

Interpreting company owner tells **potential entrepreneurs,** *'Don't be scared'*

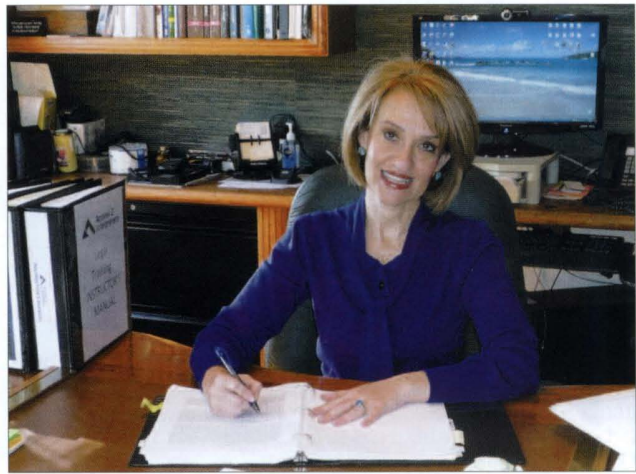
When Yana Schottenstein immigrated to Columbus from Russia in 1992 and began teaching English-as-a second-language classes, the former Moscow resident learned quickly just how important communication skills had become to a city that was rapidly diversifying.

"People started coming up to me (during class), asking ... 'Can you help with the doctor's office, (my) lawyer,'" she said. "I told them, 'I only speak two languages, not 70.'"

Schottenstein, 49, who has a doctorate in general linguistics, decided more than six years ago to do something to help plug the language gap in the capital city.

Today, the founder of Access 2 Interpreters says she has employed more than 300 people and can deploy interpreters who are fluent in 72 languages, all with extensive training in legal and medical terminology, among other specialties.

"Columbus is the most diverse (city) in Ohio," she said, adding that interpreters who speak Spanish, Somali and Arabic are by far her most requested speakers.



Schottenstein said the basis for her company's success lies in the rigorous training requirements to which her interpreters are subjected.

"Even seven years ago, the notion (was that) you could pick up anyone on the street that speaks two languages and they could be an interpreter," she said.

But that isn't the case, she said. Schottenstein employs the services of medical doctors, linguists and attorneys, among others, who collaborate with her to draft training courses designed to impart to her interpreters a high level of expertise when advising a Somali-speaking patient in a doctor's office, or an attorney who needs to discuss a case with an Arabic-speaking client.

According to the company website, Access' training curriculum "includes courses in the Interpreter's Code of Ethics in legal and health care fields, HIPAA, and legal, medical, business, and social services terminology. Access requires their interpreters and translators to provide language proficiency certificates through an independent third-party testing agency."

"It's a very competitive (field)," said Schottenstein of the interpreter industry, adding that demanding the most from her employees has helped put her company on top.

"I believe that our investment in (employee) education pays back."

Her advice to aspiring entrepreneurs is simple.

"Don't be scared to jump (in) over your head," she said. "Don't underestimate yourself. Work hard and be willing to learn, and you will succeed.

"Oh, and enjoy yourself."