

Stephanie Vega Transcript

Transcript

00:00:00 Speaker 2

Hello, this is Sam Brown, Brendan Pacious and Wiley Prior's IDIS podcast. We're here talking with Stephanie Vega today about how majoring in Spanish has affected her career and her life as a whole. Stephanie Vega, thank you for joining us.

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Thank you for having me.

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Of course. So you work in consulting and can you tell us a little more about the day-to-day of your job, what that looks like in practice?

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Yeah, sure. So I feel like no one ever really knows what consulting is and I did not know what it was.

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But basically to start, I work for, a global consulting firm and so there are a bunch of different sectors. There's like government, energy, environment, transportation, health, social, security, like all those kind of stuff. And I work on a contract that focuses on anti human trafficking.

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And so pretty much my day-to-day is kind.

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Of the contract I work on, we do trainings and we create products that we like, you know, put out for the public to use or certain professionals to use. We plan events that kind of stuff. And so it's a lot of project coordination and management that I really didn't.

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know, was a thing until I got into it. So a lot of my days are.

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Or answering emails or I'm going to meetings where I'm meeting with different people that work on like event planning or we might be putting out a training in a certain state or something like that. And so I'm kind of the person that.

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Is making sure everyone else working on it is like everything's going well. It's like moving along the timeline correctly. If there's any hiccups, we kind of address those and just checking on statuses, so it's a lot of that, which I really did not think consulting was.

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Right. Interesting. So very organizational.

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Yes, a lot of that.

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So, Stephanie, you, you, you, majors, you majored in Spanish at UMW, and what application has Spanish had in your career up to this point with the use of Spanish and and all that?

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So application do you mean like when I use my Spanish in my career?

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Yeah, yeah, yeah. And like, what? What, like how often do you use it? What do you use it for? Generally, stuff like that.

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Got it. Yeah, so.

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I actually got into this contract. I think Spanish ended up being a really big like highlight on my resume, but I didn't expect it to.

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Be but I think.

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It's just, you know, Spanish is becoming a pretty dominant language in the United States. And so working on govern a government contract, I think, you know, you want to think about things being in Spanish. And so that was something I didn't expect to help me out as much as I.

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Thought it was going to.

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But it did and so.

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The ways that I've gotten.

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To use my Spanish is.

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We have like a professional translation company that like does most of the work, but I've been on projects where I'm the one overseeing the entire translation project where I'm like making.

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There like terms are being used correctly and stuff like that, just because I'll sometimes be like the only person on my contract that knows Spanish on that level. And so I'll just kind of be reviewing things for consistency, making sure there's no errors, that stuff like that we've also done.

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Trainings in you know, states where Spanish might be like a more popular language.

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And so I've gotten to go to these trainings just to kind of be the one kind of like the event planner of, like, making sure everything is going correctly and stuff like that and sitting in on them. So those have been a couple of ways I've gotten to use Spanish that I when I was a student, I had no idea I was going to be able to.

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Use Spanish like that.

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Yeah, that's really cool. Really cool.

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Yeah. Yeah. No, that's that's awesome. So what, what actually prompted you to study and then major in Spanish, do you come from a Spanish speaking background? Do you have friends or family that speak Spanish or was it more something that came about as you came to college?

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Yeah. So I'd say it's probably like a combination of both. I grew up in a Spanish speaking household, but I think.

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To be honest, I answered my parents mostly in English. By the time I got to college, I think I spoke Spanish when I was little, and then I got to school and it kind of most of it went away for me. And so when I got to college, I had no idea what I wanted to do. I think I was a little intimidated by how many people, like, knew exactly what they were going to study or what they wanted to be

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and the path they wanted to take.

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Take that was not me at all when I took Spanish just to as like a fun class freshman year. Like, I needed one more thing and I was like, you know what? It might be nice to kind of like, reconnect, try to, you know, brush up on my spam.

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Finish and I think just by like end of sophomore year, I kind of realized that I really like the professors in the department and it was kind of the classes that I was usually like the most happy going to versus like dreading some of the other ones that were kind of like more gen-ed or required. And so I just started like I kept.

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Taking Spanish classes where I was like, do I just keep doing this and that's kind of what I did and I think my parents are kind of concerned cuz they're like, why would you major in Spanish like, you know, Spanish? But I think a lot of people don't realize the amount of.

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Different things you get out of taking a language like it's not. I don't know. I just think there's so much in majoring in a language. And so I just kind of kept going with it. And then it was really just that I was like, I don't know what the, what I'm gonna do with Spanish when I get out of this. There was a lot of, I think there was a couple of mental breakdowns where I was like, I don't know what I'm gonna do it.

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It seems like everyone else, like even in Spanish like, you know, a lot of people wanna become teachers or are gonna go to grad school or just have something really specific in mind. And that was.

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Not me. Even as I was majoring in Spanish, but I just kind of knew it was what I was most passionate about. So I kind of just took a a gamble there.

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Right. That's that's really.

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Cool and forgive me if this is too personal question if you don't want to answer, you don't have to, but I know in a lot of Spanish speaking households, sometimes parents can.

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Under undervalue in place of English or out of concern that their their kids might not, you know, be be proficient in English, how did you? How did you find that?

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Because it sounds like it's been very useful in your in your professional career, and sometimes that can't be, sometimes that's not the perception, you know, sometimes Spanish is seen especially in Spanish speaking households as like the language of the house and not something that's useful professionally. So I guess how? Yeah, what was your family's view on that? Sort of? How is that?

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You know, how is that perception? Yeah.

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That's a really great question. I think that was something that I kind of battled with my parents when I was in college and I, as like, I was like pursuing my degree was that especially for them. They were like, you know, we left our Spanish speaking like home countries for you and like for you to come here and have like, you know.

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Better education or like more opportunity then you're choosing to like major in Spanish, like what the heck? They really did not understand it, I feel.

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Like even when I graduated, my dad was like, I don't know why you did this. I really just think it was the thing I was most passionate about. And I also I think probably listened to him a couple of times where I feel like even when I graduate, I was like.

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I don't know what I might have just done, like I've just spent like 4 years studying this like you can't. Like, I felt like I couldn't go back. I was like, what if I should have gone back? I know that was something I struggled with after I graduated, as I was starting to apply to just like the most random things cuz.

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I was like, what? What do I do?

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With this so there was definitely a lot of doubt. Even just like with me. But once I got my job in consulting and realized that like Spanish was something that kind of gave me a leg up, even in the interviews, cuz they.

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Asked about it, I.

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Have like, never regretted it since and I.

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Think it's.

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Even for people that like speak Spanish at home, I think if you are passionate enough about it, like I hate to be corny and say that, but like, I think it will, it'll work out in the end.

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So. So what would you say to somebody who's potentially on the fence about learning a language, be it Spanish or anything else?

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I would say that just.

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I mean, it's really just like it makes you stand out is what I've kind of noticed as.

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I've, you know, like I've been in the professional world for like 6 years now. I've applied to different jobs and I've almost always had someone like ask about it in an interview, whether it was in a casual way of being like, Oh my gosh. Like you took Spanish and like, they'll wanna tell me something. Like if they've also taken Spanish or something like that.

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Or if it's part of the job, I think what people don't realize is that it, I mean us.

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Things I mean as the world currently is, I think having a language just becomes more impressive. It's honestly and like like work people, they do look at that when you're applying. So I always think it's a bonus.

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Stephanie, thank you very much for joining us today.

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It was lovely to talk with you.

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Of course, thanks for having me.

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Of course. Thank you very much again, Stephanie, and thank you for your time.

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And have a good rest of your evening and enjoy the rest of your Monday if you can.

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Thanks you guys as well.

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Alright, excellent you.

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See you. Thank you very much.