

# Engineering Success with English

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A good command of English is essential for Indian students entering the engineering sector. In fact this year's National Employability report for Engineers carried out by India's *Aspiring Mind's* highlights the importance of English language skills to remain competitive in the job market in this sector. The report looks at employability by roles and in one section it looks at the skills needed to carry out the role of Technical Content Developer. One thing that really struck me about this section was the fact that the report found that just 51.57% engineers possessed the required domain knowledge and only 17.75% had the required English skills meaning the employability in this role stands at just 12.15%.

These figures are staggering and I think it's clear that there is an increasing need for Indian students planning to enter the engineering sector to be able to communicate well in English. This will help them have a positive experience of the sector and allow them to thrive as they climb up the career ladder.

This creates an ever-growing demand for employers and education institutions to understand the challenges of learning English in the workplace, so suitable support can be put in place. However, this is a complicated area.

A group of our experts at Cambridge Assessment English set out to find some of the answers with the study 'English at Work: Global Analysis of Language Skills in the Workplace'. The survey looked at the importance of English in the global economy. More than 5,300 employers from 38 countries took part including representatives from India. We also analysed 20 different industrial sectors including manufacturing and engineering. So, what did we find out?

## **Is English significant for my organisation?**

Generally we found that in countries and territories where English is an official language, 97% of employers said that English is significant for their organisation.

## **What about the engineering sector?**

The survey received 483 responses from the manufacturing and engineering sector which helps us to paint a really good picture of what's going on in the sector. We looked at the percentage of employers from the different sectors who said that English was significant for their organisation. In the manufacturing and engineering 97% of respondents from countries or territories where English is an official language said that English was significant for their organisation.

## **What level of English do I need to do my job?**

The English at Work survey also looked at what level of English is required in different industries. For the manufacturing and engineering sector 13% said you need a native level of English, 49% said you needed an advanced level of English, 30% said intermediate and only 5% said a basic level of English.

I think it's very clear from these findings that organisations working in the sector place a huge importance on a high level of English language skills to carry out a job. But how can people improve their English language skills for the workplace?

## **Learning English with Cambridge Assessment English**

Cambridge Assessment English (CAE), helps people learn English and prove their skills to the world. This includes working with individuals and global organisations to help them achieve their goals. One really good way of improving English skills for the workplace is to take a qualification test that covers the skills you need for success.

The Cambridge English Qualifications are in-depth exams that make learning English enjoyable, effective and rewarding. The qualifications have been designed to help professionals develop the English language skills to communicate confidently in an international workplace. The demand for these qualifications continues to grow and they are accepted and trusted by thousands of leading employers and organisations worldwide. I think the secret to the success of CAE qualifications for business is that they are based on authentic situations, giving people the skills to communicate in real-life business scenarios. The Speaking test for example is taken face to face with our expert examiners, so students will develop the ability to express their opinion, present their ideas and negotiate in an international workplace.

Three of CAE's popular exams in this space are B1 business Preliminary, B2 Business Vantage and C1 Business Higher. As the names suggest these qualifications are all aimed at different levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages – which is an international way of measuring language ability.

### What can people expect from the different levels?

B1 Business Preliminary is a qualification that shows an individual has mastered the basics of business English. The business qualifications then move up to B2 Business Vantage – which is a qualification, will help people when applying for new jobs, getting a promotion or to develop their career. The highest level business qualification we develop is the C1 Business Higher – this qualification gives people the practical language skills they need to operate confidently at a senior level in global business.

### What is the best way to learn English?

Two of the best ways to learn English is to start as young as possible and immerse yourself in as many authentic English language materials as possible. Thankfully since the advance of the internet, it's even easier than ever to read English language newspapers, books, play games in English and it even helps if you listen to music in English!

Cambridge Assessment English are in detailed discussions with technical societies around the world to make available the Business English qualifications to the members. Preparing for these exams help them to develop their workplace communication skills and enhance their employability. CAE also offer lots of free preparation materials on its website and also has a Facebook page for learning English that gives tips to millions of people around the world on a daily basis.

It's a really exciting time to be entering the engineering sector but it's not without its challenges. With the right motivation, skills and approach, I'm sure the next generation of Indian engineers will make a huge impact.

### About the author



Arunachalam leads the South Asia office of the Cambridge Assessment English, (earlier known as Cambridge English Language Assessment), which he was instrumental in setting up in 2005. The South Asia office manages the operations for India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bhutan and Bangladesh. He has a Master of Arts (MA) from University of Cambridge and is an alumnus of Loyola College, Chennai. He has worked with the British High Commission, India as an adviser for Education as well as with the British Council, India. In his current role, he leads the team that supports the English language learning and assessment for schools, higher education institutions, corporates as well as the teacher development. Arunachalam supports and guides various ministries of Education in the South Asia region in the area of English language development and is instrumental in building enduring partnerships between Cambridge and institutions in South Asia. An avid marathoner, he recently completed the Tata Mumbai Marathon.

### Related Readings

**25 English Idioms and Phrases That Are Commonly Used in Business:** You're sitting in the conference room with your coworkers, waiting for a meeting to start. As some coworkers pour themselves cups of coffee, others are chatting among themselves. Someone is saying she has to **cut corners** to finish her report on time. Someone else is talking about how a difficult customer has kept him **running round in circles**. In workplace conversations, you'll notice that business idioms and phrases like the above are being used all the time. To be able to participate actively in these conversations, you need to master the idioms and phrases commonly used in business. That's exactly what we're going to do here in this post at <http://bit.ly/2m7cHh3>

### 40 Useful Business English Expressions

- 1. 800 pound gorilla** - the biggest, most powerful group or company. **Example:** "If we follow our plan to make this new software, we're going to have a lot of competition, including from the 800 pound gorilla, Microsoft."
- 2. (a rising tide that) lifts all boats** - something that helps all people or all groups. **Example:** "We're only number three, but the current economic growth will lift all boats, so we're sure to make a profit this year."
- 3. an old hand** - a person who has long experience, especially in one place. **Example:** "He can help us set up a company in Beijing. He's been working in China for many years and speaks Chinese fluently. He's an old China hand."

For full list, pl. visit <http://bit.ly/2kJtlmV>