

The Conference Interpreter Trainee: A Successful Start-up?

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Abstract: In 2010, Chris Durban and Eugene Seidel published the volume *The Prosperous Translator: Advice from Fire Ant and Worker Bee*. Doubtless, since translation is at least partly akin to conference interpreting, one might think that the interpreter should also be able to lead a prosperous life. But the reality around us shows that not everyone succeeds in their professional life. Starting from the idea that a company's recipe for success could be applied to the training process of a successful interpreter, in this article we aim to examine to what extent the skills of the conference interpreting master could be strengthened, sharpened and expanded if the personal as well as the teaching approach followed the entrepreneurial model of success and how much effectiveness and efficiency matters in the training process. To this effect, we consider here in parallel conference interpreting pedagogy and proven marketing techniques.

Keywords: Start-up, entrepreneurial model, conference interpreting, effectiveness, *kaizen*-type approach.

More often than not the nouns 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness' as well as the adjectives derived from them are used interchangeably, even if they do not actually designate the same thing. The phenomenon is not uniquely present in the Romanian language. Effectiveness has to do with reaching the objectives that you have set for yourself or which others have set for you, and requires the development and exercising of advanced, cognitive, linguistic and communicative skills. Efficiency, on the other hand, has to do with reaching a high level of performance while carrying out a task, through the optimal use of available resources. In other words, it means reaching a satisfactory result with minimum effort. As well as approaching the issues of efficiency and effectiveness in the context of the postgraduate training of future successful conference interpreters, this paper analyses a number of concepts deemed essential for the success of a company, in so doing, trying to see how these could be applied to the training of interpreters.

In communist Romania, the need for interpretation was practically non-existent. Still, on the rare occasions the service was needed, it was mainly used to assist with the visits abroad conducted by high representatives of power or high-level reunions with delegations from various foreign countries, for the larger part, developing countries. From the few testimonials and materials published on conference interpreting during the period – memoirs of interpreters for the presidential family or interviews given by them after the change of the regime – we learn that interpreters were generally recruited upon the request of "representatives of the Protocol of the Grand National Assembly, the Council of State or other such institutions" (Năstăsescu 2010, p. 14) or that the activity was the responsibility of certain diplomats, both at home and abroad: "As it happened, the diplomat who regularly served as an interpreter for the President was missing from the country at that time and someone thought I should take his place..." (Năstăsescu 2010, p. 16) In general, when it was not the diplomats themselves, the people called upon were academics at Bucharest University, who, coincidentally or not, had contacts in the world of diplomacy. In *Life Passes Like a Bullet: Memoirs of a BBC Reporter*, Dorian Galbinski confirms this practice in his account of an episode in which he was asked by Romanian guests visiting London to allow for a

Romanian Embassy counsellor to translate. Sergiu Celac, Nicolae Ceausescu's personal interpreter, was a career diplomat, and Violeta Năstăsescu, Elena Ceausescu's personal interpreter, was a lecturer at the University of Bucharest, and the wife of a diplomat.

With the collapse of the political regime, the training of professional interpreters became imperative, given the sudden flurry of international conferences, workshops and cultural events with international participation. The Department of Applied Modern Languages at Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj was a pioneer in this field. Established in 1991, in 2002 the DAML was the first in Romania to provide a team of highly trained staff and thus offer a Master's degree in conference interpreting at national level. To this day, it has remained the only master's degree course at national level admitted in the EMCI, the European Consortium since 2007, which confirms the standards of excellence that trainers here have managed to maintain all along. Due to these high standards, not all candidates accepted in the programme succeed in graduating, graduation rates being rather low, and even the small percentage of those who do succeed, achieve accreditation as freelance interpreters or staff interpreters with the European institutions. It can be argued that success and failure are characteristic of any profession and any field. Whereas this is self-evident, we believe, however that an entrepreneurial approach to minimising failure in the field of conference interpreting would be useful, one in which objectives are clearly set from the outset and results can be quantified at each stage of training. In other words, we propose to consider here the conference interpreting trainee by analogy with a start-up and, focusing on the key elements that ensure success in the entrepreneurial setting, formulate a set of propose solutions that could boost performance and ensure success in the interpreting field. We will proceed to do so with recourse to the literature in the field of entrepreneurship.

In order to become stable and autonomous, newly-created companies can rely on what specialists call a *business accelerator*. We will consider the definition proposed by Cohen et al (2019, p. 20), according to which:

Accelerator programs, which are also referred to as seed accelerators, startup accelerators or business accelerators [...] are limited-duration

programs, lasting roughly three to six months that helps cohorts of startup venture with their entrepreneurial process and aspirations.

They provide access to mentorship in order to draw on the positive experience of those with an established presence on the market – to investors and/or to other forms of support (clients and/or potential partners, media). Elements such as communication, voice coaching, marketing and professional advice play a major part. Furthermore, the business accelerator gives the companies in question access to various logistical and technical resources and mediates their contact with other similar businesses, whose expertise could prove instrumental in the process. General, specialised or corporate, the accelerators are in fact a sort of intensive training programs, generally requiring 30 hours a week over a period of two to six months. At the end of the program, the new company is deemed strong enough to operate autonomously.

For all intents and purposes, the MA degree course in conference interpreting will be seen as embodying the role of an accelerator for the relevant companies. The thesis is grounded in the fact in the final year of their undergraduate studies, future MA trainees are introduced to the techniques of conference interpreting, with a focus on consecutive interpretation. If we compare the maximum number of intensive training months required for companies with the number of training hours clocked during the four semesters of the MA course, we realize that the total number of hours is inferior in the latter case (12 per semester in the first year, 14 per semester in the second year), but this is compensated for by an additional month of classes for the first postgraduate year and of two additional weeks of classes for the second year.

It is important to note from the outset that ours being a professionalising programme, our approach differs significantly from that of research programmes in that it is the practical, ‘hands-on’ experience that we target, one intent on delivering immediate results, which we monitor closely. Consequently, one of the earliest skills we seek to inculcate in our students is the ability to evaluate themselves and their peers accurately and objectively, give diagnostic feedback and take remedial action toward best practice. These faculties need to be accompanied by self-control, self-efficiency and stress management, which places us more in the position of personal trainers rather than in

that of teachers. Indeed, one of the recurrent correspondences traced in the literature is the similar role interpreter trainers share with personal trainers of high performing athletes. As well as the acquisition of the skills in question, as in athletics, actual performativity in interpreting depends on the mastery of an effective, constantly perfectible technique that allows for a steady performance, regardless of the varying levels of difficulty involved in the job. Since conventional coursework alone cannot ensure the building of these techniques, in the pedagogical practice we rely on the interpreter embarking upon an intensive training regimen, which consists of a hard-core, complex mix of interpreting and non-interpreting exercises, to be conducted on a daily basis. This, too is not unlike the high-level workout programs built by PTs for competitive athletes. It is exactly why sports psychology is extremely relevant to interpreting pedagogy:

The link between sport and interpreting might seem at first sight far-fetched or at least surprising, but we shall see in what follows that they are closely related with respect to stress and stress management. Sports psychology has a lot of potential for interpreting and interpreter training as stress seems to be one of the major psychological factors influencing an interpreter's professional behavior. A competitive sports situation is similar to an interpreting assignment since they are both characterized by the achievement need of the performers, the athlete or the interpreter. They cannot escape from the situation, and they need to achieve what they have undertaken to do. Their performance on the day depends on external and internal factors that they need to control efficiently. (Horváth 2012, p. 149)

Like athletes before an important competition, in adopting the technique of consecutive without notes, for instance, interpreters are asked to listen actively, visualize the speech, picture themselves in the position of the speaker, indeed to become the speaker, voice his/her views, emulate the tone of voice and attitude with as much fidelity and credibility as possible. The multiple tasks to hand – interpreting is a notoriously multimodal, multitasking activity, second only to air flight controlling in the degree of attention and visual alertness, situational awareness and interleaving operations – presuppose a tremendously arduous and crucial process of mental training and imagination. As part

of the coaching process, situational and self-awareness in the programme are built through the interpreter's diary, a meticulous record the trainees are asked to keep in order to monitor their progress scrupulously and design a realistic action plan for improvement. Subjective though this may be, to a certain extent, the diary is hardly a 'travelogue', the more analytical the account, the more beneficial to the trainee. Furthermore, to ensure they themselves stay in optimal shape, interpreter trainers need to attend regular ToTs, i.e. trainings of trainers, that offer an ample range of refreshing exercises, including modelling role-playing, mock exams, assessing, et al.

The support and mentoring available to trainees consist therefore of both theoretical and practical courses, and of intensive self-study and groupwork, which lay the necessary foundations and assist them with developing the relevant key skills, in consecutive interpreting with and without notes in the first year and then in simultaneous interpreting, with or without a written text, in the second year. The interpreting classes proper are accompanied by ancillary disciplines such as Romanian language (typically the A language), International Relations, Language and Cultural Studies (in both the B and the C language/s) in the first year, Communication and Information Technology, European Institutions and European Policies in the second year. Intensive practice represents obviously the prerequisite for the enhancement of general knowledge and for the development of the highly specialised skills required by the various types and modes of interpreting: span of attention, active listening, information processing, memory, a strong and efficient note-taking system, breathing techniques, the management of the information flow, stress management, intonation, empathy and fidelity in properly conveying the message of the speaker.

The trainers at Cluj are professionals, with a great deal of experience on the national market, most of them freelancing for the European institutions. Thus, they can embody the double-barrelled role of teachers and trainers, general and specialised business accelerators. As well as this, the function of specialised accelerators and of the somewhat corporate version thereof is fulfilled by the virtual classes held in cooperation with the European Parliament and the European Commission, and by various webinars devoted to note-taking or to court interpreting taught in cooperation with interpreters accredited

with the European Court of Justice, as well as the pedagogical assistance visits by staff interpreters from the European institutions. Representing the Romanian booth or the booths corresponding to the languages in the trainees' combination, the staff interpreters assist as well with the entrance admission tests and the final exams, as part of the external jury of assessors. Typically, the trainees interpret speeches tailored for each stage of the training process and are provided with competent and detailed feedback throughout the process. The 'interpreting/interpreter accelerator', to coin a phrase, thus increases the effectiveness and (especially) the efficiency of the training of the future true professionals.

Finally, most programs can end with a grand event, usually called a "demo day" (short for "demonstration day"), orchestrating a chance for participating teams to pitch their ventures to a large audience of qualified investors (Cohen, 2013; Cohen and Hochberg, 2014). Cohen (2013, p. 17), points to the fixed-term and cohort-based aspects of these programs as being the primary distinguishing features separating the accelerator from other intermediaries such as incubators.

In what concerns the *resources*, whereas the trainees are equipped with the high-tech resources necessary for online activity and rehearsing, it is the conventional conference interpreting lab that actually gives them full access to the tools required by their profession: the booth equipped with an interpreting console, a microphone and a headset. To this adds the invaluable experience of feedback from trainers and peers, which is instrumental to their progress.

Just as in the case of professional interpreters, the pandemic posed a major challenge to the postgraduate students in interpreting. While platforms such as Zoom, KUDO, Cisco Webex or Interprefy can create virtual booths, they provide little or no direct visual contact with trainers and peers, and the trainers cannot check on listening volumes, nor can they make any adjustments to these virtual booths. Accustomed to working from the comfort of their home, without anyone beside them, without being part of a team, some students found it hard to adapt or return to the pre-pandemic class formats, to the real voices of their peers and trainers, to the presence of the latter in the classroom or in the next booth.

For the Cluj students in conference interpreting, *coming into contact with other similar “businesses”* is made possible by the fact that their school is part of a European consortium (EMCI – European Masters in Conference Interpreting), which ensures the contact with students and trainers from the partner universities. At the end of the programme, the trainee resembles a company that is strong and able to operate autonomously, at least in theory, yet not necessarily as a conference interpreter. Of the 122 graduates of the European Masters in Conference Interpreting for the period 2008-2021, only a small percentage managed to get their accreditation with the European institutions. Many, however, turned towards the national interpreting market and work as well as translators, the annual number of events being insufficient for them to secure enough revenue exclusively from interpreting. Others use the skills acquired during the interpreter training programme and work for multinational companies, occupying positions such as project manager, business development manager, conceptual creator and the like.

A profitable company is a company that manages to achieve a perfect balance between its *current and long-term assets*, which it smartly employs in order to increase sales, reduce costs and generate profit. According to the definition introduced by the Ministry of Finance through Order no. 3103/2017, “an asset is a resource controlled by the entity as a result of past events, which is expected to generate future economic benefits for the entity.”

The question arises, what are the current assets held by the company called interpreting student upon entering the MA programme? A staple is general knowledge, constantly in need of consolidation and expansion, in order for it to become a long-term asset, with a focus on sound specialist knowledge of the various fields in which conferences requiring interpretation are commonly held. Just like a real company, which invests in high technology, including computer-based systems, because the use of the latest models of computers or of specialised software can increase productivity and cut down the time needed to complete daily tasks, the interpreter trainee understands that the purchase of high-performance computer devices, with enough memory space (for hundreds of terminological glossaries and other useful working documents) and with a very short response time (for more efficient access to information), is most definitely an

advantage. They are also encouraged to invest in high-performance headsets, with noise-cancelling capabilities and covering the whole ear, as over time these will protect their auditory system, seriously put to the test during simultaneous interpreting.

Companies place a lot on emphasis on *supply*, which means finding and purchasing the goods (raw materials) and services that would allow them to attract potential customers, at the right time and with a minimum of expenses, the products and the services they require and for which they will pay a price that, according to the seller or provider, will generate maximum profit. If the future interpreter were to follow in the footsteps of a company employee that seeks to ensure the optimal management of its supply activities, his or her success would be guaranteed. The first step is preparation, which entails planning and estimating the future needs of the company. In the case of interpreting trainees, this means identifying their weaknesses in terms of general knowledge and devising a plan for strengthening the existing ones and acquiring new data, from various fields. The lexical challenges a future professional interpreter is likely to encounter are merely hinted at by the speeches delivered by their trainers. The speeches are an important exercising material at start, yet they cannot fully cover the whole lexical spectrum for the weekly topics chosen during the training programme. Consequently, each trainee should devise weekly topics adjacent or identical to the ones proposed by the programme. This can make a real difference for the quality of the trainee's performance, as a rich, diverse and refined vocabulary is likely to speed up the identification of the necessary equivalent in the target language and allow for more resources to be diverted towards other aspects of the original speech, such as logical coherence, rhetorical devices, or intonation. As well as this, apart from getting familiar with the announced topic of the training speech, students should later revisit their performance, analyse it objectively and apply, *post factum*, the techniques of synonymy, antonymy and paraphrase, to speed up the identification of solutions that are not only functional in the given context, but actually ideal, in preparation for the future speeches pertaining to the same field. (Blank and Dorf 2020, p. 44). Provided the trainees have invested in a top computer or phone, with enough memory space, they will be able to access at any time the recordings of those performances they are unhappy with, in order to improve their

decalage, lexical choices, intonation, or the overall quality of the conveyed message, in terms of both form and content.

The second stage of the supply process has to do with receiving, maintaining and storing the supplies or the raw materials. The future interpreter should follow suit: objectively receive the feedback provided by their trainers for each of their performances, analyse the shortcomings, draw on the terminological glossaries or on the interpreting techniques they acquired in order to maintain and permanently enrich their vocabulary, storing new data in the medium- and long-term memory so that they could be accessed in the proverbial split second whenever needed.

A significant component of supply involves task management. This involves the measures necessary for each employee to carry out their duties within the company fully. Practically, at this stage the interpreter trainers have the same obligations as the manager of a private company. They formulate the study tasks, create the setting and design the solutions for the development of the interpreting skills, present or future, and then, during the practical courses, they check how the trainees have carried out the tasks. Customized feedback, delivered in the presence of all the trainees, has short-, medium- and long-term uses, as the mistakes identified and the solutions proposed could be turned to good account by all during a different speech, and similar challenges will be thus more readily identified by the trainees.

The last stage of supply is related to the monitoring of activities carried out in pursuit of the stated objectives and of the desired outcomes. The personal training log or interpreter's diary, in which the trainee records the feedback received from the trainers and the solutions recommended for the improvement of interpreting techniques, is a useful tool allowing trainees to monitor their progress (or lack thereof) and their thoroughness in following the suggested recommendations. If students can objectively assess their own performance, the observations they write down can help them devise new strategies for improvement.

All the elements that offer a company an advantage over its competitors, allowing it to expand its customer base and market share, account for what Michael Porter called the *competitive advantage*, in turn falling into two categories: lower costs and differentiation. For a company, it is efficiency that makes it possible to offer a high-quality

product at a lower cost than that of one's competitors. Unfortunately, on the national conference interpreting market, a lower price usually means lower quality rather than higher efficiency. In order to put an end to the widespread practice of dumping prices, students must be taught how to educate their potential customers and make them understand that interpreting is not limited to whatever happens on the day of the conference, but rather comprises an important albeit time-consuming component which involves preparation and the active assimilation of the specialized vocabulary and which should be factored in the price of interpreting services.

The competitive advantage represented by differentiation has to do with the offer of a product that is ahead of those of the competitors by virtue of its higher quality, of certain special features that are likely to broadly increase customer appreciation and/or by virtue of the after-sale service. From the very outset, the graduates of the European Masters in Conference Interpreting at Cluj can be seen as belonging to the category of high-quality products, as holders of a degree that certifies a level of training at the standards set by the European consortium of universities. The special characteristics of these MA graduates involve their training within a framework set by the specialist consortium, by trainers who themselves work as freelance conference interpreters for the European institutions or have accumulated a wealth of experience on the national and international market. Furthermore, the jury for the final exams includes staff interpreters from the European institutions, as an additional guarantee for a competent and objective evaluation.

When it comes to the after-sale service, it is well-known that conference organisers sometimes require a transcript and/or a translation of the various speeches. Even when it comes to this type of service, the Cluj MA graduates are high-quality products, as in their second postgraduate year they have the possibility to take the elective course in Specialized Translations offered by the European Masters in Translation-Terminology, which allows them to hone their translations skills in fields such as law, business, medicine, science or technology.

In the business world, only those companies that have a long and uninterrupted history of quality and high-performance can maintain their competitive advantages over a long period of time. For all the other players, competitiveness remains an ever-present objective. A

SWOT analysis, objectively carried out, will highlight for the future interpreters those elements that are insufficiently under their control, allowing them to take the necessary corrective steps and thus develop a set of skills applicable not only throughout their interpreting career, but also in all walks of life. Among them, mention should be made to extensive general knowledge, a rich vocabulary, flawless diction, proper intonation and expressive communication. Just as one's voice can be trained to acquire seemingly improbable characteristics, one's way of communicating a convincing and appealing message can be improved with the help of reading out loud exercises, which develop that flexibility of speaking likely to highlight the keywords or the logical and psychological pauses of the message that needs to be conveyed to listeners by way of interpretation.

Although for a company speed is a decisive factor whenever *flexibility* is required, the latter remains an important element of competitive adaptation, as employees can be granted more autonomy, teamwork can be encouraged, external partnerships expanded or innovation integrated at all levels. How would these successful corporate strategies apply to the training of professional interpreters? Trainees should be encouraged to resort to independent practice, on a permanent basis, following the recommendations of their trainers, in teams of at least two people, in order to improve the rapid reaction skills required whenever a booth partner encounters a terminological or any other type of difficulty. In this regard, the cooperation within the interuniversity consortium makes it possible to have joint A or B-language interpreting exercises. Also, the technological innovations in the field of conference interpreting need to be considered for integration in the practice.

Equity, meaning the net worth of a company, shows the level of the investment, financial or otherwise, made by the shareholders, and it consists of a common stock, a preferred stock and an unallocated stock. Doubtless, the net value of an interpreter is given by the sum total of his/her interpreting skills, the level of their general knowledge and their mastery of interpretation techniques, the equivalent of common or preferred stock. Whatever preference an interpreter may have for one field or another, their performance should be at the same level of quality even when working in less appealing fields. It is of the essence that trainees understand that possessing a specialised vocabulary from

unrelated fields requires a constant endeavour to identify the necessary terms and use them in a variety of contexts, so that conveying a metaphoric message based on medical terminology in order to describe a country's level of economic development does not pose problems. In other words, what is needed is a *kaizen*-type approach involving constant improvement, small yet/albeit important changes in the competitive long-term strategy of companies and organizations in order to achieve operational efficacy and customer satisfaction. In the field of conference interpreting, if the conference organisers are happy with the services provided by a team of interpreters and hire them for other conferences, they are deemed to have paid the due dividends for the investments made by trainees in the improvement of their interpreting techniques and strategies as well as of their communication skills, in their flexibility and adaptability to the circumstances that can occur during a conference without being provided for in the contract for the provision of services.

Strategic objectives represent one of the key elements of the potential success of a company. Students in interpreting also need such objectives. If smartly set, these could be achieved in shorter period of time and with less effort, in keeping with the investment that students wish to make in their professional future. The plan including these objectives should be monitored during training so that, if necessary, appropriate corrective action can be taken. In addition, as in the case of companies, "On the basis of the results obtained, comparisons between the objectives set and those achieved, the current plan is evaluated, forecasts are made and the next plan is drawn up." (Petrescu 2002, p. 20)

The *kaizen* practice tells us that one should not simply set activity-oriented objectives, but also design the methods for the assessment of the achieved results. Also, as in the case of companies, the objectives thus set can be either concrete and measurable, abstract and difficult, or downright impossible to measure. Thus, if graduates become freelance interpreters on the national and the international market, increasing the customer portfolio by a set annual percentage or securing the loyalty of the existing clients are two of the concrete objectives of a successful company also applicable to interpreting. Of the abstract objectives, those that may fit the conference interpreters are also two in number: ethical behaviour and the respect for the client,

on the one hand, and the provision of exceptional services likely to determine conference organisers to recommend the team to other potential customers, on the other. Such objectives, sometimes referred to as a *strategic position*, are important because they accurately map out what a company needs to do in order to become or remain competitive on the targeted commercial market or markets. They underpin a company's priorities and allow for a determination of the volume of resources to be allocated and of the objectives likely to streamline employee efforts, as well as of the indicators needed for a comparison between expected and actual outcomes. The conference interpreter, trainee or fresh graduate, needs such a strategic position as well as a set of values guiding their professional conduct, similar to those that shape organizational *behaviour* in a company: how it would like to be seen by customers, suppliers and partners, how it should act in order to achieve the objectives. Also to be taken into account are the quality of the products and services, reliability and an ethical conduct in regard to customers without forgetting the implementation and recourse to the innovations in a company's field of activity. Not to be neglected is the ethics of the relations between a company and its customers, suppliers and partners. Respect and mutual trust are the main elements of a long-term cooperation between the three stakeholders. The interpreters who understand the importance of this organisational behaviour and abide by it in their relations with conference organisers will be able to count on a long-term cooperation, profitable for themselves, for those who have already benefitted from their interpreting services, and even for some of those who hear them interpret for the first time.

Education in the spirit of both individual and team *responsibility* – as interpreters only seldom work alone – are two other fundamental elements that could be taken up from the playbook of a successful company. Since our purpose was to analyse the possibilities of development available to an interpreting trainee or fresh graduate, a most useful endeavour would be to transpose the concept of business plan or model in the context of the training for this highly appealing but also highly demanding profession. In a company, the business plan describes its functioning at a given moment in time, in keeping with the products they offer and their customer base. Based on the assessment of a specific context, the business plan makes possible the best

decisions regarding the future development of the company, taking into account the opinions of the various teams of employees in regard to the planned activities. This highlights as well the weaknesses of the company at the fundamental levels of its activity: productivity and profitability, the capacity to achieve the stated objectives, communication within its various working teams, their cohesion and level of responsibility.

Published in the year 2012, the book *Business Model Generation* by Alex Osterwalder and Yves Pigneur presents the Canvas business model, adopted by many of the leading corporations in the world because, as the authors contend, it is “a shared language for describing, visualizing, assessing and changing business models”. (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2010, p. 18) This model is based on identifying a set of data regarding nine items that are fundamental for the development of a company: the product or service they offer; the potential customers; customer expectations to be met by the company; the qualities of the product or service likely to meet said customer expectations; the added value brought by the company; the product going to be delivered or the service provided; the expected expenditures; the best possible cost at which the product/service can be provided; profit guarantee. By adapting the above to the interpreting profession and the services provided by it and by objectively drawing up this business model, an interpreter could focus on the aspects that need improvement and set up a timetable for the achievement of the stated goals. Every week, month or semester, according to the number of improved items and to the efforts deemed necessary in order to achieve these objectives, the interpreter will then redo the business model in order to see to what extent s/he have been successful in achieving the stated goals and in abiding by the planned timetable. Naturally, from one assessment to the next, the focus can shift towards other items, but the important thing is that a skill acquired with considerable effort should not be lost over the course of the training programme. Thus, all the techniques related to active listening, to the concise and faithful rendering of the source message, the management of both voice and stress, as well as effective note-taking strategies required for consecutive interpreting must be maintained by way of constant practice, once the focus of the training programme shifts to simultaneous interpretation.

Taking into account the aforementioned aspects, we can say that the whole training process in conference interpreting must be based not only on the motivation to succeed, but also on the conviction that the efforts made will contribute to achieving the set objectives. The more passion the interpreting student puts into learning the various interpreting techniques, into strengthening the expressive communication of a message, regardless of the field to which it belongs or to which it relates, into enriching his or her general knowledge, the faster and more confident he or she will become the interpreter whose services will please any audience. Setting clear and measurable objectives and including them in his or her personal development plan will enable him or her to know when, where and how to take action to improve his or her interpreting performance.

In other words, just as a successful company is one that understands the fact that flexibility and adaptability to market requirements and changes are the key elements that could ensure its long and active presence on this market, a fully accomplished, successful interpreter is one who efficiently and effectively adopts the strategies of such a company in order to gain a maximum of competences in a profession that can be many things, but never boring.

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