

Another new language – AIIC’s Consultant Interpreters learn to speak business

Lessons from a one-day course on Business Development, for Consultant Interpreters

Olga ALVAREZ-BARR.

Published: November 20, 2019 Last updated: November 29, 2019

A perk of membership of AIIC’s Consultant Interpreters (CI) group is the regular programme of courses tailored to the needs of CI’s. One such course was the all-day Business Development Training ahead of the group’s internal meeting in Brussels on 5 October 2019, before the Groups’ internal meeting

AIIC Consultant Interpreter Olga Alvarez Barr reflects on what she learnt:

What’s in a word?

That which we call “development” by any other name, would it smell as difficult?

All AIIC consultants and conference interpreters would like to have more working days per month. However, we are not talking just about quantitative growth but also qualitative growth. The question is how to manage growth in today’s extremely challenging market.

Julian Lewis, a sales and marketing expert, led the all-day session. He began with a presentation on sales as part of a systematic process.

The key to success lies in developing a business cycle, he explained, customising general sales principles to our own profile and market needs when engaging in outbound sales activities. Some practical case studies allowed us to take in several key notions for our customers, such as increased communication through professional interpretation.

A new B language

To invoke the familiar AIIC classification of working languages, understanding and speaking the foreign language of sales and marketing is not quite the same thing. We should go out of our way and listen to our customers outside the booth, changing our words, and so change our sales world.

Not only must we speak the language of our occasional interlocutor, but we must also learn a new way of writing when pitching through social media and becoming writers, editors and publishers. It’s all about them... not



just about us!

Business intelligence

Preparation is everything! (Well, aside from motivation and stamina.) Know your prospect!

This involves having a clear idea of our objectives and logistics, and always being ready to translate our sales arguments and value propositions into the mindset and language of our clients.

Last but not least: “Always be nice to the gatekeeper!”, says our expert, which takes me to our next lesson...



Getting past the gatekeeper

What is the biggest obstacle when we're chasing a contract? I may be my own worst enemy, if I do not know how to pass the gatekeeper in a professional way.

Of course, there is “no one right way” to do this, but it is always useful to consider the situation from the client's perspective.

Food for thought

We arrived at the conclusion that we all need to put ourselves “out there” while upholding professional ethics and confidentiality in the social media age.

Several options were presented to develop a communication strategy and implement a well-defined, targeted approach.

Further reading and references on developing our media presence were also provided.

The value of the AIIC brand

More than 12,000 days! That is the estimate of working days that AIIC Consultants managed in 2018. Our AIIC brand delivers as a direct result of collective and individual effort.

Our agenda wrapped up with a discussion about possible cooperation between Consultant Interpreters and PRIMS, and preparations for the next PRIMS meeting in Lyon and our 38th Assembly.

Fresh ideas for the future

The exchange of ideas with fellow consultants – both within the group and individually – was highly motivating, giving an excellent opportunity to discuss implications and obstacles when developing our own portfolios.

I headed back to Buenos Aires full of new ideas for my business, confident that the course would be a turning point in my sales efforts.

The best contracts are yet to come!

If you regularly organise teams of interpreters, find out how you can become an AIIC Consultant Interpreter by contacting the Standing Committee or visiting the [AIIC Consultant Interpreter landing page](#) (login required).

All photos courtesy of the AIIC Consultant Interpreters Standing Committee

Enter your footer here, if any

Recommended citation format:

Olga ALVAREZ-BARR. "Another new language – AIIC's Consultant Interpreters learn to speak business". *aiic.net*. November 20, 2019. Accessed March 3, 2020. <<https://aiic.net/p/8892>>.