

AIR CANADA 

LINGUISTIC
ACTION PLAN
2015–2017

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BACKGROUND

Under the *Air Canada Public Participation Act* and Canada's *Official Languages Act*, Air Canada must meet requirements regarding service delivery in both official languages where there is significant demand for these languages.

Beyond these legal obligations, Air Canada is proud to be the Canadian air carrier that offers the greatest range of services in both official languages, and a true leader among major Canadian companies in promoting bilingualism.

It is also important to point out that unlike government institutions subject to the *Official Languages Act*, Air Canada receives no direct or indirect funding for language-related training, testing or communications. Nevertheless, Air Canada continues to increase the financial and human resources it allocates to maintain and improve its language programs.

Recognizing that there is always room for improvement, the Company continues to make every effort to meet its linguistic commitments while adapting to the constant and rapid changes that characterize the competitive airline industry including the organizational and operational changes that have occurred in recent years.

2011–2014: Sustained implementation efforts

The 2011–2014 Linguistic Action Plan responded to the 12 recommendations the Commissioner of Official Languages made in his 2011 audit report. The audit covered services provided in French and English to Air Canada passengers, and had set four objectives targeting the following areas: executive management’s commitment, bilingual service delivery, consultation with official language minority communities and performance monitoring.

From 2011 to 2015

Air Canada implemented a series of sustained initiatives and measures contained in its action plan and ultimately, improved delivery of the services it offers its customers in both official languages. Here are some of the initiatives and measures the Commissioner of Official Languages recognized in his February 2015 follow-up report:

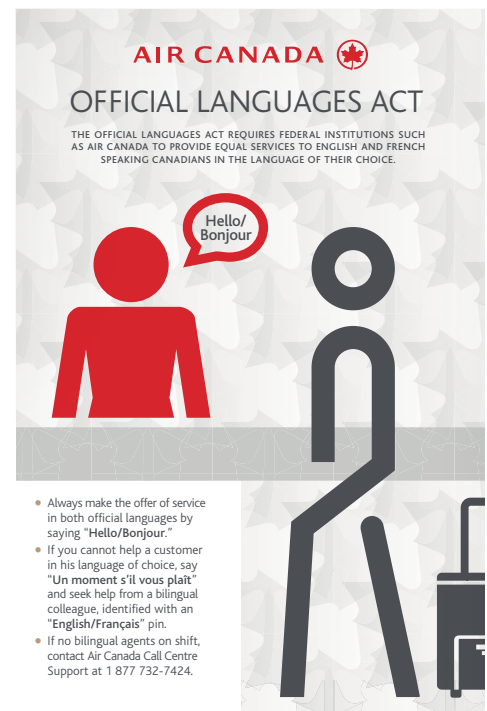
- New manual describing Air Canada’s official languages policies and directives;
- Web-based employee awareness module;
- The raising of awareness of official languages obligations during new employee orientation sessions;
- Important changes to the Collective Agreement signed with Unifor regarding the assignment of bilingual agents in airports;
- Enhanced collaboration with official language minority communities on hiring bilingual employees.

2015: New implementation initiatives

Since the Commissioner of Official Languages’ report was submitted in February 2015, other initiatives were introduced to support efforts to achieve Company objectives such as raising employee awareness.

For example:

- Addition of official languages objectives in the managers’ Performance Plan;
- Distribution of “Hello/Bonjour” banner pens to raise employee awareness;
- Installation of “Hello/Bonjour” banners in In-Flight Service communications centres;
- Presentation on linguistic obligations during customer service training sessions;
- Presentation of linguistic policy to new managers;
- Introduction of briefings on linguistic obligations before the start of work shifts at Toronto Airport;
- Creation of a network of ambassadors representing the various airports composed of frontline agents, team leaders and managers at the airports;
- Customer satisfaction survey on bilingual services.



- Always make the offer of service in both official languages by saying “Hello/Bonjour.”
- If you cannot help a customer in his language of choice, say “Un moment s’il vous plaît” and seek help from a bilingual colleague, identified with an “English/Français” pin.
- If no bilingual agents on shift, contact Air Canada Call Centre Support at 1 877 732-7424.

2015–2017: New action plan aligned with our corporate continuity strategy and priorities

The new 2015–2017 Linguistic Action Plan is a logical continuation of the 2011–2014 Plan, which lists actions and measures to be implemented to further improve priority items while strengthening existing best practices. It is also aligned with two of the Company's four priorities: culture change and our renewed commitment to our customers.

Air Canada took the time to clearly identify its priorities when designing its new Action Plan which will be implemented and monitored by the Company's Linguistic Affairs Department.

To ensure continuity and facilitate comprehension, the Action Plan's outline is based on the objectives and recommendation the Commissioner of Official Languages made in his most recent audit report:

OBJECTIVE 1:

Executive management's commitment

- Official languages accountability framework
- Human and financial resources
- Official languages action plan
- Employee awareness
- Performance evaluation
- Collective agreements
- Language of work

OBJECTIVE 2:

Delivery of bilingual services

- Signage and visual active offer
- Active offer in person, and service provided in English and French
- Bilingual capacity and provision of bilingual services

OBJECTIVE 3:

Consultation with official language minority communities

- Community relations

OBJECTIVE 4:

Performance monitoring

- Monitoring mechanism and measures for correcting shortcomings

It should be noted that some measures listed in the previous plan are also included in the new action plan, either because they are ongoing processes or the measures have been modified to improve their scope and results.



OBJECTIVE 1: Executive management's commitment

New and strengthened measures have been identified to achieve this objective. They build on existing measures, and are designed to improve employee accountability in order to drive corporate performance; increase the number of employees committed to implementing the new plan; improve employee awareness on a more regular basis regarding the importance of providing service in both official languages; and, improve the deployment and assignment of employees.

Official languages accountability framework



Measure 1:

Clarification of official languages responsibilities in the job descriptions of employees dealing with the public, as well as in the job descriptions of their managers. This measure will apply to front-line employees such as flight attendants, service directors, customer sales and service agents, lead agents, customer service managers and general managers within the Airports and In-Flight Service branches. – **Existing measure from the previous plan, modified to make it clearer.**

EXPECTED RESULTS: For each role, clarify responsibilities regarding active offer and delivery of bilingual services.

PERSON OR UNIT RESPONSIBLE: Customer Service and Linguistic Affairs

TIMELINE: 2015-2016

Measure 2:

Presentation on linguistic issues and progress to executive management by the two co-champions. – **Ongoing measure**

EXPECTED RESULTS: Keep all members of executive management informed, and make necessary decisions, as required.

PERSON OR UNIT RESPONSIBLE: Co-champions

TIMELINE: At least once a year or when a special situation arises

Human and financial resources

Measure 3:

Finalization of implementation and maintenance of an ambassadors' network at each airport and In-Flight Service base. – **New measure**

EXPECTED RESULTS: Facilitate implementation of the action plan; ensure follow-up; identify local challenges or issues; participate in seeking specific solutions for various realities and challenges; and share best practices.

PERSON OR UNIT RESPONSIBLE: Customer Service and Linguistic Affairs

TIMELINE: Implementation in 2015 and ongoing process thereafter

Implementation of the Official Languages Action Plan

Measure 4:

Managers will define objectives and performance indicators that take into account local differences and challenges and announce them to employees.

– **New measure**

EXPECTED RESULTS: Make managers accountable and achieve concrete, realistic results based on the different challenges in different locations.

PERSON OR UNIT RESPONSIBLE: Each airport and In-Flight Service base manager

TIMELINE: To be reviewed on an annual basis

Measure 5:

The Ambassadors' Network and the Customer Service branch will help establish and adopt the measures in the action plan. – **New measure**

EXPECTED RESULTS: Obtain commitment at all levels from all parties involved in the solution.

PERSON OR UNIT RESPONSIBLE: Linguistic Affairs, Ambassadors' Network, Co-champions of Official Languages, and Customer Service branch

TIMELINE: 2015-2016

Measure 6:

Once the action plan has been approved, ensure that all employees concerned as well as all staff and the public are informed of its existence. The information can be provided in *The Daily* (the Company's daily newsletter), and posted on the employee portal and the company website. – **New measure**

EXPECTED RESULTS: Ensure that all employees are aware of the action plan.

PERSON OR UNIT RESPONSIBLE: Linguistic Affairs, Employee Communications

TIMELINE: 2016



Employee awareness

Measure 7:

During the orientation process, continue to inform all new employees of the Company's language policies and obligations and its commitment to its customers.
– **Ongoing measure.**

EXPECTED RESULTS: Ensure that all new employees are informed of language obligations and expectations regarding their role.

PERSON OR UNIT RESPONSIBLE: Learning and Development Department, Linguistic Affairs

TIMELINE: Modified in 2015 and to be reviewed periodically as required

Measure 8:

Ensure that all employees, who deal with the public and have not yet completed the Module for Raising Awareness on Language Obligations, take it. – **Ongoing measure**

EXPECTED RESULTS: Ensure that all employees periodically receive the same message and reminder on language obligations.

PERSON OR UNIT RESPONSIBLE: Customer Service Training

TIMELINE: 2017



Measure 9:

Evaluate delivery of the various language training programs. If required, revise and design (online and traditional) language training tools that provide more options and flexibility for the employees. – **Existing measure updated to respond to changing needs.**

EXPECTED RESULTS: Improve non-qualified employees' language skills and maintain qualified employees' skills. Also maximize learning while taking operational and budgetary realities into account.

PERSON OR UNIT RESPONSIBLE: Ambassadors' Network, Linguistic Services

TIMELINE: Ongoing

Measure 10:

Develop a specific communication plan for bilingual services that indicates means of communication, type of message, content and frequency, from executive management to messages from local managers. – **New measure**

EXPECTED RESULTS: Improve the efficiency of communications with a constant, consistent and clear message on language requirements as part of management's commitment to customer engagement.

PERSON OR UNIT RESPONSIBLE: Customer Service, Employee Communications, Ambassadors' Network, and Linguistic Affairs.

TIMELINE: Annual process to be revised as required

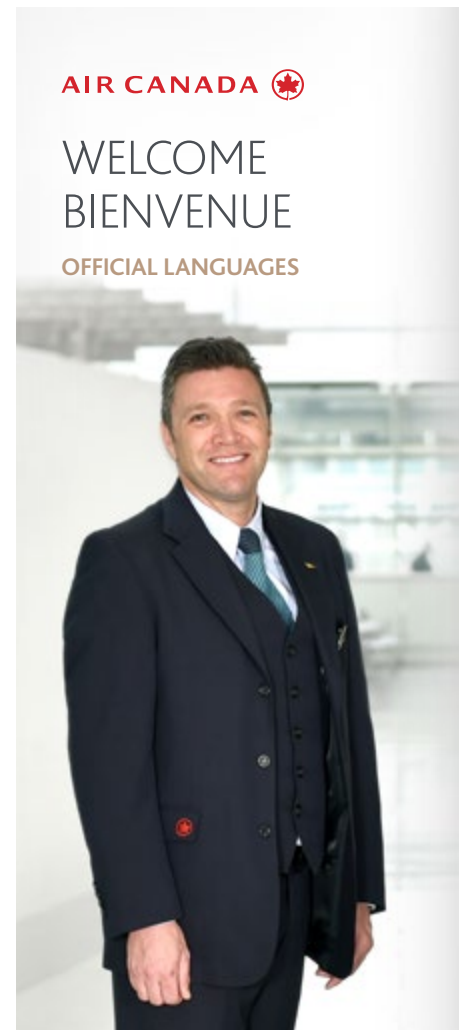
Measure 11:

Develop a system to recognize employees with language skills in order to acknowledge the efforts of employees who provide service in the customers' preferred language. – **New measure**

EXPECTED RESULTS: Recognize employees with language skills and encourage best practices.

PERSON OR UNIT RESPONSIBLE: Ambassadors' Network, Customer Service, Human Resources

TIMELINE: 2016 and to be reassessed annually



Performance evaluation

Measure 12:

Incorporate language obligations in the performance plan for managers with responsibilities pertaining to the delivery of bilingual services based on their roles and responsibilities. These managers include those responsible for the planning and delivery of customer service. – **Modified measure from the previous plan**

EXPECTED RESULTS: Increase the accountability of the employees concerned for achieving concrete results.

PERSON OR UNIT RESPONSIBLE: Airport and In-Flight Service base managers

TIMELINE: To be reviewed on an annual basis



Collective agreements

Measure 13:

Upon renewal of the various employment contracts, discuss ways for the Company to improve official language compliance with unions. For example, add bilingual lines (assignments) at airports to guarantee bilingual resources at strategic service locations. – **Ongoing measure**

EXPECTED RESULTS: Facilitate bilingual service delivery and achievement of objectives

PERSON OR UNIT RESPONSIBLE: Linguistic Affairs and Labour Relations

TIMELINE: At the renewal of the applicable Collective Agreements



Measure 14:

Ensure that all language issues regarding complaints, training, deployment or other issues are added to the agenda of joint meetings between the Company and its unions once or twice a year, as required. – **Ongoing measure**

EXPECTED RESULTS: Facilitate the achievement of objectives by maintaining an open dialogue between Air Canada management and unions representing employees who deal with the public.

PERSON OR UNIT RESPONSIBLE: Linguistic Affairs and Labour Relations

TIMELINE: To be reviewed on an annual basis

Language of work

Measure 15:

Maintain our efforts to enhance the language of work policy in bilingual regions (Provinces of Quebec, New Brunswick and City of Ottawa) applicable for:

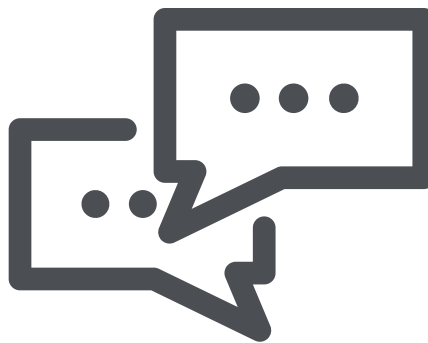
- Supervision
- Working tools & instrument
- Training
- Services provided to employees
- Communication

– Ongoing measure

EXPECTED RESULTS: create a work environment conducive to the effective use of both official languages.

PERSON OR UNIT RESPONSIBLE: Linguistic Affairs

TIMELINE: Ongoing





OBJECTIVE 2: Delivery of bilingual services

With respect to the second objective, the measures outlined in the Company's new action plan are a continuation of efforts made in recent years, in particular, regarding the assignment of personnel, and the strengthening and standardization of signage. It also goes without saying that the additional employee awareness measures listed in Objective 1 are also important in achieving Objective 2.

Signage and visual active offer

Measure 16:

Taking into account the Company's signage standards, those of airport authorities and the configuration of each airport, review and define signage regulations (especially relating to pictograms for active offer at counters) and communicate these to everyone concerned. – **Ongoing measure**

EXPECTED RESULTS: Improve the visual active offer

PERSON OR UNIT RESPONSIBLE: Ambassadors' Network, Marketing, Linguistic Affairs and local airport authorities

TIMELINE: 2016

Measure 17:

Increase use of "English/Français" language pins. – **Ongoing measure**

EXPECTED RESULTS: Improve the visual active offer

PERSON OR UNIT RESPONSIBLE: Ambassadors' Network, Linguistic Services

TIMELINE: Ongoing



Measure 18:

Encourage employees with developing knowledge of French to wear "J'apprends le français" [I am learning French] language pins. – **Ongoing measure**

EXPECTED RESULTS: Improve active offer and encourage employees who do not qualify as bilingual to use and develop their languages skills.

PERSON OR UNIT RESPONSIBLE: Ambassadors' Network, Linguistic Services

TIMELINE: Ongoing

Active offer in person and service provided in English and French

See measures under “Employee awareness” on page 9

Bilingual capacity and provision of bilingual services

Measure 19:

Based on airport labour requirements, assess the need for bilingual employees on each shift. – **Measure from the previous plan modified to make it clearer.**

EXPECTED RESULTS: Determine the appropriate number of bilingual employees required for each shift in order to meet language obligations, and establish the number of bilingual employees to be recruited.

PERSON OR UNIT RESPONSIBLE: Linguistic Affairs and Workforce Planning Management

TIMELINE: Annual process

Measure 20:

Develop a succession plan taking labour requirements and attrition trends into consideration. – **New measure**

EXPECTED RESULTS: Support planning based on medium-term recruitment and language training needs.

PERSON OR UNIT RESPONSIBLE: Linguistic Affairs and Workforce Planning Management

TIMELINE: Annual process

Measure 21:

Every airport will develop a clear procedure to follow when no bilingual employees are available and ensure that it is communicated to and understood by all affected employees. – **New measure**

EXPECTED RESULTS: Provide equal-quality service in English and French.

PERSON OR UNIT RESPONSIBLE: Ambassadors’ Network, Workforce Planning Management and local authorities

TIMELINE: 2015-2016 and annual review thereafter or as required



OBJECTIVE 3:

Consultation with official language minority communities

The measures listed under this objective reflect the importance the Company places on establishing and maintaining good relations with minority communities and communities in general. Therefore, the Government and Community Relations team, the Linguistic Affairs team and the Regional Markets team work closely with all Canadian communities to listen to their needs and improve the services offered by the Company. However, we reiterate that decisions on route and network planning are based on strictly commercial criteria, such as the specific demand in each market.

Finally, the Company recognizes the importance of working with linguistic minority communities to recruit new bilingual employees, an increasingly common practice in its recruitment efforts. Given recent recruitment campaign results, we plan to continue this approach in the coming years.

Community relations

Measure 22:

Develop and maintain relationships and/or partnerships with various organizations in official language minority communities. – **Ongoing measure**

EXPECTED RESULTS: Facilitate hiring of bilingual candidates and provide service that meets community expectations.

PERSON OR UNIT RESPONSIBLE: Linguistic Affairs, Government and Community Relations

TIMELINE: Ongoing

Measure 23:

Develop strategies to attract more bilingual candidates when hiring new employees for positions that involve dealing with the public. – **Ongoing measure**

EXPECTED RESULTS: Increase the number of bilingual employees

PERSON OR UNIT RESPONSIBLE: Linguistic Affairs and Recruitment

TIMELINE: Ongoing





OBJECTIVE 4: Performance monitoring

Performance monitoring is an objective that changes as new measures and initiatives are implemented. These measures therefore take into account the processes in the previous plan, as well as additions outlined in the new plan, such as the implementation of an ambassadors' network.

Monitoring mechanism and measures to improve performance

Measure 24:

Review the methodologies currently used by the Quality Assurance team to monitor performance with respect to the delivery of bilingual services by Air Canada and the other companies providing services on its behalf. – **Existing measure from the previous plan, modified to make it more effective.**

EXPECTED RESULTS: Have a performance measurement tool and respond to real needs. The audit must include signage, advertising, as well as the offer and availability of bilingual services.

PERSON OR UNIT RESPONSIBLE: Ambassadors' Network, Quality Assurance, Customer Services and Linguistic Affairs

TIMELINE: 2016

Measure 25:

Implement an audit follow-up system and examine findings on a regular basis. – **Existing measure that is modified to make it more effective.**

SCOPE: Implement corrective measures as needs are identified.

PERSON OR UNIT RESPONSIBLE: Customer Service, Linguistic Affairs, Ambassadors' Network and Co-champions of Official Languages

TIMELINE: Ongoing

Measure 26:

Hold regular meetings (quarterly) with the Ambassadors' Network and the Co-champions of Official Languages to review the progress of the triennial action plan. – **Existing measure updated to take into account the Ambassadors' Network.**

SCOPE: Remain focused on priorities and implement new measures, as required.

PERSON OR UNIT RESPONSIBLE: Customer Service, Linguistic Affairs, and Co-champions of Official Languages

TIMELINE: Ongoing

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