



Stepping up the business

Fast facts

Company: Steps Drama Learning Development

Industry: Training

Target Market: India

UKTI Service: India Marketing Strategy Scholarship Programme, Trade Mission

www.stepsdrama.com



In March 2010, UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) organised the India Marketing Strategy Scholarship Programme. Since taking part, Steps has set up a new office in Mumbai from which it is serving international clients.

Steps Drama Learning Development (Steps) is a global leader in experiential drama-based learning solutions. The company creates innovative and award-winning programmes for multinational clients across the UK and overseas. Its specialist team of actor facilitators uses techniques such as role-play and interactive theatre to help its clients to deal with a range of individual and organisational development challenges, such as diversity in the workplace.

“Drama creates a safe environment in which people feel more open to express themselves,” says Robbie Swales, Co-Founder and Programme Leader at Steps. “By engaging with a character, they are more comfortable challenging unacceptable behaviour and finding ways to tackle socially delicate problems. Our bespoke programmes

cover common workplace issues that arise all over the world, such as sexual harassment, and more specific, cultural issues. In India, for example, we recently delivered a bespoke programme to tackle the delicate matter of how a woman’s relationship with her father might impact her performance at work.”

Investing in India

Over the years, working with UK multinationals has given Steps the opportunity to deliver its programmes around the world. A roll out of diversity training for Vodafone across 25 countries was the catalyst for the company to expand its business into India in a more formal way. In March 2010, it joined the India Marketing Strategy Scholarship Programme, a course run by UKTI to help UK SMEs to understand how to market themselves in India.

Following the Scholarship Programme, Steps went on to negotiate a contract with HSBC Bank India to deliver a Performance Management Training Programme for its senior managers. This was the first time the company

had dealt directly with a potential customer overseas, rather than the Head Office in the UK, and it was very well received. Recognising the potential of the Indian market, Steps cemented its commitment to the country by incorporating a legal entity locally, later that year. Steps Drama Learning Development Private Ltd is headed up by local human resources specialist and creative facilitator, Mohan Madgulkar, backed up by the Steps team in the UK.

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“Knowing that we have UKTI behind us has given us the confidence to push ourselves and take the steps necessary to build our export business,” says Robbie. “Since taking part in the India Marketing Strategy Scholarship Programme, I have been back to India 14 times to support Mohan, generate new business and deliver programmes to local clients. We have met every target that we set ourselves for 2012-2013.”

Ongoing support

Through its new hub in India, Steps is able to serve its multinational clients, new and existing, more effectively. For example, when a leading US investment bank commissioned a programme to be rolled out in several countries, the fact that the company was already up and running with 20 actors at its disposal in India gave it a head start. Indeed, the Steps India team delivered the programme in Singapore. More recently, Steps worked with UKTI’s counterpart, the China British Business Council to deliver a programme for a leading international University in Ningbo, China.

Meanwhile, Steps’ association with UKTI continues to go from strength to strength. Having kept in regular contact, Robbie was invited to join the Prime Minister’s Trade Mission to India in February 2013. During the visit, the delegates showcased their businesses to key people in local organisations and companies. It was a great success. Amongst others, Robbie met the Deputy Director of the Confederation of Indian Industry who introduced him to the National Skills Development Council,

with whom he is now in talks about working with young parliamentarians.

“The UKTI Trade Mission was a unique and invaluable opportunity for me to promote Steps,” says Robbie. “I was one of 106 British business people in the group, which included 20 CEOs of major British companies and five Vice-Chancellors of British Universities. You can’t beat this kind of exposure, and because we were all there with UKTI, they recognised our international capability and were happy to endorse me to their Indian colleagues. The Managing Partner of KPMG, for example, arranged a meeting for me with the local KPMG office. I also met representatives from UKTI Mumbai who were keen to offer their support and advised me about organisations that we should get in touch with to promote our Indian business. These are just some of the benefits of working with UKTI. Over the next few years we have ambitious plans for our business in India, and we will definitely continue to work in partnership with UKTI.”

The UK and India

India is the UK’s second largest export market in the developing world after China.

India’s economy is one of the fastest-growing in the world, with a rapidly expanding consumer class. The UK has strong ties with India, and UK companies are well positioned to take advantage of this growing export and investment market.

Liberalisation of the economy continues, with trade barriers largely removed, and the role of the private sector is gradually increasing, including in areas that have been dominated by the public sector in the past.

For further information about business opportunities in India, please go to www.ukti.gov.uk/india

Helping you to do business abroad

Doing business in another country can be a challenge, so it’s good to know that UK Trade & Investment is there to help you succeed.

Through a range of unique services, including participation at selected trade fairs, overseas missions and providing bespoke market intelligence, UK Trade & Investment can help you crack foreign markets and quickly get to grips with regulations and business practices overseas.

Through our Passport to Export programme we offer new and inexperienced exporters:

- free capability assessments
- support in visiting potential markets
- mentoring from a local export professional
- free action plans
- customised and subsidised training
- ongoing support once you’re up and running.

UKTI was delighted to support Steps Drama Learning Development in its investment overseas.



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