

EVALUATION

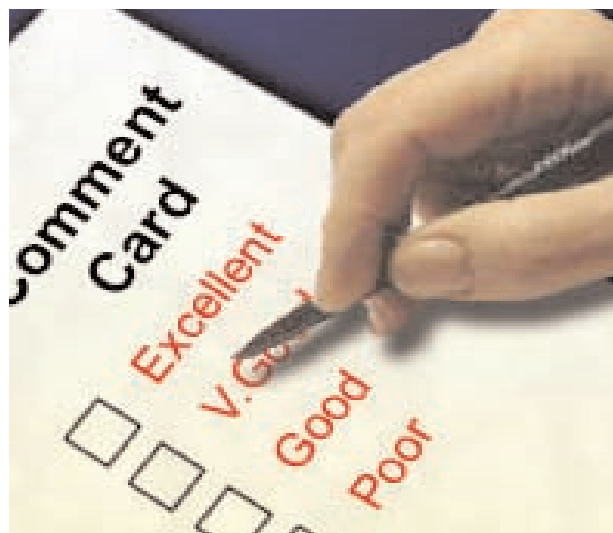
All your activities need to be measured in some way, and introducing a better international welcome for your customers is no exception.

Examples of business objectives:

- Increase customer satisfaction from “poor” to “good”, “very good” or “excellent” among your overseas visitors. Collect your feedback using “guest comment cards” or “attraction questionnaires” completed by your guests.
- Increase the number of visitors from Norway by 10 per cent on the previous year
- Increase the number of Dutch visitors on walking holidays by 20 per cent on the previous year
- Increase the number of nights booked by all international visitors from two to four

Include questions about communication skills in your customer feedback forms and discover how it makes a difference. Have these questions translated into the key languages of your most regular international visitors.

Keep a track of the effectiveness of international communication skills – whether this is written translations on your website or brochure, language skills of your staff or being culturally aware of the differences in social etiquette between the UK and international visitors from different countries.



TOP TIP... When you invest in languages, keep a track of your return on investment. This will demonstrate the links between language skills and increased customer satisfaction and your increased sales revenue.

International communication skills work! The checklist will help you prove it. Use the evidence you collect to justify further funding and investment in language skills.

You should discuss funding for international communication skills with your Business Link Skills Broker or an International Trade Adviser.

TOP TIP... Use the evaluation checklist included in the further information factsheet

Go to www.businesslink.gov.uk and www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk

Passionate about languages

Language lessons come in all sizes

Whether you are a large hotel or a small B&B; a famous attraction or a small attraction aimed at a niche target audience, language lessons can be learned. You could carry out some research, look online to see what others are doing, or attend events aimed at tourism businesses such as yourselves.

One NorthEast's Tourism Team organise an annual Distribution Day, inviting regional tourism businesses to attend and to distribute and exchange their promotional information. The event is well attended by attractions, services, hotels and B&Bs

At these events One NorthEast's Regional Language Network have met with many tourism businesses with an interest in international communication skills, including:

The Alnwick Garden

Marketing information has shown that for The Alnwick Garden, as many as 12 per cent of their visitors are from overseas. In 2006, these were mainly from Australasia and Europe, following a marketing campaign that was carried out in conjunction with VisitBritain.

In 2007, the VisitBritain "Great Ideas" campaign is targeting Belgium, USA and Canada to try to encourage increased overseas tourist numbers from these countries. This will be through a variety of exhibitions and holiday shows.

One great idea operated by Alnwick Garden's marketing department is keeping translated copies of brochures and leaflets on their computer system, which they can easily be printed out when large tour groups visit the Garden.

The languages include French, German, Spanish, Italian, Dutch, Japanese, Arabic, Russian and Chinese. If a tour group is pre-booked, whenever possible a guide is provided that speaks their language.





Blackfriars restaurant

Blackfriars restaurant advertises itself as the oldest dining room in the UK that is now one of the most innovative and cutting-edge restaurants in Newcastle. With origins dating back to 1239 its history includes time as hostel to accommodate King Henry III.

Consequently it has attracted a number of articles and is a visitor destination both for UK based and international visitors. Indeed it is noticeable that there is now a Norwegian customer base, which has a probable connection with a magazine article written by a visiting Norwegian. (deleted last three words)

Garret McCarthy, manager of Blackfriars, is aware of the effectiveness of positive communication in attracting European customers to the restaurant. To ensure that this is put in place the company has made efforts to appreciate cultural awareness, more than simply focussing on language training. Garret says “If front of house staff can enhance a non-English speaking client’s experience at the restaurant through understanding their different tastes and expectations, as well as being able to offer some welcoming phrases, that makes for satisfied and appreciative customers and a more effective service all round.”

Blackfriars has already initiated the idea of producing menus and other promotional literature in other languages in order to enhance a welcoming atmosphere. Blackfriars are very supportive of developing international communications skills in their own company and would welcome the same support across the catering hospitality sector generally.

As part of our study into developing international communication skills, One North East’s Regional Language Network is working with the following tourism businesses in the region to increase their language and cultural awareness skills.

- BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art
- Bede’s World
- The Biscuit Factory
- Blackfriars
- City Sightseeing
- Durham Tees Valley Airport (including 22 on site businesses)
- Event Durham
- Malmaison
- NewcastleGateshead Initiative
- The Sage Gateshead
- Tourist Information Office (Newcastle)

One NorthEast’s Regional Language Network is working to promote a greater regional capability in language and cultural awareness skills for business and employment in the tourism and hospitality sector.

For more information see www.tourismnortheast.co.uk and www.rln-northeast.com