

English UK Chief Executive vows to lead industry to success

NEW RELEASE

9 May 2017

Intelligence, quality, promotion and public affairs are at the heart of English UK's plans for the future.

Revised priorities, a new mission and an updated membership model were announced at English UK's annual conference by Chief Executive Sarah Cooper, in response to what she described as "extreme pressure" being faced by the UK ELT sector.

"Our mission is to lead the UK English language teaching industry to success, through innovation and intelligence," she said, explaining that the association would do this through providing industry data and marketing insight, driving quality improvement and professional development, promoting the UK as the global ELT destination of choice, representing members and acting as the voice of the industry.

In a wide-ranging speech to members in Bristol, Ms Cooper said that English UK needed to change to support members at a time when the industry was vulnerable. "There is a real possibility that not only will the trend of closure and acquisition continue, but that it will accelerate: we face the very real possibility of a vastly reduced sector in terms of number of players in a few years' time as struggling centres close or are acquired by groups," she said.

But it was not all doom and gloom. "There has been innovation and enterprise in the sector, as providers have recognised the need to not just meet the new challenges, but get one step ahead, by adopting new delivery models or new product portfolios...it has been exciting to hear about these," she said, concluding:

"We may be in very uncertain times, but I believe there is much to be positive and optimistic about. Somebody said to me the other day that Brexit had to happen and that it will give us all the wake-up call we need. Centuries of common heritage, culture and exchange will not disappear... perhaps this wake-up call will strengthen those cultural ties. We believe, with this new focus, we can lead to succeed."

A refreshed membership offer – to be tested with members before launch in early autumn – would provide industry representation, accreditation and strategic business support as a core offer for all members, with additional support available in different packages, she said.

This approach had been confirmed as part of English UK's second membership survey earlier this year. While one key finding was "that there is a distinct lack of awareness as to exactly what the association does," Ms Cooper said overall perception remained very positive. On one measure – the net promoter score, which calculates customer loyalty – English UK's rating rose to +48, which is "very positive" she said.

Almost 90 per cent of members agreed that English UK supported professional development and promoted excellence and improvement, and 57 per cent said the English UK brand was one of their top three reasons for membership.

Notes to editors

1. English UK is the national association for English language teaching centres in the UK, with around 450 accredited centres in membership. It covers university and further education college language departments, international study centres in independent schools, educational trusts and charities, and private sector colleges. English UK is a UK registered charity (www.englishuk.com).
2. For more information, contact Susan.Young@englishuk.com