

# Starbucks®: Using the *TOEIC*® Test for Career Measurement and Advancement



*“The TOEIC test is a global measurement tool which brings trust and transparency in its results.”*

Thiago Panicacci\*  
Head of Human Resources, Starbucks Brasil

## Starbucks Success Story Snapshot

It is imperative that Starbucks’ employees have a working knowledge of the English language in order to communicate with overseas partners and offices.

Starbucks Brasil has begun using the *TOEIC*® Listening and Reading test as an audit tool for its top and middle management, requiring that select employees take the test before and after a 120-hour guided-study program.

The test has also helped Starbucks focus on the individual needs of their employees, improving the average *TOEIC* score from intermediate to an upper-intermediate level.

## Company Snapshot: Starbucks

**Starbucks Corporation** is the largest coffeehouse company in the world. Since opening its first coffee shop in 1971, it has become one of the most recognizable brands in the world with millions of people enjoying their products daily.

### Quick Facts

- **Key Categories:** Coffee, Tea, Ready-to-Drink beverages
- **Corporate Headquarters:** Seattle, Washington
- **Retail Locations:** 20,184 in 60+ countries
- **Number of Employees:** 160,000
- **Net Sales (2013):** \$14.8 billion

As of December 2013  
Source: Starbucks.com

*To learn more about the TOEIC tests and how they can benefit your organization, contact your local ETS Preferred Network office at [www.ets.org/toEIC](http://www.ets.org/toEIC) or email [globalforum@ets.org](mailto:globalforum@ets.org).*

## TOEIC® Test Success Story

Starbucks Brasil

# Leading Global Brand Uses TOEIC Test for Career Advancement and Measurement



### Challenge

Since opening its first coffee shop in 1971, Starbucks Corporation has grown to become one of the most recognizable brands in the world, with over 20,000 locations in 60+ countries as of December 2013. Their vast selection of beverages and food items are enjoyed by millions of people every day, and the company continues to expand into new territories every year.

One of the places they have expanded to is Brasil, with the first two Starbucks in the country opening in Sao Paulo in 2006. Although Portuguese is the official language of Brasil, it is imperative that Starbucks' employees have a working knowledge of the English language in order to communicate with overseas partners and offices. However, English-language studies are not part of the curriculum in most Brazilian public and private schools so many college graduates do not have the English skills necessary to succeed in an international workplace. This requires companies to invest in English-language training. According to Thiago Panicacci, former Head of Human Resources for Starbucks Brasil, "The level of English measured during the hiring process is usually enough for basic and written communications, but it definitely creates barriers when the employee needs to talk to colleagues overseas, give a presentation to our board of directors, or when meeting foreign visitors." Because of this challenge, Starbucks Brasil needed to improve the English-language proficiency of its top and middle management.

### Solution

Starbucks Brasil has begun using the **TOEIC®** Listening and Reading test to assess the English-language proficiency of its top and middle management. Select employees then participate in a 120-hour guided-study program, for which Starbucks uses the TOEIC Listening

and Reading test to measure participant progress. Additionally, Starbucks Brasil has begun using the TOEIC test as a criteria for internal promotions for higher level positions.

### Result

The TOEIC Listening and Reading test provides Starbucks Brasil with an accurate picture of its employees' English-language proficiency. According to Thiago Panicacci, "The TOEIC test is a global measurement tool which brings trust and transparency in its results. It helps Starbucks make important decisions regarding the investment needed for every partner at the managerial level."

The test has also helped Starbucks focus on the individual needs of their employees by being able to reliably measure and easily track their progress with a TOEIC score. TOEIC scores are also used to determine whether employees are eligible to receive a 100% grant for the language training. The test has helped Starbucks focus on the individual needs of their employees, improving the average TOEIC score from intermediate to an upper-intermediate level.

### About the TOEIC Tests

For more than 30 years the TOEIC tests have been the global standard for measuring workplace English-language communication skills. The TOEIC tests are used by nearly 14,000 businesses, organizations, and government agencies in 150 countries.

\*Thiago Panicacci is no longer employed by Starbucks.