The Really Helpful Friendly
Guide to
Better Language Translation
from
Lifeline Language Services

- where the accent is on you!

Language translation is everywhere. It can be a raw text file or a visually stunning brochure. It can be websites, software or mobile phone apps. Language translation can be recorded or subtitled, or embedded into interactive voice systems. It can be notarized or legalised language translation for use in court, or certified for civil purposes. Wherever there's language, there's language translation.

Procuring language translation with the right provider is straightforward and hassle-free. Our **FAQ page** offers lots of help on finding a provider; this guide provides more on getting **better language translation**.

Call free on **0800 783 4678**

email: **translation@lifelinelanguageservices.co.uk**

Getting better translation for no extra cost is easy, even with your current supplier

Whether building on existing translation, or translating from scratch, the translator will do a better job knowing what the translation is for. Commercial and technical authors won't write material without good background knowledge - a professional translator needs similar info.

Remember too that clients also often have translation already in service for similar product. In-country agents may have produced literature that the new translation must work with, or have terminology preferences for their market. Translators need to know!

We love doing our own research and whatever else it takes to deliver the best translation possible - but we achieve even better translation by working with the client. Of course you can simply ask us to translate a text - we have many years of experience and great partners, so working with us you've already made a good start. *But we can deliver quicker, better and sometimes cheaper with just a little input from you…*

Quicker, better, cheaper all sounds good… so what do translators need?

First, if they're translating for something it's important to know for *what*, and where to find more info - translators really appreciate websites, access to any current product/service literature (especially existing translations), any terminology preferences etc. *For example, if you're using a Russian agent to sell into Russia, the agent will probably have preferred terminology - their contact details or glossary will help the translator tailor the translation to that market for you.*

Second, if text is ***out of context*** translators need to know context… *software strings* are a favourite. Your application uses these in set ways - they can't be translated properly without knowing what these are! For example, is *"Phone:"* a number, a phone model, or a call reminder? *(It's also important to know if there are length limitations - translation is usually longer than source, so if space on screen is limited, tell us!)*

Third, it's easier and less error-prone to work in ***editable formats***. Least preferred are *scans* or *photocopies* since translators need to OCR or retype - both are error-prone, meaning additional review and re-work time. Also not ideal are *PDFs* - they can be converted, but because the process is far from perfect extra review time is needed on top of the conversion time itself.

Most other electronic formats are fine. It's worth noting that very little is ***created*** as PDF - these are output from another application such as *Quark, Visio, InDesign* etc. Access to the source files eases language translation and gives a better result, faster. More capable translation services can also provide ***press-ready*** translation of e.g. brochures from these source files, saving you time and cost - we do a lot of this.

Fourth, take a minute to consider the text content - should it all be translated? And how? For example, names of *corporate divisions* and *programmes* often stay in English - the translator needs to know not to translate these. Translators often spot and query these as they go, but that causes delays and - because you're closer to the material than the translator - isn't foolproof. You'll get better product more quickly by indicating what shouldn't be translated in the source text. A good way is colour - for example, *"Performance & Progress division has continued the roll-out of our Customer First initiative".* In other instances translation ***is*** required, but must be done using ***established translation*** which is already in service - again, the translator needs to know this and a footnote such as *"Existing translation - please use…"* works well.

Finally, expect and be ready for ***queries and requests*** from the translator. Most texts contain ambiguities the translator will need to confirm, and the more specialist the text, the more queries are likely to arise.

Ambiguities?

Yep - English is a lazy language and uses words loosely. Most other languages are more precise - so for example *"big orange box"* can have at least *4 different correct translations* depending on the exact context… and always remember that something that's obvious to you may be less so to someone without your experience. We always review text for ambiguity to assist translators.

That's actually all really useful info… thanks!

No problem! We appreciate that buying language translation is less straightforward than buying "stuff" and we want you to get good rather than "adequate" (or worse) translation. Quality-assuring translation's tricky, and buyers put much trust in the translator - we want that trust to be justified!

But does it really matter? I mean, as long as it's understood…

The Brits are funny about language translation - we'll indulge others' attempts at English and not be deterred. However, it's not two-way - Europe in particular expects excellent language translation and will be actively put off your product if translation is poor so *yes*, it matters. Bizarrely, companies will often spend thousands on marketing, then opt for the cheapest language translation to save a few hundred - but things are always cheap for a reason, and bad translation will undo even the best marketing...

Sourcing language translation does tend to be an afterthought here - we hadn't realised it mattered so much! So what's the key?

Well, you need excellent translators *(got them)* and great reviewers *(got them too)*, backed by good experience *(Lifeline's been going since 1990)* and systems *(yep)* … but, unless the translators take a *real interest* in both *client* and *product*, instead of just in billable wordcount, you'll receive "adequate" language translation at best.

We push our translators and staff to get *close* to client and product, and to *involve* our clients in the translation process. Where many language companies want their translators heads-down translating, pushing out as many billable words as possible, we encourage our translators to spend hours researching. *It's not enough merely to understand the words* - without "getting" the concept and background it's impossible to translate well.

Our model is to use good translators, allow them the time to do a proper job, and pay them good rates. The other - far too common - model is to employ cheap translators to maximise margins, squeeze them on rates, and demand silly deadlines. So which model do you think will give you better product?

Your translator should involve you fully, asking intelligent questions and requesting information on background, application, existing material, any terminology preferences... By doing so they'll provide intelligent, accurate language translation. If your translators don't involve you, ask yourself why.

*We hope you find this Guide helpful - whether or not you opt to use us, we're keen to see UK business succeed and employing better translation will really help you **win** in your foreign markets. If this Guide helps you to work better with your translators to achieve that, then it's done its job!*

Testimonials

Here's just a few of the many kind words we've had from some of our translation clients:

"I have consistently found their work, often against difficult time pressures, to be accurate, proficient and always to the highest standards of quality and presentation"

BAE SYSTEMS

"I am writing to express how delighted we have been with the speed and efficiency of the service Lifeline has provided. From a daunting brief... a difficult task became straightforward."

Bunzl cleaning & hygiene supplies

"I want to thank you and the translators again for your excellent work. Hazox has dealt with several translation companies over the years and LLS is by far the most responsive and efficient we have had the pleasure of working with"

Hazox [US client]

"The feedback I have had [on the translations] from the plant has been excellent... they are very happy!"

Heinz

"The completed translations have been very well received by our clients and the technical accuracy has always been excellent. I would have absolutely no hesitation in recommending Lifeline Language Services."

RRC Training

"Lifeline Language Services continue to deliver on-time, accurate translation of many technical and lengthy documents, often at short notice. Your organisation has worked with the utmost level of professionalism..."

Portia [Liverpool Port Consultancy]

User-friendly professional, qualified and quality-assured
language translation
from
Lifeline Language Services

- where the accent is on you!

Lifeline also provides a full range of complementary language services including INTERPRETING, TRANSCRIPTION, TYPESETTING, VOICEOVER & SUBTITLING.

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