THE TRANSLATION TEAM

A Pocket Guide to Better AI Translations



AI translation can save you real money and real time. It can also introduce errors, and some cost far more than others: an awkward line in a marketing email is embarrassing, while a mistranslated consent form, or benefits notice creates compliance risk.

At **The Translation Team**, we match the level of human review to the level of risk. This is what we call "tiers". This guide shows you how to build protection into your own process. Start with the ten-question self-assessment to see what you already have in place, then use the four sections that follow to set up the rest.

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How mature is your process?

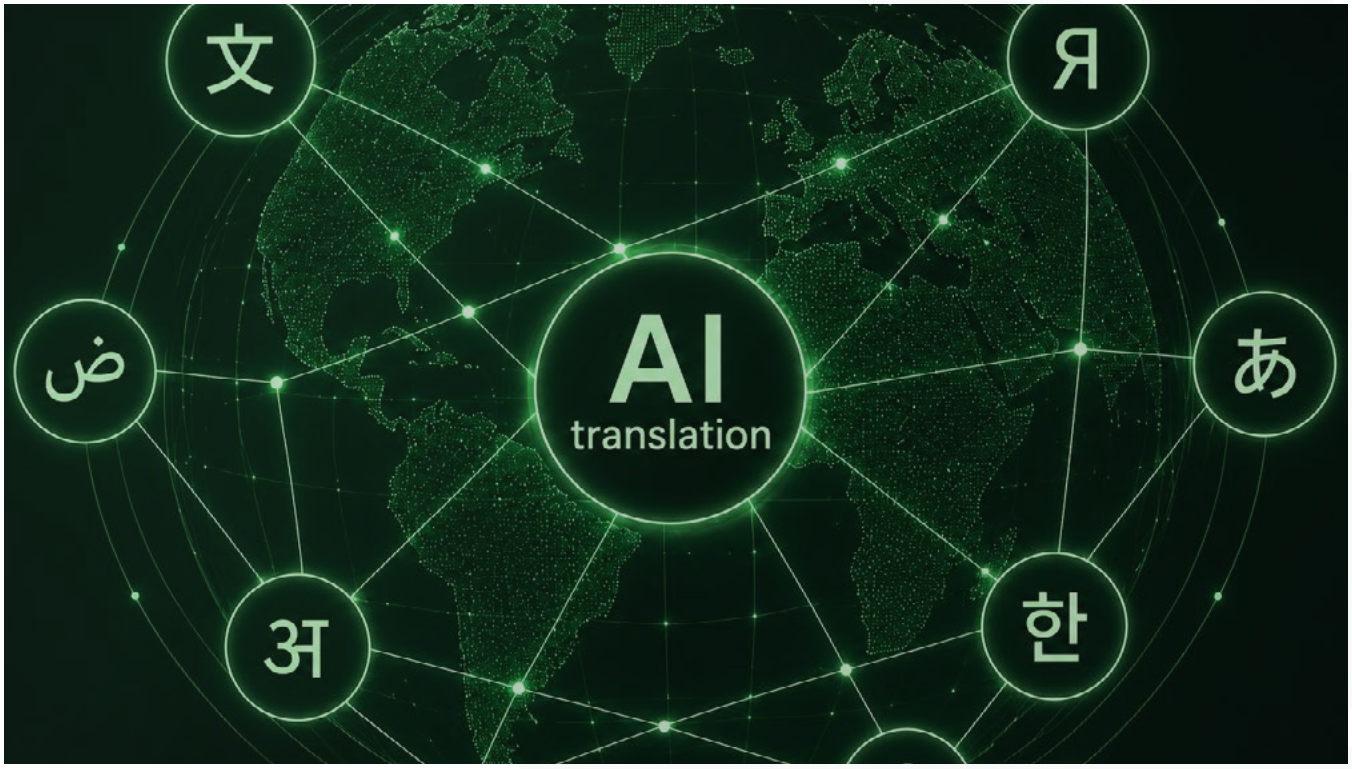
Start with a quick self-assessment. Answer yes or no to the questions below. Once you know what's missing, you can fix it before it becomes a compliance issue, or an apology to your readers.

Answer yes or no to the questions below to obtain your company's score:

- [ ] We've tiered our content by risk.
- [ ] We know which content is too sensitive to go through AI at all.
- [ ] We know which AI tools handle our files, whether our content is used to train models, and what the confidentiality terms cover.
- [ ] We can describe each audience we translate for, down to the variety of the language they use.
- [ ] We have and maintain a current glossary and style guide.
- [ ] Our approved translations are stored in a translation memory.
- [ ] Our translation partner understands what our quality expectations for translated content are.
- [ ] Above the lowest tier, trained linguists review AI translations against the source text.
- [ ] Final layouts in every language are professionally reviewed before release.
- [ ] As part of the process, any changes to translation further trains the model for future iterations.

0-3 YES AD HOC	Most organizations start here. If you only do two things this month, tier your content and have every high-stakes AI translation reviewed against the source. Then work through the rest of the Foundation section below as time allows.
4-7 YES DEVELOPING	For every "no", you will find the answers in this guide, and most organizations find their "no's" cluster in one section. Start there. If you are not certain, start with questions 1 and 8: written tiers and source-based reviews do the most to protect you.
8+ YES MANAGED	Your organization is off to a good start. Use this guide as a reference when onboarding new team members, evaluating new partners, processes or tools, and for keeping compliance as you grow.

Whatever your score, each question above is covered in more detail in the sections ahead.



Foundation: Laying the groundwork

These are the foundations that your AI translation workflows depend on.

Tier your content by risk.

Decide what an error in each type of content would cost you. Some errors are minor, some embarrass you publicly, and some create legal or safety problems. We recommend three levels: low, medium, and high. The table below matches each level with the right kind of review.

> For the most sensitive content, we also offer an AI-free workflow: human translators work from your deterministic glossaries and well-maintained style guidance, to ensure the keenest crafted translation.

Recommended workflows:

	If an error would...	Typical content	What it needs
HIGH RISK	Create legal, medical, or safety problems.	Contracts, consent forms, safety instructions, compliance filings, employee handbooks.	Custom AI model development. Deep review of all content by linguists; the most sensitive content may skip AI entirely.
MEDIUM RISK	Reach customers and reflect on your brand.	Websites, marketing emails, product guides, support content.	An AI draft, then one or more human linguistic reviews and edits against the source.
LOW RISK	Cost you almost nothing, whoever sees it.	General communications, company history on website, FAQ, basic specifications, registration forms, password reset instructions, user instructions for common tasks.	AI on a secure, custom-trained model with deterministic guardrails for term adherence; sometimes no per-file review.

One note for marketing: creative campaigns that call for transcreation (adapting creative work for effect rather than word-for-word accuracy) usually turn out better when a creative human writes from scratch.



Set the rules for your content.

Decide which content can go through AI tools at all, and under what conditions. Anything with personal information, like student special education records, patient materials, or employee data, needs stricter handling or pre-processing. Ask your language partner which AI tools handle your files, whether your content is used to train models, where files are stored and for how long, and what the confidentiality terms cover.



Create and maintain style guides.

Your English style guide covers part of it, but you'll also need translation-specific calls: how formal to sound in each language, which terms stay in English (product names and trademarks usually do), and how to handle gendered language. A partner who knows your brand can draft this with you and help you keep it current.



Start a glossary.

A glossary lists the terms you always want translated the same way: key concepts, legal phrases, job titles, anything your industry regulates. A useful entry includes the approved translation for each language, a line of context, and a note when a term shouldn't be translated at all. Put someone in charge of keeping it current.



Keep a translation memory.

A translation memory stores every sentence or paragraph you've approved, in every language, so repeated wording is reused instead of translated from scratch every time. It helps with consistency. It can also be used to customize AI models for better AI translation performance.



Understand your translation partner's approach to AI.

A partner who runs everything through AI without guardrails lets errors out the door, and you pay for the rework. The right approach matches the tool to the content, with an experienced partner who knows your organization and your audience making the final calls.

Planning: Before each translation begins

With the ground rules in place, here are the steps to take whenever a new translation need comes up.

Decide which risk level fits the project.

Pick the level that fits this content and assign it to the corresponding workflow.

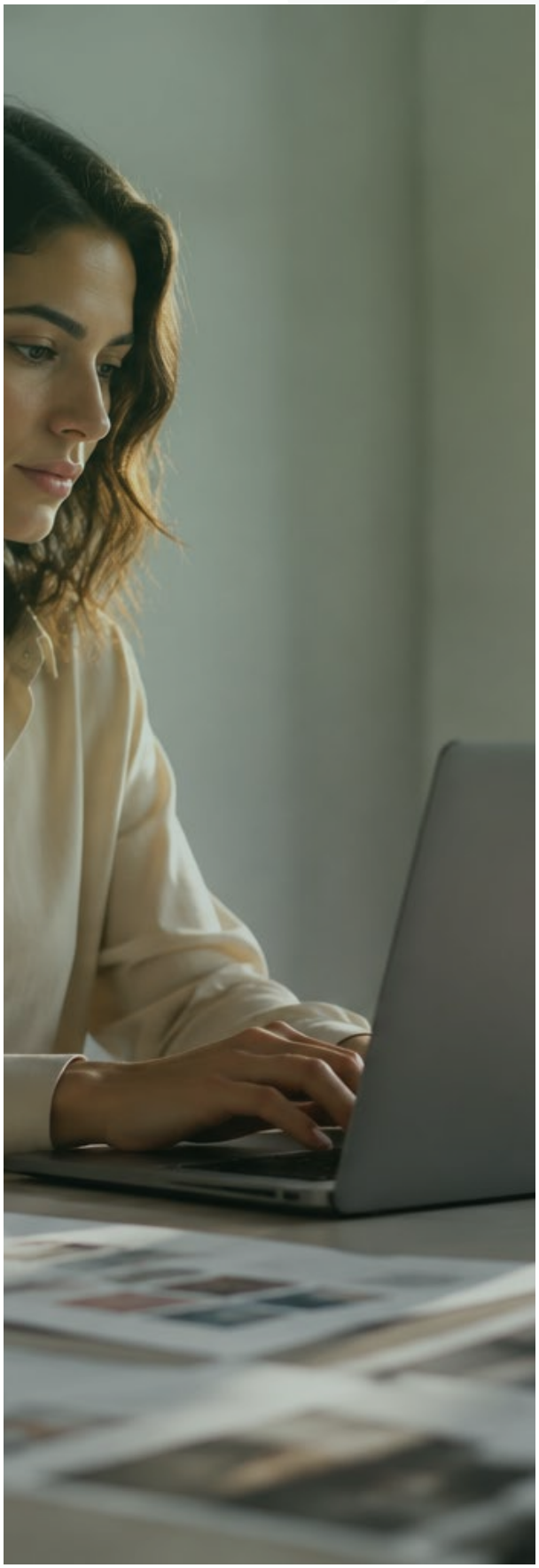
Describe the reader.

Give both the model and the humans the context they need to understand vocabulary and tone: where does the audience live, which language they speak, and which variety of it.

For example: “Vietnamese-speaking patients along the Gulf Coast, reading at a general-public level, formal but warm.”

Attach reference materials.

Include the glossary, the style guide, and the audience description when you send the content for translation, so your translation partner has everything from the start.



Review:
From AI draft to final text

During the translation workflow, professional linguists edit what the AI drafted. Here's what that editing should include.

Match the review to the risk level.

Accuracy and correct terminology are baselines at every level. For low-risk content, a secure, custom-trained model working from your glossary may be enough on its own, with no per-file review. From medium risk up, one or more expert linguists edit against your original, a sentence-by-sentence edit that also reviews tone and cultural fit.

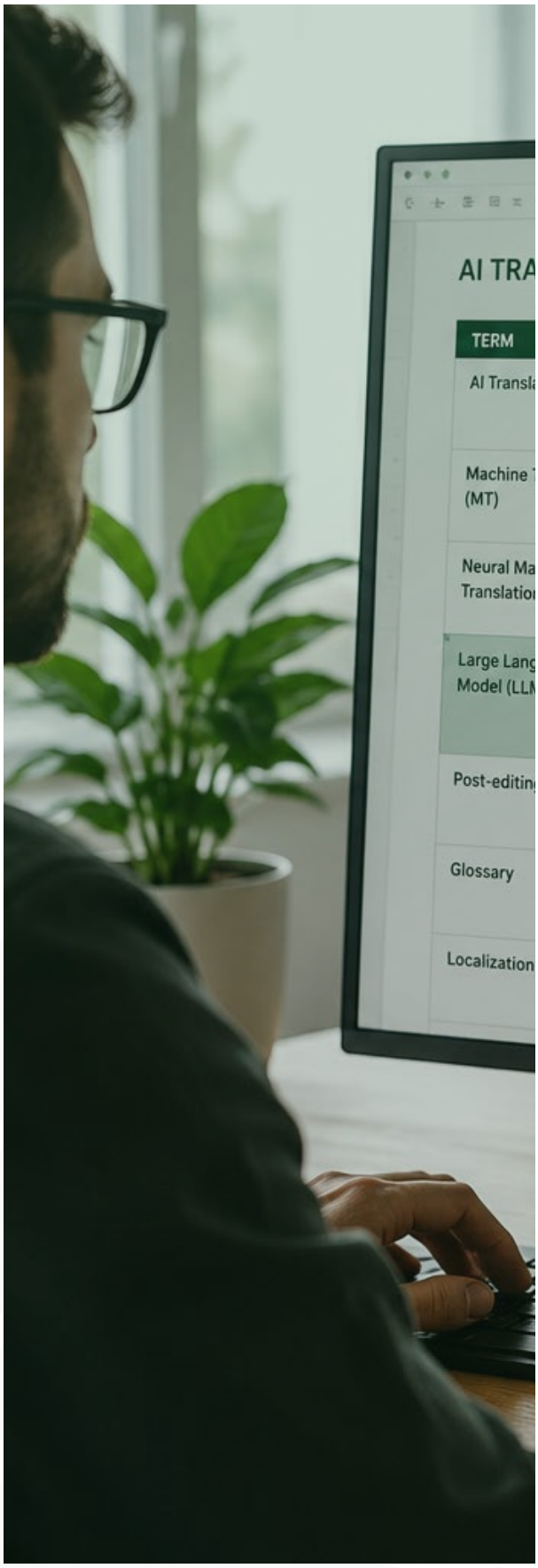
Tell reviewers what to watch for.

AI models have documented habits: terminology that changes between sections, job titles and pronouns matched to stereotypes, idioms translated word for word, hallucinated words and numbers, repetitive patterns like triplets, and formal documents that turn casual halfway through.

Keep the same people involved.

A team that has worked on your content before knows your terminology and your readers, so they notice when a plausible translation is still wrong for you. A translator seeing your content for the first time has no way to know those things.





Delivery: The final files and the follow-up

The translation itself is done, but you still have a few loose ends to tie up.

Human review of the formatted file.

Even when the translation itself is correct, design software can scramble right-to-left text, drop accented characters, and cut longer translations off mid-word. One final human review keeps your files formatted properly.

Save the corrections.

At the end of each workflow, ask your translation partner to document and remediate the errors the AI models made. This could include updating the style guides with more examples or constraints adding new term choices to the glossary, and correcting global patterns in training datasets. It's a disciplined improvement process that makes the next project cheaper and faster.

Put the process to work

With your content tiered, your reference materials in place, and the right review at each level, AI translation gives you what it promised: speed and savings you can stand behind.

The Translation Team helps with every part of this. For high-volume, low-risk content, we set up secure, custom-trained models based on your existing translation catalogue and we can even categorize it by product for laser-focused implementations. For everything else, trained editors work from your originals, all the way through the final layout review, and our QA managers and solutions architects will make sure to use the right technology workflows and content profiling frameworks for your specific use cases.

Ready to start?

We'll help you build an AI translation strategy that scales efficiently, stays on brand, and delivers measurable results.

Write to *vamos@thetranslationteam.com* and let's talk.
Or *book a meeting* via Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

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