

Belta launches tourism project

Next issue

In our April issue, **Special Report** looks at the evolution of the language teaching exam market.

Market Report finds out about business performance in Germany in 2002, while

Agency Survey canvasses agents in Italy. We travel around the south and east of England in **Destination** and report from Sydney in **City Focus. Feedback**

finds out what students in France think of their study experience. **Direction** considers what enlarging the EU will mean for the industry.

Brazilian agency association, Belta, has teamed up with the government's Ministry for Sports and Tourism to launch an initiative designed to help promote Brazil as a tourist destination around the world.

In an innovative move, the government department has decided to equip Belta clients – language travel students – with information packs about Brazil so that they can spread the word about their country as they study overseas. Students are being given a green and yellow pack from Belta member agencies, which is equipped with a T-shirt, DVD and small brochure with information about Brazil.

"I'm happy with the accomplishment of this initiative because it is simple, good and cheap," said Minister Caio Luiz de Carvalho from the Ministry of Sports and Tourism. He added, "There was good taste in choos-



PHOTOGRAPH: BELTA

Belta clients will become young ambassadors for Brazil

ing this material, the students will want to wear [the T-shirt]."

Every year, Belta estimates that some 40,000 Brazilian students travel to study abroad. Alfredo Spinola, Belta's President, commented, "[Belta

members' clients] will spread the word about the best aspects of Brazil. "We won't be talking clichés, such as soccer, coffee and Carnival any more, but about our aeronautic industry, hospitable people and racial democracy." □

Industry issues – agents speak out

January February **March** April May June July August September October November December

Q What are the typical problems you encounter when dealing with schools and how could these problems be rectified?



"The most typical problem we encounter is that the accommodation or level of [language tuition] is not as promised. If the school's management is honest, there is no problem. If not, there is no way to solve this problem. A very important thing for agents to consider is what the position of the school is when it comes to solving problems. At the stage of booking, we always promise students that we will solve any problems that arise. But then very often, schools refuse to rectify a situation. We have a lot of problems if a school is not in a position to help us in a difficult situation."

Vladimir Yankin, Fakes Tour, Russia

"Exclusiveness is the most common problem we have. We are an agency with 20 years of experience and we have been



growing year by year. However, when we find an interesting programme or a new school that wants us to be an agent, they won't deal on an exclusive basis. Selling the same courses as our competitors puts us in an unprofessional environment. A recently opened agency doesn't have the same experience and quality of service as we do, so bad service by them will affect us as well. We suggest, first of all, that agents have to have a legal constitution as an organisation. Most of the agents in my country are classed as working individuals, which means that if something goes wrong, they can run away. The second suggestion we make is exclusiveness; one good established agent per geographical area will work much better than six or seven not-so-good agents fighting for the same market share."

Santiago Flores, Fundación Cultural Apex, Ecuador



"Italian executives like to be 'pampered' a bit, so a problem is ensuring accommodation, food and the overall atmosphere [of the school] is acceptable. Connected to that, especially with teenagers, is the issue of the accommodation's distance from the school – walking distance is almost always a priority, and quite understandably difficult to ensure. I suppose the first issue is just a question of paying attention to details and wanting to make people feel at home as much as possible. The second point, especially in high season, is rather difficult to solve."

Claudio Perinot, Study Centre, Italy

"For us, one of the most important problems is the [school] acceptance letter needed by the student to obtain their visa. Sometimes we request these letters urgently, but some schools demand the total payment of the course first. The



school can send the letters before the payment and the agency should be responsible for the transfer wire to the school. We have also had a lot of problems with the invoices sent from schools. They confuse students' names and sometimes the amount of money.

Sometimes, from schools in the USA, we receive the I-20 visa form with a lot of mistakes so we have to send it back – this is something our students don't like."

Claudia Constanza Roza, Go Estudios en el Exterior, Colombia



"[Students need] a direct line of communication so that, without the embarrassment of talking to a teacher, they can discuss their complaint with senior management or, finally, with the director."

Basil Flashman, Hilfield Educational Consultants, UK

If you are an agent or school who would like to respond to any of the issues raised above, or highlight another industry issue, please email amy@hothousemedia.com

China cleans up agency market

CHINA has launched another campaign to crack down on unregistered agencies, continuing its commitment to rid the market of "unscrupulous operators". The Ministry of Education (MOE), the Ministry of Public Security and the State Administration for Industry and Commerce, issued a statement late last year saying that all agencies must have a certificate issued by the MOE in order to operate.

In the circular, the departments further warned that foreign institutions cooperating with Chinese agencies should have a certificate recognised by the education departments in their home countries and the education offices of Chinese embassies. Agencies were told that advertisements promoting their services have to be cleared by local indus-

try and commerce administration offices too.

This move represents a further attempt by the government to regulate the market. Stories have appeared in the Chinese press in the last few years of illegal operators charging students for placement services and then disappearing with the money.

In 2000, the government released a list of the first 68 agencies that it had "approved", and in 2001 it closed down over 400 illegal agencies (see *Language Travel Magazine*, July 2001, page 12). At the time, *Language Travel Magazine* was told by one source that the approval system did not reflect the quality or experience of agencies. However, now the list of approved agencies has increased to 246 on the Chinese mainland. □



Face to face

Each month, we profile the people from language schools who deal directly with agents, in order to give you the chance to get to know some of the people you work with.

Who are you?

Liz Karra, Coordinator.

Where do you work?

The Canadian English Language Institute at Grant MacEwan College in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Why and how did you start in the industry?

While studying a Masters in linguistics in 1975, a local educational institution approached the graduate students to teach English in the evenings. I gave it a try and loved it, and have been in the industry ever since.

Why should agents choose to represent your school?

Grant MacEwan College maintains a high quality of instruction. International students have the opportunity to move from an academic-oriented English language programme into university studies. For those who have not quite met the language proficiency requirement, we offer a bridging programme in which students continue with English for academic purposes while studying one or two regular programme courses.

How does your school promote itself to agents?

We have attended various agent workshops worldwide. This has given us a solid base of agents. We also receive agent requests based on our connections with post-secondary schools.

How do you believe your institution will develop in the future?

The college is currently working towards degree-granting status. I see Grant MacEwan becoming an alternative to the university setting for students. The college setting is less intimidating as classes are smaller and students receive more individualised support. Programmes are also more affordable.

CEC Network Agent Fair grows in stature

THE fifth annual agent fair organised by the Canadian Education Centre (CEC) Network attracted more agents than previous years, proving that the event is becoming an effective workshop choice for agents active in the Canadian market. Organised in December, 135 international education agents attended the two-day event in Ottawa, Canada, meeting 136 Canadian education providers.

The Agent Fair moves venue within Canada each year and last year's venue choice of Ottawa was "a great success", said Anita Wong, Communications Coordinator at CEC Network. "Fair participants enjoyed additional networking opportunities through a welcome reception at the beautiful National Art Gallery and a gala dinner," she explained.

Agents from 30 countries attended the event, including all 17 countries in which the CEC Network has offices, with an excellent turnout from Turkey and Vietnam. For the first time, there were agents present from Poland, Russia, Kazakhstan, the Czech Republic, Germany, Venezuela, Peru and Pakistan.

"This year, there was a new selection process for agents," said Wong. "Agents applied online and provided three Canadian references. Managers of Canadian Education Centres, as well as Canadian Embassies, actively helped recruit and select reputable agents with a demonstrated track record."

Next year's event is scheduled to take place in Winnipeg. □

Open Doors 2001/2002

We would like to point out that the *Open Doors* statistics relating to student intake on intensive English programmes (see *Language Travel Magazine*, February 2003, page 4) does not relate to data collected during the 2001/2002 academic year, as is the case with the rest of the *Open Doors* data, but in fact the calendar year of 2001. Therefore, indications of the full impact that the September 11 terrorist attacks had on the English language teaching industry will be best seen in next year's statistics, which will be available at the end of the year.

On the move



Richard Truscott became Chief Executive of Baselt in January. Mr Truscott has spent 17 years in

English language teaching, most recently setting up and directing the international office at Oaklands Further Education College in St Albans, UK. His experience includes teaching in several continents and marketing in the private sector. He commented, "I look forward to developing the role of Baselt and extending services to members at a time of great opportunity for the profession."



James Martin is returning to St Giles International in the UK, this time as Business Development

Manager, working from the London central office. He was Principal of St Giles Eastbourne until 1999 and has worked in the industry for 25 years, holding management positions at Eurocentres Cambridge and the University of Loughborough. Mr Martin has also worked for the Centre for British Teachers in Brunei and the British Council in Saudi Arabia.



John Sargent, Programmes Manager of the Education New Zealand Trust (EdNZ), has



decided to retire after participating in 12 years of extraordinary and exciting growth in

New Zealand's export education industry. Mr Sargent wishes to extend his sincere appreciation to all who made his time with both Nzeil and EdNZ an interesting and challenging experience. His replacement is Stuart Boag (below), who has a background that incorporates everything from marketing to farming. "John has done a fantastic job," said Mr Boag. "I am looking forward to building on what has been done, helping EdNZ meet the challenges ahead. It's an exciting time for the whole industry."



Christa Hansen is the new Director of the University of Oregon American English Institute (AEI) in

Eugene, Oregon, in the USA. As Director, Ms Hansen oversees all AEI programmes and works closely with other departments at the university to represent the interests of international students. "I plan to continue to offer a first-class educational programme that is responsive to student needs," said Ms Hansen.