

# Firms urged to equip employees with English skills

Leo Kasim  
BRUNEI-MUARA

COMPANIES that are looking to introduce their products to the global market must make sure that their employees are well-equipped with English communication skills, an English language trainer said yesterday.

In an interview, Paul East, the founder and managing director of The Pyramid Group, said companies sending their employees to do exports and meet contacts must make sure that they are capable in English.

The Pyramid Group is a German company that offers a range of specialist English training.

East, who is also the president of the International Association of Technical English Trainers, was in the English for Business & Technology Conference 2012 (E4BT 2012) at Institut Teknologi Brunei (ITB), yesterday.

Giving an example, he said that a sales team without English communication skills may miss out on

important deals at international fairs.

"It is not just the language but also cultural skills. The sales team must also be able to give presentations, handle negotiations and sell products using English," he told *The Brunei Times*.

He then stressed that the element of communication is very important for the frontliners of a company.

"Basically, if they (employees) can communicate more effectively, then the job is going to be done more efficiently," he said, adding that this leads to the company's growth.

During negotiation, he said the person must make his points clear made without using complicated language.

"It must be simple because often, less is more," he said.

He then explained that employees also gain job satisfaction when they know that they are communicating well.

Meanwhile, during the E4BT opening ceremony, ITB Acting Vice

Chancellor Dr Hj Naemah Hj Basir, in her speech as guest of honour, stressed on the benefits of having English communication skills.

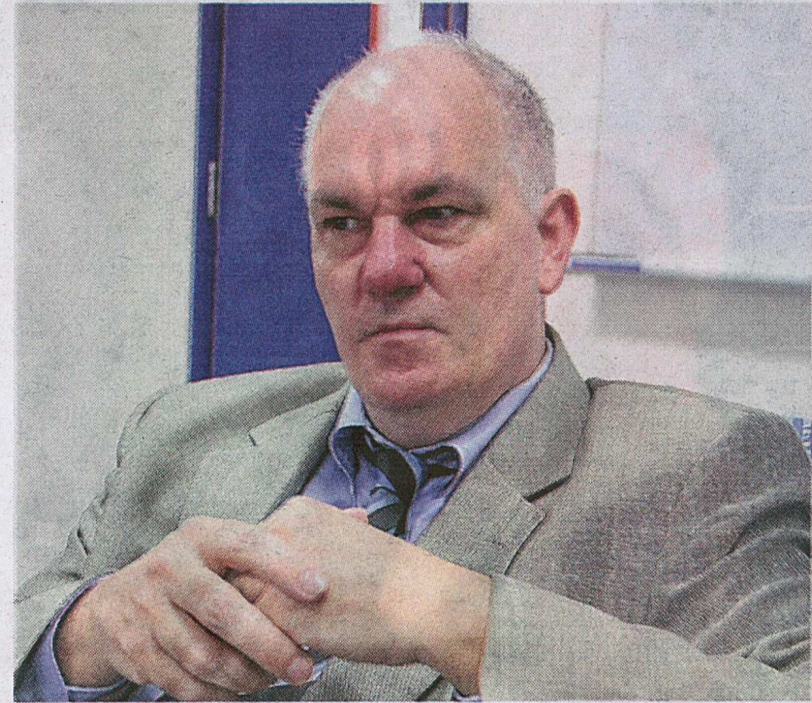
She said that having good English language is vital in a world where industries continue to grow in terms of volume and services.

"English has become a tool for global contact in business communication," she said, adding that companies also often advertise English proficiency as a prerequisite for employment.

In another speech, Mike Cross, the dean of the Centre for Communication, Teaching and Learning at ITB and E4BT chairman, said that knowing one or more of the world languages is an essential skill for an individual.

He said that for Brunei's oil and gas industry "proficiency in English is a pre-requisite in a multinational workplace, especially in an environment where safety is of paramount importance."

**The Brunei Times**



Paul East, the founder and managing director of The Pyramid Group, a German company that offers a range of specialist English training. East is in town for the Business & Technology Conference 2012. Picture: BT/Leo Kasim