



Mind your language!

LANGUAGE MATTERS. So says Alison Boardman, Managing Director of Unique Voice, a Tralee-based company that offers a comprehensive range of language services.

Alison returned to Ireland eight years ago, having spent a decade teaching English abroad. She saw the growing multicultural community and realised there was a need for language services in the corporate sector. Having spotted this gap in the market, she has since worked hard to fill it.

Her company offers translating, interpreting and language teaching services nationwide and beyond. Unique Voice employs ten people and works with 1,200 contractors nationally and internationally. "Our business is essentially three businesses in one," says Alison. "We translate the written word. We interpret the spoken word and we teach all languages."

They work with a wide range of clients. There are individuals who need help mastering different languages. "These might be non nationals who need help with English or last week, we had someone who needed to learn Croatian," explains Alison. There are community groups that need assistance. Unique Voice works with organisations such as hospitals, the Garda Síochána and other groups that come into contact with people who cannot speak English and need their words interpreted.

NEEDS

Finally, there is the corporate sector. Unique Voice has worked with companies such as Kerry Group on tasks such as translating legal documents and providing interpreters whenever staff are attending meetings abroad. "We work closely with companies to understand and satisfy their needs," says Alison.

"At an initial stage, we give a company free advice on how to deal with employees who may not have a strong grasp of English and we then work closely with HR managers helping them to bring their workers' English up to standard or providing them with interpreters whenever their employees are travelling abroad."

In short, Unique Voice aims to improve communication between people, groups and companies. This might involve teaching someone Portuguese so they can communicate with clients in Brazil; translating a legal document from Chinese to



Unique Voice provides wide range of premium language services

Alison Boardman and staff at Unique Voice Language Institute in the Kerry Technology Park, Tralee. Front from Left: Patricia White, Donna McCann, Eilish Ruddle, Colin Lyons. Back From Left: Anne Brosnan, Brid Spillane, Mark Biggane, Jean Brassil

English; writing a marketing blurb in Arabic; or providing a Polish interpreter for an Irish businessman in Warsaw. Unique Voice can do all of this and more. Alison is constantly looking for new interpreters, translators and teachers. "Since the downturn, many who worked for us have returned home," she says. "But while the need for interpreters and translators has decreased, they are still needed."

Unique Voice has grown to become a premium language services provider since Alison set it up eight years ago. Her hard work was recognised when she was recently short listed for the Image Businesswoman of the Year Award 2010 and when her company was showcased as part of last month's National Women's Enterprise Day. This event was organised to inspire more women to become entrepreneurs,

something Alison believes in very strongly. "I have two pieces of advice for businesswomen," she says. "The first is to have a good team and system behind you. I am blessed to have Eilish Ruddle as my office manager for the past five years and we've developed a system that helps us to do our work efficiently."

NETWORK

She also thinks women should network more. "It's important to talk to people," she says. "The Kerry Business Women's Network meets in the Meadowlands in Tralee on the first Thursday of the month. The Business Network International (BNI) meets in the Meadowlands on Wednesdays, in Killarney's Drumhall on Thursdays and it's soon going to start in Listowel." "Email me and I'll send you the details," she says. "You won't regret it."

For more, see www.kerry-businesswomen.com and www.bni.ie.

Alison enjoys spending time with the international community in Kerry and is looking forward to some upcoming events. A salsa ball will be held in Killarney's Brehon on the 4th. There will be a Stop Sex Trafficking Candlelit Vigil in Tralee's Square on the 9th of December. And KADE will be holding a film evening to commemorate International Human

Rights Day on December 10th. All are welcome.

Unique Voice is based in the Kerry Technology Park and has drop-in centres in Tralee and Killarney. For more information, call Alison/Eilish at 7194697, contact via email at info@unique-voice.com, download a brochure or take a free English test at www.unique-voice.com. Don't forget: language matters and at Unique Voice, they ensure your message is not lost in translation!

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