

## How to avoid costly translation mistakes

Translating a document might seem like an easy task at first glance, but when you realize that you are entrusting someone else to understand and interpret your text into a different language, you realize how many things can go wrong. In reality, translation mistakes might lead to the loss of business at best, and to signing an incorrect legal agreement or to accidents due to incorrectly translated manuals in the worst case. To avoid costly translation mistakes and to fully utilize the provider's services, we suggest the following simple tips:

### 1. Target Audience

The purpose of any translation is to reach an audience who speaks a different language and comes from a different culture. Therefore, it is very important to provide as much information as possible about the intended recipient.

- ✓ As a client, you must pay attention to language dialects. For example, the French language is spoken in many countries around the world. In Canada alone, there are four dialects of French: Acadian, Chiac, Newfoundland French and Quebec French. Therefore, a Quebec reader might get offended reading a document written in Acadian French.

### 2. Terminology

It is not a secret that one word can be translated in many different ways. For example, the English word "set" has more than 100 meanings! Therefore, prior to the project initiation, it is helpful to provide terminology resources to the translation provider such as:

- ✓ Glossaries
- ✓ Dictionaries
- ✓ Terminology lists

If you do not have any terminology resources, you can simply discuss with the translation provider which words demand special attention and have to be translated according to a particular context.

### 3. Discuss Writing Style

Most translators will try to match their writing style to the one in the original document. However, sometimes, a specific style might not be suitable to a particular culture. If this is an issue, it has to be addressed in order to avoid a translation that will sound unnatural and fabricated to a foreign audience.

Accurate. Precise. We get it right the first time – EVERY TIME!

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## 4. Assign Help

It is hard to cover all questions and problems prior to initiating a project. Some questions will always arise during the process. Therefore, it is very important to assign a representative, who can answer the translation provider's questions, in order to prevent unnecessary retranslation and, thus, save time and money.

## 5. Ask for proofreading services

Another good way to ensure that your translation is accurate and satisfies your needs is to have it proofread by an independent translator. This service might impose additional costs, but it will pay off in the long run. Proofreaders will make sure that the translation style is suitable and consistent, the terminology matches the content and client's expectations, and all human errors have been eliminated.

If you want additional safety checks, you can also request the following services:

- ✓ **Back Translation:** the original translation is translated back into a source language by an independent translator. For example, you have an English document that needs to be translated into Italian. However, you want to make sure that the translation has fully captured the meaning of the source document. Thus, a second Italian translator will translate the Italian translation back into English, so you, as an English speaker, can evaluate whether or not the original translation was correct.
- ✓ **Cultural Adaptation:** an independent translator with a particular cultural background proofreads the translation to make sure that it is suitable and understandable to a particular culture.
- ✓ **Post-DTP editing:** a translator proofreads his or her own translation after it has been typeset in a different graphic environment. This service is very recommended to use if you are planning to display your translation to the public. For example, you have a Hindi translation which is formatted by your graphic designer into an html format and displayed on your website. The chances are that your designer does not know Hindi and cannot even tell where one sentence ends and the other begins. Therefore, he or she will do their best to copy-paste the translated text accurately. But is there a guarantee that none of the characters are missing or all the sentences have been compiled correctly? Therefore, paying a little extra for the Post-DTP editing will save your business from embarrassment and possible losses.

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