



Language Strategies for
Competitiveness and Employability

Vademecum



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WHY THIS VADEMECUM?

This Vademecum is designed to arouse interest in the results of the CELAN Network project – **Language Strategies for Competitiveness and Employability** -, which was carried out in the period January 2011-March 2013 with support from the European Commission (Lifelong Learning Programme – Key Activity 2 / Languages). It is targeted at companies – particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), business representative organisations (BROs), and the social partners. It may also be of interest to education institutions that regard it as their responsibility to provide language preparation for professional life.

CELAN was launched from within the Business Platform for Multilingualism, a stakeholder forum created by the European Commission in September 2009, comprised of 12 European intermediary organisations, an EU “body”, two higher education associations, and six specialist organisations.

The Platform adopted the following Mission Statement.

Provision to European enterprises and individuals of services and tools to enable them to improve their professional performance through effective language strategies, and to provide the European Commission and Member State governments with pertinent advice.

CELAN is an innovative project experience in that the partnership is comprised of three European business representative / intermediary organisations, three higher education associations, three specialist organisations, two universities, and a vocational education and training institution.

The point of departure of the CELAN Network was the fact that as a result of economic globalisation, linguistic and language-related needs in industry and business have increased to an extent unimaginable ten or fifteen years ago. In view of this development, it is not surprising that in the first decade of the 21st century the relevance of multilingualism to competitiveness and employability became a major issue in EU policy.

The Business Platform in general and the CELAN Network in particular decided that their activities had to be bottom-up-oriented, needs- and business-driven. This is why CELAN started off by conducting a Europe-wide survey among enterprises and business representative organisations on “Companies’ Linguistic and Language- related Needs in Europe”. While the 540+ responses received cannot be regarded as providing a repre-

sentative picture, they nevertheless prove that the CELAN partners’ view of the business activities for which internationally-oriented companies need “foreign” languages was basically right, and the principal responses were as follows:

- attending business meetings (negotiation, collaboration, etc.)
- maintaining international relations, travelling abroad
- presenting company products, services
- using multilingual communication (telephone, e-mail, video conferencing)
- attending trade fairs, conferences, congresses
- preparing communication material – leaflets, brochures, mailshots, instructions
- interacting socially with customers and suppliers
- retrieving and using business/technical/market information
- interacting in teams / with colleagues / with headquarters
- preparing internal operational procedures, technical briefs, machine operating instructions, product user guides / leaflets / instructions

The following language-related business activities received less attention.

- installing and maintaining company products abroad
- responding to / presenting offers, bids, tenders
- reporting: market analysis, policy documents, product development
- managing a multilingual website

What the survey – not surprisingly – also revealed was that there are considerable differences between companies, depending, among other things, on size, sector, and geographical location.

From a provisional identification of needs, CELAN moved on to research into language industry products, tools and services that can enable employers and employees to overcome language and language-related needs. The project group came to see linguistic and language-related needs not only in relation to language learning, teaching / training, and assessment, but also with regard to the wide range of other solutions provided by the language industry. In fact, the language industry and its products and services have developed at an incredibly rapid pace over the past five to ten years.

The expansion of the language industry provides ample proof of the fact that there is a genuine need for the products, tools and services provided. At the same time, there is also evidence that particularly the managers of SMEs are frequently not aware of the linguistic and language-related needs they have to meet if they want to globalise, nor of the

broad range of solutions the language industry can offer today for most of these needs. The sheer volume of the reports prepared within CELAN on language industry products and services is a reflection on the complexity of needs and solutions. At the same time, we fully understand that managers of SMEs or even language professionals working in SMEs may not have the time to study these reports in detail and/or identify those aspects which are most relevant to their individual needs. This is why the CELAN Network has developed a **Language Needs Analysis Application (LNAA)**, which can be accessed at www.celan-platform.eu

The LNAA is designed to raise awareness among business users, including business representative organisations, of important types of language use in corporate environments – in other words – of typical needs arising from internationalisation / globalisation, of the skills and competences required, and of tools and services provided by the language industry in response to apparent needs. However, the LNAA does not and cannot provide absolute and perfect solutions to given problems and needs. It is not an automatic language consultancy service. Rather, it provides a framework and context in which users are able to gather pertinent examples and expertise.

The prompts and questions in the LNAA are based on the original questionnaire (e.g. “Do you need to translate your product/promotional material into other languages?”), on the language industry reports (“Do you use translation and/or interpretation services?”), on a questionnaire completed by higher education institutions, and on the CELAN group’s own perception of the language needs that business users may face and of the possible responses to these needs that might serve to enhance corporate competitiveness and therefore offer greater opportunities for employability. On the basis of their responses, the users of the system are assessed in terms of the intensity of their needs and their level of awareness of the solutions available to meet and satisfy those needs. The responses are then plotted on a chart, on which users can see their position regarding these two parameters and compare their performance with that of other users. The chart can also be filtered by company size, location and sector. Finally, the position on the chart points to specific suggestions, based on the research of the CELAN group, which users might wish to follow.

We hope that this Vademecum will also arouse the business community’s interest in the Language Needs Analysis Application.

IF-THEN SCENARIOS

CELAN sees the relationship between internationally oriented business goals, linguistic and language-related needs, and linguistic and language-related resources, services and tools as a kind of dynamic triangle. Each of the three interrelated elements is potentially subject to change. For example, the availability of new technological tools may encourage an enterprise to adopt new business goals. Moreover, specific needs can frequently be met in different ways.

This is why CELAN – in line with reports and studies released over the past ten years – thinks that every company should have its own comprehensive enterprise-wide language strategy for the identification and management of business communication processes. Needless to say, a language strategy cannot be seen as an isolated issue – it should be seen in connection with other policies / strategies of a given enterprise.

Interpersonal business communication

If an enterprise plans to go international, the management has to make sure that the processes of business communication to be conducted in another language or other languages are identified. This includes interpersonal communication, where issues such as frequency of communication, purposes, different language levels, and other needs may call for different solutions.

Solutions include –

- development of the necessary skills and competences among employees
- hiring people that have the necessary skills and competences
- hiring “native speakers”
- definition of standard formats and templates which can be replicated across language versions
- employing language professionals (translators and / or interpreters)
- outsourcing translation and / or interpreting to external service providers

If a company sees fit to employ professional translators and / or interpreters or to outsource translation and / or interpreting, it has to make sure that the professionals in question are fully aware of intercultural communication aspects, and have a good knowledge of the relevant domains.

Oral interpersonal communication

Oral interpersonal communication refers to all kind of encounters with foreign business partners or guests, in which the use of a foreign language is an asset or a must. If such communication is or could become sensitive – for instance, when it could have serious socio-economic, cultural, security or legal implications -, it may be advisable to involve professional interpreters – either by employing them or by outsourcing interpreting to external service providers. In either case, it would be important to give these professionals access to the company's terminology (for example, in the form of the company's terminology database if it exists). Increasingly, oral interpersonal communication takes place in traditional and modern forms of telecommunication.

As indicated in the CELAN questionnaire, there are three typical cases in which business users need to have strong spoken language skills:

- Presentations, e.g. when speaking about the company and its activities in public meetings or conferences, or when promoting company products and services to potential customers (trade fairs, etc.);
- Business meetings, e.g. when engaged in discussions and negotiations with business partners (suppliers, customers, competitors, etc.);
- Social language, e.g. all those situations outside formal business contexts where relationships of trust and respect have to be developed in order to establish and develop commercial activities.

Written interpersonal communication

Written interpersonal communication refers to e-mail messages, letters, and other forms of written communication. Here, too, the issue of involving language specialists, i.e. translators, may arise. If a company wants to do so, it has to make sure that the prospective in-house or external translators are familiar with the various types of translation technology. As stated above, written communication can be standardised through the preparation of templates to ensure that company practice and values are maintained across all languages.

Recruitment policy / assessment of language competence; staff training and development

If an enterprise plans to go international, it will be well advised to assess the language and language-related skills and competences of its employees and to assess the skills and competences of candidates. It may also have to arrange the training and development of its staff – either in-house or externally.

As regards training and development, the usual questions have to be addressed –

- For which levels are the skills / competences required?
- Which skills and competences – oral and writing – are required?
- What language technology tools should employees be familiar with?

The modes of training and learning have to be linked to the learning outcomes required –

- language learning technology, for example, language learning platforms on the Internet, computer-assisted language learning (CALL);
- arrangements with individual language trainers or language training organisations;
- language travel, including sojourns with business partners.

Enterprises may find it worth their while to include language teaching and training in their general training strategy and use or adapt their training and learning technologies for this purpose. This would also facilitate the preparation of multiple-use content – i.e. content to be used for subject matter training as well as for language training.

The authoring, storage, delivery and re-use of educational content are becoming an important issue for industry and higher education institutions alike. Co-operation in this field would be mutually beneficial.

An issue that is becoming increasingly important is that of the assessment of linguistic and language-related skills and competences. Interviews conducted with entrepreneurs in a project supported by the Council of Europe's European Centre for Modern Languages revealed that formal certificates are becoming less and less relevant to managers. They want to find out for themselves what their own employees, and what candidates can do – in relation to the communication processes that have to be mastered by the company. It should also be clear that in this context informal and non-formal language learning outcomes as well as learning on the job, self-assessment, and learning to learn competence are becoming increasingly important.

Nevertheless, regarding the question of assessment and recognition of language competence, it is important that the corporate world is made aware of the methods and systems that have been developed to offer a more holistic and comprehensive understanding of an individual's language skills and competence. In particular, we refer to the European Language Portfolio and the Europass Language Passport which are able to record and present language expertise gained in all learning contexts, be they formal, informal or non-formal. Moreover, these tools are centrally based on the Common European Frame-

work of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which offers, among many other things, a simple means to describe linguistic abilities in terms of so-called 'can-do' statements. Regrettably, the CELAN group has noted that neither the Portfolio/Passport nor the CEFR is particularly well-known or respected in the corporate world.

Localisation

Localisation is the process of modifying products and services to account for differences in distinct markets. Localisation is an integral part of the globalisation of business and industry. If a company wants to sell its product(s) and / or services to customers based in other countries, it has to make sure that they are adapted to the cultural, linguistic, legal, political and technological conditions that pertain in the various communities targeted. Localisation is particularly relevant to user manuals, catalogues, websites, and software. Companies will probably have to rely on localisation service providers, who, in turn are among the most intensive users of language technology tools and systems.

Closely related to localisation is what has come to be known as digital marketing. If a company wants to be successful in foreign markets such as China, Russia or Brazil, it is crucial to get all the marketing and promotion tools and materials localised into the target markets' languages.

Information gathering and business intelligence

If a company wants to operate successfully in foreign markets, it will have to engage in continuous business intelligence activities. The more an enterprise globalises, the more necessary it becomes to screen information coming from different countries – for example, information on market developments and competitors' activities. Language service providers use translation technology in combination with content management systems for this purpose. Companies can contract this kind of service either in the form of a project or as a permanent service.

Unification of terminology

Unified terminology is important even if a company only operates in one language. If a company has decided to serve different markets with different languages, this becomes even more important. By unifying its terminology, translation and localisation costs can be substantially reduced, and texts in all languages automatically become consistent and accurate. In addition, unification of terminology has many positive side effects on corporate identity, corporate language, branding, and image cultivation. The unification of terminology should, however, be entrusted to a trained terminologist, and it requires the use of a terminology management system.

The IF-THENs described above only cover a number of individual aspects of business language policy/strategies from the point of view of linguistic and language related needs – needs that will frequently be met by language service providers. Even large-size international companies are relying more and more on language service providers. One problem remains, however – how to develop a comprehensive language policy for a given enterprise. This is where CELAN will hopefully offer useful advice as well. Our LNAA apart, business users may find the CELAN “Language policy/strategy management toolkit for solving language problems”, available for download on the Platform, a source of inspiration – the first comprehensive toolkit on this topic. Section 8 of the Toolkit – “Language policies/strategies” – contains information that may be news to many SMEs. In addition, the Instruction Modules that have been developed as part of the CELAN project activities and which can be accessed in the Tools section of the project website, are based on the Toolkit, and offer users and interactive tutorial to familiarise themselves with, and potentially seek to implement, the main suggestions and recommendations.

Finally, companies should make every effort to get an overview of the wide range products and services offered by the language industry, including language technology tools. Information of this kind can also be obtained from the CELAN Platform, where a “Typology of language industry products and services” is available for download. Furthermore, the typology also provides the input to the Showcasing System, a further digital tool that has been realised in the project and is available through the website. Using the categories that have been identified and defined in the typology, the Showcasing System serves as a simple archiving system to visualise specific examples of situations in which the tools and services presented in the typology have been effectively implemented in response to specific corporate language needs. Users select the particular elements of interest from the typology in order to access the most relevant cases.

To conclude, however, we must reiterate that in all the project outputs we repeatedly make the point that language-related needs differ from company to company, depending among other things on:

- the size of the enterprise and its degree of specialisation;
- the company's degree of globalisation;
- customer demands in the target markets;
- the nature of the industrial sector of the enterprise;
- the company's business objectives;
- the company's ability to define and understand its needs;
- specific understanding of the significance/impact of language expertise for company business activities;

- the company's awareness of the tools and services offered by the language industry;
- opportunities to collaborate with the educational and training providers (particular higher education);
- willingness and need to innovate, expand and develop corporate activities in multi-lingual contexts.

In other words, ultimately, there is no one size that fits all!

CASE STORIES DEMONSTRATING THE SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION OF ASPECTS DESCRIBED ABOVE

I. Major international companies

The following three case stories are based on interviews conducted within the CELAN Network project. Two of the companies presented below did not allow the CELAN project to reveal their identity.

Case story 1

One of the world's largest engineering companies required a web-based portal which all employees could access via the intranet in order to look for terms in several different languages – in other words, an online dictionary containing company-specific data. They chose a well-known terminology management system linked to a translation management system produced by one and the same company.

Case story 2

Type of company	a large-scale globally active enterprise from the automotive industry
Challenge	ensure the quality of technical manuals, promotion material etc.
Localisation	the company's websites and promotion materials in different countries are fully localised – in close co-operation with large-scale advertising agencies
In-house language-related activities	co-ordination of all marketing, promotion and language-related activities in-house
Outsourcing	large amounts of work for which language-service providers are better equipped
In-house use of language technology tools	use of nearly all of the language technology tools available on the market – increasingly in order to integrate systems or to make them interoperable
Language policy	company has an explicit language policy (including corporate language)

Case story 3

Name of company	Weidmüller Interface GmbH & Co. KG
Internet address	http://www.weidmuller.com/53973/Home/cw_start_v2.aspx
Type of company	a company based in Germany with its own manufacturing plant, sales companies and representatives in over 80 countries
Products/Services	products, solutions and services in the industrial environment of power, signal and data
Challenge	markets' demand for material and communication in different languages
Localisation	website in more than 20 languages, fully localised
Outsourcing	translations outsourced to one language service provider company only, which also takes care of the company's terminology
Terminology management	the terminology management system is always up to date, and is used to support other language technology tools, such as a translation memory tool and a computer assisted translation tool
New developments	the company is thinking of developing a full-fledged language policy document

II. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

The following two case stories are based on two of the 40 Best-Practice Case Studies presented in Annex 5 of the Final Report of the PIMLICO Project, inspired and supported by the European Commission. The PIMLICO Report is a major resource as regards languages in and for SMEs; unfortunately, it is still insufficiently widely known - http://ec.europa.eu/languages/languages-mean-business/files/pimlico-full-report_en.pdf

Case story 1

Name of SME	Danfo AB
Internet address	www.danfo.se
Company headquarters based in	Sweden
Product/Service	manufacturer of toilet facilities
Number of employees	115
Turnover	€ 15-20 million
Exports as % of sales	64%
Principal export markets	UK, Norway, Denmark, North America, Russia, Spain, Greece, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania
Human resources	the enterprise favours local agents and native speakers , preferring to have in-house knowledge of the languages spoken in key markets wherever possible; in cases where this is not possible, the company hires professional translators
Localisation	the enterprise has adapted the content of its website to the different export markets , each language version featuring content appropriate to that market

Case story 2

Name of SME	Evricom Ltd.
Internet address	www.evricom.bg
Company headquarters based in	Bulgaria
Product/Service	delivery of waxes and manufacture of candles
Number of employees	100
Turnover	€ 3-5 million
Exports as % of sales	70%
Principal export markets	Greece, Romania, Macedonia, Germany, Italy and Georgia
Human resources	every employee must speak at least English , but most speak two foreign languages the company hires native speakers to create confidence, and to increase the company's capability
Outsourcing to language service providers	the company uses translation and interpretation services for correspondence, phone calls and negotiations it uses local agents for language and cultural support
Localisation	the company recognises the close relationship between website adaptation , language management strategies and successful sales

Of course, the case stories cannot be regarded as representative. What is clear, however, is that large-size international companies tend to have a fairly clear idea of the specific linguistic and language-related implications of globalisation as well of the solutions provided by the language industry in general, and by language technology in particular.

CELAN Network members hope that the outcomes and outputs of their project activities will raise awareness among SMEs, BROs and workers of the services and tools available today and thereby enable them to improve their performance.

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- Confédération des Associations Nationales de Tanneurs et Mégissiers de la Communauté Européenne (COTANCE), BE
- European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), BE
- European Network for Business Studies and Languages (SPACE), BE
- European University College Association (EUCA), BE
- Observatoire européen du plurilinguisme (OEP), FR
- Fondazione Aldini Valeriani (FAV), IT
- Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (FEW), MT
- European Multimedia Forum Ltd. (EMF), UK