

# Business Language and Cultural Audit

This simple six-step audit process and sample questionnaires complement advice provided by RLN London on [knowing your team](#) and [knowing your customers](#). They can help you to:

- raise awareness of the international and multicultural communication needs of your organisation
- find out about the existing language and cultural skills and knowledge within the team that can be used to address them
- develop a plan for future action.

## Preparation

- 1 Ask senior managers to think about language and cultural needs for current and future business.
- 2 Use the [questionnaire for managers](#) (see later) to identify work streams and job roles where language and intercultural barriers arise (including English for Speakers of Other Languages).

## Audit

- 3 Ask individuals to complete the [questionnaire for team members](#) (see later).
- 4 Analyse and collate the employee questionnaires to identify existing skills and gaps.

## Action plan

- 5 Develop an action plan to address issues and share good practice.
  - a. Match team members' skills to language and intercultural business requirements.
  - b. Train staff in language, intercultural and communication skills.
  - c. Recruit staff with language skills and cultural knowledge.
  - d. Use professional services of translators, interpreters, cultural or language trainers – you can access these on RLN London's [Service Finder](#)

## Review

- 6 Review the action plan and add it to your organisation's general business planning cycle.

## Questionnaire for managers

1. For which job roles do you require, now or in the future, languages or intercultural skills to support and enhance communication with colleagues, clients, suppliers or customers?
2. For each job role, list the language(s) required.
3. For each job role and each language, is the language needed for:
  - a. Speaking?
  - b. Reading?
  - c. Writing?
  - d. Listening?

4. To what level in each of these activities is the language required?

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| <b>A</b> | To understand and use some basic words and phrases   |
| <b>B</b> | To understand and use simple words and sentences in everyday situations                        |
| <b>C</b> | To understand and use a limited range of language to deal with most normal work situations     |
| <b>D</b> | To understand and express ideas, information and opinions about a number of different subjects |
| <b>E</b> | To understand complicated language and express oneself fluently in most situations.            |
| <b>F</b> | To understand and use any kind of language, even very complicated or formal language.          |

5. For each job role what intercultural skills are required? *Intercultural skills help us to work effectively with those from other cultures.*
6. Consider the skills needed to:
  - a. Work with colleagues
  - b. Conduct meetings
  - c. Entertain and make small talk
  - d. Meet and greet
  - e. Motivate individuals and develop teams
  - f. Have market knowledge
  - g. Understand the business practice of clients, customers and teams with different language and cultural backgrounds.

## Questionnaire for team members

1. Write in all the other languages that you can understand or speak and how you learned them.
2. Write down all the different languages you know and how well you can listen to, speak, read and write them by using the following scale.

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| <b>A</b> | You have a basic understanding and can use some simple words and phrases.                            |
| <b>B</b> | You can understand and use simple words and sentences in everyday situations.                        |
| <b>C</b> | You can understand and use a limited range of language to deal with most normal work situations.     |
| <b>D</b> | You can understand and express ideas, information and opinions about a number of different subjects. |
| <b>E</b> | You can understand complicated language and express yourself fluently in most situations.            |
| <b>F</b> | You can understand and use any kind of language, even very complicated or formal language.           |

| Language | Listen | Speak | Read | Write |
|----------|--------|-------|------|-------|
|          |        |       |      |       |
|          |        |       |      |       |
|          |        |       |      |       |
|          |        |       |      |       |
|          |        |       |      |       |
|          |        |       |      |       |

3. Are there any languages you would like to improve to help you in your work? If so, please write in which language and skills needed.
4. Are there any new languages you would like to learn to help you do your job? If so please write in which language and skills needed.
5. Do you have any experience of living, studying or working abroad or doing business with particular countries and cultures in the UK? If so please write down the relevant countries and cultures.