



# Beyond borders: Harnessing the power of English language skills for a global competitive edge

How increasing English proficiency  
drives international growth.





**Future-focused  
business leaders  
are gaining a  
competitive  
edge globally by  
investing in English  
language training.**

The link between English language proficiency and global business growth is indisputable, and this presents leaders with an exciting opportunity to gain a competitive advantage.

**We know that English is the universal language of business, and globally,**

 **1 in 4**

**of us speaks it to at least a useful level – that’s 1.75 billion of us.** And not just in person either – it’s also the language of emerging technologies and the internet, with almost **60% of all online content** being in English.

**Ground-breaking research has underpinned the importance of English at work.** Pearson's global research report, [How English empowers your tomorrow](#), reveals stark figures confirming the vital role of English in business.

### Key statistics from the research

- **80%** of all respondents say that there is a connection between English ability and earning potential.
- **88%** of employees think that the importance of English will continue to grow in the next five years.
- **92%** of Gen Z respondents said English for work will become increasingly important in 5 years' time.
- **51%** of respondents are learning English to access a wider range of roles and, more specifically, access to roles that pay more.
- Over **40%** are learning English to help mitigate the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and technology on their jobs.

Advances in technology, including a huge leap forward in AI, along with better connectivity, improved education, more outsourcing, political shifts and expanded customer bases have all played their part in transforming the international business landscape. These trends are generating more international opportunities than ever before, but only the businesses that can effectively operate across borders will benefit.

Business leaders are responding by promoting English as the common language among diverse, global teams.

The multiple benefits that better English has on your business cannot be overstated, so let's take a look at some of the leading benefits of investing in English language training for your team.

### 1 Stronger English means stronger teams

When employees are empowered to improve their workplace English skills, an uptick in confidence can be seen not only in their communication, but also across a full spectrum of other skills.

English proficiency powers a multitude of **soft skills** including emotional intelligence (EQ), innovation, diversity of thinking, creativity, collaboration, and adaptability at work. This is especially important in promoting collaboration across hybrid/remote teams that are often operating across borders and different time zones.

Higher-order cognitive skills such as complex problem-solving, originality, fluency of ideas, and active learning are the currency of the future, and high-performing teams tend to demonstrate these skills in abundance. Investing in your team's English proficiency has the power to strengthen teams, bolster teamwork and drive productivity.







**Takenobu Miki**  
TORAIZ Inc. President, Japan



Being able to speak English is directly linked to success in international business settings and is essential for communicating with people from diverse cultures and backgrounds. Proficiency in English can also expand our career possibilities and open up new professional opportunities.



## 2 Stronger English means united teams

Using one common language among teams, and ensuring employees feel comfortable and confident in their English proficiency, brings everyone together. A sense of unity and shared understanding will infiltrate every aspect of their work, and will also feed into better cross-cultural understanding and greater awareness of cultural nuances.

This will have a positive effect on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I) initiatives across your business and contribute towards a healthy **culture of learning**. All this can only lead to more cooperation and collaboration, a greater sense of belonging and a common drive to achieve shared goals.

## 3 Stronger English means a better customer experience

Whether your customer base is established all around the world or you're breaking into new markets, English proficiency is key to success.

With better English skills, all the outward-facing functions of your business will benefit. This includes your sales team, who will feel empowered in every interaction with a new business prospect. Your customer support team will be able to deliver next-level aftercare service to your customer base. Your marketing team will have improved language skills which they can use to broaden your reach and build brand awareness across multiple countries and cultures.

No matter the team they belong to, better English skills will help your employees build strong and reciprocal strategic relationships, including with suppliers and other important external stakeholders.



#### 4 Stronger English means attracting and retaining top talent

Recruitment and talent acquisition leaders are improving their own English language proficiency to access wider, more diverse talent pools and identify candidates with strong English skills. Offering language training as an employee benefit signals to candidates their future employer's commitment to ongoing professional development. This not only increases the number of suitable candidates per role, but also improves retention rates once the position has been filled.



To ensure that you are hiring the best people, you may need to accept some limitations on language capabilities and be prepared to provide training to meet both global and local language needs.



Harvard Business Review

According to [Pearson's Power Skills report](#),

# 58%

of hiring managers currently test English language skills at interview stage to ensure that potential candidates can integrate seamlessly into the corporate culture.

Increasing numbers of recruiters are incorporating language assessment in their hiring practices, and advertising language training as a key benefit of a role.



You won't just attract the top talent, but you'll retain it, too. It's well known that job satisfaction is a key driver of good staff retention and engagement. [Pearson research](#) has identified a clear correlation between job satisfaction and level of English proficiency, with a 24-point difference between those with the lowest and highest levels of English.

Indeed, candidates themselves understand the importance of language proficiency in the context of a global marketplace. They're taking a proactive approach by using language assessment tools to provide evidence of their English proficiency as part of their job search.



**Eva Lopez**  
Learning and Development  
Associate, Publicis Global  
Delivery, Colombia



Our workforce consists mostly of Generation Z and Millennials, and we want to retain this talent. We designed our Learning and Development program with English language training at its core, to meet both the business need to improve our employees' use of English at work, and to improve staff retention by offering language training as a benefit.



## 5 Stronger English means better upskilling

In addition to soft skills, English is a vital core skill that enables learning hard technical skills, especially across the IT, Technology, Innovation and Engineering sectors. Frequently the training required for technical skills is either in English, or the programs themselves incorporate English.

The conversation around the future of a global workplace can focus on automation making workers obsolete, but **Pearson's Future of Skills** research reveals a different picture – only one in five workers are in occupations that will shrink.

The future is about leveraging both human and machine capabilities so they can work together. That means human skills – the ones that machines can't replicate – are in increasing demand.



Employees are craving language training at work and employers ignore this request at their peril. They risk losing their talent to the 30% of organizations that have taken this employee feedback on board.



Pearson's global research report,  
[How English empowers your tomorrow.](#)





## 6 Stronger English means new opportunities

Along with attracting new talent, English proficiency gives leaders the chance to offer their current workforce more opportunities for growth and career development. Internal talent can be nurtured and promoted to international roles, meaning there's less risk of them moving on.

As well as opportunities for individuals, a collective proficiency in English positions your business favorably when it comes to seizing emerging market opportunities as they arise, wherever in the world they are.



**Isaac Johnson**  
CEO, EduGuide, Saudi Arabia

English is an essential skill for the future. English language training around the world has never been in such high demand. High-quality English training that uses technology to personalize learning should be the standard for every HR department and educational institution.

A team adept in English is strategically positioned to capitalize on new prospects, regardless of their location. English is the core strength that gives your organization a competitive edge over your rivals.

**So, with English proficiency delivering all these benefits and more, how do you implement language training in your own organization?**

Show employees you're committed to building a culture of learning by implementing a plan and letting the team know that you're invested in their English language proficiency. We've developed a handy step-by-step guide on [how to implement English language training](#) in your organization which will help you get started.

Increasing numbers of recruiters are moving to a formalized, computer-based test such as [Versant by Pearson](#) for a more inclusive, business-relevant assessment of English ability levels. Then, Learning and Development managers are implementing programs to upskill all employees in business English, using relevant platforms such as [Mondly by Pearson](#).



## About Pearson

At Pearson, the world's leading learning company, we empower individuals and organizations through transformative learning experiences. With a global presence in over 70 countries, we offer a wide range of products and services to institutions, corporations, governments and learners worldwide.

**Pearson Language Solutions for Work** includes our language assessment tool – **Versant by Pearson**, which helps you hire with confidence.

The AI-based test reduces bias and enables global brands and businesses to assess candidates' English proficiency quickly, accurately and at scale. Up to 3 million tests are completed each year across 100 countries.

Then, using **Mondly by Pearson** – our suite of language learning solutions – employers can support employees to develop their language skills and unlock international business growth.