

# English is the Common Link for Employees Who Interact with People From Other Countries

*Three in Ten (27%) Global Employees Interact with People From Other Countries; Seven in Ten (67%) of Those Do So in English*

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## **English is the Common Link for Employees Who Interact with People From Other Countries**

*Three in Ten (27%) Global Employees Interact with People From Other Countries; Seven in Ten (67%) of Those Do So in English*

**New York** — A majority (67%) of global employees in 26 countries who say they work in a job that requires them to interact with people from other countries indicate the language used most often in those interactions is English. The poll was conducted in an online survey among 13,644 employees in 26 countries on behalf of Reuters News.

### ***The Globalized World of Work***

Three in ten (27%) global employees work in a job that requires them to interact with people who live in other countries. Employees from India (59%), Singapore (55%), Saudi Arabia (50%), Hong Kong (44%) and South Africa (42%) are most likely to say so, while those from Japan (9%), Russia (13%), Poland (14%) and Hungary (14%) are least likely. Demographically, those most likely, on the global



aggregate level, have a high level of education (38%), high household income (33%) and are under the age of 35 (31%).

### *An Anglophone Globe*

Seven in ten (67%) of those who interact with people in other countries say English is the language they most often use to communicate with them. Those with a high level of household income (74%) and education (73%) are most likely to say English. Gender and age seem to have no statistical bearing on the dominant language used for foreign business.

North America (76%) has the highest proportion of employees reporting the main language they use to communicate with people from other countries is English, followed by Asia-Pacific (72%), the Middle East and Africa (67%), Europe (63%) and Latin America (33%).

In 22 of 26 countries surveyed, English is the dominant language. The only countries falling outside this trend are from Latin America – Argentina (53% say Spanish), Brazil (53% say Portuguese), Mexico (46% say Spanish) – and Russia, where 48% say Russian.



Spanish ranks as a distant second place, with 5% saying it is the language they most commonly use to communicate with people from abroad. After Spanish are Mandarin (4%) and French (3%). Two percent of those surveyed say each of: German, Arabic, Hindi, Italian and Russian.

The country where Mandarin is most commonly ranked as the top language is China (21%), though six in ten (63%) still say English is the main language they use. Similarly, French is most commonly used by 30% of employees in France and 28% of those in Belgium, though 62% of French and 56% of Belgian employees say English is their main language for speaking with those from other countries.

### ***Is Learning English the Key to Succeed?***

For a majority (61%) of those employed who have interactions with people who live in other countries, the language they use most often for those interactions is different from the one they learned as a child. This is particularly true for those with a high level of education (68%) and those under the age of 35 (67%) and, geographically, of those from Asia-Pacific (68%) and the Middle East and Africa (67%).



When asked the language first learned as a child, one in four (24%) employees who work in a job that requires them to interact with people from out of the country say that language is English. Cantonese (8%), Spanish (7%), Mandarin (6%), Hindi (5%) and French (5%) rank next as the most common languages learned from childhood.

*These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Global Advisor poll conducted between on behalf of Reuters News. The survey instrument is conducted monthly in 24 countries via the Ipsos Online Panel system. The countries reporting herein (26) are Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the United States of America. An international sample of 13, 644 employed adults aged 18-64 in the US and Canada, and age 16-64 in all other countries, were interviewed between April 3-17, 2012. Approximately 1000+ individuals participated on a country by country basis with the exception of Argentina, Belgium, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Mexico, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden and Turkey, where each have a sample 500+. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to the most recent country Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/-3.1 percentage points for a sample of 1,000 and an estimated margin of error of +/- 4.5 percentage points for a sample of 500 19 times out of 20 per country of what the results would have been had the entire population of the specifically aged adults in that country been polled.*



-30-

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