



Opportunities for Bilingual Employees

Can you speak Mandarin Chinese? If so, you're one of the few Americans who can, but there is a desperate need for those who speak this beautiful language. And if you can write it too, you've just hit the jackpot in terms of **bilingual job opportunities**. The problem of not enough bilingual people isn't reserved for America, however.

In fact, Wales reports significant gaps between supply and demand, and a recent study at the University of Florida indicates the need for English and Spanish speakers who are willing to travel and can, in essence, write their own paychecks. The County of Los Angeles in California pays a \$5,000 bonus to teachers who are bilingual. The demand in **bilingual government jobs** is quickly rising as well, just as **bilingual human resources jobs** are on every career board one can find. **Bilingual recruitment** efforts aren't yielding much either. Another indication of not enough bilingual people available for employment positions is the fact that Canadians who speak only one language, known as monolinguals, are far less likely to become and remain employed simply because of the fast rising need for those who are bi- or multilingual. That's an incredible statement, but unfortunately, it's all too true. More stories such as these continue to increase in number as more and more employers expand their businesses to the global level but fall short in securing personnel who can break the necessary language barriers.

Other statistics include:

- Bilinguals are said to have higher IQs as well as greater mental flexibility and abstract thinking skills.
- Bilingual children adapt to events in their lives faster than those who were only exposed to and taught one language as children.
- Other advantages of kids who are bilingual include improved cognitive abilities; they perform better in both science and math and have increased learning capacities.
- Those who are bilingual and/or multilingual are found to be more tolerant of societies and cultures.

So what's the answer to this growing need? Actually, any of us can play a role in the solution simply by becoming bilingual. The **bilingual career opportunities** are incredible and, after a bit of consideration, one begins to wonder why so few are willing to expand their own horizons to fill a need

in this lucrative industry. How many job opportunities allow us to broaden our own abilities, learn beautiful languages, and travel extensively and have the potential to put us in great demand? Some of the greatest opportunities exist for those who speak, read, and/or write Portuguese, Spanish, French, Italian, Arabic, and Chinese. These needs can be further broken down by specifics, including the Mandarin Chinese need mentioned above. A trained linguist stands to earn a salary that rivals some of this country's highest-paid CEOs. Clearly, this is one field that is highly valued and offers correspondingly high salaries.

On a related note, there appears to be an alarming trend in states that have a high number of students whose native languages aren't English, but who are adept enough to participate in classes as they continue to learn the English language. Teachers are insisting their students speak English only and refuse to accommodate those who may be struggling. It's important to note that incidents such as these are happening on the kindergarten level, when children are just beginning to properly enunciate their words anyway. There've been reports of negative attitudes towards these children and, in some cases, teachers have resorted to humiliation in front of classmates. Studies show not only that a teacher's positive reinforcements can only lead to better learning environments, but also that those teachers who embrace these differences, especially at these young ages, tend to propel students further and in a shorter amount of time simply by acknowledging and even embracing their differences. These children are sometimes already hesitant to "prove" their differences by speaking, but to have a teacher ridicule these children is unacceptable. And when you consider a state like California, where 85 percent of the teachers work on a daily basis with children from non-English speaking homes, you begin to recognize the enormity of the problem. In fact, a survey was taken in California where the majority of California educators in the public school systems were invited to participate. Only 24 percent chose to participate, and it was determined that language barriers simply weren't considered a priority for



Bilingual Job Feature

many who chose not to participate. Only 10 teachers agreed to be interviewed in depth. Had there been a more complete group of volunteers, the numbers could have more accurately depicted trends related to students who don't speak English as a first language. Unfortunately, the study was abandoned due to lack of participation.

Even as employers are begging for qualified bilingual employees, the fact remains that at the elementary school level attitudes exist that insult the global community in its efforts to close the gaps that have nothing to do with the mountains and seas that separate countries.

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