

Press release

Nieuwegein, 6th June 2007

New brochure on reading and writing difficulties for Small and medium-sized Businesses

Today, Stichting Lezen & Schrijven introduces its new publication *Taalkracht voor bedrijven, een speciale uitgave voor het MKB* (Language strength for companies, special edition SMB's). The handy brochure gives entrepreneurs practical tips and tricks on how they can recognise reading and writing problems within their own company and how they can make the problem discussable. 6 percent of the professional population in the Netherlands is low literate, that is 1 out of 15 employees. In SMB's, 4.2 million people are professionally active. The special SMB's edition is handed out today at the *Congres het Nieuwe Ondernemen* (Congress New Entrepreneurship), an event of *Maatschappelijk Verantwoord Ondernemen* (Socially Responsible Entrepreneurship) in Nieuwegein.

As chairwoman of Stichting Lezen & Schrijven, H.R.H. Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands this afternoon emphasised the important role of the SMB's while tackling low literacy. Investing in low literacy and training staff contribute to the productivity, flexibility and involvement of the employee. Constantly evolving technological changes require a constant adaptation of employees, a proper command of reading and writing skills is essential in this context.

The brochure *Taalkracht voor bedrijven, een speciale uitgave voor het MKB* gives the entrepreneur practical tools to work with. Margreet de Vries, director Stichting Lezen & Schrijven: "Companies can always do something (together) to tackle low literacy. It is not only about training own staff, but also about making (customer) information, such as the website, accessible. Companies can also offer support in their local surrounding by for instance having employees assist with reading lessons in primary schools." The publication has been created in collaboration with SMB's organisations in the Netherlands. They will bring low literacy and the publishing of the brochure to the attention of their members.

Stichting Lezen & Schrijven was founded in May 2004 by H.R.H. Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands. The foundation is committed to prevent and reduce low literacy and to embed tackling this issue within society. Previously in the *Taalkracht* series: *Taalkr8!* (for vocational colleges), *Taalkracht voor bedrijven* (Language strength for companies) and *Taalkracht voor consultatiebureaus* (Language strength for child health centres) and *Taalkracht voor ROC's* (Language strength for regional training centres).

Note for the editors, not for publication:

In case of questions, please address Stichting Lezen & Schrijven, Margreet de Vries [REDACTED]

General information about Stichting Lezen & Schrijven can be found at www.lezenenschrijven.nl. You can download the brochure from the website.

For more information about Taalkracht voor Bedrijven: www.taalkrachtvoorbedrijven.nl

Stichting Lezen & Schrijven is an initiative of H. R. H. Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands. The Princess is also chairwoman. The foundation took off in May 2004. It wants to ensure that tackling low literacy is embedded in society.

Stichting Lezen & Schrijven has three main tasks:

1. Creating a market place where companies, authorities, unions and other social institutions meet one another to learn from each other's experiences.
 2. Rupturing the taboo and making the subject discussable by means of numerous and well-directed communication activities.
 3. Setting up exemplary projects in companies, training institutions and social organisations to help prevent and reduce low literacy in a joint effort.
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