



Language and cultural strategies for pain-free exports

Body Clock Health Care Limited

Body Clock is a leading supplier of TENS machines and other electronic healthcare devices to medical professionals and hospitals worldwide, including the NHS in the UK. It started in 1989 and now has seventeen full- or part-time staff based in East London.

Developing our market in Europe

'We built up a strong reputation in the UK and US for the quality of our products, competitive prices and excellent customer service', explains Marilyn Bash, Body Clock's Managing Director. 'Then we identified countries in Europe with a real gap in the market for our devices'. Key European markets are France and Germany, although Body Clock also sells to Italy and Spain.

'We soon understood that to succeed in European markets would require an appreciation of international cultural and communication issues', Ms Bash continues. In France, Body Clock engaged a marketing company to advise on how best to make sales into the French healthcare system. In Germany, Body Clock uses the services of an agent. However, this local expertise is only part of the picture. 'We need to be capable of managing the customer relationships ourselves', explains Ms Bash. 'We already have language skills in-house and will actively recruit to improve those skills as our sales grow'.

Practicalities of a good communications strategy

Body Clock has undertaken a range of practical measures to increase its European sales. It has a long-standing relationship with a specialist translation house which provides translations within the short timescale crucial to ensure effective communication. This translation house is one of the quality assured translation professionals registered with BLIS - part of the suite of BLIS services maintained by CILT, the National Centre for Languages.

Special attention has been given to web localisation. Body Clock's Internet shopping site is available in French and, following the introduction of a French domain name, can easily be located with French search engines. Body Clock also has a separate website in German addressed to wholesalers. Distributors and users are also considered and benefit from multilingual packaging and product manuals.

Body Clock responds quickly and effectively to straightforward customer and sales enquiries from Europe by utilising its in-house French and Spanish language skills and/or the skills of its German agent or other contacts. Whilst its translation provider ensures it is able to deal promptly with more complex enquiries.

Benefits to our business

'Thanks to our marketing efforts to date and our multilingual websites, we now have steady sales in Europe', concludes Ms Bash. 'We regularly review how best to achieve our goal of increasing those sales – we are developing improvements to our websites and will continue to engage staff and contacts with the language and cultural skills which are so vital'.

<p>Body Clock Health Care www.bodyclock.co.uk www.bodyclockfrance.com www.bodyclock.de</p> <p>BLIS Professionals www.blis.org.uk/professionals</p>	<p>For more about RLN London go to: www.rln-london.com</p> <p>RLN London 20 Bedfordbury London WC2N 4LB</p>
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