

working with the welsh language



Wales has two main languages, one that is singularly our own and the other we share with the rest of the world. There are many easy ways to work with the Welsh language, both spoken and written. Welsh is the natural form of communication for many people in Wales. Its use can enhance the appeal of your business, providing a unique selling point. It adds interesting new dimensions to what visitors can discover and appreciate, as well as demonstrating that you're proud to be a Welsh business. It shows that you respect and want to promote the country's strong identity and culture, and more than that - it's fun!

Around 20% of people in Wales speak Welsh – to many it is their first language - and that number is growing every year. Like many other countries, bilingualism is a way of life for many in Wales. Visitors are usually intrigued and fascinated by the language and you can help them gain a little understanding of it, even if you are not a Welsh speaker yourself. A phrase here, and explanatory note there, can serve to remind visitors that they are in a unique culture with its own very ancient, very beautiful language.

Make yourself heard

If you or some of your staff do speak Welsh, then make your visitors aware of that. Badges and notices saying *Siaradwch Gymraeg neu Saesneg yma* (Speak Welsh or English here) are a good first step. It not only encourages Welsh speakers but also reminds others that they are in an environment that supports and encourages bilingualism.

Place names

Place names provide a marvellous introduction to the Welsh language. It's easy to take one word at a time, learn its meaning and how to say it, and build up from there. Place names usually tell us a great deal about the local surroundings. A brief glossary can do wonders for confidence and interest.

As with most languages Wales has those essentially untranslatable words such as *hwyl* (sense of fun and reverie), *cynefin* (home place), *aelwyd* (hearth or family base) and *hiraeth* (a deep, cultural longing). Talking about them with visitors offers a wonderful insight into the Welsh language and spirit.

Attractive posters featuring the Welsh alphabet are widely available. Such posters are an excellent way of

presenting the language and encouraging visitors to have a go at pronunciation. Another useful method is to demonstrate the words phonetically, making it less challenging for visitors.

Be Seen!

Bilingual signs and information are evident throughout Wales. Public organisations now produce their literature in both languages and many are only too happy to help individuals and businesses work across English and Welsh.





The visual use of both languages can have a tremendous impact on customers' perceptions of your establishment. In general, bilingual material works best and is usually more cost effective than producing separate Welsh and English versions. Make sure that proofs are checked thoroughly before sending material for final printing. More information is available from the Welsh Language Board (see Useful Contacts below).

Bilingualism is becoming increasingly important to the hospitality sector in Wales as shown by the number of grant applications to the Welsh Language Board's Business Grant and Link Line. This is a service which offers a free translation of menus and signage for any establishment wishing to promote itself bilingually. It will translate any other translating work you have up to a maximum of 30 words and is an excellent source of information if you're looking for anything to do with Wales or the Welsh language.

Using and promoting the Welsh language to your customers

To become fully bilingual takes time and effort, but can be extremely rewarding as your business becomes marketable and interesting to a whole new sector of the domestic visitor market, and the experience you can provide for your other visitors will be so rich. The basics are very easy, and again, you'll be surprised by how your efforts are rewarded and commended by your customers.

Language skills within the business

Do you yourself or any members of your staff speak Welsh? If so, who are they, and how fluent are they – you may just discover an ambassador for the language in your midst. Make sure that you and your staff know about the additional language skills you have within the team. Moreover, make sure that your visitors do. Contact the Welsh Language Board to obtain badges that promote the fact that Welsh is spoken on your premises, and to identify Welsh speakers on your team. If you don't currently have a Welsh speaker on staff, consider when next you issue an advert for staff that you could state that the ability to speak Welsh would be an advantage.

Name of Welsh speaker:

.....
.....

Level of fluency:

- Learner
Semi fluent
Completely fluent

Name of Welsh speaker:

.....
.....

Level of fluency:

- Learner
Semi fluent
Completely fluent

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You could look into courses to support your own or your staff's learning of the Welsh language. There's sure to be a course in your area, but if you have a fairly large team, you may want to consider setting up Welsh lessons on your premises at times that are convenient for your business. Your local Menter Iaith (see Useful Contacts) will be able to put you in touch with qualified tutors in your area.

Welsh all around you

Introduce Welsh into your business – into the décor, signage (internal, external, vehicles, rooms). Consider this aspect when naming areas of your building such as rooms – are there local rivers, mountains, poets, musicians etc that they could be named after – sometimes this avoids the need to translate to both languages, as the names are singularly Welsh, and while some may be unpronounceable at first glance, your visitors are sure to be intrigued by them and ask you about pronunciation, meaning etc – so make sure you know. The list below may help you.

Room/ Area/ Table name:.....
 Welsh translation:
 Alternative local Welsh landmark / personality name:.....
 How is it pronounced? (Make up your own phonetic spelling and test it on a colleague):.....
 What does it mean / what is it's history / story:.....

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Developing your business & promoting Wales

Bilingual print

If you have printed material that you use as information or promotional pieces for your business, including menus, information cards of any kind such as schedules or activity timetables, headed paper, signs, websites and so on, consider producing them bilingually. The Welsh Language Board can offer some free of charge help with basic translation, but also they can guide you with bilingual design and contacts for good translators. Remember, information remains the same for a long time, and some print has a long shelf life, so its worth investing when you're either preparing something new, or preparing to re-print materials. Prepare a list below of what materials you produce into which you could either introduce partial or complete translation:

Print item:.....
 Length in terms of words (approx):

 Name of possible translator:

 Contact details:
 Tel:.....
 Fax:.....
 Email:.....
 Estimated cost: £.....
 Length of time estimated for translation:.....

Print item:.....
 Length in terms of words (approx):

 Name of possible translator:

 Contact details:
 Tel:.....
 Fax:.....
 Email:.....
 Estimated cost: £.....
 Length of time estimated for translation:.....

Print item:.....
 Length in terms of words (approx):

 Name of possible translator:

 Contact details:
 Tel:.....
 Fax:.....
 Email:.....
 Estimated cost: £.....
 Length of time estimated for translation:.....

Print item:.....
 Length in terms of words (approx):

 Name of possible translator:

 Contact details:
 Tel:.....
 Fax:.....
 Email:.....
 Estimated cost: £.....
 Length of time estimated for translation:.....

The Welsh terms of your business

Every business whether it is a restaurant, a food and drink producer, an accommodation or leisure activity provider has a handful of key terms that are used frequently. Sometimes, they are specific to the industry sector such as 'Bedroom' or 'Wine Bottle', 'Portcullis' or 'Swimming'. Consider making a bilingual glossary of these terms that are set in prominent position(s) within your business – perhaps in reception, at point of sale or even on the back of table menus. To add fun and flavour, phonetic spellings of the pronunciation can be added to entice your visitors to have a go!

Alternatively, if your business involves guided tours or instruction in any way, might there also be a way of including Welsh words and pronunciations as part of the presentation?



Developing your business & promoting Wales

The Board seeks to work in partnership with public sector bodies, private businesses and voluntary organizations, offering advice and resources to help service providers in Wales to give a natural choice of language to their customers.

The Board has a number of useful schemes:

- Working Welsh – badges, signs and other products to help customers recognise Welsh speaking staff.
- If you want to use your computer in Welsh – they distribute free of charge Microsoft Welsh language Interface packs.
- Directory of Translators – includes details of over 150 translators and companies that provide simultaneous translation, along with advice on getting the best possible service
- Small Grants Scheme – financial assistance of up to £700 to help produce bilingual material.
- The Annual Bilingual Design Awards – the chance to have your work rewarded.
- Link Line to Welsh – offers an answer to any query or question you may have regarding the language of Wales. Also offers translation of a few words and sentences, with your translation posted or e-mailed back to you free of charge
Tel: 0845 607 6070
Email: cyswllt@bwrdd-yr-iaith.org.uk

Mentrau Iaith Cymru

Website: www.mentrau-iaith.com

Contact the website for details of your local menter iaith (language initiative). Mentrau Iaith are Welsh language teaching and innovation organisations set up to encourage and develop the practical use of Welsh in everyday life. Part of their brief is to work with the tourism industry. Cwmni Sain, in conjunction with Mentrau Iaith, is offering half-price Welsh music CD's to hotels and other accommodation providers as a means of promoting Welsh music to visitors.

Your local Menter Iaith can also provide you with a personal consultation service and visit your establishment to give you advice and practical assistance.

Merched y Wawr Centre

Stryd yr Efail, Aberystwyth SY23 1JH
Tel: 01970 611661
Website: www.merchedywawr.co.uk

Merched y Wawr is a Welsh language organisation open to women of all ages. It extends a warm welcome to women who are learning the language. Groups normally meet once a month and activities include cooking, crafts, dining, travel, sport, lectures, charitable work, singing and quizzes. It is currently undertaking an oral history project to record and chronicle the lives of women who have lived during the period 1920 – 1960. This will provide a permanent record of women's experiences of health and family life, work, leisure, volunteering and politics. The local groups are an excellent source of information about the Welsh language culture and heritage of an area, local recipes, traditions and customs as well.

National Eisteddfod

40 Parc Ty Glas, Llanishen,
Cardiff CF14 5DU
Tel: 029 20763777
Website: eisteddfod.org.uk

The National Eisteddfod, the largest and oldest celebration of Welsh culture, visits a different area of Wales annually during the first week of August. It has 170,000 visitors and involves 6,000 competitors. Each year, Welsh people from all over the world return to Wales to take part in a special welcoming ceremony staged in the Eisteddfod Pavilion on the Thursday of Eisteddfod week. It organises regional and local preliminary Eisteddfods, of which one will be near you – usually during the spring and early summer months.

trac

PO Box 45, Cowbridge, CF71 7ZT
Tel: 029 20 318863
Email: trac@trac-cymru.org
Website: www.trac-cymru.org

trac is Wales's first Folk Development Agency; its role to promote and develop the music and dance traditions of Wales - both within Wales and beyond. The organisation came about through a shared belief in the unique qualities of traditional cultures, an awareness of their continuing relevance to the present, and a passion for sharing what music traditions have to offer.

With support from the Arts Council of Wales, trac provides an information service, a free magazine, and this website listing performers, events and contacts.

On a local level, trac works in partnership with local authorities and development groups to run projects in schools and communities. Nationally, it organises training sessions for experienced musicians, and forums to discuss issues which matter to the folk world and on an International platform, trac arranges exchanges for young musicians, and represents Welsh traditional music in European networks.

Ask trac about folk musicians in your area, folk events in your area and on suitable folk music to play on your premises.