

Face to face

In this last article I am presenting you with a more deeply personal challenge and question! Are you really prepared to learn Business English?



In the first three articles in this Wirtschaft „Business English Culture Series“ I presented you with many reasons why you, and your company, should be learning Business English. Indeed, I even asserted that it is imperative that you embrace the urgency to learn Business English in order to succeed in the new global economy! I firmly believe, as I boldly asserted in the first article, that if you do not yet recognize this necessity, even here in Hessen in the very heart of Germany, you ought to bury your head, like an ostrich, in the sands on the Nordsee beaches!

Business English at the Office, Online and at Playtime

The previous articles provided specific tips that you can incorporate immediately to demonstrate, to your colleagues and clients alike, that you and your company are prepared to do business in English. The Business English „At the Office“ and „Online“ articles recommended tips for your company faxes, e-mails, brochures, web site, front desk reception and in-company training, all intended to illustrate that your company is progressively ready to conduct business in English.

Moreover, in the first article, Business English „Playtime“, I suggested that you „mix business with pleasure“ and learn Business English in your leisurely activities. Specifically, I mentioned in detail how „Business Golf“ (see www.mgtopen.com) could provide you with a relaxing opportunity to not only learn Business English but also offer you new networking contacts to enhance your profile in the community.

I want to point out however that all of these tips focused on the relatively easy Business English skills of reading, writing and listening. As

you may agree, these three language skills are the easiest to accomplish. Why? The reason is simply because these skills are more passive and they can be learned at your own pace. More importantly, they do not require you to step into the „spotlight on centre stage“!

Face to Face without loosing Face

This last article, because it focuses on Business English „speaking“ skills in the work environment, poses a more solemn challenge to test your resolve to learn Business English! When you speak you are „actively“ engaged and due to the immediate „in your face“ pace of verbal communication you are forced to compose your statements in your head (no IT spell and grammar check, at least not yet, is there to assist you!), then speak, and then also respond immediately. We therefore all know that everyone's ears are zeroed in, like radar, on the precise words we speak, and on our pronunciation. For those of us who do communicate in a second language, this is the skill that truly makes our hands sweat and our throats go dry!

When speaking, we not only communicate at a „face to face“ level but we also „face“ our own fears of making mistakes. Thus speaking tests our self-assuredness at a deeply personal level. I am sure this is why in both English and in German (das Gesicht zu verlieren!) speaking is the ultimate challenge for we do not want to personally appear foolish, inadequate, and to „lose face“! And of course, beyond the personal level, in business we also want our meaning to be precisely understood for our negotiations demand accuracy.

„Opportunities“ for Speaking with Clients!

The personal (and management) challenge, as I see it, is NOT to shy away from these inevita-

ble moments when speaking Business English becomes essential (or beneficial) but to truly „feel“ these instances are simply presenting more „opportunities“ to demonstrate to your clients your commitment to learn Business English.

The business workplace offers a host of opportunities to pro-actively engage in speaking Business English with clients. Your Marketing personnel can make sales presentations in English. Naturally, if they use Microsoft PowerPoint, as with written letters, e-mails and brochures, I recommend they use the spell and grammar check features on their computers to proofread beforehand the presentations. Further, your sales team can create „opportunities“ by inviting clients to lunch or dinner and literally be „served on a plate“ an ideal opportunity to speak Business English. Trade shows offer comparable opportunities.

Other opportunities can be found right „at home“ in your boardroom. In addition to remembering to place English brochures (and leading English magazines and newspaper subscriptions) in your boardroom, have corporate posters and banners, translated into English, adorning the walls! These will create an environment where everyone perceives that speaking English is both sanctioned and encouraged.

Hiring „Ready to Go“ Biz English Colleagues

In previous articles I offered suggestions on how to train your existing personnel with the requisite Business English skills in a non-threatening manner. I would also like to suggest now that your Human Resources personnel place a higher priority not only on „in company“ English training but that your hiring criteria qualify potential employees for Business English skills prior to placement within your company.

Not only will this ultimately reduce long term training costs but it will have an immediate pay back by having representatives „ready to go“ and actively use Business English strategies company wide. I recommend that your Application Forms have an English section and if you do have corporate screening tests you also implement a Business English proficiency assessment. I dare say that this will also send a clear signal to any existing personnel whom are reluctant to embrace wholeheartedly your new commitment to Business English. They will quickly witness from the new employees, and others who are willing to accept the challenges, that those who aspire to progress in their careers (or for that matter retain their current portfolio!) must accept this new „Business English“ culture reality!

Business English Leadership

If you are presently an owner-manager, or a senior executive-manager, you know from experience that as a manager-leader, to successfully implement a new company culture that enthusiastically takes on new challenges, it is incumbent upon you to „lead by example“ and not simply „lead by decree“! This is why I posed the question at the very beginning, „Are you really ready to learn Business English?“ If you are a mid-level manager, I submit that if you take on the challenges to learn Business English it will offer you an opportunity to distinguish yourself from your peers and greatly improve your chances for promotion!

In either case, regardless of your current management position, in learning Business English (especially speaking) you will have to look hard at yourself in the mirror and honestly ask yourself if you are up to the challenge! When facing your natural fears of failure, I would like to conclude with a comforting observation.

I sure we would all agree from experience (work and travel) that when it comes to communicating in a new language it is NOT the mistakes that we, or others, make that are remembered but rather the personal attributes of confi-

dence, courage and respect that are the lasting impressions long after conversations! So fear not! Learning Business English need not be intimidating, either at a corporate or personal level! And if your head is indeed not buried in the sands of the Nordsee, I am confident, as you look around at the new global economic horizons, you will not only recognize the downside consequences of NOT learning Business English but, in a positive way, you will see the corporate, career and personal rewards that are sure to come your way through learning Business English!

Biography Information:

Mr. Gerry T. Kierans is a Canadian Freelance Business Consultant. He is Managing Director of The MGT Open (www.mgtopen.com), an innovative concept for teaching „Business Golf“ to managers in Europe. This „Business English Culture“ concept is so unique that CNN International will broadcast his Workshop from the Bad Arolsen Golf Club to tens of millions of worldwide business viewers this November 3, 10, 17 and 24. Be sure to watch „Living Golf on CNN“ at 23:30 C.E.T each Monday in November to see Bad Arolsen on international television!

In addition to The MGT Open „Business Golf“ concept, Mr. Kierans also has many German companies as clients including Kassel International Management School, where he is currently „Teacher of English“. He encourages you to contact him directly with your comments to this article and also welcomes your inquiries regarding „Business English“ training and web site conceptualization for your company. He can be reached at either gerry.kierans@mgtopen.com or gerry.kierans@kims.de



KOMPAKTE FARBDRUCKER FÜR GEHOBENE ANSPRÜCHE SUCHEN NEUE HERAUSFORDERUNG



...abzuwerben bei **brw-Bürosysteme in Kassel.**

Ob Kopier-, Druck- oder Faxsysteme, ob EDV-Hardware oder EDV-Netzwerke, ob Büro- und Sitzmöbel oder anderes Büromaterial - bei uns können Sie sicher sein: wir bieten Ihnen nur top qualifiziertes "Personal".

Wir vermitteln heute: Konica 7820 und 7830

Integrieren Sie diese zwei in Ihre Teams, Arbeitsgruppen oder Abteilungen und sie werden sich als leistungsstarke neue Mitarbeiter bewähren. Als Colour Office Systeme drucken sie in ausgezeichneter Qualität, ermöglichen eine schnelle Dokumentenproduktion und flexible Papierverarbeitung. Frühest möglicher Eintrittstermin? Sofort!

Die kompletten Bewerbungsunterlagen von Konica 7820 und 7830 mit Gehaltsvorstellung schicken wir Ihnen gern zu.

brw-Bürosysteme Vertriebsgesellschaft m.b.H. · Ahnatalstr. 2
34128 Kassel · Tel.: (0561)96995-0 · Fax: (0561)96995-50
E-Mail: info@brw-ks.de · www.brw-ks.de

