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Press Releases - 2005 Dec 29

## BETTER BANGALORE THAN BIRMINGHAM

- An overseas accent is better for success in business than any regional English accent as survey finds prejudice against strong regional accents in business

When it comes to doing business, the majority of British bosses regard someone with an overseas accent, including American, Continental European and Indian or Asian, as more likely to succeed than someone with an accent from the English regions. Businessmen with Indian or Asian accents are also considered by their peers to be more hardworking and reliable than any of their colleagues from the UK or overseas.

The survey, carried out by the UK's leading executive communications consultancy **The Aziz Corporation**, reveals a strong prejudice against regional accents, with 79 per cent of business men and women believing that a strong regional accent is a disadvantage in business. Business people with a Home Counties accent are considered to be generally successful by 77 per cent of those in business, followed by those with an American accent (73 per cent), a Scottish accent (63 per cent), a Continental European accent (52 per cent) or an Indian or Asian accent (25 per cent). By contrast 64 per cent of business people regard those with a Liverpudlian tone as being generally unsuccessful, closely followed by those with a Birmingham or West Midlands accent (63 per cent), a cockney accent (52 per cent) and Geordie or West Country accents (48 per cent).

Businessmen who speak with an Indian or Asian accent are considered to be hardworking and reliable by 69 per cent of their peers, a higher rating than those with any other accent. Those with accents from America are considered to be diligent by 66 per cent of their peers, followed by those with a Scottish accent (61 per cent) and a Home Counties accent (50 per cent). By contrast, only 24 per cent of executives consider those with a Liverpudlian accent to be hardworking, with just 29 per cent viewing those with either a Welsh or West Country accent to be hardworking.

Professor **Khalid Aziz**, Chairman of The Aziz Corporation, commented: "Although it may not be politically correct to believe that accents matter nowadays, it is very apparent from our research that popular prejudices still exist. If you want to get ahead in business and don't speak the Queen's English, it is better to sound as if you are from America, Europe, India or indeed Scotland than from any English region. "

"Accents can speak louder than words. Even if you think like Albert Einstein, the reality is that if you sound like Vera Duckworth you will face prejudices in the business world."

The research also found that businessmen with certain accents face particularly strong prejudices. 27 per cent believe those with a Liverpudlian accent to be generally dishonest and untrustworthy, while 25 per cent think the same of those with a cockney accent. By contrast those with a Scottish accent are highly regarded, with 63 per cent viewing them as successful, 61 per cent as hardworking and reliable and 63 per cent as honest and trustworthy.

**Khalid Aziz** added:

"In the light of these results we would advise individuals to consider softening rather than changing broad accents. Experience shows that the key is to avoid using localised vocabulary,

which others may not recognise. Sloppy speech can also be a major obstacle to making yourself understood and people of all accents can be guilty of this.”

- Ends -

Professor **Khalid Aziz** of The Aziz Corporation is available for interview on this story. If you would be interested in speaking with Khalid then please visit our Contact us page.

Notes to Editors

### **The Aziz Corporation**

The Aziz Corporation is the UK's leading independent executive communications consultancy. Its mission is to add value to businesses by ensuring their people are effective communicators. Consultancy services offered by the Aziz Corporation include presentation skills, media training, crisis management, image consultancy and voice development.

About the survey

This survey was completed by 200 senior managers and directors of major companies based across the United Kingdom.