



LEARN THE LINGO

If you do business in countries where English isn't the first language, it pays to be able to do more than order beer and sausage – and being short of time isn't an excuse

Text: Dawn Gay

Learning a new language from scratch

isn't as daunting or time consuming as the chaotic, stereotype 'chalk and talk' adult evening classes portrayed in the 1970's TV show *Mind Your Language*. There are plenty of ways to pick up the patois while you keep up with a busy schedule - you'll soon know your adios from your adieus.


PARLEZ ON SKYPE

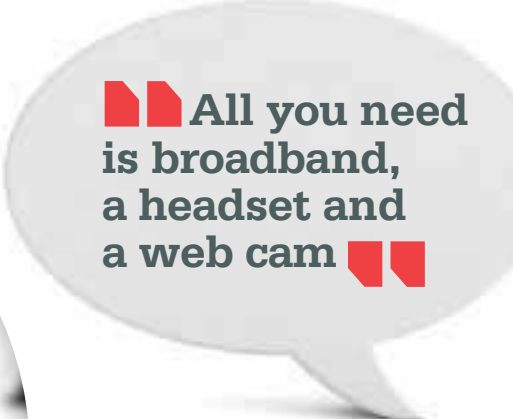
There's no need to leave your desk or hotel room when you can learn a language in real time on Skype. You can speak to trainers from all over the world and benefit from the extra motivation of having intense, face-to-face training. Cactus language training, whose past clients include big corporations like Goldman Sachs, Deloitte and Credit Suisse have a pool of international trainers available on Skype for around £29 per hour.

'All you need is broadband, a headset and a web cam and you are ready to log-in,' says Cactus PR manager Lucy Brandt, 'This executive product is for those who have no time to do a session in a training centre.'

www.cactuslanguagetraining.com

VIRTUAL LEARNING

Language publisher, Collins recently teamed up with the successful online language-learning community, Livemocha.com to produce a cutting-edge online resource. As well as tapping into Livemocha's chatroom network of six million users, the subscription unlocks access to 100 hours of interactive language content. Catherine Whitaker, language learning and publishing director at Collins explains how it works: 'It's language learning meets social networking with a whole new dimension, as productive skills are marked online. You submit a piece of writing or a voice recording and within minutes a native speaker gives you feedback.' 



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Collins also publishes French, Spanish and Italian CDs hosted by language guru, Paul Noble that can easily be downloaded onto an MP3 player for language learning on the fly. 'These are particularly suitable for getting up to speed for a posting abroad or doing a deal in another country. If you follow all 12 CDs you will learn chunks of language and be able to hold a conversation quickly,' says Whitaker.
www.harpercollins.co.uk

LET THE TRAINER COME TO YOU

Wouldn't learning be easy if you could step into a language class like any other scheduled meeting at work? Simon & Simon offers in-house workshops and

seminars in over 25 languages using the 'direct method' approach, where trainers speak entirely in the new language. Managing director Simon Robinson explains: 'Flexibility is a key factor as the trainer will come to your office on a day and time that suits you and it's great value for money as you don't have to travel.'
www.simonandsimon.co.uk

CULTURAL AWARENESS

In the global market, there's more to communication than just fluency in the mother tongue. Even if you speak the lingo, it helps to be aware of the subtle cultural nuances if you are building new cross-cultural teams or working on international mergers and acquisitions.

Linguarama, which has worked for Pfizer, Sony and BP, runs Cultural Competence seminars. Its business development manager, David Thompson, says the sessions are ideal for organisations with 'virtual teams' to understand values, attitudes and behaviour. 'We don't want people to make fluent fools of themselves with a language skill and the inability to understand cultural differences. It's not just about dress code, food and greetings but the way people think, work in teams and meetings and their management behaviour,' he says.
www.linguarama.com



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