Berlitz General Union Tokyo March 2014

April 1st everything goes up 3%, What about your salaries? No fooling. . .

The consumption tax (shohizei) will go from 5% to 8% and as you can see in the LCs, tuition will be going up as well.

But what about our wages? Prime Minister Abe has said companies should be mindful of the need for salary increases.

Let's look at this very simplistically. If Berlitz charges Y7,500 a class the increase of 3% will make that 7,725. Ok, so with that extra Y225, they have to pay more sales tax, yes, but their base revenue should also go up - meaning in theory they receive Y225 more a lesson, wouldn't it be expected for teachers to also receive some of that? Shouldn't there be a minimum 3% increase for wages for everyone?

At the last Collective Bargaining Feb 24, 2014 we had MGT trying to tell us that if students buy lessons before April 1st, students will in effect be sticking Berlitz with the burden of 8% sales tax when the lessons are used after the 5% deadline. Big deal. The company did well enough to turn a profit.

In past CB MGT used the tuition freeze as a key reason to not raise wages. Well tuition is going up now and if you look at the pay scales for 2014 and 2013 they are unchanged.

When your base pay is 250,000 yen and you just lost 3% overnight to a tax increase, that hurts. Your salary will buy 7,500 yen less a month. That adds up to Y90,000 a year less.

Here are some things that will be going up:
Transportation - so be sure to go get your transportation costs/payments from HQ updated so you aren't taking a hit out of your own pocket.

Beverages go Y120 to Y130 for 350 ml and Y150-Y160 for 500 ml to now 525 ml. Bank fees of Y105 to go to Y108. Rent only goes up at contract time.

According to memo 2014-026 President Masumoto has "taken into consideration the consumption tax increase from April1, 2014

and decided to reward instructors at the same level as in 2013." hmm. So if we work harder we can try to compensate for the tax increase ourselves?

The best rate increase (Outstanding) might equal 60 yen, so if you are 1900 yen scale A, then at a 60 yen increase, you will make 1960 and just offset the tax by 3 yen each lesson. You will have 3 yen to show for all your hard work from the previous year.

Exceeds expectation teachers, good teachers and needs improvement tecahers will take a hit - their raises will not surpass 3%.

Seniority teachers are still waiting to hear how MGT will adjust their wages.

For those of you who maxed out your pay scales, no increase! (Begunto is demanding an expansion in the wage scale, thinking of joining?)

Working in your break time - the retrenchment

If you are putting books away, filling out forms, finding a book or answering teachers questions during hand-over you are not taking a break. You cannot just walk out after a lesson and leave card/ipad and book in the class and leave for the day. There is a minimum expectation of work including tidying up and arranging/collecting data. That is not a restful activity- it's work!

MGT has in past collective bargainings stated instructors must be ready to walk into the classroom to teach as the bell rings.

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In the last CB MGT redefined the break as an instructor must be ready to get the book and walk into class when the bell rings. Ok. So that means getting a book is now work....and we have been doing that on our breaks, what about all the other activities we do as work that MGT tells us is not work, but we know is?

One instructor just completed logs for the month of February and in that 28 day calendar period over 5 lessons worth of work time on breaks was logged.

Go check out our website:

Berlitzuniontokyo.org

You can download the worksheet we are using with the Labor Standards Office (LSO) to bill Berlitz for unpaid over time.

Remember that you do not have to work on your unpaid break time, but if you do work, the company should pay you for it.

If you have ever been told to prepare for a lesson or read student notes before a class or preread a story or do proofreading for a student on your break, that is unpaid work.

Issue of 35/40 & 40/40 contracts:What availability means

In 1998 Berlitz introduced the Performance system (35/40MG) which coexists with the previous Seniority based system (30/30 MG). In 2005 Berlitz introduced the Rank system (40/40 - Instructor). This system increases the burden of lessons taught from the previous 30 to 35 to 40 required lessons a week.

When the contract was introduced in 2005, the union got MGT to sign a Labor Management Agreement (LMA) promising that lessons in the extra 5 unit availability would not be lost to 40/40 teachers. (That is why 40/40 gets 5 non paid teaching units- so teachers receiving PL lessons would still have lessons available to teach).

Currently teachers on 35/40 are saying the extra per lessons they used to get are not appearing on their schedules - their contracts have 35 contract plus 5 extra units to be filled with available lessons at pl rate. They might have gotten 3-4 or even 5 lessons filled in their availability each week, but the rationale for scheduling done these days seems to give these teachers no extra per lessons in their extra availability of 5 units. Lessons go to other teachers.

Some instructors have realized that while they are open for lessons, they get fewer each year and that impacts their salaries causing them to earn less money. One example was several hundred thousand yen in lower earnings each year.

Is this happening in LCs around you? If so, please contact the Union at begunto1@yahoo.com When you contact us please put “35/40” in the subject line.

Kids’ Prep Time- paid same month or following month

CB on Monday 24th February, the union clarified with MGT that Kids’ preps should be paid in a timely manner and when pressed, MGT responded within the same month or the following month.

You should have the choice to have it placed as per lesson because the work was done outside of contract time. If you choose to put it in contract that should be your choice. PL teachers get prep time at the 1900 pl rate, and contract teachers working on personal time should have the same expectation.

Let your Manager of Instruction know by email- keep a record. 2 years back pay for unpaid work is what you can ask for.

One teacher injured in Valentine’s Snow Storm

Even with a 7:45 pm CTL - Akasaka stayed open until 9:10 - one teacher was injured slipping in the snow and fracturing his leg.

Let’s wish him a speedy recovery.

Remember if you are injured on your way to work or from work, Berlitz is responsible for your injury and by law is required to pay you 60% of your wages while you recuperate. MGT, your doctor and you will have to fill out documents.

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