

Public Affairs Specialist

Name: **Adriana Zorrilla**

Profession: **Public Affairs Specialist** at the Census Bureau Public Information Office
Number of years in this line of work: **3 1/2**

Native Language: **Spanish**

Other Language(s): **English, little Italian**

1) What languages do you know? How did you learn them? (At home, At school, etc.)

I am from Columbia, so I am a native Spanish speaker. I came to the US in 1992 and I also know a little Italian since I took classes in college and have traveled there for

2) What is your profession?

I do a little bit of everything: media outreach, and minority media. Apart from revising conferences, and do training for journalists that are using census data. Before this, I was a news director and news anchor.

3) Describe a "typical" day as a Public Affairs Specialist. How do you use your language skills?

I develop plans and partnerships with media organizations and other communities in the community as well as finding different ways to use the census. I do planning in both languages for the creation of pamphlets, brochures, news releases in both languages. I am also the spokesperson for speaking media.

4) What do you enjoy about it?

Census data is crucial to know how communities are developing and growing in the changing communities means that the federal and local governments can better plan

5) What language do you think in?

English. Actually I do think in Spanish when I am speaking to the Spanish media or use English I think in English. Sometimes when I switch from Spanish to English I

6) What do you think helped you the most in mastering the foreign/second language?

A person's level of education is crucial in their ability to pick up another language. I learned English so it was a little more difficult for me. It is easier for children to learn in schools or with peers in everyday life. Learning another language is like learning younger than when you are older. Using a language every day also helps; just like an instrument. Since I don't use Italian very often I have lost some of it, but I sharpen it when I go to

7) What opportunities have knowing another language provided in your career and otherwise?

Knowing two languages opens up many professional opportunities. Since the Hispanic population is an incredible tool for career advancement. It also gives one the possibility of knowing what is going on outside the US. Having this extra understanding helps one understand

8) If you had the time to learn another language now, what language would you choose?

Chinese, Chinese population is huge and the economy is booming and if I had the opportunity to learn Chinese.

9) How do you think your life would have turned out if you had never learned a second language?

That is a difficult question to answer, I don't know how it would have turned out.

10) In your opinion, are there more career opportunities for people who speak multiple languages?

I think so, not just in the media market, but in any other market such as corporations.

11) What do you think you would be doing if you weren't a Public Affairs Specialist?

I would probably be exploring documentary short film. I've worked in film production

12) What advice would you give to somebody who wants to be a Public Affairs Specialist? What languages should they learn?

I would say they should keep themselves informed: read the newspaper, and listen to the news. If you are proficient in another language, so when you are speaking you can translate in your native language. In a nationwide survey so many languages are important, Spanish is always a good tool, and Arabic.

13) Anything else you'd like to add?

Knowing another language is an opportunity to get closer to cultures not just in the professional world but in the personal world. It is important just as a professional to be more open minded and more cultured.

helps one to be more open minded and more cultured. it is important just on a proit encourages acceptance of others.