

Don't underestimate the power of language

English Services is a leading translation company based in the Netherlands and the preferred supplier to many well-known international organisations. As an exhibitor at UKTI's Benelux Day, the owner of English Services and Chairman of IoD Netherlands, Ilse van den Meijdenberg, would like to share a few thoughts on doing business in the Benelux and the power of language.

Sarah Schenk-Thompson, Thompson Media

As managing director of English Services and UK meets NL, Ilse van den Meijdenberg has helped countless businesses promote their services and products in foreign markets over the years. She knows exactly where the challenges lie, and how important language is: *"Doing business internationally is paved with unique challenges and sometimes we forget how important it is to be clear in our communications. The choice of language is an obvious issue to deal with, yet cultural differences, etiquette, norms and traditions can also have a direct influence on how well your message is received."*

Dutch or Flemish

It is all too easy to assume that communication is going to be easy in countries so close to home. *"This is particularly true for the Benelux,"* Van den Meijdenberg continues, *"it is clearly an important gateway into Europe for UK businesses and admittedly, the level of English in these regions is high, but there is a very distinct difference between having a valuable conversation at a networking event, and being able to promote your products and services in a foreign country. When doing business in the Benelux for example, it is important to be aware of the local linguistic divides and the fact that Dutch and Flemish are two distinct languages."*

Language barriers

Business can be a minefield at the best of times, why let language be a barrier? *"Over the years, I have witnessed plenty of miscommunication in foreign languages, and plenty of embarrassment on both sides. In extreme cases, it has even lead to upset and failed international endeavours. We all know how off-putting it can be during a presentation for example, when people laugh in the wrong place, or are distracted by mispronunciations or bad spelling. Not to mention businesses that have forgotten to have their new brand names scanned for foreign foibles in their target markets (we've all seen them and they're often rude). When you forget to consult a language expert, you're selling yourself short."*

These kinds of errors are commonplace, but when you are trying to position your business as a high-quality enterprise in a foreign audience, it would give great peace of mind knowing that your documentation and marketing materials match your quality hallmark. *"At English Services we want to help all of our customers succeed in their international ambitions. We can ensure that legal agreements are just as airtight in a second or third language as they are in the original. We can help you translate and adapt your marketing presentations, your brochures, websites, technical documentation, packaging, certificates and informal communication. Each type of text involves a very different process, and deserves professional support."* Van den Meijdenberg's message: *"Don't underestimate the power of language, and don't hesitate to call us for help and advice."*

English Services (Communications) BV was founded by Ilse van den Meijdenberg. It is a successful translation company that offers multilingual services in a myriad of languages. Ilse herself is a speaker of Dutch and English, and an expert in Anglo-Dutch business and international communication. Ilse is also the founder of **UK meets NL**, a company that organises events and helps companies set up in the Netherlands and the UK. These two enterprises offer a powerful

combination of support services to companies setting up in the Benelux and the UK, offering practical advice, training courses (language and business), specialist legal, financial and general consultancy services, as well as the high-quality language services provided by English Services like translation and interpreting. Ilse works with local experts: hand-picked to suit your specific business needs.