

Your Translation Top Twelve Tips...

1 Think about what you need to get translated.

To begin with, think about your source text – do you need to translate everything? For example, if you are translating a website or perhaps a company report, do you need a fully translated version, or do you perhaps just need certain pages translated or even customised copy for those languages?

2 What is your deadline?

Be realistic with your deadline and try not to leave time-sensitive projects to the last minute. We estimate 1000 words a day from our translators, so a 10,000 word document could not be done accurately and competently in a few days. It is of course possible to bring multiple translators into a project, but you would risk losing the consistency and style of a single translator.

3 What languages do you need?

Sounds like a simple one to begin with, and on the whole it is. Your translator or agency will need to know what language the original is in – the source language – and what language(s) it needs to be translated into – the target language(s). But sometimes you may need to provide a bit of extra information to ensure the right translator is used. Is it Traditional (Cantonese) or Simplified (Mandarin) Chinese, for example? European or Brazilian Portuguese? European or South American Spanish? If you need something very specific, make sure to give that information at the very beginning to avoid delays and potential extra costs. At First Edition, we only ever use native speakers and translators only ever translate into their native language. When localisation is important, we will try to match the country as well as the language wherever possible.

4 How many words are there?

The word count is very important as it enables us to give you an accurate quote and timeframe. Most of the time the quote will be based on the number of source words although occasionally the translator may charge by target words if the two are likely to be very different (for example Japanese into English). Your translator or project manager will be able to advise you.

5 What is the subject matter?

A sales or marketing brochure needs a very different approach to a technical manual or legal document. Translators should be matched with projects based on their skills, experience and expertise, as well as language. It would also be helpful to know who the intended audience is, in order to maintain the appropriate tone and style.

6 What format is it in and how do you need your finished document?

The format of the document can be important, especially when trying to estimate cost. A pdf or image file can make a word count difficult and the document may need to be converted. Websites can also be hard to estimate if there are many different pages and sub-pages. It might be a good idea to provide the copy in a word document format to ensure nothing gets missed. Sometimes documents are password protected, so make sure you remove the password, or provide the relevant information to your translator. First Edition Translations can provide the finished document in a number of different formats, including pdf and the standard Microsoft programs. We also offer a typesetting service if required.

7 Do you have a style guide or list of terms?

It can be useful if you are able to provide particularly technical or specific words (ie your preferred inhouse terminology) in the target language(s), or reference material if it is available. If the text is for publication, a style guide can also be useful. Providing such information at the outset when available will save you time answering queries during the project and also at the end of the project when preparing your document for its final publication.

8 **Think about cultural differences or sensitivities.**

Be sensitive to the culture of the country you are translating for – it can be easy to cause unintended offence or confusion. A translator native to that country should be able to advise, but you should also take guidance from your colleagues or suppliers if available.

9 **Try to avoid slang.**

It can be great to keep local flavour in your document, but slang or colloquial expressions can be difficult to translate. A professional translator will 'transcreate' or adapt the message to suit the target language whilst maintaining the context, intent, style, and tone, but it may still lose something in the translation! Transcreation is now becoming more common, however, due to the global nature of advertising and marketing.

10 **Provide approved text.**

We know that changes happen and often at a much later date than would be preferred. However, wherever possible, provide finished text for translation. Changes to the source text made after translation may be harder to incorporate and there is more chance of errors creeping in. If you do, however, need to supply later versions, make sure different versions are clearly marked as such and use track changes if possible.

11 **What about automated or machine translation?**

Use with caution. Although, for example, automated translation can be handy for the odd word or for just getting the gist of a document, they will not give you publication-ready copy and should always be checked by a professional human translator.

12 **Get it checked.**

Your original source document has almost certainly been checked and double checked, why would you ask for anything less of the text in another language? First Edition's checking service involves a second, equally qualified native speaker checking the translation against the original to ensure accuracy of style, sense and terminology. Some companies may prefer to use an in-house resource, such as a colleague in an overseas office, to carry out this final check.

Your Translation

Request a quote