



**OUR STAND AT THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
NORWICH, NORFOLK**
Thursday 9 May 2002

Beate Knights (German Translator) and Corinne Blésius-Robins (French Translator), both live and work in Norfolk. Recently they teamed up to promote themselves and their professional translation services at an exhibition sponsored by the Norwich Chamber of Commerce, held in Norwich on 9 May 2002.

The event caters for local businesses of all sizes and industry sectors and is an opportunity to market their products and services, promote their ideas and network with other businesses.

Our first challenge was to design a stand that would accurately illustrate the professional translation services that we could offer. We did not have any high tech material such as smoke/wind machines, stroboscopic lights, or other special effects that some exhibitors often use. Nor did we have any classy pictures or glossy brochures. After much thought, we decided to opt for the more 'traditional' and arguably simple approach (did we have the choice?).

Using a blue velvet screen, which we hired, as a background, we covered a long table with a blue tablecloth and used this as our central feature. On the table we had copies of our CVs, business cards, copies of advice and guidelines for choosing a translator and sweets in a blue bowl. A multi coloured banner reading 'Translation Services' hung on the blue screen and two superb large flags, German and French, were attached in each corner. Between the flags were some laminated examples of bad translations, anecdotes of things going wrong and some statistics. Some of this material

was inspired by the very successful brochure "Getting it right" by Chris Durban and Antonio Aparicio. We were very pleased with the result and thought that our stand was one the best looking ones.

People were very curious about our stand, which was 'one of a kind'! They came to us as they walked past to ask us what services we provided. What was very strange was that the majority of people found that our stand was such a good idea. They all welcomed the idea of incorporating translations into their written material within their line of business, but none of them (apart from one or two exceptions) had really thought about it and did not really know how to go about it. So this was also an opportunity to introduce and promote the ITI and the IOL.

It was both very interesting and an eye-opener to explain to people who knew nothing about translation and (all in all) very little about languages what it was all about. One standard question was "how many languages do you speak"? So the essential difference between an interpreter and a translator was explained. It was nice to know that some people left knowing this distinction between both professions and that they would (hopefully) pass it on.

It was also very important to clarify that professional translation was a 'serious business' and not a hobby. We explained that you cannot translate several thousand words of text over night, that we were not 'born with it' and that translating the highly specialised documents we work on, within the usually tight deadlines, which are often imposed, requires many years of experience and very hard work.

Corinne said, "I had a great time and the whole experience was fun and exciting. It was both inspiring and enriching to promote my own work and the profession itself to people who knew very little about the profession. It also felt good to be away from my desk for a whole day!".

Beate says about the day, "It was a very enjoyable and fun afternoon. We felt privileged that the Norwegian Ambassador visited our stand and left his business card. It's a nice way to meet prospective new clients and find out about their potential needs."

The event itself only generated a small amount of business but was still a very positive experience for many reasons. We introduced ourselves to many businesses who were not necessarily looking for our services, so we look at it more as an educational event. Our CVs, business cards and guidelines have been distributed to a very large number of people and they will keep us on file until they are reminded that having their written material translated into another language could do a world of good to their business.