



Have you ever considered the extent to which language skills could improve your business operations?

Whether you trade overseas or employ foreign workers, language and cultural skills can enhance your international communications, increase profitability and help you to build good working relationships.

When entering a new foreign market for the first time, a basic knowledge of the language and local business etiquette will undoubtedly help you make a better first impression. From the little things, such as knowing how to present your business card, to the more influential decisions made during negotiations, languages should form a vital part of any export strategy.

People are more likely to make a purchase when being sold to in their own language so use this to your advantage and you will not only gain new customers but demonstrate respect and commitment to any working relationship.

If you don't have in-house language skills it is advisable to employ the services of a professional. Our colleagues at the Regional Language Network can put you in touch with local translators, interpreters, language trainers and cultural consultants to improve your international communications and ensure you avoid embarrassing situations. The RLN also provides a range of free resources, including cultural briefings and language service guides to download from their website [www.rln-westmidlands.com](http://www.rln-westmidlands.com)

If you already have languages under your belt you will appreciate the importance such skills bring to the workplace and that we need to reverse the decline in languages uptake in schools to increase youngsters' employment opportunities and boost UK performance in global markets.

The RLN are looking for business people who can help reverse this trend by bringing their business experience, language expertise and tales of global travel into the classroom, as part of the Business Language Champions programme.

Since the launch of the programme four years ago, over thirty Business Language Champions partnerships between schools and business have been created and in 2 out of 3 cases these activities have helped to increase languages uptake.

The RLN hopes to create more partnerships this year and in particular emulate the achievements of current 'Champions' such as Mark Wilson (pictured below) from Birmingham-based Catalyst Corporate Finance, whose presentations and workshops at Ninestiles School in Acocks Green helped increase languages uptake by 20 per cent.

To find out more about Business Language Champions please contact Frances Pallett, BLC Project Manager, on 0121 329 3297 [frances.pallett@rln-westmidlands.com](mailto:frances.pallett@rln-westmidlands.com)



Pictured: Mark Wilson from Catalyst Corporate Finance and Jayne Talbot, teacher responsible for employer engagement at Ninestiles School, with pupils Nootan Vegad and Javeria Khan