

Adtech/Oath – The corporate US takeover.

Situation:

Adtech, a German digital marketing company was acquired by the US giant Oath. Several new English-speaking employees joined the firm in Germany, joining ranks with the several non-German speakers already there. How was their German? As German is not taught in schools in most countries most of the newcomers spoke little to no German. Some of the colleagues already in-house spoke some German.

The Issue:

Unlike Scandinavian countries, English is not widely used in public or in-house. Even though the company language in international companies can often be English, German is the pre-dominant language. To be able to survive in Germany you need to speak German.

Background for In-Situ to this project:

In-Situ had been teaching English courses at Adtech successfully for 4 years and was already familiar with the Adtech-specific terms and expressions. We understood the corporate structure and culture. On the basis of this we were asked to make an offer for German courses.

Method:

In-Situ offered 3 weekly courses: Beginners, lower intermediate and intermediate. We tested all the staff, some of whom had been with Adtech for a longer time, some of whom were new. We placed them in the right groups, taking their job description into consideration when drafting the courses. For those who strived for higher positions we offered official testing at the end of the year.

Tactics:

Total immersion (no translation into English), Role plays (word games every morning with new vocabulary (Pictionary, taboo, hangman), repetition, holding presentations on their respective jobs, using visual aids and describing them, grammar at all levels, vocabulary required for the jobs, a tour of Frankfurt, German culture.

Results:

Each candidate moved up one level at the end of the year. Each candidate passed their exams and are now speaking German more confidently and fluently.