

# Things to consider when buying translations

It is useful to have a few things clear in your mind when you approach a translator.

A lot of work and discussion has gone into the text you submit for translation. The translator has not been part of that process. Give the translator time and opportunity to get to know you and your company, and try to contribute as much information as possible.

**LANGUAGE** Language and variant (such as British or American English, or Portuguese suitable for use in Portugal or Brazil)

**WHAT THE TEXT IS GOING TO BE USED FOR** Internal/external use, a sales brochure, a contract for information purposes only, etc.

**TARGET GROUP** Technicians, specialists or consumers, the general public etc.

**SUBJECT AREA AND VOLUME OF TEXT** Information on subject area and degree of difficulty will help the translator assess whether he or she is the right person for the job. It is a good idea to send a few typical pages for the translator to look at.

**FORMAT** Is the translation to be delivered as plain text or does the job include layout work and typesetting? Will the text be transferred to a layout for printing at a later stage?

**CLEAR SOURCE TEXT** Provide the translator with a clear source text, preferably in a digital format (on a CD/DVD or via e-mail/FTP) and as a printout on paper.

**DELIVERY** How much time can you give the translator to complete the job? To whom and how is the text to be delivered and in what format? By e-mail or ordinary post? As a Word file or in some other format?

**REFERENCE MATERIAL** Provide the translator with as much reference material as possible that can benefit the translation process, for example descriptions of similar products, in-house glossaries and general information about what you and your company or organisation do (annual report, brochures etc.). Good reference material will make it easier for the translator to use the customary technology that applies in your company or industry.

**CONTACT** Translators benefit greatly from having a contact with specialist knowledge in the area concerned.

**ADAPTATION** Discuss with the translator whether the text needs to be adapted to local conditions.

**ALLOW PLENTY OF TIME** Plan so that the translator has plenty of time for the job. Expressions and formulations improve from being left to “mature?”. Unnecessarily quick delivery creates the risk of lower quality.

**REVIEW** It’s a good idea to let your company’s office or representative in the local market comment on the finished translation. Always consult the translator if you intend to make any changes.

**PROFESSIONAL COOPERATION** Build up a professional relationship with one or more translators so that they can learn what your company wants, its style and its terminology. Everyone stands to gain.

**LONG-TERM COOPERATION** Translation involves cooperation between the translator and the buyer. Even an expert in a particular language and a particular subject area cannot know everything. Translators often have certain specialisms, but they cannot always know what expressions and terms an individual company prefers. The translator and client may therefore need to put in some groundwork to establish mutual understanding. It's a good idea to view a few initial jobs as an investment in good future cooperation.

**MOTHER TONGUE** Most translators have more than one source language but only one target language – their mother tongue or native language. A small number of translators are, however, competent to translate into more than one language.

**USE** A translation is usually done for one specific use or occasion. If you want to use it in other contexts, contact the translator so that any necessary changes can be made.

Reference: the Swedish Association of Professional Translators, [www.sfoe.se](http://www.sfoe.se)