

## Driving business forward

UK-based staff of French car company Citroën are enjoying success in Asset's formal assessments, as part of a programme of French language learning developed by Executive Languages. John Guyon of Executive Languages explained how Asset is being used to provide assessment for this major company.

"Asset was one of two recommendations on the shortlist we researched for Citroën. The company wanted a system of assessment in place. We had previously used LCCI exams and found them very appropriate. The Asset system offered us a viable successor as the external assessments are mapped to the European Framework. They provide a deadline which concentrates students' efforts and motivate students to achieve and progress."

John described who is learning French at Citroën. "Over 40 members of Citroën staff, from director down to junior level, are improving their French. They do a wide range of jobs but most come into contact with French documents or emails. Some also visit France as part of their work or receive French colleagues on visits to the UK. Whilst many need an intermediate operational level of French, a few need more advanced abilities. The duration of their language training is open-ended."

"We provide weekly sessions in groups of up to six students, as well as some 1:1 sessions and some intensive courses of up to 20 hours per week, if called for. We operate on Citroën's own premises. As with most of our other clients, the lead tutor carries out an audit of language skills by testing reading, listening and speaking skills every six to eight months."

John continued: "As Citroën appreciate the benefits of accreditation, the company was prepared to become an Asset registered centre which enabled us to enter their staff for external assessments. Not all clients would do this. Citroën provide all the administrative support to make the exams possible. We generally enter their learners for testing of all four skills under the Asset scheme although there might be particular reasons for delaying an entry in one or more skills."

And what has the response been at Citroën – both at an individual and corporate level? "Naturally learners were a bit apprehensive at finding themselves in an exam situation as their school-days are long behind them. However comments received after the assessments have been positive. Preparing for the exams created a good team spirit and learners felt that the exams focus the mind and gave them something to aim for. People are already preparing for the next exam opportunity and there is some competitiveness among them. Those who achieved top grades in each skill are now planning for the next level and are encouraged by the OCR qualification this will lead to."

"Citroën is an Investor in People and is keen to develop all its employees. A rounded knowledge of the French language is an important component. This not only helps in day-to-day exchanges with Citroën France, but also promotes international job mobility. For this reason, students are encouraged to study all four skills rather than just the skills they need in their current role. Those who were only assessed in certain skills in January have been enrolled for the remaining ones in June. In the future, the World of Work tests may be a useful option."

Bonne chance to all Citroën staff in their forthcoming exams.

Thanks also to Anna Lukas at Citroën for her contribution to this case study.