



PRESS RELEASE

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New evidence of employer demand for language skills

The latest (2011) edition of the CBI's Education and Skills Survey provides more evidence that employers value language skills. The report, entitled 'Building for Growth: business priorities for education and skills' shows that only a quarter of businesses say they have absolutely no need for foreign language skills in their company, and states that 'operating effectively in a global economy relies on the right language skills.'

"Weaknesses in foreign language skills have been exacerbated since the requirement to take a language at GCSE level was ended in 2004 and yet we know that 76% of employers are not satisfied with the level of these skills among young people" says Sue Curry, Managing Director of Babel Language Consulting (Stand 6055) one of the UK's leading providers of corporate language training.

"In international business, the ability to speak and write in your customer's language is particularly important for developing close working relationships and advantageous in countries where the use of their native tongue is of national pride".

Only 27% of businesses say they have no need for foreign language skills. Languages are particularly important in sectors such as manufacturing and banking, finance and insurance, reflecting the globalisation of these organisations. The greatest single demand for these skills is in building relationships overseas, cited by 21% of companies. The core European languages are still most in demand from employers – French (61%), German (52%) and Spanish (40%), followed by Polish (29%) and Mandarin (23%).

Finally, the report makes an important point about languages and mobility: one in ten employers sees language competence as beneficial for staff's own role within the company because it facilitates international working.

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For further information on Babel, please call Sue Curry on 020 8295-5877 or visit us on Stand 6055 at CIPD AC&E 2011. Alternatively visit www.babelgroup.co.uk