

## Learning the ropes for international marketing

Strata Broadband working with Malet Lambert Language College, Hull.



Malet Lambert Language College, which earned specialist school status in 2001, caters for pupils aged 11 -16 years. The school gives foreign language learning a high profile, with all pupils learning two languages from a choice of French, German, Spanish, Russian and Mandarin. The school is also keen to place language learning in a 'real world' context, which is why they began working with Strata Broadband in October 2006.

Mark Walas from Strata Broadband, an Internet Service Provider based in Kettering, was no stranger to working in schools, having already designed and delivered seminars to introduce students to business concepts. Together with Mike Watson, who has extensive experience of international marketing and Sally Fagan, a linguist with knowledge of all five languages learned at Malet Lambert, Mark designed a day-long seminar to show students how they might use their language skills in a business environment.

This project is part of the Business Language Champions programme, co-ordinated by the Regional Language Network (RLN) East Midlands. It is designed to bridge the gap between school and the workplace and to reverse the decline in the take-up of modern foreign languages.

After various meetings and correspondence, a date was set for 11 October 2006, when Mark and his team would deliver a seminar to all 150 Year 10 students.

It was decided to base the day around a product students could relate to and so Double Dip, a low-cost sherbet-style confectionery was chosen. Mike, as Marketing Director for Swizzels-Matlow was responsible for product launch throughout Europe.

Students were divided into five groups, according to language, and given the tasks of designing an exhibition stand for Double Dip in the target country, designing and producing a draft flyer for the exhibition and writing and performing a 30 second television or radio advert.

Through these tasks students had to consider not only what kind of language to use but also the cultural implications of their choice of words and product name. They also learnt that language skills need to be complemented by other skills in the workplace such as teamwork, creativity and leadership.

The seminar was well received by all pupils and staff were grateful to Mark and his team for putting languages into an exciting business context. Paul Trainor, Assistant Head and KS3 Co-ordinator, said:

*“The pupils really enjoyed the day and found it useful to develop enterprise skills and knowledge using a Modern Foreign Language context.”*

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