



# A GUIDE TO SUCCESS IN IMMIGRATION CONSULTANT BUSINESS

BE A CERTIFIED IMMIGRATION CONSULTANT



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# BE A CERTIFIED IMMIGRATION CONSULTANT

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# Chapter 1

# Immigration Consultant

## OVERVIEW

### The Field of Immigration Consultatn Work

In the 1960s, a large number of qualified people started migrating from Asia and Latin America to the USA, Europe and Canada, therefore bringing about the need for increasingly strict and clear immigration regulations for the targeted states. In time, these procedures became more and more complex, rendering the immigration process a laborious endeavor for even the most qualified applicant.

### Introduction

In the case of the United States, anyone wishing to cross the borders, whether as a student, visitor, worker or permanent resident, must complete the immigration process and file for a specific type of document. While immigrants can choose to submit their applications to the USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services) on their own, this is no longer practiced due to the fact that something as simple as a filing error can significantly delay the process and even compromise one's immigration status.

### Fact

According to the 2013 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics issued by the US Department of Homeland Security, more than 204,000 immigration applicants were denied admission into the USA<sup>1</sup>. A noteworthy percentage of these people failed to complete their applications correctly.

### Consequence

To avoid such mistakes, people who wish to immigrate to the USA now employ the services of a certified immigration consultant.

### Duties of a certified immigration consultant

- Interviewing clients and ensuring that they are eligible to immigrate to the USA.
- Overseeing the completion of the immigration application and the immigration documents.
- Making sure that the client's application is received by the USCIS within the time limit set by the Government.

- Verifying the accuracy and correctness of the information provided by the client for their application and ensuring the presence of all the necessary legal documents.
- Preparing all the fee quotes and other information needed by the client during the immigration process.
- Providing clients with information regarding US federal, state and local laws in the form of brochures or handbooks.



### JOB DESCRIPTION

A certified immigration consultant deals with people who are relocating from one country to another, either temporarily or with the intention to obtain citizenship. More specifically, a consultant helps immigrants obtain the documents they need in order to live and work legally, without having the authority to offer legal advice, but with the possibility to further clients to an immigration attorney.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ois\\_yb\\_2013\\_0.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ois_yb_2013_0.pdf)

# Increase Your Value

## AS A CERTIFIED IMMIGRATION CONSULTANT



## Chapter 2

### Introduction

The USA does not posit any special education requirements for immigration consultants, which means that anyone can recommend themselves as an authorized consultant, regardless of their expertise. In fact, the percentage of people getting scammed is so high that the USCIS was forced to commence the Unauthorized Practice of Immigration Law Initiative (UPIL) to identify and eliminate conning consultants. Consequently, one of the most important factors to consider when working as an immigration consultant is building trustworthiness with clients. To this end, there are four important steps that can help increase your value as a consultant:

- Earn an official certificate.
- Apply for a surety bond.
- Become licensed with the USCIS.
- Stay up-to-date with the US immigration law and policy.

### Apply for a surety bond

To function as a trustworthy immigration consultant, you must secure a surety bond worth between \$30,000 and \$100,000. The surety bond brings together three parties in a mutual, legally binding contract – the principal (you or your business), the obligee (the entity that requires the bond or, in this case, the USCIS) and the surety (the insurance company). To obtain a surety bond, you must complete an application and pay a quote calculated according to the type of bond and the amount requested.

### Advantages

Securing a surety bond means that your clients will be fairly compensated for any financial loss, rendering your services more safe and reliable.



### Earn your Certificate

Becoming certified as an immigration consultant is the first essential step towards a successful career in the industry. To earn your certificate, you can either participate in the training program of a consultancy firm upon being hired or you can enlist in a standalone program specialized in US immigration consultancy. The latter is available in both in-class and online format and its duration generally spans over several months.

### Advantages

An official immigration consultant certificate offers clients the certainty that you have been trained to advise them and that your knowledge is up to the task.

### Stay up-to-date

Becoming familiar with the US immigration law and policy during your initial training program is not sufficient to sustain a successful career. While the main principles of the immigration process remain the same, the fluctuating nature of any law implies that the particulars

are subject to change over time. To provide your clients with useful advice, you must ensure that you remain up-to-date with these changes and integrate them into your practice.

### Advantages

Your performance as an immigration consultant is the

main factor in determining the success of your business or the likelihood of earning a raise within a firm. The higher the satisfaction of your clients, the more opportunities you create for your personal and professional development.

# Understand The Core Skills

OF A TOP IMMIGRATION CONSULTANT



## Introduction

While official certificates are important factors in forming a credible professional image, it is your performance and abilities that can maintain this image once you begin collaborating with a client. According to the majority of seasoned professionals in the field, there are 5 core skills you must understand in order to become a top immigration consultant:

- Excellent communication.
- Proficiency in English.
- Punctuality, patience and problem-solving.
- Computer and data entry.
- Thorough knowledge of the US immigration system.

## Communication is key

The central skill of any top immigration consultant is excellent communication, which is involved in almost every responsibility of this profession. Being able to communicate clearly and convincingly permits an immigration consultant to establish productive relations with clients, to

understand their circumstances, to suggest the appropriate courses of action and to provide assistance during the process of filing applications by conveying information in an understandable format. In addition, impeccable telephone etiquette and a confident personality help the consultant bring in more clients and efficiently resolve their issues.

## Speaking their language

When offering advice about immigrating to the United States, one must first be able to understand the language of the target state.

A top immigration consultant must be fluent in both the written and the spoken English language so as to be able to communicate effectively with the involved authorities and to provide guidance to clients regarding the information required during the application process. When working in a country other than the US, the consultant might be required to speak the native language as well in order to better communicate with clients.



## Chapter 3

### Working with technology

We live in a world where almost every industry has transferred its filing system to a computerized system, making it necessary to work with technology on a regular basis.

Due to the fact that a large part of the job is to collect information about clients and to fill in their applications, a top immigration consultant must have proficient data entry skills, as well as be able to operate computer programs such as Microsoft Office Word or Excel. One may also use technology to communicate with clients rapidly or to get in touch with US immigration authorities.

### Working under pressure

Making sure that the client's application reaches the USCIS in time is one of the most important responsibilities of an immigration consultant.

A top immigration consultant offers advice to tens of clients at the same time and must ensure that each of them completes and files their application before the deadline established by the US Government. Thus, a good consultant must be able to work efficiently under pressure and with tight deadlines, while also providing outstanding customer service to all the clients involved. Since the circumstances of each immigrant unique, the consultant's problem-solving skills are usually solicited.

### A solid theoretical foundation

No immigration consultant can offer useful advice without having a thorough understanding of the US immigration law and policy.

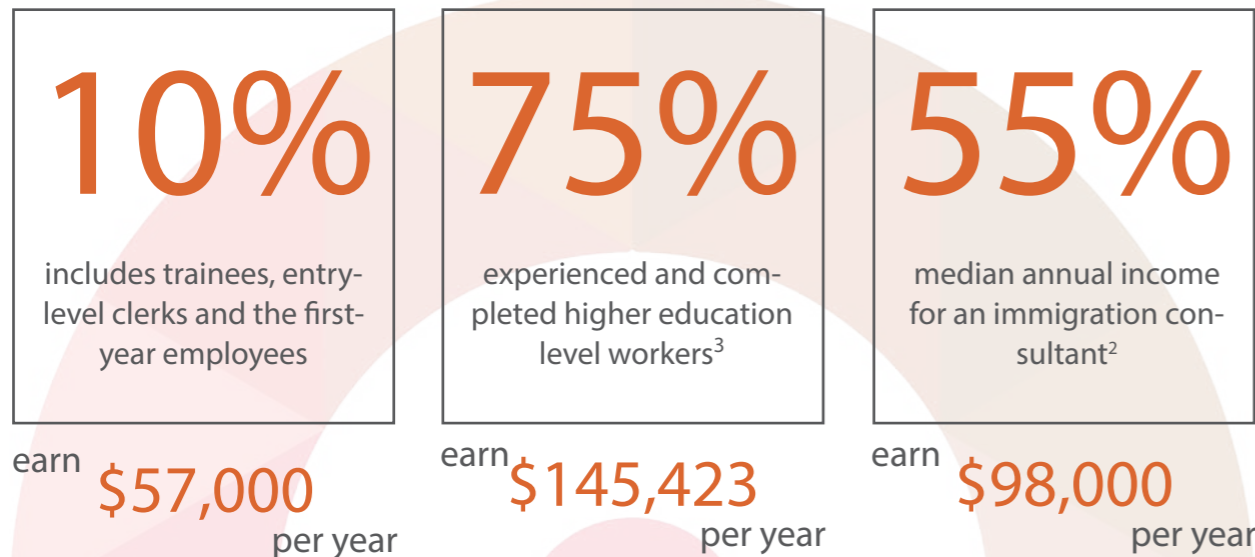
A consultant's knowledge of the US immigration system lies at the foundation of his or her practice. For instance, without understanding the large number of Visas and Green Cards available for US immigrants, one cannot translate the client's circumstances into the appropriate immigration documents. Since everyone expects an effective and timely response, the consultant must be well prepared to evaluate the client's situation right away and to offer personalized advice about the immigration process.

# Income Prospect

## OF A POTENTIAL IMMIGRATION CONSULTANT



## Chapter 4



### Why is immigration consulting a profitable career?

The median annual income for an immigration consultant reaches \$98,000. Compared to other industries and the amount of training involved to become qualified for a different profession, it is far more profitable to become an immigration consultant than support college fees.

### Figures

According to Payscale.com, only 10% of the total workers in the immigration consultancy industry cover the lower-end of the projected

salary of \$57,000 per year. This percentage includes trainees, entry-level clerks and the first-year employees. Over 75% of the surveyed workers earn more than the projected annual income, somewhere around \$145,4230.

Affordable services compared to lawyers' fees coupled with an increased global demand have turned immigration consulting into a career that has superior prospects to one that demands college education.

### Tackling the assumptions

These salaries are calculated based on specialists surveyed across the United States of America. However, the demand is variable across regions, meaning that in cities such as Chicago, New York, Philadelphia and Washington, the salary is higher than the average income. In addition, these are earnings of employees with legal firms or consulting organizations. Developing an independent immigration consulting business eliminates much of the intermediate fees that are charged by companies. Therefore, it is expected that autonomous contractors will earn anywhere between 15% and 30% more than a regular employee.

### Reducing costs for your immigration consulting business

Cost effective management is an invaluable skill to a service-providing business. The inflow of increased work amounts can be managed with fewer costs through an IT infrastructure, rather than expanding manpower.

Training immigration consultants that have IT skills can save your firm incredible administration costs. The difference is comparable to that of managing a 3-story headquarters and an apartment-sized office.

Additionally, running a virtual platform comes with the benefit of little space requirements, which reduces your expenses manifold. The added bonus is that co-workers are free to perform their duties from their own offices at home, with flexible business hours.

### Online presence is the only one that matters

Successful entrepreneurs acknowledge that nowadays, if your business is not online, it does not exist. Having a website means you customers can find out information about your services at any time, post inquiries and even look up referrals previous clients provided for your services.

As an online immigration consulting business, you benefit from global awareness and outreach. While local PR campaigns are effective, nothing can compare to over 4,400,000 worldwide customers for your services.

With these aspects in mind, the income of an immigration consultant grows at least 40% above the average projected annual salary. The only limit is the amount of work that your business infrastructure can handle.

<sup>2</sup><http://swz.salary.com/SalaryWizard/Immigration-Specialist-Salary-Details.aspx>  
<sup>3</sup>[http://www.payscale.com/research/US/Job=Immigration\\_Consultant/Salary](http://www.payscale.com/research/US/Job=Immigration_Consultant/Salary)

# DIY Immigration Consultant

## VS. IMMIGRATION LAWYER

While employing the services of an immigration lawyer provides more safety in terms of knowledge and legal advice, the financial cost is incredibly high compared to an immigration consultant.



### Introduction

As a consequence of the preparation that a person must undergo to become a legal advisor, the expenses involved in securing their support are very high. This solution is unfeasible for the majority of U.S. immigrants, as people frequently come to the United

States with the hope of better employment opportunities. Statistics from the Center for Immigration Studies<sup>4</sup> indicate that 44% of immigrants in the U.S.A live in poverty, meaning that their income is not sufficient to hire an immigration lawyer.

<sup>4</sup> <http://cis.org/node/3876>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2006/10/importing-poverty-immigration-and-poverty-in-the-united-states-a-book->



## Chapter 5

People dealing with poverty or low incomes cannot afford the services of an immigration lawyer. As opposite to little or no legal advice, an immigration consultant is a viable, affordable solution. Immigration consultants cannot represent people in a court of law, but their guidance can help avoid legal issues altogether.

A certified immigration consultant is a practical option because of their complete knowledge of the U.S. immigration process. As such, the fee of an immigration lawyer can be traded for the services of an expert immigration consultant who can guide the immigrant through the immigration procedure more closely.

An immigration consultant does not have to deal with multiple areas of the law – they are specialized and focused on immigration issues. In addition, these professionals often bring to the table resources that an immigration lawyer could never acquire, such as ways in which one can effectively integrate in a community, entry-level employment opportunities, administrative information or an overview of the educational system.

It is more rentable to acquire the necessary information about U.S. immigration and become a do-it-yourself professional immigra-

tion consultant. For a fraction an immigration lawyers' fee, it is possible to gain the underlying advantage of a qualification, resulting in better employment opportunities when immigrating to a new country without involving higher education degree programs.

An extensive presentation of the employment difficulties and poverty issues immigrants have to deal with conducted by the Heritage Foundation indicates that over 90% of the children that come from low income immigrant families are likely to live in poverty themselves<sup>5</sup>. Consequently, becoming a DIY immigration consultant is an underlying strength in securing well-paid jobs and improving the financial security of an individual, as well as his or her family.



# Building Your Own Business

## AS AN IMMIGRATION CONSULTANT

### Introduction

Starting off a business on your own demands an up-front investment that can range anywhere from \$10,000 to \$100,000 or more. As an immigration consultant, the initial cost is almost negligible, while the time requirements make it so that other attributions can be maintained simultaneously.

The number of U.S. immigrants is constantly on the rise, meaning that there is an increased demand on the market for trained professionals in this field. Statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau<sup>6</sup> indicate that only in the past couple of years, at least 1 million people sought to immigrate to the U.S.A from other countries, most of whom intended to gain permanent

### Consequence

An increased demand translates into more revenues for the business of an immigration consultant. In fact, if you become an immigration consultant as your own business, the expenditures may be covered by the revenues obtained from practicing even the lowest market price for this service.



## Chapter 6

**Building your own business as an immigration consultant also means that you can customize your service to better suit the needs of your clients**

Certified immigration consultants are familiarized with U.S. visa application procedures. Besides recommending the best green-card or visa category that suits a customer, immigration consultants are also acquainted with the possible legal issues that can emerge out of a client's circumstances.

An expert advisor in this domain can help foreign citizens understand American legislation, thereby guiding individuals on a path that would not bring about unwanted legal consequences. From non-immigrant to immigrant visa information, temporary

employment, asylum, professional athletes, students and much more, the purpose of an immigration consultant is to translate the circumstances of different clients in the appropriate visa categories. Once this is done, the client can make a choice based on their future intentions.

The assistance of a professional immigration consultant business does not stop at the paperwork. As a counsellor, you may help clients with information about the educational system available for them or their children, the work force market or even socially accepted traditions and behaviours, so that their integration occurs naturally.

**B**uilding your own business as an immigration consultant can open new gateways to services that U.S. immigrants might desire or benefit from. The development potential of such an organization expands rapidly at the rate of the firm's possibility to provide essential information that is idiosyncratic to the American nation, from language and vocabulary development to general history

courses, discussions about the administration of a federal government and much more.

### Advantages

Growth prospects intensify proportionate to the skills and areas that the enterprise is willing to encompass in its service packages.



<sup>6</sup> <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states-1>



# The Future Market Potential

FOR IMMIGRATION CONSULTANTS

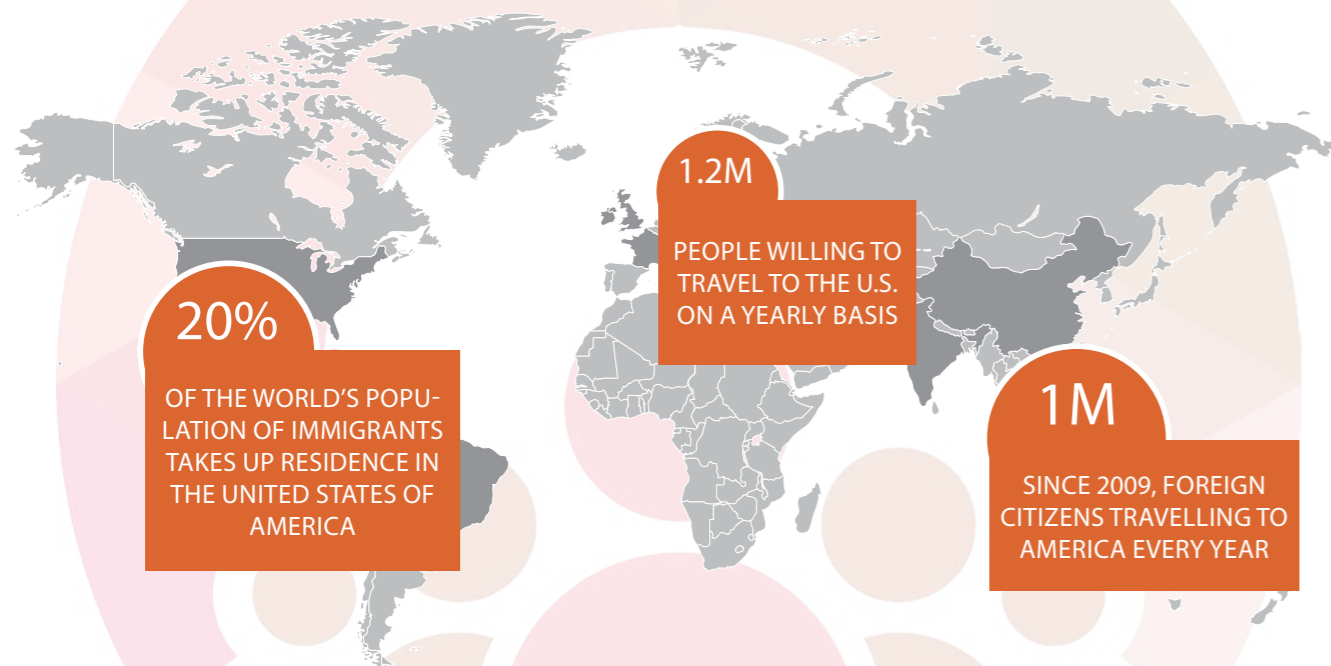


## Chapter 7

### Fact I

The United States of America is the most attractive destination for migrants, as it currently holds the highest number of immigrants world-wide.

From the developed economy to widespread incredible job prospects, Hollywood culture and gambling industry, statistics indicate that U.S. global popularity will continue to aggressively increase number of immigrants.



A report released by the government's Homeland Security<sup>7</sup> in 2013 indicated that 20% of the world's population of immigrants takes up residence in the United States of America, approximated at 41 million people. On their own, foreign-born individuals comprise the majority of population in regions such as New

York or Las Vegas, imposing an innovative view towards the concept of citizenship. In addition, starting with 2009, every year there were at least 1 million foreign citizens travelling to America. In the previous 4 years, this total has risen with at least 3% per annum.

### Fact II

The market potential of immigration consultant services turned into a pillar of development for the economy of the USA after the real-estate crisis in 2008. At a time when it seemed that nothing would work, investment bankers realized that the immigration business is still booming, diverting as many resources as possible towards immigration consultant organizations.

immigration consultants have their work cut out for them. Steady growth for a business is translated into an increased value, as it is developing at a predictable rate. As such, companies that provide immigration consulting service are now increasing in net worth due to an upsurge of attention from investors. Moreover, surety bonds constantly evaluate enterprises for their stability, powering their growth with even more financial resources. As a result, companies in this field of activity have some of the largest predicted profits on the market.

With almost 1.2 million people willing to travel to the United States on a yearly basis,



### Development

An immigration consultant's attributions can go beyond advising before the application is sent. Competent counsellors acknowledge the uniqueness of the situation of an immigrant when arriving in a new country and provide assistance to their customers for a couple of years or until they receive permanent residence.

foreign born citizens are required to manage a regular connection with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. As newly arrived individuals, they need guidance from an expert in the country, which is also helpful in the process of accommodation. Starting with the administrative and legal systems, the dynamics of the work force market and even the intricacies of the educational system, immigrants may resort to the service of their consultant for an extended period of time.

From 6 to 18 months or even 3 or 4 years, for-

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ois\\_yb\\_2013\\_0.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ois_yb_2013_0.pdf)

# Successful Elements

## OF AN IMMIGRATION CONSULTANT

### Introduction

Analysts dealing with the job offer market indicate that the ratio between professional legal advisors and those looking for these services is within acceptable margins. If we exclude the too expensive immigration lawyers from the equation, we are left with an immense demand for immigration consultants.

Close to 50% of the total amount of migrants coming to the United States of America can-

not afford the services of an immigration lawyer due to circumstances of low income. In numbers, over 500,000 individuals try to deal with the immigration procedures themselves or with the aid of non-qualified immigration workers.

This means that for the next 5 years at least, there will be an abounding demand for qualified, skilled and trained immigration consultants. Projecting a fee that is anywhere from 25% to 50% of an immigration lawyer's compensation, an immigration consultant is a feasible solution for low income situations.



## Chapter 8

-  **Case awareness**  
Every client comes with their own circumstances. As a trained professional, the key to providing effective consulting is awareness of the customer's needs and situation. In immigration consulting, applicants come from backgrounds that may range from academic professors to blue-collar employees, executives or unemployment.
-  **Management abilities**  
The increased demand for immigration consulting brings about the necessity for a business strategy. If familiarity with organizational patterns and their implementation allows for positive organizational growth, managing a firm without a corporate plan can result in poor work-flow and a negative impact on its social reputation.
-  **Business apprehension**  
Corporate immigration consulting requires a distinct set of skills. Adequate immigration counselling for commercial purposes involves grasping a variety of aspects ranging from revenue-based solutions to legal department customization, cultural acclimatization and even public relations campaigning.
-  **Risk management**  
The first dimension of risk management is complying with local standards and regulations and facilitating an uneventful integration for customers. The client must be aware of the issues that can arise in the process of immigration and a successful immigration consultant can provide this essential information. Most importantly, a successful immigration consultant has practical solving algorithms organized according to situational efficiency.

# Global Demands

## OF U.S. IMMIGRATION CONSULTANTS

### Introduction

The affordable costs of hiring an immigration consultant as opposite to a lawyer comes into play when an application is considered. The USCIS is notorious for their slow-paced visa-processing, making it crucial for a visa request to be 100% correct.

Numerous complaints are issued every year regarding the processing times for U.S. im-

migrants' visas<sup>8</sup>, but little improvement has taken place in this direction. Hiring a competent U.S. immigration consultant can literally save years from a client's waiting time. From expedite processing to overseas handling, expert immigration consultants are capable of implementing strategies for dealing with delays.

By examining the current immigrant waiting list for visa applications, it is possible to determine the global demand for U.S. immigration consultant services. The figures are as follow:



<sup>8</sup> <http://lawandborder.com/abysmal-uscis-processing-times-130-immediate-relative-immigrant-petitions/>  
<sup>9</sup> <http://travel.state.gov/content/dam/visas/Statistics/Immigrant-Statistics/WaitingListItem.pdf>



## Chapter 9

### Analysis

- From the 16 countries with the highest number of immigration applications, Mexico takes the lead by counting in over 1,300,000 requests.

- The percentage of Mexican applications is over 10% of the country's current population, indicating that American history is strongly influenced by the Hispanic culture.

- Requests from East Asian countries and India taken together have presently exceeded the number of Mexican submissions.

- Visas issued during the fiscal year of 2015 are limited to 370,000, increasing the waiting time for current applications even more.

- Roughly 60% of the total number of applicants come from East Asian and Hispanic countries. Synergizing your immigration consulting services with translation companies that offer services in these native languages successfully increases awareness for your services and communication with customers from these regions.

It is a requirement for the immigration applicants to have a grasp of basic communication in the English language, which means that the figures above are actually potential customers for immigration consultants that offer online services as well.

As proficient speakers of the English language, immigration consultants can help potential immigrants deal with the application requirements and the requested information. Additionally, if a consultant can also manage an IT infrastructure for their organization, they can effectively offer online consulting as well, therefore complementing the local market interest by the global demand. In fact, with the proper visibility, an online immigration consulting business has better growth prospects than a strictly traditional one due to reduced maintenance and administration costs. Still, integrating both dimensions maximizes possible income from revenues.





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