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Greetings!

## Top Five Tips for Meeting Facilitators When Using an Interpreter

It would be ideal if a meeting with a prospective client went without a hitch; everything that was communicated was understood and everyone felt comfortable with the outcome of the conversation. When a language professional is thrown into the picture because one of the parties speaks a different language, you can still achieve those same results if you keep the following tips in mind when using an interpreter.

During an interview, whoever is communicating a message should make eye contact with the person they are trying to communicate with, regardless if you are using an interpreter to communicate your message. The interpreter will try to duplicate the same facial expressions and tone of voice of the speaker, but having eye contact with the client will create another layer of communication that may be essential for you in establishing trust and respect with the client.

It will also be important to speak at a normal pace and a normal volume, rather than speed up your communication in a loud fashion in an effort to allow for more time for the interpreter to repeat what was said. You may save a few minutes during the interview, but it is likely you will lose that time advantage by having to repeat statements if they were spoken too quickly and are unclear to the interpreter.

Similarly, you will need to allow for more time during the interview. Your words and your client's words will be repeated twice in the two target languages. In addition, the second language that is spoken may require 10–20 percent more wording to communicate the same message, as with the Spanish language.

You should also avoid slang or technical terms. For example, if you ask a client to "Google it," you may get an odd look or have to patiently sit by while the interpreter explains what Google is and how to use it. Instead, you might try to use a more globally accepted term, such as "Internet search." Using laymen's terms will make for a more successful and efficient experience with an interpreter.

Lastly, do not make any statements that you do not want the interpreter to repeat in the non-English-speaker's language. Ethically, the interpreter is required to repeat everything that is said, and avoid any omissions or additions at all times. If you want to prepare the interpreter for the meeting by going over the content, it would be wise to do this before the client arrives.

**The following tips** will ensure the success of any meeting when using an interpreter to facilitate communications between an English speaker and a non-English speaker.

1. Make eye contact with the non-English-speaking client, not the interpreter, during the meeting
2. Speak in a normal voice; not too fast and not too loud
3. Allow enough time for an interpreting session since some statements may require a detailed explanation in another language
4. Avoid slang or technical terms; instead, use laymen's terms and be willing to explain concepts if necessary
5. Do not say anything that you do not want the non-English-speaking client to hear, because the interpreter is required to repeat everything that is said

Adapted from: Barzee, M. *10 tips for working with language interpreters*. Duke University School of Nursing, as reviewed on 02/08/12,  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cX\\_krmqsWJ0&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cX_krmqsWJ0&feature=related)

