



Exporter Spotlight on m2r Education

Established in 2001, multi-award-winning education recruitment company m2r Education initially started out working purely in the UK. Due to growing demand, they now exclusively service the international market from their office in Wakefield, supplying teachers and trainers to numerous schools, colleges and language centres across the globe. We spoke to Munir Mamujee, Managing Director, to find out more about how he approached their international business projects.

Munir, tell us more about why you decided to make m2r Education an international business?

m2r Education has worked in the UK from 2001 to 2009, but we needed a new challenge. With the amount of work that we were getting from overseas, we decided to work purely international. The demand for vocational education and English language training overseas is huge - in the international school market there are over 9,000 international schools and that number is growing every single year.

Based on all the trips I've been on, the trade missions, the feedback we were getting, the level of respect we were receiving, the awards that we were winning, they are all driving us to purely focus on the overseas market and we've never looked back.

What kind of markets have you been exporting to in the past ten years?

At the moment we cover the whole of the Middle East, South East Asia and Central Asia. We're now breaking into Africa, we've done work in Egypt, Mauritania, Zambia and, Uganda. We've now started doing work in Europe but in general our services are in the other parts of the world as I mentioned.

How important has it been to have the support of DIT and your International Trade Adviser?

It's good to have a sounding board with someone who's got far more international experience than I have. Just to be able to speak to someone who understands what it's like to work overseas, because in my social circle, there isn't anybody. Having an ITA who's worked in the market that we're in and is also passionate about education makes a massive difference.

Having entered over 15 countries, you must have done a lot of research in advance. What's your typical route to market?

Our route to markets traditionally has been trade missions. Over the last ten years I have been on over 20 trade missions and the team have been on nearly 30. Whenever there's an education-related trade mission, we'll always go on it. We'll use that as a scoping exercise, make a decision whether the market is right for us, and if that's the case, we'll then go back independently, building on the relationships of the businesses we met during the trade mission and then continue from there.

What makes trade missions so vitally important for m2r Education?

It's all about credibility, especially in the education sector. We can set ourselves on a pedestal, as a premium supplier of teachers and trainers, because we've been invited by the British government to represent the UK education recruitment sector. That's far better than me just sending an email or making a phone call to somebody who's never heard of us.

When you're part of a delegation that's backed by the British government, it makes such a difference than being just a standalone independent business trying to make your mark in a new market.

What do you find most useful about trade missions?

Networking opportunities are tremendous, there are excellent networking events, such as a round table events, exhibitions, social gatherings, all of them invite very good contacts. DIT's trade missions are very structured and I know there's going to be a very large group of individuals there that I would never get to see normally. There is no way I would get to meet the people who I get to meet if it wasn't for the British government crest.

Do you have any advice for businesses attending trade missions?

Sleep before you go and get lots of it! When you get there, you've got to work really hard, you've got to network, you've got to follow every lead, and you can't be too regimented. You might meet someone who wants to see you the next day at their offices for a meeting - you have to go. The people I see regularly on trade missions are the ones that are very, very successful and they understand it's all about perseverance. When you come back from a trade mission, if you're not exhausted, then you haven't done what you were supposed to!

Can you tell us more about some of the businesses wins you've gained as a result of attending trade missions?

m2r Education win contracts on every single trade mission that we go on. From the last trade mission, we procured a six-figure contract to supply teachers to schools across Saudi, plus we procured other five-figure contracts from being on that trade mission and building relationships. This may not seem like a lot, but we're a small business in Wakefield! If we hadn't have gone on that trade mission, we would never have got those contracts.

What are your future plans for m2r Education and it's international growth?

We're doing great business in the Middle East so we want to continue to expand on that. Also, Africa because I think that's a new, growing and exciting market. Because we are in an industry that is growing every single year, we can't take our foot off the gas.

My exporting plans are what they were last year and the year before - just keep going. I'm not willing to give it up just yet!

