What Foreign Languages Mean for U.S. Employers

9 out of 10 rely on employees with language skills other than English.

56% say their foreign language demand will increase in the next five years.

Top 5 Departments with greatest foreign language skills need:
1. Customer service
2. Sales
3. Marketing
4. Management
5. IT

Most In-Demand Foreign Languages Reported by U.S. Employers:
- Spanish (85%)
- Chinese (34%)
- French (22%)
- Japanese (17%)
- German (17%)
- Russian (12%)
- Arabic (11%)
- Italian (10%)
- Korean (9%)
- Hindi (8%)
- Portuguese (8%)

The Foreign Language Skills Gap*:
1 in 3 foreign language-dependent U.S. employers reports a language skills gap.
1 in 4 U.S. employers lost business due to a lack of foreign language skills.

*A foreign language skills gap occurs when an employer has foreign language needs that are not currently met by its employees.

U.S. Employers’ Domestic and International Foreign Language Needs:
- 47% Mostly Domestic
- 25% Equally
- 18% Mostly International
- 8% International Only
- 3% Domestic Only

Demand for Specific Foreign Languages, by U.S. Employers with Domestic-Only vs. International Foreign Language Needs:

*Because employers with at least some international foreign language needs may also have some domestic needs, it cannot be assumed that a given language is necessarily used for the international market.

From "Making Languages Our Business: Addressing Foreign Language Demand Among U.S. Employers" P.8 | actfl.org 2019