

ActivTrades CEO Talks about Languages and the Impact of Brexit

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Dan Magen | [Brokers \(Retail FX\)](#) | Monday, 27/02/2017 | 16:12 GMT



Photo: Alex Pusco, CEO of ActivTrades

Alex Pusco has long regarded multiple language support as a virtue in business. He manages ActivTrades, a company that could reap the benefits of such a strategy. With 14 spoken languages in its London office, the FX, CFDs, commodities and indices broker is ahead of the curve. Finance Magnates sat down with Mr. Pusco to hear about the state of the brokerage and of the industry.

Please tell us about yourself and how you reached your current role

I am the CEO of online broker ActivTrades, which has been in operation for 15 years. As CEO, I am responsible for the direction and growth of the company and I have a fantastic team at ActivTrades. Between 1990 and 2001, I worked as an agent, networking to attract new clients. But I had always dreamed of expanding operations. ActivTrades was born in 2001 when I built a website in four languages to enable European clients to trade with US brokers. The improvement of the Internet across the continent made this possible. I started with CHF100,000 of capital and today we have an annual turnover of nearly £35 million and generate a monthly volume of \$80 billion.

My core role is to always ask and challenge:

“How can we, as a team, make this company better than it already is?”

What are your main duties and what challenges are you facing?

My main duties are to steer the business into growth, making sure I lead from the front in carrying the values we hold dear at ActivTrades – transparency, education and exemplary customer services. My core role is to always ask and challenge: “How can we, as a team, make this company better than it already is?” One part of that is of course our technology, our customer services and of course, which new markets we enter into geographically. For example, we have just opened a new office

in Dubai to meet demand that has risen in the Middle East over the past four years.

As a UK regulated broker, how does the Brexit affect your day to day routine?

At present, it doesn't. But of course, in the future it may present us with challenges in recruiting multi-lingual staff, which are so important to our business.



ActivTrades – Company profile

- Year of establishment - **2001**
- Office locations – **London, Milan, Sofia, Dubai**
- Number of employees – **200 +**
- Products/services – **Spread betting, forex, CFDs, commodities, indices, prepaid card**

Source: ActivTrades

Has the Brexit made people more aware of London's status as a global financial capital?

London's reputation has always been known. Did it need reinforcing? I am not so sure. But it has certainly helped raise the profile of other cities which are said to be challengers. London is respected globally, and rightly so. We moved ActivTrades to London – our first offices were in the Square Mile – in 2004 for that very reason.

Have people learned more about the financial industry since the referendum?

ActivTrades has actually completed research in relation to this and the answer seems to be 'yes'. We are very interested in the education of customers – and non-customers for that matter – in relation to the financial markets and economics in general.

Research we conducted with YouGov showed that more than a third of people have an increased knowledge and interest in the economy since the Brexit vote, while those aged 18 to 24 now discuss it more than any other age group. It also showed that 32 per cent talk about domestic and international financial news more now than before the vote to leave the EU.

When we broke the analysis down, it showed of those who voted to remain in the EU, 37% stated that they now talk about economic issues more, compared to 28% of those who voted Leave. What I did realize about the referendum in Britain is that it made politics and economics a far more acceptable dinner party discussion as it appeared that people were more open about talking about whether they voted Leave or Remain than they would talking about which political party they voted for in the general election. The debate was far more open.

Why are languages important to businesses post-Brexit?

Multilingual businesses are proven to benefit from richer interactions between partners, employees, suppliers and customers as well as increased sales and Return on Investment (ROI). It also offers a significant leg up on the competition by enabling a wider customer and client base. We have always welcomed multi-lingual employees – there are 14 languages spoken here.

Our business is focused on customer service and education of our clients, the rich language pool has enabled us to move easily into new territories, gain invaluable local knowledge, and allows us to provide round-the-clock customer help.

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Communication for companies in the UK with potential trading partners will be more important than ever and speaking the local language, no matter what trade agreements are in place or have been removed, will help give companies a competitive advantage over those who do not.

What do you think sets you apart from the competition?

As I have mentioned before, customer service is paramount. The company is built on it. I believe that all customers should get first rate attention. We answer all calls immediately and emails within 15 minutes. Our customer services teams are well trained and not only know how to communicate, will also have

the knowledge to be able to help there and then. Our sales team are skilled operators who provide value.

We have invested greatly in developing skills – it does not come cheap, but it is worth every cent. Also, ActivTrades is always seeking to innovate and improve its systems. Recently we launched our App and made our website even more responsive. Education is also very important to us and I believe the seminars we run, help we provide and engagement with clients and the media is a key part of what we do.

What are your goals for the company over the next few years?

To keep growing and improving. That is always our main goal and the blueprint for the future follows.