully improved the working relationship with the German-based staff, IDS has translated its website into French and German and has already carried out a visit to China in order to target the Chinese market.

**Best practice in** Language coaching

**Number of employees** 230

**Location** Boldon, Tyne and Wear

**Website** [www.idsltd.com](http://www.idsltd.com)



## 14. L2

L2 was founded in 2004 by two multimedia producers: Graham Shipman and Mark Osborne. The company designs and publishes quality language learning solutions using new learning technologies. The flagship product WORDREADY® is a multimedia web resource designed to help learning and improve the user's foreign language vocabulary.

### Identification of challenges

The company is looking to develop its products in foreign languages so it can work in the international market.

### Aims

L2's directors contacted Regional Language Network in 2005 to have a list of English vocabulary translated into several European languages. L2 already had a version of WORDREADY® in Greek as both Graham and Mark are fluent Greek speakers. The requirement was to have the product available in French, German, Spanish and Portuguese.

### Solution

Regional Language Network assisted L2 in getting quotes for translations and helped find French and Spanish speakers to read the vocabulary out loud for the purpose of the software.

### Results

The translation agency completed the work and L2 was satisfied by the service and the quality of work provided. Members of the Regional Language Network team who were French and German speakers even proof read the translation.

By 2006, WORDREADY® had six support languages: Arabic, Chinese (simplified and traditional), French, Greek, Spanish (European and Latin American) and Portuguese (European and Brazilian).

### Next steps

Translating the product has allowed L2 to open up new markets. The company has noticed an increase in website visits from countries that have recently had their language included in the product. L2 is also trialling the product in the British Council in Hong Kong after the addition of Traditional Chinese to the language portfolio. Discussions with mainland China (simplified Chinese) and Taiwan are ongoing. Many Arabic speaking nations have also shown great interest.

**Best practice in Translation**

**Number of employees** 3

**Location** Barnard Castle, County Durham

**Website** [www.l2.co.uk](http://www.l2.co.uk)



**L2.co.uk**

## 15. Masterlube

Masterlube is a worldwide distributor of specialised automatic lubrication systems for agricultural field equipment, mobile plant machines and heavily worked machinery used in tough environments.

### Identification of challenges

Masterlube currently sells mainly to France, Germany and Poland and export sales represent 70 per cent of its total turnover. The company acknowledges the need to develop its international communication skills to deal more effectively with its international customers.

Ian Beaverstock, Masterlube's Chief Executive, was put in touch with Regional Language Network by an International Trade Adviser from UK Trade & Investment and has benefited ever since. The company's website is available in English, French and German.

In 2004, Ian's only representative in France died suddenly. No one within Masterlube was able to take on the role due to a lack of language skills and communication with the company for whom Ian's representative worked, broke down.

### Aims

The main objective was to restore the relationship with the French market without neglecting the work being undertaken in the other markets.

### Solution

The Regional Language Network team helped to find a provider for culture and language training and translations (website, brochure and technical documents).

### Results

Since investing in international communication skills development, Masterlube's turnover has increased significantly and eight jobs have been safeguarded thanks to the restoration of business between the UK and the French market.

### Next steps

Masterlube will continue to invest in international communication skills because this is fundamental in supporting its export strategy.

**Best practice in** Translation/language coaching

**Number of employees** 35

**Location** Shildon, County Durham

**Website** [www.bignall.co.uk/masterlube](http://www.bignall.co.uk/masterlube)



## 16. Metal Spinners

Based in Newcastle upon Tyne, the Metal Spinners Group formed in 1953. Metal Spinners has the largest range of metal spinning capabilities in Europe, operating from two sites in the city. Metal spinning is a highly technological process, transforming sheet metals into integral and precise components, with enhanced mechanical properties. The company's products are aimed at the top end of the market, including the aerospace, offshore, medical and furnishing industries.

### Identification of challenges

Metal Spinners trades extensively overseas and recently employed an agent in Germany, which has translated some of its corporate brochures and website into French and German. Metal Spinners feels international communication skills should be the start of an ongoing project.

### Aims

Having monitored the success of the translated documents, Metal Spinners is now planning to increase document translation to cover other key markets.

### Solution

Metal Spinners received advice and support from Regional Language Network on the business benefits of translation. The company then went on to source a language service provider who assisted in the translation of its corporate brochures and website into French and German.

### Results

The company is completely satisfied with its investment in translations and found that its customers were delighted with the efforts the company was making to improve international communications.

### Next steps

Having monitored how well its new documents and website have been received by customers, Metal Spinners is now considering translating its website into Chinese and Russian. The company has also completed filming a promotional DVD and has investigated having international voiceovers for its export markets, with plans to penetrate the Latin American and Italian markets.

**Best practice in Translation**

**Number of employees** 120

**Location** Newcastle upon Tyne

**Website** [www.metal-spinners.co.uk](http://www.metal-spinners.co.uk)



## 17. MKW Group

MKW Group, founded in 1976, is based in Ryton, Gateshead, and provides specialist engineering solutions in the defence, offshore, sub-sea, chemicals, medical equipment, renewable energy and general engineering sectors.

### Identification of challenges

Whilst no more than five per cent of the group's business is directly export-related, Group Managing Director, Michael Wright, explains: "When all business relationships are taken into account, that figure rockets to about 60 per cent, therefore on-site language competence was essential."

### Aims

As Rahmon Nassor, Commercial Director, says: "Having French speakers on the team levels the playing field when MKW is involved in contracts in France. It's recognised that if we continue to develop French language skills, we'll certainly be even better off."

### Solution

MKW got in touch with a French training organisation called Les Campagnons du Devoir, which operates schemes for sending French engineering trainees into British companies to help improve their English. MKW has been so impressed that it now regularly takes French trainees, whilst also sponsoring enthusiastic English trainees to attend Les Campagnons du Devoir.

The company has run French lessons, with several staff signing up each year. This has raised the number of English employees now able to speak basic French to about a dozen.

Regional Language Network assisted the company in strengthening its roots in the international market by localising its website for France and Germany.

### Results

MKW sent its French speakers to negotiate a prospective contract in France, prompting the comment that it was the only English company to have done so; it automatically put MKW ahead of the competition.

### Next steps

The company has been taking a close look at new opportunities and identified the need for a Turkish speaker to help support a joint wind turbine venture in Turkey. Significant interest from Italy in the same technology suggested the group would also benefit from in-house competence in Italian.

Subject to its success in pursuing other ventures, the future could also see speakers of Mandarin and other languages on the payroll. MKW proves that while it may be an increasingly small world, it remains a multi-lingual and multi-cultural one.

**Best practice in** Language coaching/website localisation

**Number of employees** 200

**Location** Ryton, Tyne and Wear

**Website** [www.mkw.co.uk](http://www.mkw.co.uk)

## 18. Multichem

Multichem was established in 1973 in Hexham, Northumberland, and since then it has grown from a local business into a global supplier of ink.

### Identification of challenges

The company's products are exported to about 30 countries all over the world, including China, Central and Eastern Europe, Japan and Germany. The changing markets and customers have required the enterprise to develop international communication skills. Multichem's website is partially translated into Chinese and Japanese as part of the company's drive to target these markets and to offer a more localised customer service.

### Aims

Multichem was looking for an agent in China and, in order to assist the search for an appropriate partner and to gain a better understanding of Chinese culture, the Managing Director of Multichem, Kaleel Zibe, discussed Chinese language coaching with Regional Language Network.

### Solutions

With assistance and advice from Regional Language Network, Kaleel started language coaching with a locally-based accredited supplier and sourced alternative quotes from translation service providers. Translation work was then undertaken for the company's brochures and business cards.

### Results

Kaleel has very much enjoyed his Chinese classes and other colleagues are now keen to join him.

### Next steps

Multichem plans to translate parts of its website into other European languages, French and German being the most important ones.

Multichem strongly believes that the development of international communication skills adds value to its business; therefore, the company will continue to invest in the improvement of language skills. The management team has praised the services provided by language specialists and cultural consultants as being "excellent" and values the support from Regional Language Network.

**Best practice in** Language coaching

**Number of employees** 17

**Location** Hexham, Northumberland

**Website** [www.multichem.com](http://www.multichem.com)



## 19. NTE Ltd

NTE Ltd is a distribution company, supplying a wide range of communication products to over 2,500 communications and IT professionals, installers and resellers in the UK and abroad. The company works with overseas resellers, providing a complete solution to meet the customer's specifications. In order to support these products, NTE has developed a number of specific marketing tools.

### Identification of challenges

NTE has grown rapidly and employs over 30 staff at its Peterlee headquarters, in County Durham. In 2004 the company started getting increased contact from Middle Eastern markets.

### Aims

The company needed to find support and advice from Regional Language Network. NTE needed assistance in developing positive relations with the burgeoning demand from the Middle East.

### Solution

In order to give NTE a broader view of what was available, Regional Language Network invited the company to attend one of its business breakfast events in County Durham. Marketing Manager Pauline Herring said: "The event introduced us to Regional Language Network, the people and the services it provides. We applied for assistance with translating leaflets we were producing. We also managed to follow up on some contacts we met at this event. Our Marketing Director subsequently went on a trade mission to the Middle East to strengthen links with existing contacts in person and to develop new ones."

Regional Language Network also helped NTE find a language provider to translate its business cards.

### Results

The business cards, as well as other literature, have been translated, NTE's Marketing Director has now visited the Middle East several times and sales to Middle Eastern countries are continuously increasing.

Pauline found the SOLVIT training provided by the Regional Language Network team to be very useful.

### Next steps

NTE will continue to invest in language skills in order to maintain adaptability when targeting new markets.

**Best practice in Translation**

**Number of employees** 30

**Location** Peterlee, County Durham

**Website** [www.nteltd.uk](http://www.nteltd.uk)

## 20. Osborne Engineering

Osborne Engineering was founded in 1984 and specialises in the manufacture and repair of all types of white metal components.

### Identification of challenges

In 2001, Osborne Engineering opened a new component repair facility in Dubai. The company mainly works for international clients from the petrochemical, oil, gas and power generation industries where it is required to repair and replace components to a high degree of quality. Eighty per cent of the company's sales are international, with France, Germany and Italy being its main European markets.

### Aims

In order to better communicate with its international customers, the company needed to develop its international communication skills even further.

### Solutions

Regional Language Network assisted and supported Osborne Engineering to source quotes for the translation of its company website and quotes for language coaching. Regional Language Network provided a list of French engineering schools as Osborne was considering employing a linguist.

### Results

Shukri Benfaid, Managing Director of Osborne Engineering, found the Regional Language Network service very helpful and has established contacts in a number of engineering schools in France.

### Next steps

Osborne Engineering will be looking to strengthen its in-house language capabilities by employing a French national in the Cramlington branch.

**Best practice in** Employing linguists

**Number of employees** 69 in Cramlington, 22 in Dubai

**Location** Cramlington, Northumberland

**Website** [www.osborne-engineering.com](http://www.osborne-engineering.com)



## 21. Perry Process

Perry Process Equipment Ltd is the European Headquarters of the Perry Machinery Group of Companies and has been exporting for more than ten years.

As an internationally used process plant & equipment specialists, the company has been working with clients in the chemical, pharmaceutical, plastics and rubber, food, sugar, fishmeal and paper industries for over 70 years. The company has developed by building up close client partnerships throughout the European and World markets. Exports now represent 60 per cent of total turnover.

### Identification of challenges

Perry Process operates in Europe and decided to adapt its approach to export markets by using its customers' native languages.

### Aims

The company wants to have its website translated into German and develop the international communication skills of its in-house staff.

### Solution

Anne Moat, Managing Director at the Newton Aycliffe premises, contacted Regional Language Network to get advice on translating the website.

Perry Process, in its aim to do business with customers in their native tongue, decided to develop its international communication skills by investing in translators and language courses.

The company's main export markets are Germany, Spain and the Netherlands, and language skills would be needed to build a customer base in these nations.

### Results

The company worked closely with its chosen translation agency and the website is now available in Chinese, German and Spanish.

Two salespeople have taken German courses, which was very useful and has created a competitive advantage, according to Anne. Perry Process also employs native speakers to manage the Spanish and Italian markets.

The Regional Language Network team also conducted SOLVIT training with some employees and the company now enjoys the services of a whole range of different international speakers, including Spanish, German and Dutch.

The company's gross turnover, following the investment in language skills, increased by 25 per cent, leading to new job opportunities within Perry Process.

### Next steps

Perry Process plans to develop in new markets and, having seen the advantages of dealing with customers in their native tongue, will continue to invest in international communication skills and employing multilingual staff.

**Best practice in** Translation/language coaching

**Number of employees** 125

**Location** Newton Aycliffe, County Durham

**Website** [www.perryprocess.co.uk](http://www.perryprocess.co.uk)

## 22. Roman Ltd

Founded by Gerald Osborne in 1985, Roman Ltd is based in Newton Aycliffe, County Durham, and is currently the UK's largest shower manufacturing plant. The business employs 210 staff and manufactures a huge range of shower enclosures, bath screens, shower trays, state-of-the-art wet room products and many other luxury showering items.

Over the last two decades, the company has enjoyed massive growth, launched a successful national advertising campaign and won three major business awards.

### Identification of challenges

In order to expand further and move into new markets Roman set up a dedicated Export Department in 2004.

### Aims

The Export Department was tasked with communicating with overseas markets and developing overseas sales.

### Solution

Two specialists cater for worldwide demand. They include an experienced Export Manager, fluent in French and German, to oversee the department. Working alongside her is an Export Sales Executive, originally from Majorca, fluent in Spanish, English and Italian.

Regional Language Network has supported the translation of Roman's website into six foreign languages; French, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Portuguese and German. Translation of marketing support material for international customers has also been completed.

### Results

Roman already successfully exports to France, Spain, Portugal, United Arab Emirates, Poland, Latvia, Romania, Hong Kong, Malta, Bulgaria, Gibraltar, The Netherlands and Tonga. The percentage of export sales in annual turnover is expected to grow significantly over the next few years.

### Next steps

Roman plans to develop the Canadian market whilst improving relations with existing customers in the USA, Russia and France.

**Best practice in Translation**

**Number of employees** 210

**Location** Newton Aycliffe, County Durham

**Website** [www.roman-showers.com](http://www.roman-showers.com)

## 23. RTR

RTR is the Gateshead-based UK subsidiary of German based company RTR Handelsgesellschaft. The company supplies tubes, pipes and forgings to the power industry.

### Identification of challenges

Being the British office of a German company meant that international communication was vital in the everyday work of RTR.

### Aims

When an annual meeting was called in Germany that all staff were due to attend, the team decided to brush up on their language skills to enhance rapport with their German colleagues.

### Solutions

The team embarked on a three-month programme of one-to-one sessions to improve their language skills and increase their knowledge of German business culture. With the support and assistance of Regional Language Network, RTR was able to enrol all staff on individual language coaching sessions at beginners, intermediate and advanced levels.

### Results

Armed with improved communication skills and a greater awareness of German business culture, the meeting in Germany went very well. The considerable investment made by RTR in language coaching has secured the positions of the four members of the UK team.

### Next steps

Other members of staff with more advanced language skills may seek further language coaching at a higher level.

**Best practice in** Language coaching/ cultural awareness

**Number of employees** 5

**Location** Gateshead, Tyne and Wear

**Website** [www.rtr.co.uk](http://www.rtr.co.uk)

## 24. Seen and Heard

Seen and Heard is a conference and events production company. Established in 1978, the company has a reputation for professionalism throughout the UK and internationally.

### Identification of challenges

Many of Seen and Heard's events take place abroad, with a large number taking place in Geneva in particular. As a result, staff visit Geneva on a regular basis. Members of staff have commented that to facilitate the organisation of events in other countries it would be helpful if they could speak another language.

### Aims

Seen and Heard works within a time sensitive market and feels its staff would be more efficient if they were able to overcome the language barriers they encounter.

### Solution

Seen and Heard now offers staff language coaching in French. Six members of staff have signed up to benefit from the language coaching.

### Results

In a recent trip to Geneva several staff members studying French used their new found skills to communicate and have seen great results.

### Next steps

The class has now split into two levels so that the basic and more advanced groups receive the level of training they require.

**Best practice in** Language coaching

**Number of employees** 17

**Location** Newcastle upon Tyne

**Website** [www.seenandheard.co.uk](http://www.seenandheard.co.uk)



## 25. Solar Solve

Established in 1975, Solar Solve Marine is the world leader in the design, development and manufacture of specialist retractable sunscreens and fabric roller blinds for the marine industry.

### Identification of challenges

After undertaking an Export Communications Review, Solar Solve was aware that it needed to address cultural issues for the US market. A new website was considered especially for the US market and the company has taken advice on how the site should be localised. Solar Solve were also advised to source Japanese translations to support export sales into the Japanese market.

### Aims

The company commissioned a market research report for the Japanese market which concluded that Solar Solve's product should give the impression of "being Japanese". For the Japanese shipbuilding market, it recommended that everything should be translated into Japanese, including instructions and promotional materials.

### Solution

A number of the Export Communications Review consultants' suggestions have been adopted, such as translation of box labels (eg "fragile" and "careful") and also fitting instructions. The company has also had sales literature and the company website translated into eight languages: Mandarin, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, and Spanish plus a version in US English. Regional Language Network provided support and assistance for further translation work.

Whenever the company undertakes cultural business training or a foreign visit, reports are documented for informal staff training and learning resources. The company maintains a very positive attitude towards learning and training.

### Results

Business is booming. The company has moved to new purpose built premises on the Tyne Dock and has employed three new members of staff.

### Next steps

The company intends to continue localising its website to support its international marketing export strategy.

**Best practice in Translation**

**Number of employees** 16

**Location** South Shields, Tyne and Wear

**Website** [www.solasolv.com](http://www.solasolv.com)



## 26. Walker Filtration

Walker Filtration designs and manufactures a wide range of products for filtration and drying, from medical sterile filters, to laser smoke evacuators.

### Identification of challenges

With 85 per cent of sales being international there was a need to adapt the business to global markets. The company has a sales representative based in Singapore who manages the South East Asian market. The biggest export markets are in Europe and the Middle East and the company is committed to developing a closer working relationship with its international customers.

### Aims

The company is looking at various means of developing relationships with international customers, including attendance at overseas trade exhibitions. While the company has a partner who can speak German, French, Italian and Dutch it has also recognised the need to support the effort with translated sales material.

### Solution

Walker Filtration's marketing department organised for brochures and other technical information translated into French, German, Italian and Dutch through a local approved supplier using the support and assistance offered through Regional Language Network.

### Results

Attending a trade exhibition in Germany, Walker Filtration has further expanded its translated documents to include Swedish. Showing a high level of commitment to its non-English speaking customers has contributed towards the company winning the Queen's Award for Enterprise for international trade for the third time. The business has also notched up nearly a 12 per cent increase in its export sales.

### Next steps

Having successfully translated technical documents and brochures, Walker Filtration has targeted the translation and localisation of its website.

### Best Practice in Translation

**Number of employees** 150 worldwide

**Location** Washington, Tyne and Wear

**Website** [www.walkerfiltration.com](http://www.walkerfiltration.com)

# Helpful information

If you want to delve deeper into a specific topic, there are sources of further information listed at the end of various sections. Below is a list of useful resources for all topics listed for your further convenience and research purposes.

## ■ REGIONAL LANGUAGE NETWORK

Promoting a greater capability in language and cultural skills for business and employment in North East England. RLN's role is to raise awareness of international language and cultural issues and how to solve them. RLN may often refer companies to colleagues in the UK Trade & Investment team or to an Export Communications Review consultant.

Tel: +44 (0)191 423 5610

[www.rln-northeast.com](http://www.rln-northeast.com)

## INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

### ■ CILT, THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR LANGUAGES

Responsible for promoting a greater national capability in language and cultural skills

[www.cilt.org.uk](http://www.cilt.org.uk)

### ■ SOLVIT (Solving the Challenges of International Communications)

On-line tool that offers information, advice and solutions to help businesses overcome the challenges of international communications.

[www.solvit.org.uk](http://www.solvit.org.uk)

### ■ LANGUAGES WORK

Promoting the true value of languages in the workplace and beyond. Includes case studies of employees using languages in their work, as well as listings of specialist recruitment agencies.

Tel: +44 (0)20 7379 5110

[www.languageswork.org.uk](http://www.languageswork.org.uk)

### ■ NARIC

The official source of information and advice on the comparability of international qualifications from over 180 countries worldwide with those in the UK.

Tel: +44 (0)870 990 4088

[www.naric.org.uk](http://www.naric.org.uk)

### ■ NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS

The approved UK national occupational standards for languages in a work setting.

[www.cilt.org.uk/standards](http://www.cilt.org.uk/standards)

### ■ THE LANGUAGE BUSINESS

Language training across the UK.

Tel: +44 (0)1335 330808

[www.language-business.co.uk](http://www.language-business.co.uk)

### ■ EUROPEAN LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO (ELP)

Portable record of language skills, devised by CILT and validated by the Council of Europe.

[www.cilt.org.uk/elp.htm](http://www.cilt.org.uk/elp.htm)

■ INCA (Intercultural Competence Assessment)

A Leonardo Da Vinci funded project co-ordinated by CILT, the National Centre for Languages which developed a portfolio of intercultural competence, a framework of intercultural competence and a partly computerised model for a suite of assessment tools.

Tel: +44 (0)207 395 5101

[www.incaproject.org](http://www.incaproject.org)

■ SIETAR (Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research)

Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research, the world's largest interdisciplinary network for students and professionals working in the field of intercultural communication.

[www.sietar.org](http://www.sietar.org)

■ DIA (The Delta Intercultural Academy)

The Delta Intercultural Academy, a knowledge and learning community for intercultural business and management communication.

[www.dialogin.com](http://www.dialogin.com)

■ CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF LINGUISTS (iol)

The Chartered Institute of Linguists serves the interests of professional linguists throughout the world and acts as a respected language assessment and accredited awarding body.

Tel: +44 (0)20 7940 3100

[www.iol.org.uk](http://www.iol.org.uk)

■ INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONFERENCE INTERPRETERS (AIIC)

AIIC is the only worldwide association for conference interpreters. Founded in 1953, it brings together more than 2600 professional conference interpreters in over 80 countries.

Tel: +41 22 908 15 40

[www.aiic.net](http://www.aiic.net)

■ LINGU@NET EUROPA

Lingu@net Europa is a multilingual, on-line resource centre for foreign language learning. It provides information about, and links to good on-line resources from around the world relating to the learning and teaching of any modern foreign language.

Tel: +44 (0)20 7379 5101

[www.linguanet-europa.org](http://www.linguanet-europa.org)