

WELCOMING INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

- Ever struggled to make yourself understood in another country?
- Found it difficult to read a menu or order a meal?
- Felt embarrassed to ask for help?

Remember how happy you were when you found someone who spoke your language.

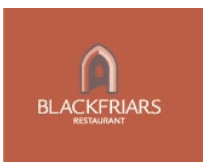
How can we make a real difference to our international welcome?

- We could greet our visitors with a few warm words of welcome such as “Bienvenue” or “Willkommen”
- Offer some extra help in selecting and ordering food from a menu.
- Make it easy to communicate – in person or in writing
- Have tourism brochures and guides available in a range of languages.
- Understand the cultural differences between nations
- Speak clearly and not too quickly

Research highlights the importance of foreign language skills for work, particularly use of languages in e-commerce. A survey of more than 2,400 consumers across eight countries revealed that those with little or no English are six times less likely to buy from English websites than those with more confidence in their English, and that they are more willing to pay more for a product if it means that they can buy it in their own language.

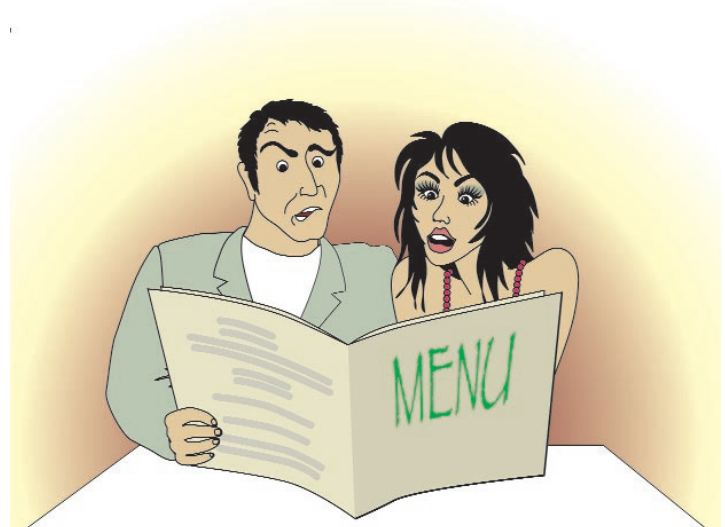
How can we improve our international welcome?

Greeting potential or returning visitors often begins with your website. Forrester Research has found that customers are four times more likely to buy online (book a holiday or accommodation) if you address them in their first language.



Garrett McCarthy, manager of Blackfriars restaurant took part in our language skills audit and feels very passionate about language

skills. He said “I’d like to see the hospitality sector in the region embrace international communication skills”.



Passionate about languages

Ten top tips

Surprise, surprise, the first top tip is about your website...

The ten top tips below can be downloaded as an easy to read factsheet, from www.tourismln.co.uk Pin it up on your wall as a reminder – it's easier than you think to communicate with international visitors!

- 1) Use your website to attract visitors from overseas by **making key information available in other languages**. Start with countries from where you already get visitors, others can be added in due course.
- 2) **Welcome signs in different languages** at your reception or ticket office will make a good impression as your guests arrive.
- 3) Consider getting **health and safety** and other **notices** in hotel bedrooms **translated**. This will help make your overseas guests feel safe.
- 4) Compile a **list of your staff and the languages they speak**. Distribute it widely so they can be contacted if needed. Badges that show staff names and their language skills can also be useful.
- 5) **Encourage your reception staff to learn how to greet guests in their own language**. This is very straightforward and a number of quick reference guides are available.
- 6) Translate your **restaurant menu into different languages**. It will impress your guests and is not expensive to do. If you have regular guests from a specific country, why not consider including a regional dish.



- 7) Each culture has a **specific social etiquette**. Raising employees' awareness of this will be appreciated by your guests and returned by their repeat business. Create a list of "Dos and Don'ts" and circulate it, this will help avoid any faux pas.
- 8) Cultural awareness can also benefit your business internally. A **multicultural workforce, whose differences are appreciated by their colleagues**, will feel more involved in business. This will result in a happier workforce, better staff retention, and ultimately better customer service.
- 9) Familiarise your non-English staff with the **Dos and Don'ts** of British social etiquette.
- 10) Create a **resource bank** of relevant phrases. For example; meet and greet, specific industry related phrases, cultural Dos and Don'ts, quick reference guides, and other relevant reference material.








What to do next? Get the next fact sheet from the RLN.

The table and chart below show accommodation symbol downloads in various languages during a six month period from www.tourismnortheast.co.uk These accommodation symbols are universal, but by adding the option of translating the text that accompanies them into a range of languages, you will engage more with your customer, and they will be more likely to book with you.

	ENGLISH	FRENCH	GERMAN	SPANISH	ITALIAN	NORW'N	DUTCH	SWEDISH	MANDARIN
TOTALS	277	278	297	261	214	227	225	225	199

ONE NORTH EAST REGIONAL TOURISM TEAM (JAN-JUNE 2007)

Are you aware that there are useful accommodation and expressions freely available to download and put on your website and brochures?

	Months open number indicates which months establishment is open/ if no number is indicated establishment is open all year <i>Anzahl der offenen Monate an / wo keine Zahl angegeben ist, ist das ganze Jahr offen</i>
	Children welcome (minimum age) <i>Kinder willkommen (Mindestalter in Klammern)</i>
	Reduced rates for children <i>Ermäßigung für Kinder</i>
	Children's play area <i>Kinderspielplatz</i>
	Babysitting/listening service <i>Babysitting/Baby-Audioüberwachung</i>
	Games room <i>Raum für Gesellschaftsspiele</i>
	Pets accepted by arrangement <i>Haustiere nach Vereinbarung willkommen</i>

Language skills audit

Discover what language skills you have already have under your roof by conducting a language skills audit with your staff using the questionnaire in the further information section of this toolkit.

Training and development

If you are interested in cultural briefing sessions, language coaching sessions, translation services, or you simply want to know more, contact the Regional Language Network at www.rln-northeast.com

Also worth a look...



Welcome International training

Welcome International. A one-day training programme designed to give you confidence when meeting and greeting international visitors in another language.

www.welcometoexcellence.co.uk

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