

## 5 Tips to Finding the Right Language Services Provider

### 1. Individual Translator and Interpreter vs. Language Service Provider

The role of an LSP is not just to translate and provide interpretation but to add value to the service. The value added to the translation and interpretation processes by the LSP is the ability to select translators, editors and interpreters with appropriate linguistic and subject matter expertise, and the ability to manage multilingual projects. The LSP will make sure that a translation is reviewed by a qualified editor and that an interpreter not only shows up on time, but also has the necessary qualifications to match your specific needs.

### 2. Costs of Language Services

In the US, the rates for translation are typically given on a per-word basis; interpretation rates go by the hour, half-day, or full day. Minimum fees typically apply for both translation and interpretation. Per-word rates charged by LSPs are all-inclusive (not only the translation, but also the project management time, editing/review, and quality assurance procedures) and cannot be compared to the rates charged by individual translators. The rates will differ for different languages. When negotiating per-word rates, it is advisable to agree in advance on the basis of the calculation of the number of words. Word count of the same text in two different languages can differ by as much as 40% – this is true especially for Asian languages.



Consider the cost, not just the price. You can pay a low price and incur high costs because the translation or interpretation service you receive is of substandard quality which not only is expensive to fix, but also can cause incalculable damage to the name and credibility of your company.

### 3. Purpose of Translation and Interpretation

Another consideration is the target audience itself. In translation choosing an appropriate regional variation is important not only because you want to address your audience in the language they are comfortable with, but also because some dialects can easily become politically charged.

Defining the target audience and purpose of your communication is just as critical to the interpreter as it is to the translator. The gender, voice, attire and general appearance of an interpreter may impact the message you are trying to convey. While the interpreter's goal is to be a conduit of communication and not detract from the message they are interpreting, it is the client's responsibility to provide enough information and details to the LSP for them to make an appropriate selection of resources.

#### 4. Language

Professional translators typically work into their native language. In the case of languages of limited diffusion this might not be possible; for example, professional translators who can translate from Faroese and who are native English speakers would be quite hard to find. In such cases it is crucial that the translated text is reviewed by a native speaker of the target language. Make sure that your LSP uses native speakers of the target language for translation and identifies the right dialect for both translation and interpretation.

#### 5. Final Review

Resist the temptation to revise the translated text without talking to your LSP. In many languages, grammatical and spelling rules differ dramatically from English – if you see different endings attached to a proper name, it is not because the translator does not know how to spell the name, but rather because the language in question is inflected and requires different endings for different grammatical cases. Different languages have different capitalization rules, punctuation rules, formatting requirements, etc.

It is an established practice to receive feedback from the end user in the target country – share this feedback with your LSP, preferably before the translated text is finalized. Another good practice is to have the translation reviewed by an independent third party, especially if you are working with a new LSP. Such a review can be done by another LSP.



**Keeping these tips in mind as you begin your search for the right LSP will help you make the best choice, have a better experience, and offer the peace of mind you want – and need.**

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