

# Case study

## Languages and culture at work

### Tequila mixes with Cactus for a taste of Spanish at lunchtime



Soho-based TEQUILA\ is one of the UK's top five integrated marketing agencies with operations across Europe, the USA and Asia. With an expanding international workforce and some of the country's brightest graduates taking their first step on the marketing career ladder, training and development is crucial for TEQUILA\ to both inform and inspire its employees.

As part of its investment in people, TEQUILA\ approached language training provider Cactus to devise a special programme that would appeal to a cross-section of staff and help reinforce the company's international business outlook. It was decided that Spanish would be a popular choice and the courses were rapidly booked-up as employees opted to learn the language during their lunch breaks.



"For a marketing agency like TEQUILA\ with pan-global clients, helping our staff learn about other cultures and develop language skills is crucial to our business success," explains Silvia Bartels, Head of Intelligence at TEQUILA\. "To create campaigns that will work in Russia or France, we have to understand those markets and recognise local consumer behaviour. Learning languages can play a huge part in this."

"In the early nineties there was a big investment in language learning in the media and marketing industries as large global agencies merged to form conglomerates. This emphasis is definitely returning as marketers recognise the importance of local knowledge to enhance campaigns and strengthen business partnerships globally."

Cactus developed a beginners' Spanish syllabus to include everything from conversational tips and ice-breakers to grammar and Spanish history. Classes were designed to be fun and informal, with emphasis



placed on real-life exchanges and functional language to encourage learning.

With all TEQUILA\ staff learning together at their London offices, from directors to junior executives, the classes proved to be a great team-building and motivational exercise. By making mistakes in front of each other and sharing the learning experience, traditional company hierarchies were relaxed and team spirit boosted.



Silvia continues: “One of the key challenges in my role is deciding how people can be managed and organised to work together effectively. When our teams are as far flung as LA and Hong Kong, this pan-cultural awareness or connectivity becomes much more important and language training helps encourage team building and creativity.”

“When I am on conference calls with our offices in Madrid or Paris, it helps to have some understanding of the local language. Colleagues and clients worldwide usually find it flattering if someone cares about their market enough to learn a bit of their language and it helps to establish trust quickly.”

TEQUILA\ has completed its initial Spanish beginners’ courses and employees have signed-up for second and even third sessions of training. The courses have proved so popular that there are plans to increase classes and offer additional languages in the coming months, with French earmarked as the next language choice.

If you think your company and colleagues would also benefit from language learning, you can find a wide range of language trainers and other language and cultural service providers on Regional Language Network’s Service Finder – simply visit [www.rln-london.com/servicefinder](http://www.rln-london.com/servicefinder).

## Useful links

**TEQUILA\**

[www.tequila-uk.com](http://www.tequila-uk.com)



[www.cactuslanguage.com](http://www.cactuslanguage.com)

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