



August 2015

Berlitz Branch Newsletter

“Improving workers' lives at Berlitz since 1993”

- Abeno Tennoji - Ashiya - Hiroshima - Kariya - Kyoto Shijo - Kyoto Ekimae - Honmachi - Nagoya Ekimae - Nagoya Kanayama - Nagoya Sakae - Namba - Nishinomiya - Sannomiya - Senri Chuo - Okayama - Toyota - Umeda -

Ch-ch-ch-ch-changes...

What is a company's most important asset? Is it the cash in the bank account? -Nope, not even close! How about the building and/or location a company is located in? - Sorry, no dice! The president? - even that is nowhere near as important to a company's success when compared to its employees. Yup, the employees, especially the front-line employees, are truly a company's most important assets, since they are who the customers relate to day in and day out.

Think about the last time one of the company's bright employees was stolen by the competition, or left out of frustration. Was an investigation launched? Were the root causes identified? Were any measures implemented in order to prevent a recurrence? Or did the loss of yet another experienced Instructor set off no alarm bells? That seems to be the case for Berlitz more and more recently.

It appears that some language centers in the Berlitz family have a higher than average turnover. Could the company be losing valuable employees (and subsequently, profits) due to questionable MI,

management, or daily operational practices?

Many studies on retention agree on what influences employees to stay: meaningful work, a chance to grow and learn, a high quality work environment, and recognition and respect. With a company that tries to take away more benefits than it actually gives, allows questionable treatment by some staff, claws-back long-standing benefits, and permits an environment conducive to unfair treatment of employees, is it any wonder people aren't happy and are not willing to take it anymore? To put it bluntly, good instructors are leaving in droves recently and Berlitz is feeling the effects.

It's not just the front-line LC's that are having retention issues, however. The company is having severe and ongoing problems keeping Presidents. With the departure of the latest President mere months after taking office, and an average track record of less than 12 months for previous presidents, what's the cause of Berlitz having just lost its 15th??? (So hard to keep count) President in 11 years? Is it really that difficult to figure out, Berlitz?

What it comes down to is that changes are inevitable; some changes are for the better, and some are for the worse. As we brace ourselves for yet another executive change, and the changes caused by good teachers leaving in droves, we'd like to remind Berlitz that usually it's the positive changes that have the most impact for a company - especially the ones showing gratitude or respect for their employees. Isn't it about time Berlitz also welcomed those kinds of positive changes towards their employees? We do, sincerely hope, that the new President will take that into consideration, and think about the front-line elements as people, rather than just numbers on a spreadsheet.

If you'd like to be part of a group that actively tries to affect positive changes for the Berlitz workforce, and keep the negative changes in check, we'd love to hear from you. Think about joining the Union, where you can make an active difference. The Berlitz sister unions in East and West Japan have been fighting for Instructor's Rights since 1993 and are only getting stronger as membership grows.

<http://www.generalunion.org>

CTL Issue Revisited

If you're reading this, chances are you remember a little piece about the mysterious case of the disappearing CTLs, we featured just a few months ago. It seems this highly unethical practice has now spread beyond Aichi, and has unfortunately infected the rest of the Berlitz family. Recent instances are being spotted all over Kansai, and there are numerous reports of something similar happening in the Kanto Region as well. In one instance the MI even chose to add 'No Show' to a confirmed CTL in a move which has all the hallmarks of a smokescreen. More reports of confirmed CTL's being converted to "No Shows", and some creative scheduling are trickling in left, right, and centre. Is this a new ethical low even for Berlitz? Why are The people doing our schedules willing to forgo their humanity, integrity, and respect for a few thousand yen?

Due to the pervasive nature of these unethical practices, there will be a special section dedicated to these

Grievances

In the event Berlitz breaches its own set of Work Rules to the detriment of a union member, it is our right to file a complaint as a 'grievance' through the union to Berlitz. We do not generally publicise resolved grievances, but if a grievance remains unresolved for too long, then unfair practices will become public domain. Potential future examples are as follows:

- Unpaid bonus for a member on LOA.
- Breach of internal contract procedures.
- Harassment claims.

instances and "Black LCs" featured on the Union Website (shortened link) at: <http://goo.gl/75r8HS>. We need your support to collect information and help spot any creative scheduling instances in order to take the necessary steps should these instances continue.

With wide-spread availability of cell phones and other devices



Points to REMEMBER

We're still here

Maybe you haven't heard from us for some time, but remember, we're still here. Union members are still negotiating with the company over how you will be reimbursed for the five minutes before, between, and after lessons.

We beat the company's unilateral plan to give with one hand and take with the other.

It was union members and teachers who joined after the company's October announcement who forced the company to withdraw its proposals and enter into negotiations. If it wasn't for union members at Berlitz you would have "bought a pig in a poke".

Now, teach that expression to your students.

The union is here for all Berlitz employees but can negotiate only for members!

The union has brought a lot of benefits to Berlitz teachers in the past:

- Proper paid holidays for contract and PL teachers
- Pay for rest day work
- Unemployment, health, and pension insurance, etc...

This time we're not only negotiating "legal issues". This means that while we believe the company must pay for the five minutes before, between, and after classes, how they do it, will be negotiated between the union and the company, union members' priorities and ideas prevail. Want to be included in this? We welcome ANY Berlitz employee to join.

Joining the union is easy and it gives you a voice at the bargaining table

Dues for new members are ¥1,000 for the remainder of the first, and next month (for those who pay through automatic payment on PayPal, bank, post office) and are then based on your earnings (between ¥500 and ¥3000 per month). An easy online application and payment form can be found at the address below.

Feel to contact either branch chair Joe Mc Vay or Secretary-Treasurer Jools Collis.

mcvay@generalunion.org OR collis@generalunion.org

www.berlitzunion.generalunion.org

Meaning
An offering or deal that is foolishly accepted without being examined first.

Origin
"Don't buy a pig in a poke" might seem odd and archaic language. It's true that the phrase is very old, but actually it can be taken quite literally and remains good advice.

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