

News Release
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Sell-out marketing conference informs and entertains

From practical advice on networking to an extraordinary tale of using extreme honesty in brand creation, the English UK ELT Marketing Conference had something for everyone.

A lively list of speakers at the sell-out event began with Nigel Risner, formerly one of the youngest CEOs in the City of London, explaining why most people don't network effectively and explaining how to identify and communicate with different types of people.

His animal analogy -- that people's personality types are broadly monkey, dolphin, lion or elephant, and that the wise marketer will tailor a pitch accordingly -- became a talking point at the day's refreshment sessions, as did his other main nuggets of advice about networking with strangers and using business cards to convey useful information.

"He was just brilliant, and everybody's been trying to put what he said into practice," said Susan Brearey, director of the Suzanne Sparrow Language School in Plymouth.

Jodie Gray, English UK's senior international manager who organised the day at the historic Butchers' Hall in London, was also delighted. "It's been great. We filled all 165 places for the event and had a waiting list of more people who wanted to come. The speakers made a real impression with all the delegates, and lots of people were very complimentary about the new venue."

The day's closing session was another talking point. The speaker was entrepreneur BJ Cunningham, whose business failure at the age of 23 left him more than 800,000 in debt and with the need to make more money fast.

His solution? To create a cigarette brand called Death, with the unique selling point of honesty. "What matters most is what people believe," he said. "A brand is a promise. Logos, pantone colours -- they're all a vehicle to get your promotion into the eyes of your customer."

More detailed advice for the EL industry was provided during nine elective sessions led by experts. Mesud Yilmaz gave extensive advice on the Turkish market, outlining the expectations of students -- which include last-minute decisions to travel, the desire for ornate certificates and dislike of homestay accommodation -- and agents, who want prompt replies from language schools and have strong views on discounted commission. Other sessions gave equally useful information on Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Kurdistan.

Other sessions discussed ways of getting the marketing message across, with Peter Swain explaining how to get the best out of apps, Jon Aizlewood on digital marketing, and Angela Murray on copywriting. There was also a masterclass from three industry professionals on international marketing, who gave their hard-earned tips on careful pre-trip research to avoid arriving on public holidays or organising meetings without sufficient travelling time, and the do's and don'ts of building relationships with agents.

And at a panel meeting chaired by Amy Baker of industry website The PIE, ELT sector experts including English UK Chief Executive Tony Millns, Andrew Mangion, Executive Chairman of the EC Group, answered questions about branding and future prospects.

Marketing conference first-timer Barbara Carson, Sales & Marketing Manager of The British Association of Boarding School Short Courses found the day useful. "I thought the first and last sessions were particularly good, but it was all very good. I got a lot of useful things to take away with me," she said.

Roger Smith, director of the English Language Unit at the University of Leicester, added: "I very much enjoyed it. I found it refreshingly different and very informative. I'm very impressed and would come again."

Notes to Editors

1. English UK is the world's leading language teaching association, with more than 450 accredited centres in membership. It covers university and further education college language departments, international study centres in independent schools, educational trusts and charities, and private sector colleges. English UK is a UK registered charity (www.englishuk.com).
2. The English UK ELT Marketing Conference, held on January 26, was organised by the English Language Promotions Group. This group is comprised of English UK, the British Council, UK Trade & Investment, and VisitBritain.
3. The English UK ELT Marketing Conference was supported by Cambridge ESOL.
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