

**Best Skills Development Program Entry  
2007 WORLD CHAMBERS COMPETITION**

**Title of the Project**

***“Induction Matters, in Every Language” series of multilingual DVD,s ( DIGITAL VIDEO DISC )***

**Executive Summary**

There has been a remarkable turn-around in Ireland’s economic fortunes over the last decade. After many years of low economic growth, high unemployment and emigration we now have had rapid growth and our economy has been characterised as the ‘Celtic Tiger’. Ireland’s high growth period started in 1993.

Today, some 10% of Ireland’s workforce is made up of foreign nationals, compared to 3.4% in 1996 - a very major change for us over a short space of time .Foreign nationals are now accounting for over half of employment growth in Ireland and our future economic performance will be very strongly influenced by our ability to continue to attract extra labour to Ireland .This however also presents significant challenges to the Irish labour market members of Chambers locally and nationally.

As part of our overall training support for the membership County Carlow Chamber sought to address some of the barriers at enterprise level by establishing effective supports for both the employers of migrants and the migrant workers themselves and consequently develop the conditions that will enable the Irish labour market to support a multicultural workforce.

Overwhelming evidence from the chamber research pointed to the need for thorough induction/orientation programmes for migrant workers coming to live and work in Ireland for the first time. As a result, the County Carlow Chamber has compiled induction guidelines that incorporate input from migrant workers, other successful programmes in Irish businesses and recognised best practice in the workplace to support the membership needs.

**Target Audience :**

This skills development programme was designed for employees, front-line managers, supervisors and H.R. personnel who communicate with speakers of English as a second language or co-workers who are learning English for the first time.

**The Project :**

The project has two related elements: language support and multicultural awareness / diversity management.

The main objective of the project was to develop a quality induction process across several disciplines with a multicultural workforce ensuring that all people maximise their potential and maximize their contribution to the organisation.

The example provided is the, ***Hygiene Induction Programme Training Pack ,the first in a series of multilingual DVD,s .“Food Matters, in every language”*** has been developed by County Carlow Chamber in conjunction with our members in the hospitality sector.

## 1. INTRODUCTION :

County Carlow Chamber recently won the overall national chamber of the year competition and we are there to serve and represent the Business Community of County Carlow. Located on the banks of the River Barrow, Carlow town is a bustling market centre serving a large rural area. The Chamber draws its membership from the County and from the surrounding area.

County Carlow Chamber was founded in 1953. It is a company limited by guarantee and files its annual returns with the Companies Registration office. The Board of Directors comprises twenty voluntary people who are elected on a bi-annual basis. The Chamber works to an Operating Plan, which is fully reviewed and updated every two years (in line with the election of directors). Priorities are extracted from the Operating Plan (see below). The day-to-day management of the Chamber is in the hands of the CEO, and a staff of three. Current strategic priorities of County Carlow Chamber are:

### Infrastructure:

- Development of motorway to Dublin , Town bypass and of rail transport
- Development of cost effective ICT

### Quality of Life:

- Development of cultural/artistic/tourism events.

### Enterprise support within our County:

- Decentralisation of a government department to County Carlow
- Secure major job creation within the County

### Enterprise support within Chamber membership:

- Address business needs of Chamber members.
- Provide Training ,business briefings, half-day and full day workshops to support our membership reach their full potential
- Provide Networking Opportunities

### Region:

- Lead the South East regional agenda.

County Carlow Chamber has achieved the goals it set itself in the last 24 months. It has expanded from being a Town chamber to a County chamber and has achieved its goal of being a representative business body that addresses all the key economic issues affecting business in the County of Carlow.

Our membership is the key to our success, following an intensive membership development campaign focused on both recruitment and retention spearheaded by the Board and the CEO our membership **represents 33% of all registered business in County Carlow**

As part of the national chamber network County Carlow Chamber has in 2006 participated and run several highly successful campaigns and programmes ranging from 2nd **Annual Local Government Funding Conference** to the “DAWN” non-national workers programme. Through participation in CCI at Board and committee level including committees on Tiering and Chamber Identity County Carlow Chamber of Commerce contributes back to the development of the Chamber network nationally.

Innovation is a key part in what has made County Carlow Chamber a very successful chamber; this can be seen in the high quality of design of publications and is clearly illustrated in our submission **Best Skills Development Program** . Our ability to see new ways of providing services to be more reflective of our membership needs, our unique structure of been one of Irelands only County Chambers illustrate our ability to be innovative and creative in our approach to the traditional work of the Chamber as an economic development body for the County. County Carlow Chamber is a dynamic, professional business led organisation.

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## **2. Background to the project – the issues**

In 2002 County Carlow Chamber established training and development programmes for our members, precise training needs are identified by way of a consultative process and now Chamber Business School provides a range of highly innovative services and supports that contribute greatly to the increased competitiveness of Chamber members throughout the South East of Ireland at a time of an ever changing demographic workforce.

Today over 20% of the recent influx of foreign nationals into Ireland have found employment in our hospitality sector. The three top countries of origin are Poland, Lithuania and Latvia. What had been highlighted by our membership in County Carlow is that this new multi culture workforce while offering real opportunities economically for them it was presenting many challenges .

In 2004 the Chamber set about developing a network within this sector to act as a research base and production locations to address these gaps and find business solutions to these new challenges

This network began with ten properties in the hospitality sector who had the following business issues:

- 1- Diverse workforce with concerns over level of language skills**
- 2- Lack of skills in key areas such as customer care**
- 3- Lack of knowledge in areas such as waste management systems**
- 4- Lack of networking between local properties**
- 5- Lack of targeted skills development**

The number one issue -**Perceived language barriers within the hospitality sector lead to :**

- Costly Employee turnover:“Many of these costs consist of management or administrative staff time (opportunity costs) but direct costs can also be substantial where advertisements, agencies or assessment centres are used in the recruitment process.”
- breakdowns in communications within the workplace
- reduced productivity,
- Poor customer Service
- poor relations between Irish and migrant workers
- an overall lowering of company morale.

## **Workplace communication development**

With this project the Chamber aimed to raise participant's awareness of the issues surrounding intercultural communication and allow them to share and evaluate strategies for managing intercultural communications and methods of best practice in their work place.

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#### **3. The solution**

##### ***Hygiene Induction Programme Training Pack ,Induction, orientation and support***

In an age of increasing skills shortages, our companies are constantly examining human resources policies in an effort to reduce staff turnover and improve retention policies. As Ireland moves to a more diverse labour force, the nurturing of high performance through the development of people is essential if membership is to remain viable and competitive.

To avoid wasting talent, all methods of creating an efficient and effective workforce need to be examined, an important aspect of this is the induction process. Through a number of initial workshops right across our membership but in particular the hospitality sector we found many of our members expected their employees to “hit the ground running” and become productive extremely quickly. Many others regarded an induction as a waste of time, or think a quick tour of the building should be sufficient!

The Chamber felt it was extremely necessary to prepared a set of Action Steps to change the mind set of employers towards migrant workers :

- Note that migrant workers are not necessarily short-term workers; investment in training will pay off.
- Work towards the goal of ensuring equal opportunities in employment progression and opportunity for all workers, including migrant workers.
- Track equal opportunities by keeping good records and monitoring staff performance and progression.
- If necessary, provide additional training to upgrade workers' basic skills and language levels.

We found where migrant workers work collectively in groups and their jobs are similar, induction and orientation are easier to manage. The suite of DVDS are a useful tool for both employees and employers in an intercultural working environment but must be part of a coherent approach to the issue.

A detailed training programme was implemented by the County Carlow Chamber and delivered on site for staff to incorporate their new skills into the job. The project was designed to make information and language related to the workplace more accessible to learners of English as a second or other language.

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#### ***4. Execution of skills development***

##### ***Phase 1***

The Induction Process ideally started shortly after the new employee arrived and involved bringing staff together for an hour or two to discuss some of the issues that are likely to arise and to introduce some of the strategies that might be useful in ensuring effective communication. Existing structured induction programmes were tailored to meet some of the needs of migrant workers. Some migrant workers needed extra support in upgrading their basic skills, including English as well as service skills.

##### ***Phase 2***

A clear idea of the level of English of the migrant workers was required to ensure that the strategies and issues were relevant. Running the session shortly after the arrival of the migrant workers with their participation had the added benefit of discovering exactly what the problems are from both perspectives in the context of the workplace

##### ***Phase 3***

we formalized simple rules that when used can improve communication in a multicultural workplace. They are simple ways of making verbal and written communication more comprehensible to migrant workers for whom English is not a first language. Many are so simple that it seems unnecessary to mention them. However, the evidence from the Chambers survey suggests that the simplest strategies are the easiest to forget. In addition, many of them require a conscious change in behavior on the part of the Irish colleagues of migrant workers and the difficulties involved with this cannot be underestimated.

- Speak clearly and slowly
- Avoid slang and idiomatic language
- Be open and patient!
- Keep clarifications simple
- Concept check instructions
- Maintain eye contact where possible
- Simplify written texts as much as possible

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#### **Phase 4 “Show and tell” .“**

There is nothing that improves the chances of someone understanding you better then showing or doing while instructing. Again it is something that is often forgotten in a busy works environment but the time taken to show or demonstrate greatly improves the chances of the new employees understanding exactly what the new employer requires from them .This is best suited to instructions that involve showing someone how to do something but you would be surprised how many things can be explained more quickly and clearly with visual images.

#### **Sample “Food Matters, in every language” for application purpose.**

Food Hygiene matters, training DVD was filmed locally within the hospitality properties of network members .Mapped scenes for the DVD were identify and instructions synchronised to visually demonstrate hygiene best practice .General Hygiene, Personal Hygiene and Hygiene for the preparation and service of food were all covered in individual modules .

Once filming was complete the production was translated into 6 languages, German, English, Polish, Latvian, Lithuanian and Portuguese. This specific course was designed around health, safety and hygiene in the catering and hospitality sector.

The content married the informational content of the HACCP system with the language necessary to understand and adhere to the system. The local *Environmental Health Officer* helped in the verification process for the content of the DVD and ensured it met local and national requirements and standards

On completion ,this food hygiene product was targeted at learners working in the catering and hospitality sector. Over 100 properties ranging from 4 employees to 120 employees have now included this training DVD into their induction process for new workers from the international workforce.

#### **Use of DVD in the workplace**

After the in house training session on power point the DVD is played for employees in their chosen language to reinforce the message prior to taking exam in also in their own language.

The DVD reinforces the message verbally as well as visually. As local properties are used for the production the surroundings are familiar for the employee which assists the transfer of the theoretical knowledge gained to be transferred into practice.

The benefits of induction training have been vast and include:

- increased retention of newly hire employees,
- improved employee morale
- increased productivity.

The DVD has saved time and money that might other wise would have ended up being spent on covering wastage ,absences and re hiring .

On the broader end of the scale a this DVD concept can be designed for any particular sector pending the lesson one needs to depart.

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#### **5. Limitless potential for further development and for support of the wider Chamber membership**

**Induction Matters, in Every Language** is now a collection of skills development DVD's only available through the chamber network that will help businesses do things better and more efficiently . This DVD is now available to other chambers both nationally and internationally as a resource tool and training aid.

The Multi language DVD's for specific purposes have almost limitless potential. Other titles in the range include :

#### **Waste Matters, in Every Language**

We have now begun production on“ Waste Matters in Every Language” MULTI lingual DVD This is an environmental standard that owner/managers can work towards to develop procedures and practices that conform with EU standards.

They key elements for this standard are:

- **Energy awareness and costs**
- **Waste management systems and costs**
- **Training systems for staff on being environmentally friendly**
- **Signage throughout the properties for employees guests on environmental systems and standards**

#### **Safety Matters, in Every Language .**

This module is designed to provide an induction in health and safety hazards in the work place. In particular it focuses on the retail, catering and professional services sector, where risks tend to be higher.

They key elements for this standard are:

- **Manual handling processes**
- **Signage throughout the properties for employees on health and safety systems and standards**
- **Equipment use**

***Research to develop others in the series is on going in answer to membership needs...***



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#### 6. Conclusion

It is important that we have mechanisms in place to support the smooth integration of foreign-national workers into the workforce .This suite of DVDS are a useful tool for both employees and employers in an intercultural working environment but must be part of a coherent approach to the issue. Using documents, information and case studies from the workplace the programme aims to provide migrant workers with essential information about their employment while developing language and learning skills.

We found through appropriate target language use that is relevant to the daily lives of learners, language training becomes a tool that can solve short term and immediate problems as well as contribute to the longer-term development of the individual. This is particularly applicable to learners who are living and working in the target language environment such as the hospitality sector. The content of language training DVD’S can range from the general to the specific and can incorporate elements relevant to the private, professional or public lives of the learners.

The benefits of the DVD based session included the following:

- Deals with a range of communication issues cost-effectively;
- Uses situations specific to the workplace to increase the relevance of what can seem like an abstract topic;
- Promotes an open and fair approach to the inevitable communication difficulties that arise; and
- Highlights the role that all employees have in promoting good communication.

It can seem easier to leave the issue of communication between workers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds to chance but a laissez faire approach could lead to very serious consequences in the work place including:

- Accusations of racism and discrimination;
- Serious health and safety incidents;
- Lower productivity;
- Deteriorating staff and customer relations; and
- Low morale among staff (particularly migrant workers).

On the other hand, making an effort can lead to:

- Less wastage of time or materials;
- Improved employee relations;
- Higher morale;
- Better customer satisfaction; and
- Improved communication for whole organisation.

***“A limited investment of time and/or money in a more comprehensible Induction Process to migrant workers for whom English is not a first language will result in a big pay-off”.***



## **2007 World Chambers Competition Assessment Criteria:**

### ***a. Innovative nature of the project***

This project is genuinely innovative in its approach to workplace Multilingual learning

Firstly, approaches to the workplace induction training are far more dynamic than was previously the case with traditional classroom centered approaches through the use of information and communications technology, more flexible scheduling structures, and adult learning methodologies,

Secondly, through appropriate target language use that is relevant to the daily lives of learners, language training becomes a tool that can solve short term and immediate problems as well as contribute to the longer-term development of the individual. This is particularly applicable to learners who are living and working in the target language environment. The content of language training DVD programmes can range from the general to the specific and can incorporate elements relevant to the private, professional or public lives of the learners.

### ***b. Impact of the project on the chamber and/or the business community***

Providing Induction communication through the employees mother tongue has had a positive influence on retention of migrant workers. More importantly though is the effect that the training has had on the long-term development of migrant employees. It has encouraged the integration of migrant workers into the workplace and society. Through the use of a task-based approach migrant workers have been encouraged to interact more with Irish colleagues, complete essential administrative and information-gathering tasks in the workplace themselves, source external information themselves rather than through managers or co-nationals, etc.

Finally, the training has fulfilled the dual role of improving the learners' communication capabilities and providing a cost effective means of information provision. The Chamber project has developed the training modules that marry these two functions. Using documents, information and case studies from the workplace the programme aims to provide migrant workers with essential information about their employment while developing language and learning skills.

### ***C1. Measurable outcomes for Chamber Members***

Developing a proactive policy towards managing Induction processes in a multicultural workplace has had significant benefit for our members, their employees and their customers. This Induction improvement product advocates a common-sense approach that takes into account human resource policy, management responsibilities and the customer service policy. Some of the direct benefits gained by our members who have invested in time and resources in this Induction :

- Helped to attract and retain highly talented people
- Improved motivation and efficiency of existing staff
- Strengthened cultural values within the organisation
- Enhanced corporate reputation
- Improved innovation and creativity among employees
- Enhanced service levels and customer satisfaction
- Helped to overcome labour shortages
- Reduced labour turnover
- Lowered absenteeism rates
- Avoided litigation costs

## **C2 . Measurable outcomes for The County Carlow Chamber:**

The long-term measurable outcomes relate to membership growth, revenue increases and satisfaction expressed by members. While membership retention is secured we have already received applications from potential new members equivalent to another 10% of our current membership base and our commercial income has increased also as each DVD carries a retail cost of 160 euros .

### **d. The relevance of the project to the target category**

The project is aimed squarely at the heart of the target category – with the objective of enhancing the Induction process of workers from several countries into the Irish work place . The project demonstrates that good induction management will seek to ensure that all workers work to their full potential, including opportunities to take on additional responsibility that will assist in their chances of promotion.

### **e. Potential for the project to be successfully adopted by other chambers of commerce throughout the world.**

The Multi language DVD's for specific purposes has almost limitless potential.

The beauty of the product and concept is that it can be easily modified to work in the hospitality ,service or manufacturing sector and in any chamber jurisdiction particularly in countries facing similar labour issues and competitive challenges that Ireland currently face.

The product also fits with the overall chamber ethos of being at the heart of local economic development and being at the core of responding to real business issues facing our members today with practical and cost effective solutions. County Carlow Chamber are prepared to share our experiences with other chambers in an open and transparent way and are more than happy to help other chambers roll this product out in their jurisdiction.

## **Testimonial ;WHAT OUR MEMBERS SAY**



*“The DVD has proofed to be a very useful tool, as it reinforces the message verbally as well as in pictures. As local properties including our own Hotel is used the film is ‘real’ and the Team Member can associate with this and don’t need to transfer the knowledge gain into their own area mentally before they put into practice the theoretical knowledge gained”.*

*“The DVD could be useful to any organization with a multi national and especially multi lingual workforce as it is based on current European Food Safety Legislation and also incorporates best practice. As more languages are available, each company can purchase to their individual language requirements. The DVD overcomes language barriers in teaching such an important message to all team members. This greatly assists in ensuring consistency, quality and especially a safe working environment for all concerned. Great tool for HR / Trainers as they don’t have to source trainers capable of teaching in team members own language to ensure the message has been received”.*

*“The relationship between the Hilton and Co.Carlow Chamber has been key in promoting the customer care and consistent service and product quality that the Hilton Group has to offer Internationally “*

*Heïke Kober , HR Manager, Mount Wolseley Hilton Group.*