

Managing And Training A Bilingual Workforce



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Training Goals



- o Communicate in Spanish
- o Learn key Spanish words to enhance your safety training curriculum
- o Research Spanish language material
- o Using translation tools (find out what really works)
- o Determine which training styles work best for your Spanish workforce
- o Gain an understanding of your group of Spanish speakers and what makes them tick...

Overview



- When managing a bilingual workforce, finding ways to ensure proper communication is critical to maintaining a productive and safe workplace.
- Language and cultural barriers that emerge in a bilingual workforce can contribute to miscommunication and on-the-job accidents and injuries.

Overview



- Why???
- Because employees that do not speak English generally hesitate to ask for help when they do not understand,
- It is essential to have the necessary resources available to communicate information.

OSHA



- o So what does OSHA have to say about non English speaking employees and your responsibility?
- o OSHA offers no relief from required training obligations simply because workers are unable to understand English. “Information [must be] presented in a manner the recipient is capable of understanding,” the agency says unequivocally. That means training Spanish speakers in Spanish.

Training



- o The first objective is to understand where your Spanish speaking employees come from.
- o This speaks volume in establishing rapport with your group.
- o They will respect your efforts!

Tips for better communication with multilingual audiences:

- Tip # 1 Acknowledge that the language barrier exists. Many people who are not fluent in English are reluctant to admit it, leading them to pretend as though they understand what you say. Let them know that your goal is to teach your topic, not English, and that it's OK for them to keep asking questions until they really understand your message.



Tip #2



- Speak slowly and clearly—this makes it much easier for people who know basic English but are not truly fluent. Try to avoid using jargon or jokes, which can be incomprehensible or confusing.

Tip #3



- Learn some key words and phrases in other languages. You don't have to become fully bilingual, but you can help break down barriers by showing your willingness to make an effort to improve communications.

Tip #4



- Don't assume the immigrant worker understands what you're saying. Use pictures, diagrams, and other props to communicate.

Tip #5



- If you don't speak the worker's language that he/she is comfortable with, use body language to communicate and show you care. Say hello or good morning, use the individual's name, and look the worker straight in the eye.

Tip #6



- o Customize training by using videotape or photos of workers doing their jobs. It's a popular technique because it gives employees a personal view of safety. It's especially helpful when language skills are low.

Tip #7



- o Even if you don't speak the language of the workers, take steps to understand their customs and culture. For example, if Latino workers are told to be on the job at 8:00 a.m., they may arrive 5 or 10 minutes late, as is common in their home countries. Understanding these differences will help you interpret workers' behavior and suggest how to effect changes.

Tip #8



- o Remember the value of "MBWA," or managing by walking around. Get out among the workforce. Observe how they're performing their tasks, and talk to them about hazards and solutions.

Tip #9



- Don't depend on words alone. Have procedures demonstrated, and then ask volunteers to repeat the procedure to be sure it's been understood.

Tip #10



- o Understand that you may be dealing with educational as well as language gaps.
- o Many foreign-born workers, especially in the Agriculture and construction trades, receive little schooling in their home countries. In dealing with them, things should be explained as simply as possible, with as limited a vocabulary as possible.

Developing Your Material

- o Fortunately there are many resources available to assist you in this area.
- o While researching and resourcing, make sure your trainings come from the same source. Sometimes the translations do not match and can cause confusion amongst the group

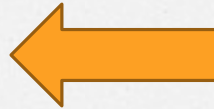
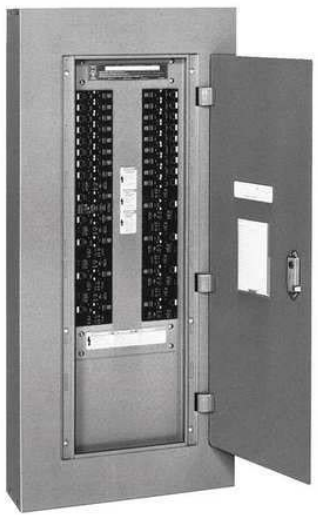


Develop and ID Your Power Words

- o Identify which words are key to describing your points.
- o Practice your words. Be fluent and have the word down before you say it.
- o And if you mispronounce it...DON'T WORRY.
- o Believe it or not this will involve your employees and get them to participate and it creates a “team” environment.

Organizing Your Props and Training

Here's an example:



Developing Bridge Employees

- o Survey your crew and identify individuals who speak both English and Spanish.
- o If you do not have a bridge employee, consider adding “bilingual” to your selection process.
- o This is a key point in your development process. The stronger you bridge employees are, the better your injury prevention efforts will be

Developing Bridge Employees

- o Develop a training matrix of subjects needed to be executed in Spanish.
- o Bridge employees should be taught in a “Train the Trainer” format.
- o This will assist in developing knowledge on the subject and the ability needed to insure the proper translation of the material.

Bridge Employees

- o As you develop your bridge employees the knowledge will increase hopefully to the point where some of the responsibilities regarding training can be transferred.
- o Developing a strong bridge employee(s) will assist in the short term but also long term.
- o Remember how most safety professionals got started in safety!

Material Support

- o Cal Osha

- o <http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/dosh1.html>

- o Tool Box Topics for Construction

- o <http://www.toolboxtopics.com/Construction/index.htm>

- o The California State Fund

- o <https://www.statefundca.com/Home/StaticIndex?id=http://content.statefundca.com//safety/SafetyVideos.asp>



Questions or Comments?

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