



With hotels in over 70 countries, Hilton has deployed a “think globally, act locally” strategy for managing its customer service programs.

Hilton International's global customer base is comprised primarily of highly educated, upper-income frequent travelers who demand the highest levels of quality and service. In order to consistently meet the expectations of this group, most of whom speak English, the hotel chain declared English to be its official language and deployed a global strategy for building English language skills.

“We believe that if we respect our employees and make them feel special, they will go the extra mile to deliver exceptional service to our customers. Our English language training program is at the foundation of this ethic.”

—John Guthrie, Head of International Management Development,
Hilton International

“Our frontline employees interact with our global customers daily in English,” said John Guthrie, Head of International Management Development for Hilton International. “Managers in our organization are expected to govern an international brand and comply with Hilton's high standards for operation; this requires confidence when speaking, writing, and listening to English.”

Deploying the Finest Hospitality Talent

Hilton's brand promise—“Hilton puts back a little of what life takes out”—pledges to consistently deliver the highest level of customer service.




Industry

Hospitality

Summary

With a largely English-speaking customer base that demands the highest level of quality and service, Hilton needed a global strategy for building the business English communication skills of its employees to help deliver on its brand promise. After careful evaluation, Hilton implemented the GlobalEnglish Corporate Learning Service™ (currently known as GlobalEnglish Edge™) on a worldwide basis and has realized significant productivity and performance improvements.



A key strategy in delivering on its brand promise is the attraction and retention of the best hospitality talent in the world. Hilton International has differentiated itself from the competition by providing training to its team members who value the opportunity to improve their English skills. Adequate English skills also make talent more portable, allowing the company to roll out new products more quickly and standardize management excellence around the world.

“What we are trying to accomplish is nothing less than reshaping the culture of our organization to align consistently and globally to the brand promise,” said Guthrie.

The Approach

Hilton International determined that online English training was the best solution. “We knew that our success would be predicated on a superlative product that would be perceived as non-threatening and easy to use,” said Rosie Hollis, Vice President of Human Resources—Middle East /Asia Pacific for Hilton International. “An online solution would also give us the opportunity to know what people were being trained, what they were learning, and the demonstrable impact it had on their capability within the organization and across the network.”

Hilton International had the following goals for its English language-training program:

- Maximize the potential of Hilton’s global business by enabling high-potential team members to contribute to the business, regardless of geographic boundaries.
- Support the effort to diversify the Hilton workforce and develop local nationals to operate its hotels.
- Deploy a personalized English learning program to address varying levels of English ability and maximize the investment in learning, while efficiently bringing all participants to a consistent level over the course of the program.
- Create efficiencies across the worldwide organization and manage costs.

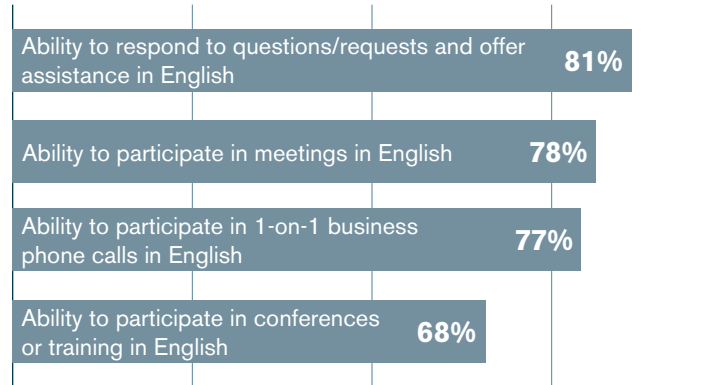
After a careful search, Hilton International selected GlobalEnglish. “The GlobalEnglish Corporate Learning Service has the best functionality and navigation by far. It is highly interactive and the support is excellent. We are also impressed that the GlobalEnglish service teaches all the necessary English skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking,” added Guthrie.

The Results

Hilton International has achieved excellent results with the GlobalEnglish program. After using the GlobalEnglish Corporate Learning Service for less than one year, 92% of learners reported they have already applied what they have learned to their jobs.



The majority of Hilton International learners reported improved performance on the job. Overall, 71% of Hilton International employees have been able to save more than 1 hour per week because of their improved English skills:



Managers also say that employees using the GlobalEnglish service have improved their performance in these key areas:

- Dealing with customers
- Conducting negotiations
- Interacting with the management team
- Participating in meetings
- Reading and writing emails
- Talking on the telephone

“GlobalEnglish Corporation is a unique e-learning provider in that it has understood the challenges of running a global business and provided solutions that are helping us improve our team, our culture, and, ultimately, our competitive advantage,” said Guthrie.