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### **A Valuation: Bilingual Businesses- The use and benefit of speaking English and Spanish in a competitive work environment (Panamanian vs. American outlook)**

In the competitive- nature of the business world there has been a gradual focus on making corporations not only successful in the United States, an American corporation's home country, but also advancing and increasing corporate outreach to countries around the world. With this in mind, it is impossible to be a successful multi-national corporation in various countries without speaking various languages.

It is apparent that in Panama, business men and women know Spanish and English fluently. Knowing the Spanish and English language in Panama is pertinent to business success. On the other hand, in America businessmen and businesswomen easily can be successful without knowing two languages, specifically Spanish and English.

This paper will evaluate what the pros and cons are to knowing two languages in the marketplace and delve into America's globalization of business and the evolving need to know two languages in business.

According to Merriam- Webster Dictionary, the word bilingual as being able to use two languages especially with equal fluency. (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bilingual>).

A multinational corporation is defined as a corporation that has its facilities and other assets in at least one country other than its home country. Such companies have officers and/or factories in different countries and usually have a centralized head office where they coordinate global management. Very large multinationals have budgets that exceed those of many small countries. (<http://www.investopedia.com/terms/m/multinationalcorporation.asp>)

With the globalization of business and populations growing exponentially, the need for transactional knowledge of languages has become very important in both private and government sectors. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the employment of translators and interpreters in the United States is expected to increase by twenty two percent between 2008 and 2018. (<http://www.ibtimes.com/foreign-language-skills-provide-sharp-edge-job-market-258085#>).

The broadening desire for corporate expansion relies on the ability to communicate with others. The increasing focus on human resources departments seeking out individuals who speak more than one language helps close the gap in America and facilitates the opportunity for global expansion and collaboration with other companies outside of the United States.

The desire for corporations to operate globally has significantly increased the need for translators and businessmen and women who can speak a language other than English. America recognizes a need for translators and individuals who can speak multiple languages because the ability to speak more than one language enhances America's opportunity to operate globally. For this reason, the number of jobs available to individuals who can speak multiple languages has multiplied.

The same applies for businesses in Panama. Most individuals who have attended college in Panama have the ability to speak English and Spanish. Panama has a high amount of jobs available to the individuals who can speak English and Spanish because these individuals play a

big role in helping Panama stay in touch with their subsidiaries and brother- sister corporations in the United States.

Nestle operates in the United States with twenty five manufacturing facilities, 35 distribution centers, and 15 sales offices across the country. Nestle realized \$10.1 billion in sales in 2012. Nestle has more than 25,000 employees in the United States.

The Vice President and Chief Procurement Officer of Nestle in North America has said in an interview that “We [Nestle] are committed to the development of meaningful and mutually beneficial business relationships with diverse suppliers and recognize the value that these relationships add to our company”. <http://www.nestleusa.com/About-Us/Suppliers.aspx>

Nestle in the United States has a strong commitment to diversity. Nestle emphasizes diversity in its operations because Nestle has always been a globally operating company. Nestle formed from a merger in 1905 between Nestle and the Anglo-Swiss Milk Company. As a result, the company operated factories in the United States, England, Germany, and Spain. At the beginning of the century milk exports were its largest source for sales.

The official language is Spanish. Because of the extensive U.S. influence, most Panamanians are bilingual in Spanish and English. The majority of the people (85 percent) are Roman Catholic, although Panama has no official religion. There are also small numbers of Protestants, Muslims, Hindus, and others. <http://www.cyborlink.com/besite/panama.htm>

In panama, when operating in business, conservative business suits are appropriate for men. Panamanian businessmen in higher positions wear suits; others wear camisillas. Women when in the office should wear a dress or skirt and blouse. Women should avoid wearing any kind of revealing clothing.

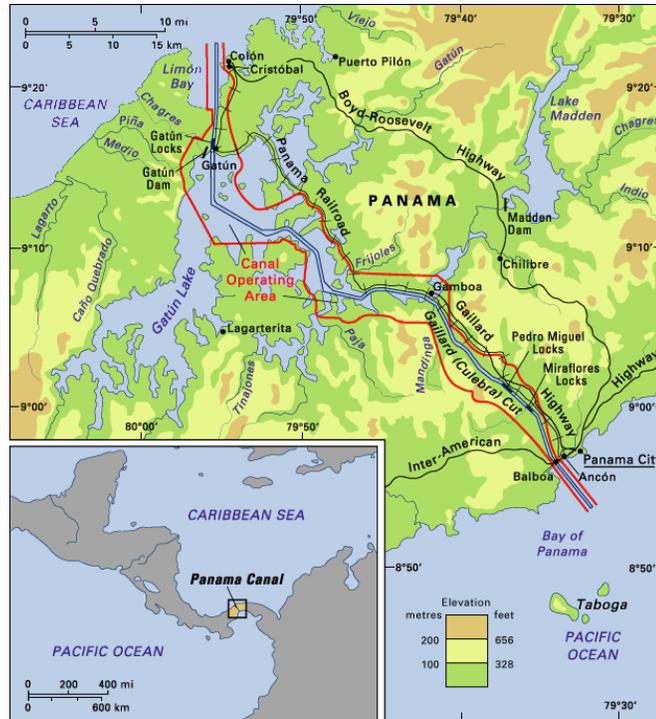
Panamanian norms include that Panamanian women are now being promoted into managerial jobs yet women in managerial positions is relatively rare because this is a new norm in the country.

<http://www.cyborlink.com/besite/panama.htm>

The official language of Panama is Spanish spoken by almost all of the population. Many of the people are also fluent in English; in fact almost 88% of all the population has this ability. This makes it almost impossible to be a successful business in Panama if you don't have this ability.

Along with the establishment of a business in this country, establishing housing that is convenient to commute to work will be a necessity. This is one of the fantastic items that Panama offers because of the positive elements of owning real estate. Most foreigners who come to Panama are completely surprised by what they find. It's not a Third World Country, it's not dangerous and it is not inefficient.

The infrastructure, diversity, and sophistication of the country easily surpass its Central American neighbors and should be considered as a great investment for life. The country has world-class restaurants, five-star hotels, international banks, hundreds of multinational businesses, and every imaginable luxury at about half the price in the United States and Europe. Whether you want a beautiful property in the mountains, a luxury apartment or home on the beach it is available and affordable. Most of the property you will find for sale in Panama will be much more affordable than what you are accustomed to in the States.



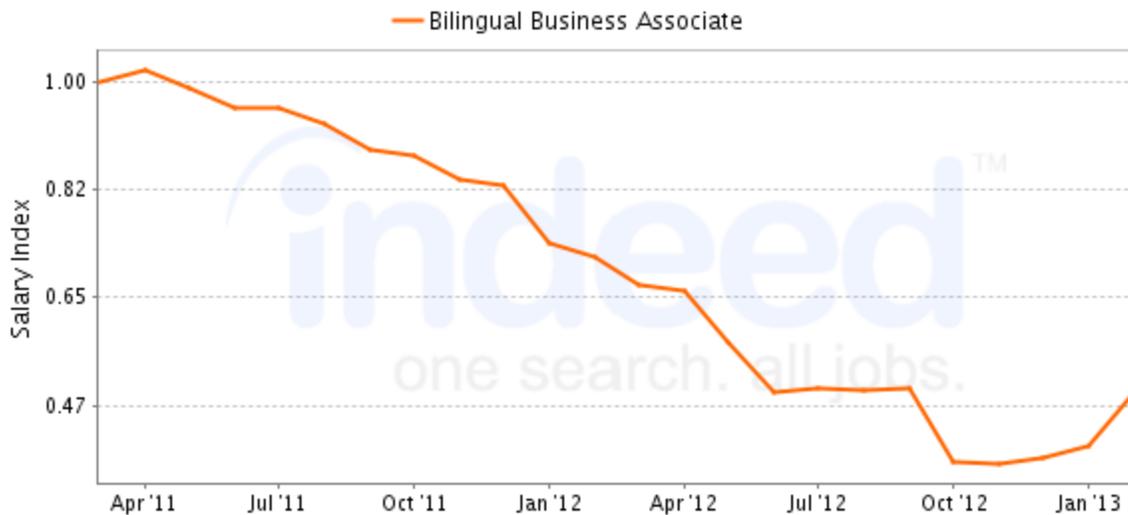
Panama is considered first class at third world cost. Nevertheless, the country's economy is still developing, and prices are relatively inexpensive across the board. In other words, you will be able to find stunning properties for sale in Panama that you may not be able to afford elsewhere. It is similarly important to point out that acquiring property in Panama is relatively simple. Foreigners in Panama enjoy the same property ownership rights Panamanian citizens. So when you find that exquisite beach lot for sale and are ready to pursue your lifestyle dream, you won't have to jump through hoops to make your dream a reality.

The following is a guide when purchasing land:

1. Confirm the Title,
2. Promise to Buy,
3. Transfer the Title,
4. Transfer Funds,
5. Record your Purchase at the Public Registry.

The average bilingual business associate salaries for job postings in Hattiesburg, MS are 10% lower than average Bilingual Business Associate salaries for job postings nationwide.

### National Salary Trend from Indeed.com



Source:

<http://www.indeed.com/salary?q1=Bilingual+Business+Associate&l=hattiesburg%2C+ms>

Nestle Company's business strategy focuses on innovation and renovation while maintaining a balance in geographic activities and product lines. Nestle operates in a manner that makes sure that long term potential is never sacrificed for short term performance.

Nestle makes several products sold nationwide which consist of lean cuisine, nesquik, maggi, nido, butterfinger, digiorno pizza, stouffer's frozen dinners, and pure life nestle water.

Nestle has expanded internationally. Nestle Specifically focuses on Hispanic markets by developing a website called [www.elmejornido.com](http://www.elmejornido.com). On elmejornido.com there are recipes for several Mexican dishes that include nestle products as ingredients. The images used on the website are a great marketing technique because it encourages consumers to purchase nestle products when making quality foods for their family.

American's have implemented their own similar website called nestlekitchens.com. Nestlekitchens.com has the latest kitchen tips and recipes to inspire consumers to cook using Nestle products.

Abuelita is a Nestle product that is very popular in Hispanic kitchens, it is an essential item in all Hispanic kitchens. Abuelita is a chocolate mix that is used in recipes and in hot chocolate.

In the United states there are more than 25,000 employees nationwide. In the united states there are 25 manufacturing facilities, 35 distribution centers, and 15 sales offices across the country. Nestle affiliates across North America include: Purina Pet Care.

<http://www.nestleusa.com/About-Us/Key-Figures.aspx>

Data Collection:

The importance of being bilingual in business will be evaluated by searching through the internet and by conducting personal interviews with associates in Panama.

The search engine that I will use is google chrome, and I will search key words such as "bilingual business", "corporate bilingual", "multinational bilingual", , "expansion bilingual", and "diversity bilingual".

Database's Name	URL	Information


Keywords
Bilingual
Bilingual Business
Corporate Bilingual
Bilingual ability in business
Business norms in Panama

In my interview, I focused on learning whether being bilingual in Panama is a cultural norm, or is being bilingual a talent to strive for in Panama.



I had my interview with Joe Zarate, Supervisor.

**Joyce:** Joe, it is a pleasure meeting with you. I was hoping to ask you a few questions about the benefits of being bilingual while doing business in Panama. Can you tell me a specific story about a time when you had to problem solve during a situation where you had to use your linguistic skills to facilitate your solution?

**Joe:** Great seeing you Joyce, you look beautiful today. I will be glad to answer a few questions for you. One day I had a co-worker in our sales department with an issue that escalated enough that I had received a phone call from this individual asking for help. It had turned out that a sales purchase order was not properly satisfied. An individual had mistaken the type items to ship our client because they could not read English. This shipment was going to a client in America. My linguistic skills came into play because I had to be aware of what are the business norms in America. What will this client expect as compensation from me for the issue? Will the client be upset? What particular words should I use so that this client is not offended by any means.

**Joyce:** Wow, that is fantastic. Are most of the people you hire bilingual?

**Joe:** Yes, most of the people we hire to work here are Bilingual. The native language here is Spanish, but most individuals grow up speaking both languages.

**Joyce:** Do you think Americans will ever get to a point where being bilingual is the norm?

**Joe:** Americans pride themselves in the English language. I don't think it will ever get to a point where Americans feel forced to learn another language in order to be successful in life.

**Joyce:** Do you enjoy working with people in America who are bilingual better than working with business partners in America who are not bilingual?

**Joe:** I'd much rather speak with a business partner who is bilingual. Although, I am never given a choice. To me, someone who takes the effort to learn the Spanish language in order to understand my business and cultural norms gets more respect from me.



### #3. Case Study-

The Greater Houston Partnership Chamber is a dynamic and diverse organization that leads the promotion of business, economic development and support of the metropolitan and surrounding area of Harris County in Texas. This is comparable to The American Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Panama (AMCHAM), whose mission is to be the chief advocate, educator and business catalyst for commerce between Panama and the Americas. The purpose is to promote and advance free enterprise and trade agreements and information on doing business in Panama, from market entry strategies to expert advice on taking all advantages created by the US-Panama Free Trade Agreement.

Despite the different locations (United States/ Panama) both of these organizations are very similar in their core principles:

To promote commerce, trade and investments.

Market businesses and the community.

Maintain a coordinated Economic Development Strategy.

To promote high standards of ethics in business relations.

Enhance communication and networking.

Encourage high standards of ethics.

Because of their key geographic locations both chambers are conducive to trade and the prosperity of the region. Both groups are involved in the shipping of goods worldwide and are industrial leaders. The Houston Ship Channel is similar to the Panama Canal and they serve the same type of service. Both are heavily weighted towards banking, commerce, tourism and trading. While many parts of the world have suffered economically these two areas have seen economic growth and expansion.

Due to the proximity to Mexico and South America it is natural that many of the employees of these two areas are bilingual with the ability to speak both English and Spanish. Success and promotions are often based on this important ability.



#4

I have determined that the similarities and differences between the two organizations (Greater Houston Partnership Chamber and The American Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Panama) are almost identical. Both regions are successful and heavily impacted by their proximity to waterways that allow for shipping and trade. They are world leaders in business and economic growth. Any chart done regarding the chambers would be identical.

The following is a chart reflecting the two water ways. It is astonishing how these are so similar.

CRITERIA	Panama Canal	Houston Ship Channel
Year Built	1914	1914
Distance	51 miles	50 miles
Depth	39 feet	40 feet
Man Made	yes	yes
Ocean Vessels	yes	yes
Connects Oceans	yes	no

[www.houston.org/policy/index.html](http://www.houston.org/policy/index.html)

[www.panamcham.com/en/about-us/history](http://www.panamcham.com/en/about-us/history)

<http://paccmiami.com/newsletter.htm>

[www.tshaonline.org/handbook](http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook)