

# 45 Key Business Spanish Vocabulary Words and 7 Quick Tips for Pros

## Want to speak Spanish like a professional?

To [be a pro](#), you've got to know the business lingo, *amigo*.

Did you know that over 500 million people [speak Spanish](#) globally?

To be more specific, there are 390 million native speakers in 21 different countries where Spanish is the primary language. Some of these countries are major players in global economy. Countries like [Argentina](#), [Chile](#) and Peru are important economic partners for the United States and active members of MERCOSUR—*Mercado Común del Sur*, the South American equivalent of NAFTA.

It's estimated that 1 in 10 North American residents speak Spanish at home. The Hispanic population of the United States has grown 60% in the last decade. Spanish is also one of the official working languages of the United Nations, alongside English and French.

This translates to a [global boom in Spanish-speaking residents](#), consumers and workers. What does all this mean?

## The Importance of Business Spanish

Spanish is an important global business language, and if you're a global player then you've got to know it like a pro.

In fact, in the United States, bilinguals earn \$7,000 more than monolingual speakers. With a mere 10% of the American population speaking a second language, it's time you invested in your business Spanish!

Now that you've overcome those [common intermediate mistakes](#) and [SNAFUs](#), you can consider yourself an advanced speaker. Or even if you're not quite there yet, it never hurts to get an early start on this key component of the language.

*Bienvenidos* (Welcome) to the world of *español para los negocios* (business Spanish). It may not be the most exciting or [zesty vocabulary](#) to learn, but it is indeed the most *práctico* (practical) for professional advancement in the global market.

Whether you'll be at home or abroad, possessing business Spanish provides an array of advantages. You'll professionalize your vocabulary, obtain jobs, [write perfectly professional emails](#) and open your professional [horizons to the Spanish-speaking world](#).

## Business Spanish in the Digital Age

[In Latin America and Spain](#), the digital age and email haven't got as tight a grip as they do in North America. In many areas, face-to-face communication still tends to take precedence over digital communication.

As such, from a socio-cultural perspective, *enchufismo*, or the *enchufe* phenomenon, (i.e. pulling strings for friends and family to gain competitive advantage in obtaining jobs) is still quite rampant in the Spanish-speaking world despite all the negative press this practice has been getting lately.

Nowadays, English has surely become the global language of business, but let's not underestimate the importance of foreign language acquisition.

Considering the importance of face-to-face communication in Hispanic culture, Spanish-speaking employers and businesses will be overjoyed when anglophones put the time and effort to conduct business in Spanish.

Simply putting forth the effort to properly say *“hola, es un placer conocerle”* (Hello, it is a pleasure to meet you) with a firm handshake *hace que tu primera impresión sea duradera* (makes a long-lasting first impression). Hey, it might even land you your dream *empleo* (job).

Your beautiful *sonrisa* (smile) won't get you everything in life!

*Ahora* (now) let's take a look at 10 essential words used in *español para los negocios*. With this key vocabulary in mind, you'll be using your business Spanish like a pro in no time! Get your flashcards out and let's get started.

We'll ease in with the basics.

### **10 Palabras Imprescindibles en los Negocios (10 Key Words in Business)**

1. **jefe** — boss
2. **director** — director
3. **empresa** — company
4. **reunión** — meeting
5. **negocios** — business deals
6. **contrato laboral** — work contract
7. **mercado** — market
8. **personal** — company staff
9. **acuerdo** — a work agreement
10. **oficina** — office

For number 1 and 2, don't forget to switch to **jefa** and **directora** for a female boss or company director, as it's quite common to see women as company bosses and directors in Spanish companies.

For number 3, the variant **compañía** can be used, for example *una compañía aérea* (airline) or *una compañía marítima* (shipping/ferry company).

Lastly, for number 10, although **oficina** is acceptable and much easier to remember, **despacho** will be the variant used in Spain and some parts of Latin America. A trick to remember this word is thinking of the English word “dispatcher” and linking it to the idea of an office space.

The above list is by no means a comprehensive list, but the words will come up in all sorts of professional dealings. Write them down and *asegúrate de saberlas muy bien* (make sure to know these ones)!

Now that you have some basics covered, let's quickly review some [vital vocabulary](#) related to work contracts. In Spanish-speaking countries, it isn't uncommon that job listings won't contain this information and that “contract details” will be discussed face-to-face during the interview.

These 5 key phrases will make sure you know what kind of business or work contract you're agreeing to with an employer or business!

1. **estar contratado/a** — to have a contract
2. **jornada completa o parcial** — full-time or part-time schedule
3. **contrato fijo/indefinido** — a permanent work contract
4. **contrato temporal** — a temporary or short-term work contract
5. **prácticas** — internship

Ready to branch out beyond isolated vocabulary? Here are some useful phrases. You'll hear the second sentence quite often considering the current economic climate...

- *se incorpora en la empresa con **un contrato temporal** de 6 meses* (you are hired into the company on an initial 6-month short-term work contract)
- ***los contratos fijos** están desapareciendo* (permanent work contracts are becoming less common)
- ***hacer prácticas** con el fin de obtener **un contrato indefinido*** (internship with the possibility of future full-time employment)

Now let's get even more specific. Professionalism and business success, whether you're hunting for jobs or dealing with clients, will require you to have **keywords tailored to your industry**.

The 3 key industries in which anglophone immigrants and workers take jobs in the Spanish-speaking world are: **trade, language instruction** and **tourism**.

At one point or another, as an English speaker living abroad, you'll likely end up working in at least one, if not all, of these industries. So let's review the 10 key words in each industry alongside vocabulary alternatives. After that, we'll give you 5 tips to remember and use your new vocabulary like a pro. Pass over some more flashcards, please. *Dale* (hit it)!

### **Comercio** (Trade)

1. **comercialización** — marketing
2. **beneficio** — profit
3. **bolsa** — the stock-exchange
4. **compra** — purchase
5. **dinero** — money
6. **exportador/importador** — exporter/importer
7. **fabricante** — manufacturer
8. **demanda** — demand
9. **ahorros** — savings
10. **acción** — share

A few examples...

- ***la comercialización** de nuestro producto es de alta prioridad* (marketing our product is of top priority)
- *la empresa ha tenido un año fiscal de bajo **beneficio*** (the company has had little profits this fiscal year)
- ***la demanda** está vinculada a la oferta* (demand is linked to supply)

### **Enseñanza de Idiomas** (Language Instruction)

1. **academia de idiomas** — language school
2. **profesor/a** — a teacher (at any level)
3. **alumno** — student
4. **aula** — classroom
5. **curso** — school year
6. **asignatura** — subject
7. **lección** — lesson
8. **ministerio de educación** — ministry of education
9. **tutoría** — tutoring

## 10. **clases particulares** — private language classes

In language instruction there's, for obvious reasons, great linguistic variety. Depending on your location, there'll be preference for one word over another. Not sure what the heck I'm talking about? Well, let's explore.

For number 1, there's also **escuela de idioma**, which is typically a school that receives state funding for language instruction, and **academia**, which refers to a private enterprise. A teacher can be called a **maestro** or, alternatively, a **catedrático** at the university level.

For number 3, you'll hear **estudiante** (all levels) or **universitario** (university students).

Lastly, **clases particulares** can also be referred to as **clases privadas** or simply **clases extra**.

All these different word choices are valid, so feel free to choose and use the one you remember best and feel the most comfortable pronouncing!

A few examples...

- *la **academia** busca **profesores** nativos de inglés para dar clases de idioma* (the language school is hiring native English speakers to give language classes)
- *el **ministerio de educación** está reclutando* (the Ministry of Education is recruiting)
- *se puede ganar bastante dando **clases particulares*** (you can make quite a bit of money giving private language classes)

## **Turismo** (Tourism)

1. **cadena de hoteles** — hotel chain
2. **viaje de ida y vuelta** — round-trip flight
3. **lista de espera** — waiting list
4. **recepción** — reception
5. **temporada baja/alta** — low/high-season
6. **folleto** — informative brochure/leaflet
7. **tarjeta comercial/de negocios** — business card
8. **agente de viajes** — travel agent
9. **agencia/empresa de viajes** — travel agency
10. **libro/hoja de reclamaciones** — customer complaint book

A few examples...

- *la **cadena de hoteles** ofrece trabajo a gente con formación de hostelería* (the hotel chain is hiring people with training in hospitality)
- *la jefa me dio su contacto y **tarjeta comercial*** (the boss left me her contact information and business card)
- *la **empresa de viajes** busca contratar a **agentes de viajes** bilingües* (the travel agency is looking to hire bilingual travel agents)

Check out this short [video](#) to review and listen to pronunciation of key business vocabulary. Many of the words above will be covered.

Now you have 45 new words in your business Spanish repertoire. Great, right? The lists above are guides to key vocabulary in general business and the three main industries occupied by English speakers, but knowing the words is simply a start.

As this vocabulary doesn't always come up in day-to-day conversations, you need to set time to use it on your own. Although [apps](#) and [digital dictionaries](#) are fantastic language tools, it's best to avoid pulling out your phone in professional settings.

Keeping this in mind, it's important to review and practice your business Spanish independently. Having [Spanish slip-ups](#) during a live interview or business dealing can be quite... *vergonzoso* (embarrassing) and unnerving. Below are 5 quick tips to ensure that you practice, properly pronounce and enrich your Business Spanish on a daily basis.

You'll be a bilingual global player in no time!

## 7 Quick Tips To Practice Your Business Spanish Daily

### 1. Keep up on current events

Watch the news and listen to political and economic debates and speeches, especially by heads of state or economic ministers. You won't understand everything but don't let that put you off as your pronunciation and vocabulary acquisition will improve by leaps and bounds through [news videos](#) and debates.

Check out this video from [the HispanTV YouTube channel](#): [Fort Apache Economic Sanctions](#)

### 2. Learn actively

Read 1 newspaper article in the business section daily. Write down 1 new word daily along with the sentence in which it's used. By the end of the week, you'll have 7 new phrases—that's 28 monthly!

Check out the business sections of the two most widely-read newspapers in the Spanish-speaking world:

[El País](#)

[El Mundo](#)

### 3. Get yourself involved

Sign up for an online journal and read industry-related work reports and research. This is particularly helpful if you work in science, energy or technology sectors. For starters, check out the [EBSCO](#) database.

### 4. Focus on your industry

Read website content of companies working in your industry. You can start by reading the pages first in English and then in Spanish, or put them side-by-side and read them both simultaneously! Lucky for English speakers, most Spanish-speaking companies have their company information translated into English.

Check out these companies that work in [energy](#), [engineering](#) and [teaching](#).

### 5. Rehearse

Do live mock interviews with Spanish-speaking friends to fill in fluency and vocabulary gaps. As you progress, jot down key phrases that fit with the way you express yourself to avoid sounding like a robot. If you don't have any local Spanish-speaking friends, it's time to find yourself a [conversation partner](#), one of the most practical and fun methods to live language learning.

In the meantime, check out this [video](#) on 10 common interview questions and responses, and this [one](#) to see a live interview in Spanish.

### 6. Write up a short introductory email

In business it's also very important to have an introductory email where you can sell a product or apply for a job. In both instances, it's always a smart idea to send a succinct email along with your *currículum vitae* (CV) and *carta de presentación* (cover letter) to potential employers and partners.

Below is a simple text that I've used many times in the body of my emails to employers. Save it, use it and adapt it to *cubrir tus necesidades* (to cover your specific needs).

*Estimado/a Señor/a:*

*Deseo solicitar el puesto de (insert desired position) en (insert company name). Creo que tengo un perfil adecuado que podría encajar muy bien en su empresa. Le adjunto en archivo PDF mi CV, además de mi carta de presentación. Si quisiera usted ponerse en contacto conmigo, me podría llamar por teléfono al número (insert local phone number) o enviar un correo electrónico a mi dirección: (insert email address). Quedo a la espera de sus noticias.*

*Atentamente,*

(Your Full Name)

Dear Sir/Madam

I would like to apply for the (position) in your (company/institution name). I strongly believe I have the professional experience relevant to your company/job offer. Please find my CV and cover letter attached in PDF format. If you would like to contact me, you can reach me at (phone number) or send an email to (email address). I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

(Your Full Name)

## **7. Keep these 3 details in mind**

1. Don't forget the masculine/feminine *señor/a* (sir/madame) and *estimado/a* (dear)
2. Put a double colon (:) instead of a comma (,) at the introduction
3. Always use the *usted* (formal you) conjugation in work and business emails

Don't you feel like applying for jobs now? Go for it!

I bid you farewell and *buena suerte* (good luck) in your *negocios* and *búsqueda de empleo* (business deals and job hunt). Hopefully this key vocabulary will give you confidence to *ponerte las pilas* (get yourself going) on your way to your next *entrevista de trabajo* (job interview).

Not only will you be a business pro, but you'll be a bilingual one to boot!

*Hasta la próxima, amigos!* (Until next time, friends)!

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