



Key Skills for Enterprise to Trade Internationally

Objective of Study



Objective

- To ensure the supply of skills and talent necessary to drive Ireland's trade and export performance in existing and emerging markets - as identified in the *Government Strategy and Action Plan for Irish Trade, Tourism and Investment to 2015*.

Challenges

- Irish trade is geographically and sectorally concentrated. Need to break into new sectors and emerging markets with export growth potential.
- Essential that the education and training skill supply pipeline is fully aligned to the international business needs of enterprise and that individuals develop the required skills to avail of job opportunities.



- Extensive research undertaken with 60 exporting companies and key stakeholders. Companies both indigenous and foreign owned from different sectors were selected with IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland.
- Six in-depth case studies into the key success factors of six successful exporting companies including (i) Openjaw Technologies (ii) Abbott Ireland (iii) PM Group (iv) Nualight (v) Google Ireland (vi) Dawn Farms.
- Assessment undertaken of relevant international business third level and professional development courses.

Key skills and competencies to drive export sales performance





Challenges

- There is a mis alignment between the domestic supply of foreign language skills and the demand of enterprise for international business purposes.
- There is a need to build -up a multi-lingual workforce for an increasingly globalised marketplace.
- While many positions require a high level of language fluency, conversational level can also be valuable.

Foreign Language Proficiency – Recommendations (1)



(1) Publish a Foreign Language Education Policy with 5-10 year horizon vision to ensure an integrated and coherent approach to language learning and cultural awareness across the continuum of primary, secondary and third level education.

Implementation Timescale: Immediate

Impact: Medium to Long Term

(2) Boost the supply of foreign language skills (numbers and proficiency) at 3rd level including German, French, Spanish and Italian as well as Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian & Arabic - the latter at a relatively lower level.

Implementation Timescale: Medium Term

Impact: Medium to Long Term

(3) Provide integrated business and foreign language content learning opportunities for business, marketing, sales and technical students.

Implementation Timescale: Medium Term

Impact: Medium to Long Term

Foreign Language Proficiency Recommendations (2)



(4) Align the assessment of foreign language learning outcomes to the 6 levels within the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Implementation Timescale: Immediate

Impact: Medium to Long Term

(5) Set national targets for increased EU Erasmus student placements with a focus on study and work opportunities through a foreign language in Germany France, Italy & Nordic countries. Provide support for foreign language learning .

Implementation Timescale: Immediate

Impact: Medium Term

(6) Strengthen the focus on language and intercultural awareness and sensitisation at primary level (both European and Asian) to motivate students learning and engagement at 2nd level.

Implementation Timescale: Immediate to Medium term

Impact: Medium Term

International Sales Skills Recommendations



Challenge

- International sales professionals with foreign language proficiency are a key skillset. However, sales as a profession is held in low esteem. Lack of formal international sales training.

Recommendations

- Include a compulsory international sales module on 3rd level general business and marketing courses.
- Introduce post graduate diploma courses in international sales with foreign languages e.g German, French, Spanish.
- Introduce an International Sales Degree programme with foreign languages .
- Ensure Business to Business; Business to Government; and Technical Sales content included within course curriculum.

Implementation Timescale: Immediate to Medium Term Impact: Medium Term



- Report identifies the international skillsets that enterprises should build up to enhance their export sales performance - and that individuals should acquire to improve their employment prospects.
- An improved supply of internationally orientated skills and talent will drive trade and export sales and enhance inward investment.
- Foreign languages Skills and international sales with foreign languages are two key areas of skill supply mis-alignment.