



As an international bank serving clients throughout central and eastern Europe, Raiffeisen International Group relies on English as a common language to ensure excellent customer service and effective communication among its global work teams.

When Raiffeisenbank Austria acquired Russian bank Impexbank in 2007, forming Raiffeisenbank ZAO, the need for business English competency grew as Russian employees servicing 1.5 million retail customers and nearly 60,000 business clients throughout 45 regions of the country were integrated into the international organization.

“English language is the official language of communication in Raiffeisen International Group. To share expertise, participate in functional training or lead various projects, employees are expected to communicate in ‘no-border language’: English. A Good level of English enables us to provide services to our international customers and helps achieve our mission—to be one of the leading universal banks in Russia.”

—Julia Krasheninnikova-Poschik,
Director HR Russia and CIS, Raiffeisenbank ZAO

Like many financial institutions, Raiffeisenbank continually strives to maximize the productivity and cost effectiveness of its operations. The ability for employees, customers, suppliers and partners to communicate in a common language is key to that endeavor. Talent development, retention and recruitment further drive the need for business English learning at Raiffeisenbank, where the focused development of key employees plays a central role in promoting employee engagement, motivation, and satisfaction.



Industry

Financial Services

Summary

Raiffeisenbank ZAO implemented the GlobalEnglish Corporate Learning Service™ (currently known as GlobalEnglish Edge™) throughout its Russian offices in 2007 to improve organizational efficiency, reduce training costs, and provide equal learning and development opportunities to all employees across the country. Nearly 3,500 employees have used the program since its inception, and Raiffeisenbank has realized a 60% savings in training costs, greater employee engagement, and significant productivity gains.

“ We value the ‘push and pull’ strategy demonstrated by the GlobalEnglish team. They are strategic partners with whom we collaborate to bring new ideas to life and capitalize on their continuous innovations to the system. The spirit of our discussions is, ‘How can we do it even better?’ ”

–Tatiana Krasnova,
Employee Development Manager,
Raiffeisenbank ZAO

In a business climate where efficiency in the development and utilization of resources is essential, company training programs must show tangible, measurable results in order to prosper. Accessibility across a wide range of geographic areas, work environments and IT systems is also crucial to Raiffeisenbank’s English learning program. GlobalEnglish offered an affordable, scalable, on-demand solution that met these needs.

A Team Approach

In 2007 Raiffeisenbank implemented the GlobalEnglish Corporate Learning Service. Since its inception the program has been used by nearly 3,500 employees in over 60 sites across 11 time zones. “With GlobalEnglish we are able to offer the same high-quality service to all employees in all our locations throughout Russia, while centrally managing the program and measuring results,” says Krasnova.

Learners at the basic and elementary levels use GlobalEnglish exclusively; beginning at the pre-intermediate level, they participate in a blended solution in which the GlobalEnglish program is augmented with classroom sessions to provide additional opportunities for learners to practice speaking and listening skills. Project Leader Marina Pisareva, with the support of seven regional experts, manages the GlobalEnglish program, develops its strategic goals, plans the implementation throughout the company, and monitors effectiveness. “The quality and dedication of this team,” says Krasnova, “are key elements to the program’s success.”

“We see our role more as consultants than administrative or disciplinary experts,” says Pisareva. “One goal and one team is our motto for success. Our training center team works proactively with our learners to help them get the most out of GlobalEnglish, provide encouragement and motivation, and keep them informed of new developments and innovations. We place a special emphasis on management responsibility, since it is their integral role to track progress, provide feedback, and support the learners on their teams.”

Other key success factors include clear executive support of talent development and the GlobalEnglish program, engagement of line managers, and learners’ motivation and desire to succeed. “We consider our learners to be our customers, but we also expect them to work hard in return,” says Pisareva. This motivation is enhanced through the celebration and promotion of individual achievements: top learners are featured in the company magazine and intranet and honored in twice-yearly ceremonies in which they receive signed certificates from top management. This also adds visibility to the program and encourages other employees to participate.

Results

Learner Satisfaction

The vast majority of learners rate GlobalEnglish as “excellent,” “very good,” or “good.” Learners particularly value the flexibility of the service—the ability to study anytime, anywhere; to make progress at their own pace; and to build a customized learning plan

“ We monitor the results regularly, and the facts and figures show that we are making progress. It’s become prestigious for our employees to be good in English. Last winter we implemented a motivational campaign called “English Champions,” in which the best learners and their superiors are recognized at the upper management level and throughout the bank. With this initiative in place we expect to achieve even more results and greater participation in the future. ”

–Marina Pisareva,
Project Leader,
North-West Training Center

that meets their individual needs. “During my holiday trip to Vietnam I could easily access GlobalEnglish and combine a great vacation with continued learning,” says Moscow Department Head Artem Andreev. “My team members also appreciate being able to improve their English skills and get ad hoc tips when and where they need it.”

Effective Partnership

Raiffeisenbank is fully empowered to run the program, with the GlobalEnglish account team offering strategic and local support when needed. Performance reports available through the GlobalEnglish system and annual ROI analysis enable Raiffeisenbank’s central learning and development team to engage line management throughout the company as business partners in the program’s implementation.

Significant Cost Savings

Implementing GlobalEnglish has enabled the company to save 60% in annual operating costs over their previous classroom-only training approach. “Keeping the proper balance between value and cost is essential,” says Krasnova. “Another element we value is time. In Raiffeisenbank we have set a clear standard: employees are expected to move from the elementary level to the upper intermediate level within two and a half years. The prerequisite is that learners should be ready to invest their personal time and energy into the work.”

Improved Organizational Productivity

Based on a GlobalEnglish business impact survey conducted with users in June 2009, Raiffeisenbank learners are saving 1.2 hours per week—a total of 8,384 working days per year—due to improved English skills and the GlobalEnglish on-the-job support tools, equating to an annual savings of almost \$1 million in productivity gains.

Increased Employee Engagement

GlobalEnglish is seen as one of the most successful and desirable learning programs within Raiffeisenbank ZAO. “Employees really value the program—they see how they can support the company and grow themselves,” says Krasnova. This ultimately leads to increased employee satisfaction. And participation continues to grow—the average usage per month for each active learner in 2009 has increased by 50% over 2008, and Raiffeisenbank now ranks in the top 15% of corporations worldwide using GlobalEnglish based upon total time spent on the site.

Percentage of learners who have improved in key business situations:

