

# 10

pitfalls to avoid when  
communicating  
internationally

# What do translation companies do and how are they different from individual translators?

Indirectly, translation agencies can help companies with vital aspects of their business. For example:

- Ensuring that medical and life science companies are in compliance with industry regulations by delivering accurately translated documentation.
- Helping corporations improve internal processes by providing the right linguistic support to manage risks and avoid the liability issues associated with incorrectly translated information.
- Helping you succeed in foreign and domestic markets by effectively communicating your message to culturally diverse clients and partners.

Translation companies create value directly by using their expertise to assemble the right linguistic team of translators, editors and other professionals with the knowledge and experience to deliver high-quality, carefully tailored, accurate and idiomatic translations.

- Ensuring the successful launch of international products or services by making them accessible to foreign clients in their own language.
- Helping to establish more control over internal and external business procedures by providing effective communication with partners, workers and clients who speak different languages.

When you search the Internet, you will find thousands of translation companies. How do you choose the right one? The short answer is –you must figure out what is right for you. We are pleased to offer you this report, which we hope will help you make the right decision, succeed in foreign and domestic markets and avoid making costly, time-wasting mistakes.

## 1 Are you paying too much for translation services?

*Abraham Lincoln once said, “I can make more generals, but horses cost money”. Strangely enough, the same can be said about the translation business: Any translation agency can make more translations, but quality costs money. In other words, you get what you pay for.*

Without a doubt, money plays an important role in choosing a suitable LSP (Language Services Provider) and the best advice we can give you is to choose the middle bidder.

You should try to disregard the lowest offers, no matter how good they sound, and the reason for this is simple—good translators cost good money. However, there is also no need for you to overpay to a corporate translation giant for the same translation service that can be provided by

a smaller company. In large translation agencies, the cost of your translation will often include not only the actual fee paid to the translators, but also hidden fees, such as management, accounting marketing, and sales fees.

Therefore, the highest price does not always guarantee the best quality and can result instead from the accumulated costs of a company's internal procedures, which might have nothing to do with your project.

Now that you have eliminated the top and bottom 10% of the prices on your list, you will still have ample offers from which to choose. An important thing to remember is not to compare apples with oranges. In other words, when you are comparing one translation rate to another, you have to know exactly what these rates include. For example, some companies will give you a TEP (translation, editing, proofreading) rate, whereas

When you screen your possible translation candidates, weed out the extremes and aim for the golden mean.

other quotes will include translation only, excluding editing services as additional options.

## 2 Are you missing important deadlines?

*To stay ahead of the pack, many translation agencies will try to offer you the fastest possible turnaround times. If you are making your choice based on your tight schedule, we again suggest taking the middle road, avoiding the fastest and slowest bids.*

There are simply no miracles in the translation business. The average translator can do 1,500-2,000 words a day and the average proofreader can do double that. Therefore, if a company promises to translate a 6,000-word document in 2 days, you can expect them to cut corners and deliver shoddy work. This is because your job will contain the errors and inconsistencies that result when it is split up among different translators. In other words, if you can spare the time, it is best not to rush translations, and to focus instead on quality.

However, time is money, and if you are racing to meet a deadline that requires your document to

be translated in 24 hours or less, we recommend choosing a company that can meet this deadline while adhering to certain quality assurance procedures that will minimize the risks of errors.

Is your important message not being delivered on time? Since rush services often require alterations to be done to a regular translation process, we recommend discussing the exact procedures (such as proofreading, editing, coordination) with your LSP before submitting your project for translation. Even though these negotiations might take some time, you will save both time and money in the long run.

*If you still feel at a loss and do not know how to proceed, ABC Language Solutions will gladly offer you a free consultation during which we can answer your questions and devise the localization strategy that best suits your business. Please get in touch with us today to schedule an appointment in order to discuss your project or translation needs. You can also subscribe to our newsletter, which contains more valuable advice, as well as tips and offers that are provided exclusively to our subscribers and clients.*

### 3 Does your vendor have sufficient knowledge and expertise?

*It is well-known that agencies often use the same pool of vendors and work with freelance translators who are publically available. Moreover, there are dozens of websites each of which lists thousands of translators. In other words, you will have no trouble finding someone to translate your document.*

So why not bypass the middle link and go straight to the source, which might seem like a cheaper alternative? There are many answers to this question, but the most important is that working with a professional translation agency guarantees expertise.

Avoid sailing too close to the wind by taking advantage of professional expertise and your LSP's ability to assemble the right linguistic team with the appropriate level of experience, education and knowledge of your subject matter.

Sure, you can find someone who knows the French language. But can you foresee and avoid the problems associated with choosing the wrong dialect, or an inexperienced translator who has no

particular familiarity with your area of expertise? A professional agency will know how to avoid these traps.

Just as in any other aspect of your business, you might be surprised by the amount of things that can go wrong in a seemingly simple translation! Even if you find a suitable translator, you have to worry

about overseas payment charges, different time zones, taxes and other expenses that might end up costing you twice as much as the translation itself!

### 4 Are the right services available to you?

*If you've done any translation yourself, you know that the job does not end once the translation itself has been completed. No matter how good and experienced a translator may be, no one delivers a perfect translation.*

Inevitably, there are always other services that need to be performed. These may include editing, proofreading, back-translation and even specialized localization.

According to recent research, failure to offer accurate translations incurred non-compliance penalties among 7% of respondents.

In addition to these services, you might also want to use professional DTP (desktop publishing) services that will turn your black and white translation into a beautiful brochure that can be sent out to printers.

Feeling out of your depth already? There is no need to panic; let your agency worry about these details.

When choosing a translation agency, contact your LSP and discuss in particular what kind of services you might need to meet your end goal. For example, if you are publishing an advertisement brochure, you will

need TEP (translation, editing, proofreading), DTP (desktop publishing) and post-DTP proofreading services. Make sure that your LSP has sufficient resources to cover all of your needs.

This is another reason for choosing to work with an LSP instead of individual translators, whose work ends once they press the "send" button.

**In other words, instead of wasting time and money by shopping in a whole series of individual stores, why not go to a supermarket and do all your shopping there?**

## 5 Are you satisfied with the process?

*If most agencies work with freelancers (individual translators) who work for dozens of companies, how does one LSP differ from another?*

Choosing the right translator is only half the battle; a translation agency must also be able to polish that translation to a fluent, consistent, and error-free text using a process that is convenient to you.

To avoid receiving a bad quality translation, we recommend discussing the actual processes and procedures with your LSP prior to the project initiation. The process might include not only the linguistic services, such

as quality assurance procedures, but also payment terms, delivery options, timelines, follow-ups etc. If you are not satisfied with the fact that your translation will be edited only and not proofread for the second time, or that you have to pay the whole sum upfront, keep looking for a more suitable LSP. The important thing to remember is that the job should be done right the first time and every time!

When you are contemplating which company to work with, pay attention to their quality assurance procedures. The best solution is a complete TEP package (also known as translation, editing, proofreading). The TEP approach will significantly minimize your risks of having an incorrect translation.

## 6 Is there a guarantee that your project will be completed?

*We often take things for granted without considering that accidents and blackouts happen to people every day. Therefore, putting all eggs in one basket may be convenient, but it is rather risky.*

So when you are thinking about working with a freelance translator or a translation agency, consider the guarantee factor. Even though most translators will do their best to complete a project, during unexpected circumstances, such as a family emergency or an internet failure, you and your project may be left hanging.

If a translator quits, your failure is guaranteed, but a reliable LSP will always finish the job.

When it comes to peace of mind, working with a translation agency is definitely a more reliable option because LSPs have access to considerable resources, which can be used as a backup. Therefore, when you work with a professional translation agency, you are guaranteed that your project will be completed!

## 7 Is your information safe?

*It is true that nothing that passes through the Internet is absolutely safe.*

However, some translation agency approach confidentiality and security very seriously and take measures that can protect your identity and your career. It is a good idea to ask your future LSP about their security measures such as secure data transfers, password protected servers, office security etc. If no sufficient answer is forthcoming, then

Some of the questions you might want to ask are:

Are the documents stored on secure servers?

Is all work password-protected?

Do you use secure procedures to transfer documents?

you know that the confidentiality and security of your property may be at risk. Besides that, you might also want to inquire whether or not a particular LSP imposes certain confidentiality principles on their translators, workers and partners.

**When it comes to confidentiality, every measure helps to prevent disasters.**

## 8 Does the size of a company matter?

*Today cutting edge nano-technology allows people to have razor-thin cell phones, tiny mp3 players, and ultra-light computers. But when it comes to translation agencies, does size really matter?*

Yes, size definitely matters, but bigger is not always better. In fact, independent research has demonstrated that many people prefer to work with medium-sized translation agencies instead of corporate giants, due to the former's more flexible procedures.

Big franchised companies will apply rigid procedures to your project whether you need them or not, causing you to overpay and waste time.

**Therefore, we recommend that you look for a smaller LSP that is ready to go the extra mile for you.**

## 9 Are you working with an experienced project manager or just a trained worker?

*If you've ever worked with a freelancer directly, you probably know that at times it is difficult to get in touch with him or her simply because he or she is busy translating your documents or is otherwise unavailable due to prior arrangements, family commitments, etc.*

Imagine three people working on your project, translator, proofreader and editor, all of whom you must contact with an urgent question or correction in the translation. What if you are translating your document into 3 languages? The number of people you have to manage has tripled! And let's not even talk about the different time zones and country phone codes—what a headache!

Fortunately, you can bypass this whole mess and enjoy the practical convenience of LSP project management, which will provide you with a single point of contact—a professional—who is always ready to answer your questions and manage any unpredictable circumstances. However, you

LSP Value: Guaranteed quality, price and delivery

have to make sure that a qualified project manager, who has at least 2-3 years of working experience, is managing your project. Often times, to cut back on spending, translation agencies will involve international students and volunteers to help out with the production process which might impact the quality and timeliness of your translations. Therefore, getting to know your project manager, his or her qualifications, might save you a lot of time and money invested in having to resolve mistranslations, lawsuits, unmet deadlines etc.

**Even though the company's procedures, costs and services are vital considerations, do not underestimate the importance of finding the right person to manage your projects.**

## 10 Does your vendor understand you?

*Perhaps the most important quality in the right translation agency is its ability to understand your actual needs.*

This might sound like a cliché, but in a business where everything is done online or over the phone, you have to make sure that you are speaking to someone who can fully understand the purpose of your translations, your goals and requirements.

**If the project manager does not understand what you need, you can imagine what kind of translation you will receive in return.**

If you still feel at a loss and do not know how to proceed, ABC Language Solutions will gladly offer you a free consultation during which we can answer your questions and devise the localization strategy that best suits your business. Please get in touch with us today to schedule an appointment in order to discuss your project or translation needs. You can also subscribe to our newsletter, which contains more valuable advice, as well as tips and offers that are provided exclusively to our subscribers and clients.