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CCES has moved its international training capacity to Kuwait where it has concluded a licensing deal with a local Saudi/Kuwaiti company. CCES has licensed the local company to use its vocational training materials while CCES ensures quality control from Canberra. The business started in highly unusual way: The Kuwait-based company made a cold contact through the CCES website.

David Widdowson discovered that five minutes' face-to-face is worth a thousand emails.

"After the local company contacted us we spent about two and half years exchanging emails along with the occasional phone call.

"At times we thought they'd lost interest, but suddenly it got very serious. I flew over and once we met face-to-face all the issues that had been a problem were resolved very quickly.

"It was clear once we sat down that there had been areas in our email exchanges where we had a difference of understanding.

"It also showed that just because they don't respond to emails it doesn't mean they're not interested.

"Once the agreement was struck, I've never seen anything move so fast. Government approvals were given quickly.

"You hear about it before you go, but it is *who* you know that it crucial. They have the connections and can make it happen.

"There are often gaps in the understanding of what we are trying to achieve, so it is important to monitor that.

“I can’t place enough emphasis on the need to understand the culture.

“There was a great deal of trust, even from our first meetings. In the initial stages everything was done on a handshake.

“In terms of follow-up, I have invited our clients to come out to Australia and we have someone from Australia who will visit half a dozen times a year. We’ve appointed a local from Jordan to be there for us full-time. I am planning to make around three trips a year to maintain the relationship.”