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Management

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10 areas of management in ELT

ELT managers are in a particularly unique position in that the areas of responsibility in ELT are very far-ranging. One day you might be enrolling new students, the next you're analysing feedback or checking copy for a new brochure. This can be either motivating or overwhelming, depending on the circumstances. However, you are likely to find that certain areas allow you to play to your strengths whereas others will require you to seek training and hard work to get you up to scratch. Here's an introductory list of ten key areas in ELT management that will be expanded upon in later units.

1. Operations and logistics

This is one of the areas where an ability to deal with data is useful. For a lot of people, coming into language teaching from an arts and languages background can initially come as a bit of a shock, but most people eventually find it an interesting part of the job. A lot of what is required from you will depend on context: are you sending teachers to teach off-site? Are you receiving inbound students via airports and bus transfers? Are you timetabling a large number of classes into a finite set of classrooms? Whatever the operational task, organisation of information is usually the key. Make sure you have everything you need to know or, at least know where and when you can get it.

2. Human resources (HR)

One of the main areas of HR that you will be involved in is recruitment. This will mean dealing with applications as well as interviewing and task-setting. It will also involve mentoring and offering in-service training to staff. HR-related work might also lead you into areas where difficult conversations are needed to discuss performance and other issues. You will need to have a good handle on employment law, and this might be one area where your personal opinion and the policies of your employer might be slightly different. For example, zero-hour and casual contracts have become commonplace in the training sector, and this might be something you are not comfortable with despite it being both legal and widely practised. Remember to retain objectivity in all HR-related conversations.

3. Product development

Markets and customers are constantly changing, and many successful suppliers react to these changes in terms of the products they offer. It is advisable to keep real data relating to your courses and to analyse the information closely to see what trends are being revealed. How popular are the courses? What results are participants getting from them? Is the content still reliable and useful? The more you analyse, the more you will be able to tweak, alter or replace products. Keeping an eye on the competition will also give you invaluable data. What products are growing? How are they being marketed? What materials are being used? We look at this area more closely in Units 21 and 23.

4. Marketing

Whatever your role in the institution, you are likely to be involved in marketing its products. Teachers are directly involved as they are dealing with some of your best opinion leaders – their classes. Word of mouth is a hugely important aspect of marketing, particularly since there are so many ways of recommending or complaining via social media. Networking has always been an important means of marketing services, and the benefits of visiting agents and potential contacts, as well as receiving them as guests at the school and explaining to them what you can offer, are many. Talking about the reality of what goes on in the classroom, how a new programme could be constructed and what resources would be used are areas where managers who have recent classroom experience are in high demand. Learning how to talk about those things from this slightly different perspective is a skill you will develop.

5. Professional development

One of the first steps people often take in terms of academic management is the role of mentor or senior teacher to one teacher or a group of teachers. This is usually a good way of finding out how well suited you are to teacher training and teacher development. Encouraging staff to develop is a long-term plan for all good institutions, and getting the right balance of introducing new approaches and maintaining standards is vital. As part of the academic management team, you might find yourself encouraging colleagues to lead or attend sessions, present at conferences, take further qualifications or think about taking on new responsibilities. A background in teacher training will be useful for this sort of role but is not compulsory. All of these areas require the manager to demonstrate sensitivity, active listening skills and a genuine interest in people.

6. Systems

No language teaching organisation can survive without good systems for enrolling, managing and recording the progress of the students they are teaching. All systems rely on staff inputting the information correctly, and these tasks can become quite mundane. Without such records, however, teaching and learning cannot be properly assessed. Despite increases in the speed and memory size of computers, there never seems to be much of a drop in the amount of time managers spend recording and analysing data; it looks likely to continue to be a major part of the academic manager's role for the foreseeable future.

7. Customer service

The most important part of any school is the student body, and that is why the way we deal with students is critical for maintaining a good level of teaching and learning. What good service really boils down to is respect for the customer, rather than a blind following of the 'customer is king' mantra. Ensure a good level of service by making sure that clients are getting what they expect, that the learning conditions and other services are as good as possible, and that students are genuinely listened to when they offer feedback.

8. Compliance

'Compliance' means ensuring that everything the institution does follows local laws, regulations and policies. One particularly important area is data protection; this is especially significant when you are dealing with large numbers of enrolments containing a lot of personal data. As a manager you will have to ensure that areas you are responsible for are compliant with local regulations. This could mean carrying out certain checks on teachers' backgrounds, ensuring your assessment methods follow the correct procedures, or monitoring attendance from students whose visa approval is dependent on being in class. Finally, you will need to be aware of any local regulations relating to your school's accreditation requirements.

9. Finance

Academic management will always involve certain activities linked to finance. This involvement might be on a very basic level, such as buying resources, paying for subscriptions, or ensuring that a budget does not overrun. Another aspect of finance-related activity might be getting the class sizes right, based on both pedagogic and financial criteria. Institutions will not be able to afford classes that drop below the expected income levels, and opening a new class can have a considerable impact on profitability. You will have to learn about key performance indicators for your institution, such as average class size, ratio of teaching costs to income, and average cost per student for teaching materials (including photocopies and copyright protection fees). An understanding of these elements will greatly improve your ability to manage a successful school.

10. Performance

Another important part of the manager's role is to monitor and improve performance. A language teaching institution has to improve the learners' ability to use the language in as efficient, engaging and enduring a way as possible. Of course, this puts a lot of pressure on the teachers, but there are other elements within the school that also need to perform well: technology, self-study systems, assessment methods and support staff. As well as making sure average performance on an average day is good, managers also need to ensure that everyone can improve within their own context and style. Keep in mind, too, that improving performance which is already good is just as important as training up those who are underperforming.



Think about the school where you are currently working. If you were to do a performance rating today, which areas would require the most improvement? Make a list of key areas and reflect on how they might be improved.

10 ways of achieving staff loyalty

As we saw in Unit 15, getting recruitment right is a lengthy but crucial process. It is therefore important that new staff members feel part of the organisation as soon as possible and have a desire to invest their time, energy and hard work in the school. Longevity of service is positive, as long as long-term members of staff feel valued and are given the opportunity to develop and contribute to the organisation. The benefits of good retention of staff are many: an opportunity to develop good new recruits, long-term knowledge of the workings of the school, continuity and consistency, relationship building with clients, time and cost saving in repeat recruitment and training, to name a few. What follows are some ideas to help make retention successful.

1. Wow them

From the minute a new member of staff has contact with your school, they will start to make judgements about it. It is important to make them feel from day one that they have made the right decision. This will go a long way to ensuring their investment in the school ethos. Consider the little details that will make them feel valued and special on day one, week one and month one. They do not need to be attended to at great expense – they can be small things like sending a welcome email, sending an email again at the end of their day to say you are glad they are part of team, ensuring all staff members know the name and role of the new person, and ensuring their work space is theirs and not left over from the last person. If you want to spend some money, arrange welcome drinks or provide a cake at coffee break. Remember not to stop 'wowing' staff and making them feel appreciated after the first month.

2. Induction or 'onboarding'

Whatever the role and whatever the length of contract, it is important to have a full and ongoing induction plan in place to help the new person settle in and perform well from day one. This will also help other staff members and clients, so investing the time in a structured induction is worth the effort. The term 'onboarding' refers to the same concept – the process of integrating a new employee into an organisation. The first day can be overwhelming, so cover only the most important things initially. Then spread the induction over the space of several weeks, checking that all is going well by way of post-induction meetings. Don't forget that even after six months your new employee will still be new to some aspects of the role. It could be argued that a full induction lasts 12 months, the full life cycle of a school and all the roles within it.

3. Mentors

Arrange for new staff members to have a mentor. Clearly define the mentor's role and ensure that the existing staff member is happy to take this role on. A mentor is often a colleague who can provide support and answer the little questions a new staff member may feel too shy to ask their line manager. A successful mentoring system can establish strong friendships or at the least good professional respect between colleagues. When choosing a mentor, consider the personality compatibility of the pairing.

4. Goal-setting meetings

Establish a pattern of regular, individual support meetings with staff, especially for the first few months of their term. This is an opportunity to check how they are settling in, how they are getting to grips with their role, to establish goals and communicate expectations. It is also, very importantly, a place to provide meaningful positive feedback. When this system is in place it will establish a feeling of being valued. Get this right from the start and you should have staff loyalty in return. If your organisation is big or spread out, or your team members work at various times, try to implement these meetings virtually if a face-to-face option is not possible.

5. Complacency

As a manager, it is easy to lose sight of the needs of your longer-term members of staff. Do not become complacent and take these people for granted just because they seem settled or because everything is going well. Providing support and individualised praise and recognition is not time-consuming, so distribute it evenly and generously. Take the time to ask how team members are doing and take an interest in their responses. This can provide an opportunity for a long-term member of staff to share concerns they have about their place in the organisation rather than just resigning without warning.

6. Workload

It is important to capitalise on people's strengths. These will become apparent as a person grows into a role. The role should grow and change with the person you have in place, and as a result the job description evolves. With this in mind, be aware of how much work an individual is taking on and how many additional tasks are being added to a person's role. Fairly new members of staff tend to be eager to please, so be careful not to pile work on them because they don't say no. They may end up burning out or leaving the school.

7. Training and development

A key to staff retention, and particularly the retention of happy staff, is to ensure they are motivated and stimulated by their work, and that they feel their development is adding to the development of the school. In a language school, we often associate professional development with the teaching staff. However, everyone benefits from development in their roles, so ensure that professional development opportunities are provided in all departments and to all members of staff. Ensure that clear, agreed developmental goals are in place and provide the means to make them achievable. Training does not need to be all about diplomas and MAs, but can be as straightforward as training the staff in how to promote the new courses the school has introduced. Cross-departmental training and sharing of experiences contributes to understanding the value of others, which in turn creates a more harmonious team and therefore a good working environment. See Units 41 and 42 for further tips on training and development.

8. Review your Ts and Cs

In most countries English language teaching exists in a saturated market. Employees will look around, and if your competitors are offering better working conditions than you they may leave. Do a regular salary review to ensure you remain competitive. What other perks or benefits can you provide? Think of holiday allowance, free tea and coffee, training provision, opportunities for promotion and career advancement. Add these into your staff handbook or induction document so that staff know that the school values and invests in them. Pay is not always the main motivator for staying in a job but the little extras show the staff that they are valued, and they go a long way towards helping retain staff.

9. Trust and communication

Your team is your biggest asset. Listen to them, show an interest, ask for their opinions and suggestions, get to know 'the whole person' and take their concerns seriously. Building a culture of trust is complex and fluid, but it is appreciated by staff and will lead to effective retention and investment from your team. One way of doing this is to organise out-of-school get-togethers to build a sense of community. This could be something as simple as going for a walk together, cooking lunch as a team or doing a training workshop with an underlying goal of bringing people together.

10. Find out about your staff



It is useful to look at your staff profile from time to time. Keen new members of staff can become long-term staff members, and this can be positive or negative for the team dynamic, depending on their reasons for staying and the extent to which they feel valued. It's useful to carry out mini-interviews or do a survey with your staff to get an overall picture of the team on a regular basis. Find out why your staff stay, what they appreciate, and what they would like more or less of in the workplace. Use the results to identify ways of improving staff conditions, understanding how you are perceived, and hopefully as a result encouraging people to stay with you for the right reasons. See page 171 of the Appendix for an example of a staff satisfaction survey form. Think how you could modify it to suit your team.

"We should be looking for every opportunity to promote the engagement and performance of employees through building and maintaining relationships; creating and encouraging a culture of collaboration; promoting learning; recognising and rewarding achievements; and solving individual problems which may positively impact on many. In a nutshell, HR should be about making everyone's working lives simpler, productive, better and happier."

Tommy King, Beststart Human Resources – HR Consultancy, UK

10 ideas you can borrow from other sectors

Sometimes you will have done everything you can to keep your courses well developed and your customers well serviced. If you are still feeling that things could be improved or you are wanting to innovate more, it can be useful to look outside the world of ELT and see what ideas and activities can be borrowed from other sectors.

1. From the automobile industry

Total Quality Management (TQM) is a familiar concept to most automobile companies. It is based on the idea of setting standards so high that the service regularly surpasses the expectations of customers. This in turn leads to an increase in those expectations and subsequently a general increase in standards and continual improvement. It's something ELT can easily borrow from. For it to succeed, TQM is carried out at every single stage as a means of ensuring that the whole process leading up to the final product is as good as possible. All employees are encouraged to look at part of the process and make suggestions for improvement. If this approach is applied to ELT, all stages of the customer journey would need to be quality controlled. The way an enquiry is handled, the paper used for certificates, the type of chairs in the classroom, the reporting system used: each stage of a customer journey would be evaluated; improvements would be suggested, trials done, and then the new approach implemented.

2. From management consultants

Management consultants have a huge range of tools for measuring the key performance indicators of a company. Knowing your business inside out, both in and out of the classroom, allows you to manage much more efficiently. Depending on the situation and the time of year, you could do a Boston Consulting Group Product Matrix, which allows you to judge the potential of your products. You could also do a SWOT or PESTLE analysis, which would allow you to see any opportunities or threats on the horizon. Finally, you can do some basic management accounting to give you a real-time view of how the business is going.

3. From tourism

We all know how stressful travel can be when it goes wrong, and how much we appreciate good service from a tour operator or a travel agent. Both of these sectors were threatened by the arrival of the internet and the increased accessibility of so many destinations to the customer. What successful independent tour operators have added, in terms of value, is a good lesson for ELT. They manage to personalise the whole business by finding out people's needs and then offering the perfect package to satisfy them. Every step of the way is meticulously planned to get it as close to ideal as possible. You often hear about the 'wow factor' in tourism, but not so often in education.

4. From hotels

Hotels have been impacted by the sharing economy, where anyone can let their spare bedroom and have it marketed globally. Hotels have had to fight back by improving their standards, adjusting the offers available and tailoring their offerings to specific markets. Modern digital marketing can help seek out likely potential customers for these packages, and ELT can do the same.

5. From airlines

Airlines have two distinct elements from which ELT could borrow. The way seats are sold and the prices are charged are all worked out by software that ensures that flights are as profitable as possible. In addition to ensuring a good deal for the airline, it also means that the passenger who is prepared to do a bit of research can get a good price, too. The airlines' aim is for the majority of planes to be full, and this is essentially what schools need for their classrooms. Airlines, of course, have blue-chip routes, such as Paris–New York, where they can sell a large number of higher-priced packages in different classes. Schools need to consider what the added value would be if they offered different pricing schemes. To justify higher prices, they can reduce class size, install better technology and furniture or recruit a higher level of teacher. You must decide if the market can sustain these higher prices. Some schools have proved they can.

6. From engineering

The engineering world relies on firms with different specialisations working together. For example, if you want to build a stadium, you will need specialist builders, equipment-leasing companies, transport suppliers, plumbing and drainage specialists, electricians, and so on. The education world also has large contracts; individual institutions cannot possibly deliver these alone, simply because of the huge numbers involved. As part of a larger partnership, however, they would have a role to play. We have already mentioned networking (Unit 22); tendering for contracts is a way of turning those relationships into actual business. An operation of any size can get involved, provided they find the right partners. So look outside ELT for potential partnering possibilities.

7. From retail

Many retail and leisure outlets rely on secret shoppers for feedback on their products and services. Get people to come to your school to take a test or simply get information. Have them join a class as a guest. (You would obviously know the role of your guest but others on the staff wouldn't.) Both of these things will get you valuable feedback on the service you are providing. If you have colleagues in other regions, offer to do the same for them: visit their school as a potential customer and see how good the early part of the customer journey is. Another idea from the retail sector is that of 'pop-ups'. New businesses take on premises on a short-term basis, sometimes within a larger business, as a means of getting their ideas across directly to potential customers. Language schools have even been known to pop up in department stores and on commuter trains. Why not give it a go?

8. From business support groups

By joining local enterprise groups and professional associations, you will start to network with colleagues from other sectors. They can be a great source of ideas for customer retention, local regulations, ways of marketing and advertising, and places where you might find potential customers. Marketing is about building relationships, and working with other businesses in your region or country is a great place to start. It might also lead you to opportunities to tender (see Tip 6 above).

9. From business media

Business magazines, books and websites offer a seemingly endless stream of ideas on how to do things better. Even if an idea cannot be borrowed as it is, it can often be tweaked or will act as a stimulus for you to change things in your school. A number of eminent business experts publish regular short articles and blogs. These can act as a great catalyst for stimulating your thought processes. Examples of such resources include *Fast Company*, *Harvard Business Review*, *The Economist*, *Forbes.com* and *Bloomberg.com*.

10. From other sectors



Think of other sectors that might offer tools, services, marketing strategies or other techniques that you could use in your school. Consider the sectors your students come from or sectors that are important in your region. How can they be of help?

10 ways of encouraging professional development for teachers

Although professional development (referred to as PD, continuous professional development or CPD) is widely considered to be important, there will be times when staff do not want or feel the need to engage in any professional development. This may be due to complacency, particularly in the case of long-term staff, or the transient nature of seasonal staff. It is important to note that a good manager will recognise that not everyone in the team needs to be pursuing development goals all the time. There may be times due to personal circumstances, or even CPD fatigue, when it is okay to just be doing a good job. Here are 10 suggestions for ways of encouraging professional development.

1. Know your staff

A good manager should know what makes each member of their team tick – what motivates and interests them. You should know their teaching style and also be aware of what is happening in their personal life that may have an impact on their performance and commitment to CPD at this moment. Only once this is achieved can you help them to play to their strengths and tap into their professional development potential and aspirations. In order to get to know your staff, take time to talk to them in a personal as well as a professional capacity.

2. PD culture

It is important to ensure on an ongoing basis that there is a culture of meaningful professional development, which is embraced by all staff. Highlight the PD opportunities you provide for staff as a perk of the job, a benefit to working for your organisation as opposed to a competitor's one. Make it clear from the start that staff members' willingness to engage in professional development is also an expectation of the school – and show that you invest accordingly. Highlight PD as an enjoyable and integral part of everyone's role within the school. Involve everyone and show that it is taken seriously. This approach should run through everything from recruitment to observation to appraisals, to exam results and student feedback. Do an informal check from time to time by being around your staff to see what is being talked about in the staffroom: are discussions about teaching and lessons taking place? Is there an atmosphere of general positive energy? If so, you are doing something right in creating a positive CPD culture.

3. Individualisation

Professional development is not only about attending a programme of workshops. In knowing your staff and their individual areas of interest you will be able to identify, for example, who might develop best by taking on an action research project, who would prefer to identify an area of development and learn through structured peer observations, and who is ready to get involved in course development. Agree on individual goals that fit in with the school development plan, then help facilitate these along the way.

4. Reflective practice

Create a culture of professional reflection, allowing staff to recognise how they have developed. They might think about the positive impact it has had on the quality of their working life, and also on any student feedback they receive and how much progress their classes have made. Reflection can be done in a number of ways: keeping an online journal or CPD record (see Unit 37 for an example), sharing thoughts with a peer partner, making small and frequent reflective notes on a specific area of focus throughout lessons, and reviewing all these on a weekly basis. Reflections should go beyond simple descriptions (e.g. 'This is what I did'); they should be evaluative, analysing what has been learned as a result. Highlight to teachers the benefits of reflection. Emphasise the fact that this does not need to be a time-consuming chore; instead it should be an integrated and enjoyable part of our working lives.

5. Peer and group work

Peer partners or small working groups can be about much more than peer observations. Allow such groups to evolve organically with the guidance of the line manager. Peers or small groups can identify an area of interest that they can do research on, experiment with, plan together, peer-observe and reflect on. This gives teachers autonomy, and is a more bottom-up approach, with them being in control of their own PD. In order for this to be successful, it must be planned for, embraced by staff and given time and resources. It works well when time is an issue. Make it a final goal to share findings and achievements with peers and, where possible, with students.

6. Tap into the new

New teachers can invigorate a complacent staff, so it is important to tap into this energy. Teachers straight from initial training courses, from other schools, or straight from diploma courses will have a bank of ideas and information about current trends in ELT. They will also have an enthusiasm for their new job and are often eager to share their new-found knowledge. You can tap into this in a number of ways, for example in the form of staff workshops or, more informally, by encouraging them to share ideas with colleagues in the staffroom or to write an article in the school newsletter. Alternatively, long-term teachers may be keen to do some peer observations of newer teachers to get some fresh ideas. Such enthusiasm and idea-sharing is contagious and can spark a renewed interest in PD throughout the school. (See also Unit 38.)

7. Pitch

Professional development opportunities within a school will only be taken seriously if they are pitched at the correct level. In the same way as in a classroom environment, where you would rarely mix all levels of language ability, try to group teachers more or less according to needs when running workshops. Consider your audience: is the content suitable, relevant, too basic or too complex for the teachers attending? If workshops are teacher-led, make sure that the session leader has pitched the content appropriately. Get feedback from staff after workshops and adapt accordingly for future events.

8. Rewards and incentives

Good professional development is rewarding in itself and creates a sense of achievement, especially when the teacher can see obvious progress and results from their efforts. But it is also a good idea to give staff the opportunity to showcase their PD work to the broader industry as part of their bigger PD plans. Encourage them to write an article or to speak at an international conference such as TESOL or at a local teaching event. An opportunity to travel and share the knowledge gained from PD goals can be a nice incentive for the teacher, and is also good for the reputation of the school.

9. Lead by example

A good manager will have a set of developmental goals to work towards as well. Do not end up being so busy that you forget about your own PD. Share this with your team and involve them where possible. Ask for feedback on the progress of your goals and projects. You may decide to focus on an aspect of management or an aspect of teaching and learning that you can trickle down to staff with confidence. You will benefit from this, as will your team, but you are also sending a strong message that PD is important to everyone in the organisation.

10. Professional development opportunities



There are more ways to tap into professional development opportunities than just attending workshops. Think of five to ten other ways to help develop staff. See page 188 of the Appendix for a list of suggestions. Think about which of these might be successful for each individual staff member on your team and how you might introduce it. How will you monitor the success?

“Professional Development (PD) is about learning something new and being able to do it. However, oftentimes, teachers do not receive any kind of support in implementing the new ideas. This comes from traditional conceptions of PD but we must realize and start to acknowledge that PD is something to be done with teachers and not to teachers.”

Gabriel Diaz Maggioli, Ludus Center, The Catholic University, Montevideo, Uruguay

10 things you hope to hear when students (and staff) leave

At the end of a course it is easy to get caught up in the leaving process of issuing exam results and certificates, holding end-of-term parties, celebrations and graduation ceremonies, as well as preparations for the next intake. But at the same time, don't forget to collect and listen to leavers' comments. You can learn a lot from what people say when they leave – and that's in addition to the information gathered more formally in exit questionnaires. You should also listen carefully to what staff members say when they leave.

1. 'My English improved a lot and I got the grades I needed'

This is probably the comment we are most satisfied to hear. We have fulfilled our purpose and delivered what was required: job done! Sometimes, particularly on short-stay courses, the extent of improvement may not be evident. As an organisation you may need to help your students identify what they have achieved. This requires setting clear and realistic goals at the beginning of and during the course, measuring and applauding progress, identifying new skills and abilities, and getting the student to see these outcomes and successes (as well as being aware of what they still need to do).

2. 'This was one of the best experiences of my life'

It's not just about learning English. Studying in a language school, especially if it's in a different country, can be one of the most formative and enjoyable experiences of a person's life. Remember most students are typically aged from 16 to 30, an age of developing maturity when characters are being shaped, opinions formed, career paths forged and lifelong relationships established. Make sure that what you are providing is contributing to that development.

3. 'I had a great time and made lots of friends'

As we said above, it's not just about learning English. For some students, the learning of English is almost incidental to the main aim of meeting new friends from different countries, experiencing a new environment and simply having a good time. There is nothing wrong with having that as your main purpose, as long as it doesn't disrupt the learning process in general (for example, by coming in late every day). In fact, it could be argued that students who are outgoing and enjoying an active social life are more likely to develop communicative skills and benefit from communicative teaching.

4. 'I learnt how to make roast potatoes'

This was a genuine comment from a 16-year-old Italian boy studying in the UK. He was a good student, around A2/B1 level, who had progressed well. For him, though, the best part of his experience was outside the classroom, living with an English family and experiencing a different culture and learning new skills – in this case, culinary ones. Think about what is behind this comment: involvement with the family, learning how to cook a typically British dish, the language of listening to and checking instructions from an English-speaking host (with no ELT training), writing the recipe out and sending it to his Italian mother, cooking it for his family on his return, and so on. The communicative exchanges and language skills involved in all of this were hugely beneficial to his development in so many ways. Never think that learning can only take place in the classroom.

5. 'I'll recommend this school to my friends/colleagues'

Personal recommendations are a wonderfully cost-effective way of getting new business. Offer to send contact details and publicity to relevant people and organisations. Be sure to find out exactly why they would recommend the school, so that you can emphasise these points in your marketing. You might even be able to use the student's comment and photo as a testimonial on your website or brochure (with their permission, of course).

6. 'I was impressed by how well the school was run'

A comment like this is perhaps quite rare, as customers tend to expect that things will be run well and will only comment if they think something falls short of their expectations. Excellent service and administration often goes unnoticed. As a result, if you want to find out if the students think that the school is run well, you may need to ask a direct question.

7. 'This experience will look good on my CV (or resume)'

Most students study English not because they want a holiday, but because they are developing their careers and accumulating skills that will help them get better jobs. For business English students, this aim is self-evident, but even if students are not thinking overtly of career enhancement, they should be encouraged to record the experience of a language course on their CV (resume).

8. 'I would like to get involved in ELT as a career'

Language schools are often very special places with an atmosphere of communication and camaraderie, and an awareness of internationalism that is attractive to young (indeed all) learners. High-level students may have been inspired by their learning experience to become ELT teachers themselves, so give details of teacher training opportunities. Other students may be interested in different roles, as activity leaders, teaching assistants, computer technicians, administrative staff, marketing co-ordinators, finance assistants, welfare officers and paid interns. You may even consider directly employing one of your students after their course; they will certainly be familiar with the organisation.

9. 'Can you send me an enrolment form?'

This is something you definitely want to hear. It not only indicates satisfaction with the course, but also offers a business opportunity. Remember, it may not be for the person who requested it, but for a friend, a family member or a work colleague, so get their contact details. You can encourage this by having enrolment forms available to take away, or a more formal 'send-a-friend' discount offer.

10. 'All the staff were so friendly and professional'



It's the staff in a school (the teachers and the rest of the team) who often determine whether a student's leaving comment is positive or not. For this reason, it's also worth considering the comments of staff members when they leave your school. Like students' feedback, their comments are an invaluable source of information and development opportunities, not least because you might want to re-employ them later.

To consider what your staff might say about the school, look back at the ten comments above and think of their equivalents for staff. Some comments (e.g. 5) might be the same. Some will need modifying (for example, 1 might be modified to 'My teaching improved and I can now teach a wider range of levels and courses'). Finally, think of ten things you don't want to hear when students and staff leave, and, using what you have learnt from all the tips in this book, decide what you would do about each negative comment. You can use the photocopiable form on page 197 of the Appendix to carry out these tasks.



Appendix

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Unit 16.10: Staff satisfaction survey

Complete this satisfaction survey by carrying out short interviews with staff. Complete the two blank boxes with questions relevant to your organisation and add the person's position, if necessary. For any data collection to be taken seriously by staff, it must be analysed and acted upon, with action points fed back to everyone. Where points raised cannot be acted upon, explain to your staff why not.

Position	Teacher	Marketing Manager	Administration Officer
Is the school meeting your expectations?			
If so, how can the school make things even better?			
If not, what suggestions do you have to help the school meet your expectations?			
Are you (motivated/ happy/ fulfilled) in your work?			

Unit 41.10: Ten ways of encouraging professional development for teachers

Sample list of CPD opportunities:

- ▶ Teacher conferences (local and international, face to face and online)
- ▶ Local CPD groups
- ▶ In-house CPD sessions (attending and running them)
- ▶ DoS observation (working with DoS to identify areas for development)
- ▶ Peer observation
- ▶ Pop-in observations (short observations of colleagues to see a variety of types of lesson)
- ▶ Self-observation
- ▶ Reflection (daily or weekly lesson journal)
- ▶ Online support (blogs, portals, publisher sites, examination board sites)
- ▶ Idea-sharing discussion groups (in school and online)
- ▶ Mentor or buddy system
- ▶ Trial a new idea one day a week
- ▶ Shared board for classroom ideas and activities in teachers' room
- ▶ Reading (journals, blogs, teacher development books)
- ▶ Writing (write an article or blog post)
- ▶ New projects, courses, levels, teaching trends
- ▶ Action research

50.10: What people say about your school

Student comment (positive)	Staff comment equivalent	What you don't want to hear	What you can do about it
My English improved a lot and I got the grades I needed.	My teaching improved and I can now teach a wider range of levels and courses.	I didn't make any progress at all.	
This was one of the best experiences of my life.			
I had a great time and made lots of friends.			
I learnt how to make roast potatoes.			
I'll recommend this school to my friends/colleagues.			
I was impressed by how well the school was run.			
This experience will look good on my CV/resume.			
I would like to get involved in ELT as a career.			
Can you send me an enrolment form?			
All the staff were so friendly and professional.			