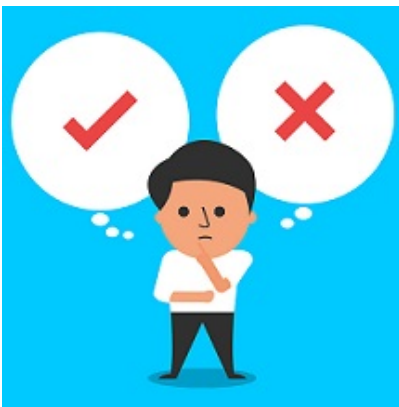


Why speaking good English at the workplace still makes a difference to your career

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A few months back, a video of a job prospect venting out his frustrations on having to speak in English at job interviews, went viral. The protagonist of the video, a youngster, who could speak English fluently was angry that he was always asked to speak in English, and he let out his frustration with a series of expletives in Hindi. The fact that the video went viral and was shared by a large audience in the country, especially among youngsters, shows that it certainly struck a chord amongst the target audience.

The video may have been making a point about why we, as a country, still promote the use of English at the workplace. The fact is that India, unlike China, is a multilingual country with over 20 languages (and countless other dialects). While we have Hindi as the national language, it is not spoken or understood uniformly across the country. Due to our being subjected to British colonialism for a few hundred years, English became the de-facto common language across the country; it became the language of intra-national and international business.



While we understand some of the sentiment behind the aforementioned viral video, we still feel there are several reasons why it will help youngsters to improve their English proficiency and fluency and learn to communicate effectively in English for better career prospects. Here are some of these reasons.

- Business is conducted in English across the country. While some state governments mandate all their communication in a local language, most private sectors conduct their business in English. If you are unable to speak English or communicate reasonably well, you will limit yourself in conducting business well.



- It is easier to build rapport with different parties when you communicate in a common language. Rapport is a critical driver of business success as business does depend on human relationships.
- Messages get lost in translation: Translations work, and one may have to rely on translations to get things done when doing business in/with some countries. However, messages do get lost in translation and it lacks the same effect as communicating in a common language. There is much greater efficiency when such loss in translation does not happen.
- Companies do a lot of international business. That is where a lot of growth happens. When communicating with international counterparts, it helps to be able to speak fluently in English.



As we wrote in a previous article, communication and collaboration skills are indispensable career skills, according to various studies. So even if one has the best technical skills or knowledge in one's area of expertise, if those skills and knowledge cannot be effectively communicated to one's superiors or clients, it doesn't help a person grow to his or her fullest potential.

Go ahead and communicate with colleagues in a language that all of you are comfortable in, but please do not do that at the expense of your English speaking skills.

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-By Chander Madan

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