

Begunto September Newsletter 2014



Dear Max

Recently I have been getting emails from my managers (not only sent to me) about work issues. It used to be one short email from time to time, but things have escalated ...

For the past three weeks I have been getting longer and longer emails with important job details. Sounds to me that rather than giving an office and talking about the new matters arising they have decided to email them!

Work-email in free time is not something I appreciate, what can I do?
Telephonically Challenged.

Dear Telephone,

I hope you have been keeping all these emails. You can assemble them to ask for remuneration for work. (Record how much time each letter takes to read and what time the requested action requires of you.)

Then send in an email asking for compensation in methods. If your MI complains about your asking for payment, you could ask your MI not to send you such long emails from now on.



Dear Max,

The kids teachers in here get 1 method for every 8 kids lessons taught, not 4.

Is it supposed to be this way for us down here?

Thanks

Concerned Koala

Dear Koala,

The old memo we use as reference is the June 19, 2001 memo signed by Mr. Iwai. The most important part of this is the following “...the precise number of units assigned must reflect actual time required and spent, as agreed to between the instructor and the LC management.”

So if it takes five minutes to prepare, bill them five minutes and that should work to 8 kids' lessons to a prep. If it takes you ten minutes for lesson then bill them the ten minutes for that prep time. Some prep will take more time, some will take less.

Another point in the memo states “it is the job of the LC management to make sure that LC employees are properly paid for their work, and that a quality product is being delivered to the LC's customers.”

If you aren't paid for preparing for work, do you really have to do it? That is the quality of product issue. Keep a record of your work and go to the local LSO (Labor Standards Office) your office is registered at.

Three Second Rule

Anyone riding on trains recently might have noticed Berlitz's increased advertising.



Two phrases that seem to have popped up are “It's easier than you think” and “the 3 Second Rule.”

What exactly is the 3 Second Rule? Other competing companies have used the 3 second rule in their pedagogy and now it has popped up in Berlitz advertising. Quite simply it is the permitted time a student has between hearing the question and responding- and it is used in Berlitz - for Berlitz Business Communication School.

It hasn't been applied to the regular LCs but the advertising seems to imply this.

If you wander the LC hallways, you might see some Japanese advertising posters strategically placed reinforcing the message to students, but have we, employees, been made aware of what Berlitz is advertising and what students might be expecting of us as instructors?

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President Masumoto's message: "One Team, One Goal"

If you haven't had time to see the message, take a look at your memo board at your local LC.

August is a landmark month for change. Though not going into specifics, the President has mentioned that the company has "a lack of out-of-the-box thinking caused by ongoing cost cutting measures and suppressed investment since 2008."

His memo goes on to mention understanding the market and customers, but might we also suggest he understand the teaching staff who offer the product?

In 2010 Berlitz cut wage level increases in half. Maybe returning the pay scale to pre 2010 qualifies for thinking enough out of the box? Let's see.

As far as we know "the Project" will have six main areas of focus and twenty distinct themes.

Integrity of Information Clarification sent in to MGT

Begunto submitted a demand that Berlitz inform us if any employee information was leaked in the Benesse incident.

Benesse is the parent company of Berlitz. How much of Berlitz's data is linked into Benesse? We as employees have no idea.

Teachers have asked the union to address the issue with the company. The union submitted a demand and we await a response.

Salient points of the Summer Union Assembly on August 24, 2014

1). The shop stewards voted to allow the executive to hold jimmu sessho (loosely translated as non-binding talks) about work on the break and the 40 minute lesson. The conditions to have jimmu sessho are that MGT expand the as yet unsigned Labor Management Agreement of 2012 regarding Financial Disclosure to include 2 Begunto execs and 1 Nambu appointed

representative. (Our parent union, Nambu has stated that having 2 executives privy to the financial status of the company is better than only one, according to President Hiraga of Nambu.)

2). Teachers who are PTG 20, MG 20, MG 40 (Instructor), MG 35/40, MG 30 and Full Time Instructors (offered till 1996) have contracts which have a defined work time. Your scheduler or manager cannot randomly move your schedule unless you agree to it and you have the right to refuse. Under Japanese law contracts must have a set/fixed time. The choice is yours, not your MI/scheduler's. 2 schools were mentioned specifically for floating schedules.

3). There was also a demand sent in by the union regarding preselection of teachers. Some office staff have been preselecting teachers who they think are best for a student when they enroll or do counseling but the teachers selected are not given credit in their IPE. Teachers as a rule do not have access to a computer at work so there is no way they have access to information about who has requested them or how many requests they have unless staff informs them. Teachers should be informed.

4). More members are joining.

5). Discussion of inclusion of LCs outside Kanto into Begunto.

6). Michelle English concludes wrongful dismissal case against Berlitz through court mediation.

7). Teachers on the old 35/40 contract are not seeing their salaries remain stable. There is a year on year decrease as per lessons are shifted away from their extra availability schedules to other teachers.

You can contact us through our email at begunto1@yahoo.com

You can visit our website at berlitzuniontokyo.org