



I have the pleasure of presenting an interview with Luis Echeverry, CEO of Continental Interpreters.
Thank you for a great interview Luis!

Cynthia Schenck
CEO Medical Interpreters of the North Shore
IMIA Board Director
IMIA ISP Journalist

1. Tell me about your business, how/why/when did it begin?

After freelancing for about one year with various interpreting agencies mainly in the Southern California area, I had too many bad experiences with some agencies that did not pay the amount promised, were very late paying or just simply did not pay at all. After so many bad experiences, in 1992 I begin my business as a Language Service Provider vowing to always take care of the freelancers that worked for us and treat them all as fairly as possible.

2. What is your core business (primary product or service) and who is your consumer?

Our core business is legal interpreting. Our primary clients are law firms and insurance companies. We also provide simultaneous conference interpreting services. The clientele for that type of service varies depending on the type of event and location.

3. What is the greatest challenge Continental Interpreting Services, Inc. faces in providing consistent and competent quality service?

Our biggest challenge is the lack of certified interpreters available throughout our State. Currently California requires certification for most legal settings as well as medical appointments for cases litigated either through the Workers' Compensation System or the Civil Courts. Finding good certified interpreters on a regular basis makes our job very challenging.

4. How does Continental Interpreting Services, Inc. recruit interpreters?

Since most of the work we hire our interpreters for is legal in nature and requires certification, for our Court Certified Interpreters we rely on the listings provided by the Judicial Council of California. For Administrative Hearing Certified Interpreters and for Medical Certified Interprets we rely on the listing provided by the State Personnel Board of California.

5. What type of training do you require of your interpreters?

Most of the interpreters we hire are required to be certified by the State of California. In order for these interpreters to obtain that certification they usually undergo rigorous training at educational facilities specializing in training interpreters to pass the State exam. Once certified, the State of California requires that these interpreters undergo continuing education to maintain their certification status.



6. What are your most frequently requested languages?

Spanish is our most requested language followed by the more common Asian languages such as Vietnamese, Korean, Mandarin, Laotian and Tagalog. We also have a large demand for Arabic as well as Eastern and Western Armenian.

7. What technology has Continental Interpreting Services, Inc. found most effective in managing business?

We have our own in-house proprietary software specially developed for our scheduling and management needs.

8. What specifically have you done to enhance and improve the sector?

We are a true believer in promoting goodwill for the professional interpreters we work with. We treat our interpreters with the respect they deserve as professionals insuring they are always paid fairly and on time.

9. Has Continental Interpreting Services, Inc. had the opportunity to give back to the community?

From time to time we are asked to provide services or equipment on a pro-bono basis for certain non-profit charities. Our CEO has also served on the board of various local interpreting associations.

10. How do you see your role within IMIA as an IMIA ISP member?

Currently California is no longer providing testing for interpreters wishing to become Administrative Hearing Certified or Medically Certified. Unless California adopts the certification awarded by IMIA as a valid medical certification to replace the certification process it once had in place, I don't see a strong reason for our participation with IMIA.