

## Bury Company Ties up Languages

### the challenge

Bury based Tie and Scarf Company is used to dealing with foreign customers. For over 150 years it has been manufacturing and exporting clothing and accessories to Japan, Russia, America and Europe.

But with 10 members of staff, none of whom spoke languages, it was proving increasingly difficult to communicate with their ever-expanding customer base. What's more, managing director Barry Chaytow's bi-annual trips to Japan were highlighting yet more language barriers.

"People assume that everyone in the world speaks English but that couldn't be further from the truth in Japan," he comments. "With each new trip I was becoming painfully aware of the problems. It really brought it home to me the time we exhibited at a trade show – people were just walking away when they realised I couldn't speak Japanese." It was time to take action.

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"There was no getting round it," admits Barry. "I simply had to learn Japanese if I was to succeed over there."

### the solution

Initially, Barry placed an advert for private Japanese tuition. It wasn't long before he was contacted by a native Japanese teacher who gave him weekly lessons in simple grammar and conversation.

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Armed with the basics, Barry was keen to develop his language skills in a business context. "The private lessons gave me an excellent grounding in the language," Barry explains. "What I needed next was some training in how to use Japanese to help improve my business competitiveness."

Barry enrolled on a Japanese night course at the Manchester Business School. Aimed at business people, the classes focussed on using Japanese in the commercial environment. "It was tailored exactly to people like me," says Barry.

"Japanese is not as simple as English – it requires different vocabulary when addressing different people. Being taught how to effectively communicate during the sales process was a big help. It also taught me the value of understanding Japanese business culture – it's completely different to our own."

### the benefits

Barry is in no doubt as to the effects of learning Japanese on the business. "I'm 100 per cent confident that it's improved sales," he says.

### Tie and Scarf



barry chaytow (right) receives an award from a fellow language student, actor david neilson

"Whenever I travel there now, the response from local people is amazing – they can hardly believe an English person can speak their language! It's definitely given my business the edge."

With a conversational level of Japanese, Barry is looking forward to developing his skills in the future. "Experience has shown me that even making the effort to speak another country's language helps international relationships. You don't need to be fluent to gain foreign customers' respect – they appreciate simple greetings and phrases in their language.

"I would advise anyone trading abroad – especially non-European countries – to take the time to learn the language. It certainly helped me – and I'm looking forward to building on this in the future."