**UK**

**David – Scotland**

Part of my remit in— … um … includes travel abroad. Um … I love travelling, it’s part of my— my business. I love getting to engaging business relationships across multiple cultures… um … so I can go as far afield as, you know, China, you know, India, even Europe. Um … for me each different country presents different challenges … uh … but all of which … um … you know, are— are easily overcome … um … sometimes the only challenge is my limited ability to speak language.

We often get visits in— in either London or Glasgow from people abroad … um … in terms of business discussions. Um … on some occasions … um … some people need help in either, you know, finding hotel accommodation … um … looking for advice … uh … in terms of— of travel … um … and arrangements. I’ll easily provide that. Generally … um … to avoid any misunderstanding, I— I would tend to speak to people first but always follow up in some form of email where I’m providing instruction, that way there can be … uh … nothing lost in translation. Um … but generally … um … most of the people who tend to come to the— to the UK on business speak wonderful English … um … and can very easily … um …, you know, understand, you know, the instructions or advice that you— you’re providing them with. Um … Glasgow presents some different challenges given that … um … it requires that people from abroad often need to fly via one of the main London airports. Our Glasgow office is also in the fringes, in the north side of the main city … um … and the— the transport links aren’t entirely straight-forward. Um … for that reason … uh … it’s often better to provide written … you know, instructions for the easiest way to find our premises. And … uh … so far so good. Everyone’s managed to make it … to the offices on time for their meetings. I think there are very few occasions … um … out of people’s control that they perhaps don’t turn up on time for meetings or … um … you know fail to make it to the UK at all, you know, through no— no fault of their own.

**Catherine**

Well, I’ve just got back from a … business trip to Korea. It was quite a short trip. I had three intense days of meetings and … it was the first time I’ve been to Korea and it was slightly different to some of my other trips because I’ve travelled a lot in previous roles. I’ve spent a lot of time in South America, I’ve been to the Middle East, other parts of Asia, a lot of trips to Europe and … most of the time, on most of those trips, I’ve been visiting a local office or we have some kind of lo— local representation – that wasn’t the case on this trip to Korea, so I set up all my own appointments. I was following up on a trip that a … colleague had made earlier in the year so these people were known to the company and they had already met us but I hadn’t met any of them before. And … once I got out there, I was very much on my own which I … it never really occurred to me, it was almost as I was on my way to the airport that I realized that … uh … you know my evenings were going to be my own. That I wasn’t going to have to spend a lot of time in a car with somebody I’d never met before who was going to be taking me to every single one of my appointments, which is what happens when you— when you have an agent or a— a local office, you— you often get thrown together with someone, who you end up spending four days solid with from breakfast in the morning to dinner in the evening. So that was quite nice in some ways but equally in the evenings … um … you know, I don’t speak any Korean, I was in a hotel that was very expensive and I didn’t particularly want to order room service every evening, partly because of the cost, partly because it’s boring. So I went out every evening … on my own and a few of those evenings I discovered there was a food hall in the department store that was part of my hotel and they had all these different counters where you could get lots of different types of Asian dishes and the only interaction you needed to have was to just say the number of the dish you wanted to a person at a central till and that was great because everyone ate communally on big tables no one was looking at me thinking, ‘Oh dear, she hasn’t got anyone to talk to, there she is with her book’. And it was fun because there were lots of different people there, families out together on the Sunday night … um … when I first went down there. And then one night I went to a Korean barbecue place which I walked past and the smell was so fantastic. I was a little bit nervous of going in cause it was up some stairs and the menu was in Korean and I thought, well, I wasn’t quite sure what I was going to find there. But having walked around looking for somewhere to eat for a bit longer I thought actually that place smelt so good, I am going to go— try and find it again and I am going to be brave and I’m going to go in and I’m going to eat there on my own, and I did and it was fantastic. I was very lucky cause I’d downloaded a guide to Seoul on my iPod touch so I had a little bit about Korean cuisine because I don’t think I would have known what to do with the dish when it came but my guidebook told me what to do which is that you take some lettuce, you put the barbecued meat, which has been barbecued in front of you by the waitress in this little pit in the table where they bring the hot coals and they pull the extractor fan down from the— the ceiling, and you— so you put the meat that’s been cooked there into the lettuce leaf, you wrap it up, you can chose some kimchi, which you get with everything in Korea, which is … um … pickled cabbage, which is delicious actually. And … there are other various things you can put in this lettuce leaf and so you can have a different kind of flavour every time. But I had a lot of fun, I was th— there on my own, I was a bit self conscious about that but … the waitress and I understood each other just enough to … uh … to order and— and pay and I was very pleased I’d been brave enough to go in.

I felt completely safe in Korea on my own. Um … I was staying centrally in quite a— a nice district but … I didn’t feel threatened at any time. I was very pleased though: the hotel had a woman-only floor which is only, you know, the rooms on there only women have access to and in order to get onto the corridor at the lift there’s a— you have to touch your room key and the double doors open and you go in. And I like that very much because the only time I think I’ve felt unsafe on business trips is sometimes you get out of the lift with— with a man and they are following you down the corridor and you think, well, they are probably just staying in the room next door or a few rooms down but you never know. And sometimes those corridors can be quite long and you can feel a little bit exposed in that situation so I’m quite a fan on the— of the woman-only flo— floor.

**Nick – England**

My wife’s from Edinburgh so we … um … we’ve discussed, you know, I don’t— it doesn’t matter to me where I live … um … in the sense of as long as it’s not in, you know, in the middle of a city … um … I’ll— I’ll kind of go anywhere in the UK. She wants to go back to live in Scotland ’cause her, one, two, three sisters live there, one brother lives there, other brother lives in … um … in Vietnam! So not gonna be seeing him very often but she wants to go back and see the rest of the family. Um … both of our kids are, you know, again they’re kind of, ‘well, fine, don’t mind’. Um … I suspect, you know, we— you know, we will move up there, they’ll have a year or two and think, ‘I think I might wanna come back down south again,’ but hey, that’s— that happens! So, we’ll see, you know, we’ll see what happens. But that’s— that’s the plan, so sell the house we’ve got in … um … in the south, which hopefully we’ll have paid for by then. And … um … put it all— you know, all our contents in a— in a lor— in a small lorry and then somebody can drive it up the M6 … to somewhere in or around Edinburgh.

I can imagine it being fantastic! However, you know, who knows? Um … it’s very different having a— a week or two off as you do for holiday or a day off to, you know waking up and thinking, ‘Oh, I haven’t got to get up today, tomorrow or at this time next week and go to work.’ So … just deal with that when it happens and, you know, if you think, well, I wouldn’t mind a little job, you know, taking the frozen peas out of the packet and putting them in the fridge in Tesco’s then I’ll go and do that ’cause it’s— it’s more about meeting people and getting out and not just, you know sitting on your bum at home watching the telly. The only thing I’m concerned about is that the weather down here is quite warm and my experience of the weather in Scotland is— is kind of different. So whether I can cope with that or not I don’t know, we’ll have to find out, we’ll just have to put another l— layer of clothing on that’s— that’s it. But I quite like walking round in shorts in the summer… and I may not be doing that!

**Jude**

A viral campaign is … um … is I guess, something digital like a video or a computer game that is sent out via email to one person, and if they’re engaged and they like what they— they see, they will then send it on to all their friends and therefore it generates sort of a word of— word of mouth effect. Um … and lots of people end up … um … spreading the word on your behalf for free which is a really great asset to any marketing campaign.

Um … I’m in the process of designing one … um … the Times Atlas of Britain Game is— is our first— is our first experiment an— and the idea is that— that the player will … um … be encouraged to place … um … geographical points … um … within the UK, and— I mean basically the idea is that they get addicted to this game which will have four levels of difficulty, so ranging from pinpointing places in the UK from big cities right through to small villages. Um … and once they’ve kind of got their score, they’ll then pass it on to their friends to— to compete with them and get … um … some— just go head to head on the— the competition level really.

**Seamus**

Well, I’d say the— the thing that identifies people from the countries of— of former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe is— is a great hospitality. Uh … there’s a— a tradition amongst Slavic peoples particularly that you really look after guests and you invite them to your home and you put them up for the night. And it’s a really warming and— and … uh … very satisfying cu— … uh … region to work in, I would say.

There’s certainly a big contrast between the way that business was done in these regions in the 1990s when the— the system demanded full employment for everybody. So there were a lot of people who really didn’t have very much to do and it wasn’t unusual to walk through— down a corridor and see people sitting really twiddling a pencil and scratching their head and looking out the window. That’s changed dramatically … uh … over the last ten years, and— and people have really got to tackle the— the whole work ethic and— and in fact I would say in certain countries people are working at least as long hours as in the UK and in some cases they’re pressurised into working even longer hours. Um … in terms of business … uh … culture … um … I think the— the system is—is still changing. I think as the number of people who speak English increases and they absorb much more of … uh … foreign culture, I think the system is— is changing, they’re— they’re really ad—ad— adapting to an— and adopting the systems that we follow. But … um … I have to mention the— the drinking culture which is still very much alive and kicking in these territories. Um … the— the celebration of a deal with … uh …. a couple of glasses … um … not unlike the UK in some ways but certainly lives up— sometimes lives up to its reputation.

I think at the beginning of the … uh … time I spent over there I went straight in and joined them and … uh … was— was as good as anybody that I was working with, and felt that it was actually a mark of respect for the business culture to behave in exactly the way that people behaved themselves. Even if that did mean the odd morning when it was sort of quite difficult to get out of bed, but that was all for the good of the cause, I guess. Uh … again this— this culture of— of drink and work has changed dramatically as people over the years realise they can’t really do the job properly if they’re getting up very late in the morning and … uh … nursing a terrible hangover. They boast vodka doesn’t give any hangovers but it certainly slows down the speed at which the brain works, that’s for sure. I would certainly differentiate between Russia and Ukraine on the one hand and the countries of Eastern Europe on the other hand when— when making the judgement about the importance of speaking local languages. In Eastern Europe it’s now true that you can do business without knowing any of the local languages, English really is the— the— the … uh … business— the language of business in those territories. But in Russia and Ukraine well there’s a very simple fact that if you want to travel round the underground in Moscow, you have to be able to read the signs for the metro before you go into the underground. Uh … and unfortunately all the metro maps above ground are in Russian only. It’s only when you actually get on the train that you find there are English … uh … subtitles, let’s say, for the metro stations. So you only know that you’re lost once you’re actually lost. Uh … so I would say Russia’s still— has still got quite a distance to go … um … to make it suitable for people who don’t speak or read any language at all. Uh … the alternative is to spend an awful lot of money on an interpreter and then the difficulty is you’re not entirely sure that the interpreter has properly translated the context and … um … the subject matter.