

Case study: Renault Group

Setting corporate goals for multi-lingual competencies

Challenge

Facilitating international mobility by ensuring language competence in multiple languages

As companies become increasingly global, there is a growing need to find a common language in which to conduct business. In the case of the French company, Renault-Nissan, both English and French language competence are required for many business activities. Employees throughout the group Renault-Nissan are encouraged to improve their English and French skills, thus enabling the group to continue to compete in today's global environment. Renault-Nissan group management wanted to insure that employees and new recruits have the desired language skills.

Solution

- In the 1990s the TOEIC® test was administered to all young management recruits. The test was adopted as a core element in the Renault recruitment procedure, with a minimum score of 750 points required for management positions.

In 1998, the CEO of Renault extended the use of the TOEIC® test as the means of evaluation for the thousands of French managers working for the company. Specific English-language training programmes were developed to increase the overall level of English competence. Learning objectives were set based on the results of a first round of TOEIC® testing. On an ongoing basis, monthly reports are provided to management to ensure results are being obtained.

With English-language training being managed, the focus shifted to French. The TFI™ test has been adopted to ensure that staff throughout the Renault group, including its international subsidiaries, can interact in French as well as English. Minimum TFI™ scores are determined by local Renault HR staff, based on the particular French-language needs of the local office.

Results

- The use of the TOEIC® and TFI™ tests saves money and time in the Renault-Nissan hiring process. By ensuring that newly hired employees possess a sufficient level of English proficiency to do the job, costly mistakes, miscommunication, and poor job performance are avoided.

The consistent use of the TOEIC® test and the TFI™ test enables the group Renault-Nissan to achieve higher levels of job mobility and increases their chances of success in foreign missions.

This experience at Renault, one of France's foremost corporations, has led numerous other companies, universities, and schools to set clear objectives for language learning. To date, two thirds of France's engineering schools have adopted Renault's policy as an exit requirement for their students.