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Pacific Interpreters expands call center to meet demand from immigrant populations

by Michelle Leach

If you were to rewind three years, Pacific Interpreters would have been an interpretation, translation and consulting business with one office — its founding location in Portland, Ore. In quick succession, however, the company has added 50 percent more space to the office that opened in Omaha in May 2009, and has grown its local workforce more than 470 percent in that same time period to 40 employees, according to Lesley Linn, general manager of the Omaha office.

That growth has shown no signs of waning, as Pacific Interpreters is currently hiring for customer service associates in Omaha, Linn said.

In all, the nearly 20-year-old company employs 194 people who specialize in interpretation, translation and consulting services, with health care, government and business language access niches.

“Pacific Interpreters continues to experience strong customer demand and year-over-year growth, and expects a revenue increase of 20 to 22 percent next year,” said President David Porter. “To accommodate this growth, we recently added 50 percent more space in our Omaha call center, and several months ago launched a major project to upgrade our technology infrastructure.”

Linn alluded to many factors — both those in and out of the organization’s control — that have driven growth at the local call center at 222 S. 15th St.

“The local market in Omaha is known for the availability of experienced customer service agents,” Linn said, also noting the medical community recognizing the need to provide medical interpreters to limited-English proficient patients.

Solutions, according to company information, include: trained professional interpreters, translators and consultants, quick connection



Lesley Linn, general manager of the Omaha office ... Recognition of need for interpreting services from medical community helps drive need for additional customer service associates.

times, fee options, built-in flexibility to nimbly adapt to changing needs and circumstances, a dedicated customer service department and in-depth user information and cost analysis, courtesy of custom reporting.

Previously, Pacific Interpreters leadership had referenced the quality of talent locally as one of many reasons the business started by nationally-recognized medical interpreting advocate Mary Rynerson selected Omaha.

For one, there was the need for a second location to be in a different time zone, the use of different power and telephonic infrastructure and incentives offered through Nebraska Advantage were also listed as perks.

To present day, Linn indicated the size of immigrant populations are only continuing to increase stateside, fueling the demand for such language interpreting services.

“Spanish remains our language in top demand; we have also noticed significant increases in requests for Asian and Middle Eastern languages,” Linn said.

This, however, provides just a snapshot of the expertise the company’s talent boasts; its people support more than 180 different languages and dialects — from Kunama (Eritrea), Rade (Vietnam) and Zophei (formerly Burma) to Wolof (Senegal), Yup’ik (Alaska native) and Chuukese (Micronesia) — in all,

representing 99.85 percent of all language requests.

According to corporate information, more languages are added as the arrival of new populations create demand for services in these dialects and languages.

The Omaha facility takes calls generated from across the country — about 7,500 re-

Pacific Interpreters Omaha

Phone: 800-311-1232

Address: 222 S. 15th St. Omaha 68102

Services: interpretation, translation and consulting offerings to eliminate language barriers

Founded: 1992 by Mary Rynerson

Employees: 40 locally

Website: www.pacificinterpreters.com

quests each day. Just as many calls, Linn said, are fielded by its office in Portland.

Though there are many external factors contributing to demand for its solutions, local leadership also indicated the strategic decisions behind the momentum, which has resulted in continued need for additional personnel.

For starters, from the get-go, Linn said the local facility was “designed to be scalable,” allowing for room for expansion.

As Porter referenced, technical capabilities are continuing to be expanded, both in terms of capacity and functionality to support new services, according to Linn.

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