

Challenges on the communication for the TTS Lean Staffing team, by using a second language in an intercultural context of truck drivers and logistic companies in the EEUU

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### **Abstract**

This document discusses those challenges on the effective communication for the TTS Lean Staffing team, by employing a second language in an intercultural context of truck drivers and logistic companies in the EEUU. The importance of this discussion resides on how collaborators may feel overwhelmed and frustrated in an environment where a second language becomes the essential tool in an extended intercultural context.

## Chapter 1 – Context and expectations

Lean Staffing solutions is a division of the company Lean Solutions Group, founded in February the 6<sup>th</sup> in 2013 in Cartagena, Bolívar. LSG is a nearshore service provider that focuses on expanding and enhancing logistic companies' business; having a wide offering range from staffing to technology, marketing, sales, and BPO services.

My path in this company started in October the 11<sup>th</sup> in 2021 as a Logistic Coordinator from Lean Staffing division. My job mainly consists on tracking loads in diverse regions from the USA and Canada. The environment of the company is warm and provides a lot of chances to grow up professionally. Currently, I'm assigned to TTS Logistics to provide them with our services. My team consists of five trackers working in different times of the week and our Lean Staffing operations manages and immediate supervisor, night operations manager and quality assistant.

During the first stage in the company, I was tense of talking on the phone with carriers. The only thoughts coming to my mind were: I will miss some value information or won't be able to explain myself. It was a challenge for me to face my job every day, and caused me anxiety when my shift was coming in. It took a while to overcome this problem. At present, I'm confident in my job even though sometimes I commit mistakes, I accept I'm unperfect and work on those weaknesses.

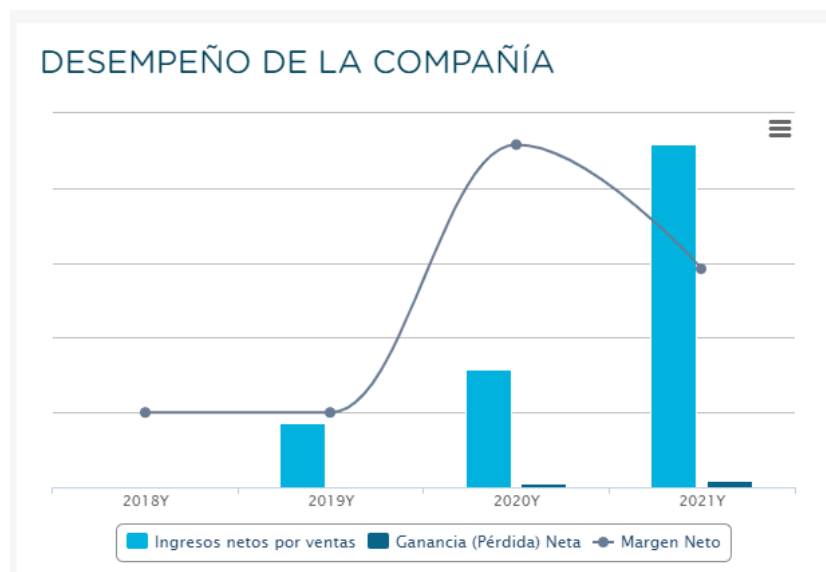
Taking into consideration what was mentioned, in this document will be discussed those challenges on the communication for the TTS Lean Staffing team, by using a second language in an intercultural context of truck drivers and logistic companies in the EEUU. The importance of this discussion resides on how collaborators may feel overwhelmed and frustrated in an environment where a second language becomes the main tool in an extended intercultural context.

## Chapter 2 – Problem statement

Lean staffing department is a division that provides specialized personal to logistic companies in the USA and Canada. It has gained success through the years, showing a big increase on incomes since 2019 according to EMIS, Emerging Markets report. As a result of this, a lot of new collaborators have joined the company to cover that need of more specialized personal.

**Figure 1**

*Lean Solutions Group development - EMIS report*



*Note:* This graphic shows the increase in the company's revenues since 2018 to 2021.

One of the most relevant and attractive features of this company is being a nearshoring company. “Nearshore outsourcing is the practice of getting work done or services performed by people in neighboring countries rather than an organization's own country.” (Terrel, 2021). In our context, being in Colombia means that American/Canadian entities who contract LSG services may have to pay lower costs for specialized staffing than what they would have to in their own countries due to the exchange rate.

Based on what have been said until now, this is certainly a context where diverse kind of cultures face, moreover, the presence of different mother tongues, especially in the USA where we can find a mixture of culture from the worldwide. Additionally, once a company decides to get a nearshore service, those people selected will be following

instructions from a different team in the USA. This is a big challenge a bilingual collaborator will have to take in order to fulfill his job, and it may cause some problems as deep stress and anxiety.

For a company whose main purpose is to provide specialized staff, it is highly important to look after how comfortable and healthy their environment is. For this reason, we are going to focus on Lean Staffing division in Cartagena, more specifically the TTS team, and study how their environment is, what challenges they need to confront, and what kind of solutions can be implemented to get success on communication and TTS tracking mission.



### Chapter 3 – Proposal for a solution

First of all, regarding the *Great Place to Work* evaluation, Lean Solutions Group is certificated as an excellent job. According to the information collected, 91% of collaborators consider it is a great place to work, emphasizing mainly that people are treated equally regardless of their sexual orientation or race. On the other hand, most of the population belonging to this company is in a 76% between the age of 18 and 34 years old.

Along those lines, it is important to mention LSG has different departments and one of those are focused on mental health, which promotes attitudes and behaviors that will allow to the collaborator to orient his life towards an optimal state of mental health. This department operates especially if someone is going through a difficult situation or wishes to strengthen and improve his or her mental health.

Taking into account the fact most of the people operating in LSG are under the age of 34, it is demanded to be aware of the fact that people under the age of 35 years old tend to feel more stress and anxiety than older people as seen by the article *Young adults and anxiety* from Sandston Care. This happens due to many factors such as professional path, economic uncertainty, hostile political environment or what it is exposed in this report: challenges of communication by using a second language in such an intercultural environment as it is the logistic domain in the USA.

After that, the proposal to be used to mitigate those challenges that can lead to some emotional burden on collaborators is to make use of the relevant departments of mental health and require support. To do this, first have to be identified if there is something that affects the collaborator; this is why a survey will be applied focusing on how the employee behaves in their work area and the treatment they receive from those with whom they relate.

## Chapter 4 – Implementation of plans

First, in order to get an overview of what is intended to find in this project, a survey was sent to each member of the TTS Lean Staffing team, specifically, the tracking team (See annex 1). This was approved and supported by Jorge Bayona, the immediate supervisor. The survey consisted on six questions focused on the main points discussed in this document.

Depending on results, a meeting would be carried out to formulate a plan of action to support those collaborators who look affected by the stress of achieving an effective communication or not feeling properly confident in their workplace. This plan consists on communicating the mode the job is affecting the collaborator and provide support from the supervising team, in the same way than promoting the consult of mental health department.

Stieg (2020) states that asking for help can be tough, she cites M. Bouchard words *“People are hardwired to want to do things on their own and be independent-minded [...] We don’t want to be ashamed of our situation, or come across as incompetent.”*. This is a frequent situation that tended to be underestimated; reason why it is necessary to record the answers collected in the survey and provide the support that may be needed in the team, after their approval.

## Chapter 5 – Results

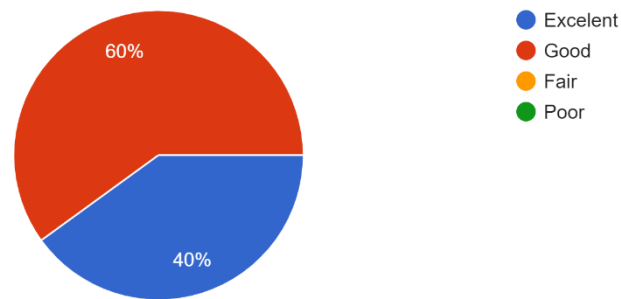
Based on the findings achieved in the survey, we can highlight next for each question asked to TTS trackers members:

### Figure 2

#### *Question #1 TTS survey*

How confident do you feel talking to people belonging to carrier and shipping/receiving companies in your operation routine?

5 respuestas

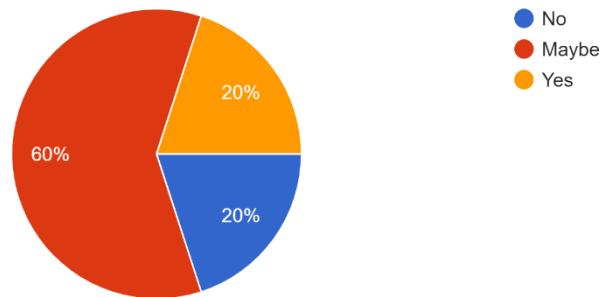


For the first question, can be observed that all of the collaborators feel confident taking to people belonging to the context where the operation occurs. Being this, 60% feeling “good” and 40% “excellent” in the activity.

**Figure 3***Question #2 TTS survey*

Have you ever felt too overwhelmed by not understanding some terms of your daily job routine?

5 respuestas

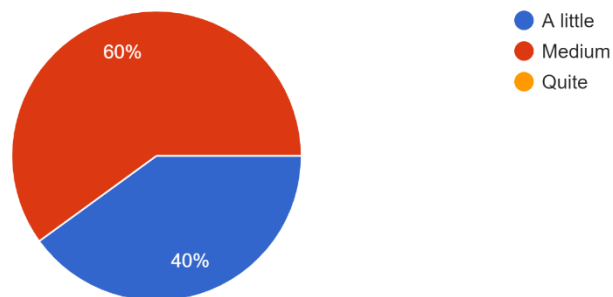


Next, the second question shows that most of the collaborators may have felt overwhelmed in situations where they cannot understand some of the terms used in the routine operation, being this the 60% of respondents. 20% has affirmed have been overwhelmed and the other 20% not being so.

**Figure 4***Question #3 TTS survey*

How difficult was for you to get used to your operation functions employing a second language?

5 respuestas

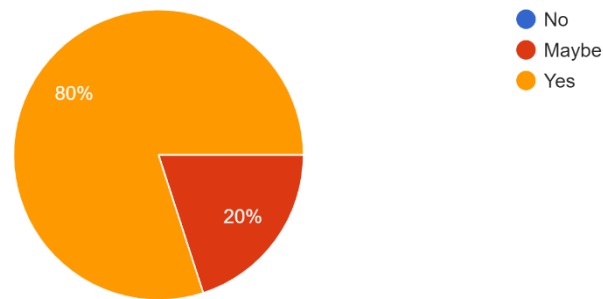


For the third question, 60% of the collaborators state was moderately complex to get used to the operation employing a second language. The other 40% say was little difficult to do it.

**Figure 5***Question #4 TTS survey*

Have you used any tips to improve your English skills since you started working in your current position?

5 respuestas

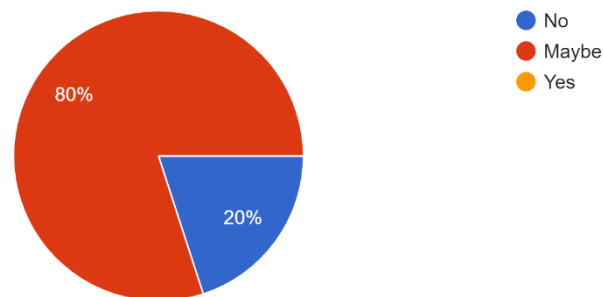


Moving on to the fourth question, 80% of respondents have used tips or practice with the aim of improving their English skills since they started their operations. 20% left may have followed some practice to strengthen its English skills.

**Figure 6***Question #5 TTS survey*

Have you ever felt discriminated for not being an English native speaker?

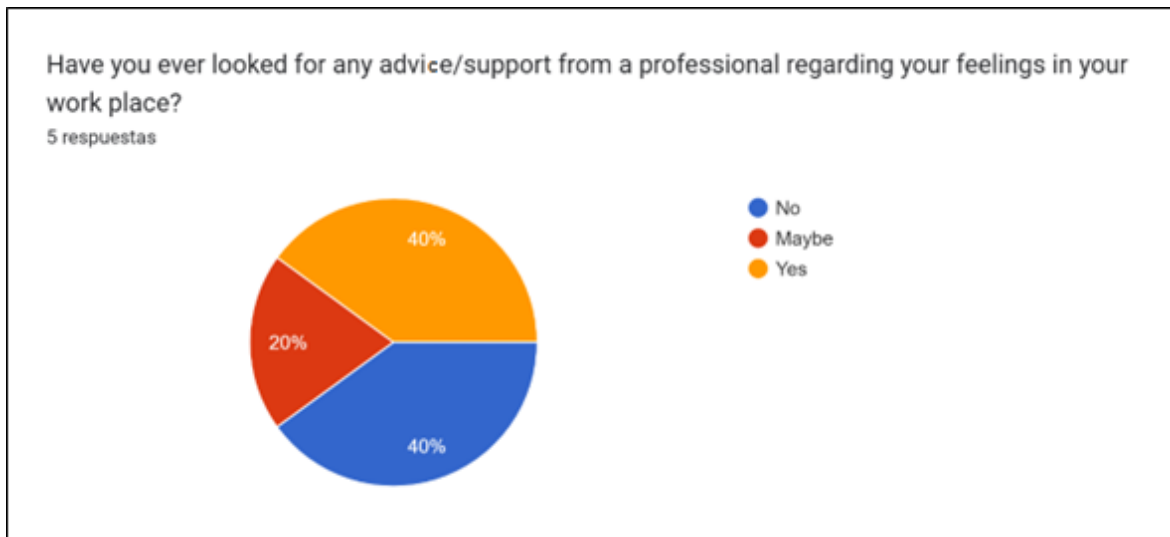
5 respuestas



In the fifth question, 80% of collaborators state that may have experienced some kind of discrimination for not being an English native speaker. The 20% left has not perceived any kind of discrimination.

## Figure 7

Question #6 TTS survey



Finally, the last question shows that 40% of respondents have sought support from a professional regarding their feeling in the work place. Other 40% has not looked for any, and last 20% has may looked for some kind of advice.

Putting all together, responses collected show that an effective communication for the TTS lean staffing team is possible and is being achieved. This is evidenced by how collaborators feel pretty confident while talking to people belonging to the operation environment in the USA. It may be that such confidence was not all the time successful as getting used to the operation by using a second language was moderately difficult; and in some cases, people can feel overwhelmed when new terms show up in the daily routine.

Accordingly results, it can be observed that collaborators may feel confident as most of them have used tips or similar to get their English level increased in this specific context. This is a great strategy to face and overcome issues that may arise during the operation. Notwithstanding, it is highly important to keep an eye on how discrimination can affect people, as most of the collaborators have perceived a little discrimination during their shifts.

At last, half of the collaborators have received advices and support from a professional, event that may have been essential for the confidence demonstrated in the

work team in relation to the work activity. Although the other half has not received any assistance, they may have focused the gain of confidence by using other strategies, such as English practice.

## Conclusions

In conclusion, there are challenges to achieve an effective communication for the TTS Lean Staffing team; however, most of them are under control. There are multiple ways to be confident and handle the stress, and anxiety that may cause being in such a complicated context like was mentioned before, a place with a mixture of cultures from the worldwide, where the presence of different mother tongues is frequent.

Even though multiple strategies can be implemented to overcome the challenges of the communication in this place, it is always important to be opened to get support from a professional. Problems such as discrimination or feeling overwhelmed in certain situations where things get out of hands are usual. Asking for help is good to properly face troubles from the outside and inside; and can also mean the correct development of the company's mission.

Finally, a suggestion for future research on this topic should be focused on the challenges from working remotely, its effects on the physical and mental health of collaborators and the gradual returns to the office. This is one of the most remarkable and influential events during and after quarantine due to the Covid-19 virus, which LSG is still experiencing.





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## Annex

### TTS SURVEY - UDC RESEARCH

This survey aims to get an overview of the communication challenges for the TTS Lean Staffing team through the use of a second language in such a diverse context of truck drivers and logistics companies in the United States. The responses collected will not affect your work in any way.

 victor.ortegaemou@gmail.com (no se comparten)   
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\*Obligatorio

How confident do you feel talking to people belonging to carrier and shipping/receiving companies in your operation routine? \*

Excelent  
 Good  
 Fair  
 Poor

Have you ever felt too overwhelmed by not understanding some terms of your daily job routine? \*

No  
 Maybe  
 Yes

How difficult was for you to get used to your operation functions employing a second language? \*

A little  
 Medium  
 Quite

Have you used any tips to improve your English skills since you started working in your current position? \*

No  
 Maybe  
 Yes

Have you ever felt discriminated for not being an English native speaker? \*

No  
 Maybe  
 Yes

Have you ever looked for any advise/support from a professional regarding your feelings in your work place? \*

No  
 Maybe  
 Yes

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*Note:* Survey applied to TTS Lean staffing team.