

**BUSINESS SECTOR: IT**  
**NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 4 PLUS 200 TRAINERS**  
**REGION: LONDON**

Since 1995 SIMON & SIMON International has delivered courses in more than 20 languages to thousands of professionals in companies throughout the UK and in numerous international locations.



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Simon Robinson  
 Managing Director  
 SIMON & SIMON International Ltd

**The challenge**

SIMON & SIMON describes itself as the UK’s number one provider of highly experienced language trainers. With its ever-growing database of freelance trainers, the company has successfully delivered in-house language courses across the UK and in 25 major international cities.

Managing Director Simon Robinson said: “Although we are well known in the language training industry, we decided to revisit our wider internet marketing strategy with a view to growing the business further.

“Unfortunately our previous website designer was no longer able to work on our

behalf, so we started to investigate the feasibility of employing an external web designer to update our website. However, we soon realised that the costs involved were prohibitive, even for making relatively minor amendments.

“We looked at the alternatives and realised we had the potential to update the website ourselves, so we decided to invest the money in training instead. I knew that my Account Director, Sonsoles Gonzalez, was IT literate and felt sure that the web training would give her an excellent opportunity to expand her creative, marketing and technical skills in a new direction.”

**The solution**

A Train to Gain skills broker visited Simon to help analyse the company’s training needs. She quickly identified the perfect course: Macromedia DreamWeaver 4 Introduction.

Simon said: “Things moved very quickly: within a couple of weeks, Sonsoles had embarked on her course at a training centre in Paddington. She was very impressed with the training environment, the effectiveness of the training materials and the support she received from the tutors.

“She really appreciated the flexibility involved. Having to attend classes on fixed times and days each week would have proved problematic from a business point of view, so she was delighted to be able to undertake training on her own terms and at an appropriate pace. That was important to me too, because I knew Sonsoles was having to juggle her responsibilities at SIMON & SIMON as well as meeting her learning requirements.”

**FURTHER INFORMATION:**

Visit: [www.traintogain.gov.uk](http://www.traintogain.gov.uk)  
 or call: 0800 634 0262

### The results

Having completed her Dreamweaver course towards the end of 2006, Sonsoles can now make changes to the SIMON & SIMON website as and when required.

"Going through the Train to Gain programme has been a very good experience for our company," said Simon. "The business benefits are undeniable: rather than employing the very costly services of an external web designer, we're now able to do most of this work ourselves.

"But the advantages go way beyond this. The course has contributed greatly to the personal and professional development of a key member of staff. Since learning new skills, Sonsoles realises that she is fully capable of doing something which previously she regarded as beyond her competence. And her colleagues now know that training is available to them too, if and when they need it."

Armed with new skills, Sonsoles is now fired up to do even more. She has fully engaged in the company's journey to upgrade the look and design of its website, which is an increasingly important part of its 'marketing mix'. And the training is already starting to bear fruit: by combining the website work and an extensive Google advertising campaign, the company has generated multiple leads and opened up many new business opportunities.

Simon concluded: "For any company director who is looking to develop and retain staff, I'd thoroughly recommend taking advantage of the subsidies available through Train to Gain."

### WHAT DOES TRAIN TO GAIN OFFER EMPLOYERS?

These days, making sure your business is more productive and competitive is a real challenge. Train to Gain can help you get the right skills to do the best job. It's a service that does three things:

- It provides a free and independent look at what skills your business needs – now and in the future. An unbiased skills broker who knows your region and industry works with you to find out what training could make a real difference to your business.
- It helps you pick the right people to do the training. Once you and the skills broker find out what your business needs are, they then work with you to find the right training provider. It's important that the training is done in a way that meets your business's needs.
- It helps you get the most from your training investment. The skills broker can also help find out the best ways to pay for the training, since they know what financial support might be available to you.

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