

“I learned German at work”

Recommendations for suitable language courses and more effective communication in companies



iQ | GOOD PRACTICE to the point

Addressees for transfer:

Companies, chambers and educational organisations

Brochure “I learned German at work”:

In the brochure “I learned German at work. Integrating work-related German language into the company”, published by the Network IQ Lower Saxony, companies and institutions will find tips and ideas on how to find and integrate a good and appropriate language learning offer for their employees, how communication in their businesses can become more effective and how new employees can be integrated faster into the daily workflow with the help of language mentors.

Project:

“Work-related German language”

Implementing organisation:

Volkshochschule Braunschweig GmbH

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Offer:

For more information on the brochure “I learned German at work”, please go to www.netzwerk-iq.de/publikationen/fachpublikationen/berufsbezogenes-deutsch.html. Printed copies of the publication can be ordered from the responsible contact person, Wilhelmine Berg, under the above e-mail address.

Starting position/challenge

Numerous companies and institutions are faced with the challenge of encouraging their migrant employees so that they can confidently deal with their language-related tasks. Support for learning and developing these skills has become an important issue for many companies. General German courses often do not deliver the desired results.

From the Network IQ, employers repeatedly demanded information on the topic of “work-related German language”. The companies want to sensitize themselves about these questions and increase their ability to act with the knowledge of targeted language courses and in-house support facilities.

Implementation of the brochure

The challenge with the creation of supporting information materials was to present complex facts in a concise manner to the target group. To ensure this, special emphasis was placed on integrating the knowledge of companies into creating these materials. In cooperation with the IQ Competence Centre for Work-Related German Language, the educational organisation Volkshochschule Braunschweig, as the implementing organisation of the project in the IQ regional network Lower Saxony, looked at the experience gained so far on “German at work”. Based on this information and materials, the brochure “I learned German at work. Integrating work-related German language into the company” was created.

The publication provides employers as well as human resource managers in chambers and educational institutions with a quick overview of the ways in which they can further develop the linguistic skills of migrant workers. Different procedures are presented: The development of workplace-oriented language



courses; possibilities to make the communication in the workplace more effective; hints as to how language learning can be integrated in the work day; as well as the use of language mentors. In addition, the brochure provides information on funding opportunities and contact persons on the subject.

Summary

The cooperation with the IQ Competence Centre for Work-Related German Language proved to be very successful from the perspective of the project managers, because different experiences could be bundled during the preparation of the brochure. The handy format with brief, clear texts as well as tried and tested examples has proven itself and received a good response from numerous companies.

By incorporating the experiences of companies with language learning offerings and in-house support services for on-site language learning, the brochure provided precise suggestions that companies can pick up and implement directly.

What are the specific objectives?

The brochure underlines the importance of workplace-related language learning and provides information on funding opportunities

"For us, the German courses were a great success [...]. Initially, only while processing written requirements, e.g. by e-mail, and soon afterwards also during oral communication among the colleagues and with the clients. [...] The communication among each other [has] improved, which also improved the team spirit." These statements from a person in charge for the workplace-related language learning of immigrant employees are also reflected by the brochure. Company-internal language courses in individual training or in small groups provide the opportunity to prepare employees specifically for the language requirements. For the conceptualisation of the offer, it is important to clarify which goals the

employees should achieve in specific terms, in order to be able to determine the duration, scope and design of the procedure. The brochure contains a check-list for the co-ordination with the language course providers and the assessment of the offer. In an



additional overview, it provides information on how the company management can contribute to the success of a workplace-oriented language course. It shows that it is of great importance that employers provide sufficient time to prepare and carry out language learning, including the involvement of colleagues and supervisors. In addition, a contact person from the company should be named for the students, acceptable learning time should be agreed upon and the practice-oriented implementation of the studied material should be planned. Furthermore, the publication provides information on where suitable providers of language courses can be found and what support possibilities are available.

Three questions for Wilhelmine Berg, project manager of the brochure "I learned German at work" in the Network IQ Lower Saxony

"2,500 brochures have already been distributed"



What is the innovative aspect of the brochure?

Increasing the linguistic requirements in company communication as well as the addition of specialists from abroad have further highlighted the importance of work-related German language. Corresponding informational material for institutions and enterprises has not yet

been available, although the information requirements are very high. We were able to close this gap with this very compact and clear publication, which answers numerous open questions from the target group.

Is it possible to introduce this format in other regions?

To date, about 2,500 printed brochures have been ordered by and distributed to companies, business associations, chambers of skilled crafts, and business-oriented consulting institutions. This makes it clear that the publication has provided valuable

support for the counselling of companies on the subject of "German at the workplace" and actively promoted it. Currently, the publication is also being translated into English and French and will be published on the website of the "Language for work" project as part of the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML), an institution of the Council of Europe.

What can the brochure affect in the long-term?

The brochure supports companies in the long term by establishing a language-sensitive communication in their company and thereby promoting the integration of employees. Companies are given information to assess the quality of the offered language courses and how they can contribute to the development of an offer tailored to their business and their employees, which will promote the team's success in the long term. Institutions and people, who advise companies, receive the brochure with information material on language learning in the company, which they can use in the long term in consulting situations with companies.

Imprint

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Network IQ

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