

The Costs of Choosing the Wrong Translation Company

When a company is deciding whether to translate marketing material or legal documents into a second or third language, a major concern is that they could harm their reputation if the job is not done right. Credibility with your clients is of utmost value in today's competitive marketplace. If documents are translated poorly into another language, you are certain to have your non-English-speaking customers feel that they are not valued. "Why didn't the management take the time to do it right?"

Another concern is that product details or company branding may be miscommunicated if not translated properly. After spending weeks doing market research on your new tagline, and a good chunk of your marketing budget, you need to hire a language service that can translate your material into a message that carries the same passion and integrity you worked so hard to conceive. A one-page insert may clearly communicate details on a product or sales promotion in English, but if poorly translated into another language, you may be expected to provide something that you didn't bargain for.

Delayed product launches or advertising mishaps caused by choosing a lower-priced, but ultimately unreliable, incompetent language service, will adversely affect both your and your clients' profit margins.. Imagine a valuable client who is dependant on your copy to be sent in by a deadline and their frustration when it isn't....

You may not lose your client the first time, but your budgeted line item for translation could double. If the document needs to be translated a second time due to excess errors in tone and vocabulary, the fact that you won't pay for the first version isn't enough to offset the cost of staff time allotted to produce an acceptable translated product. You will have to hire another, more reputable agency to proofread your less-than-perfect translation at a rate between \$30 and \$50 per hour. And then what happens to all the other projects sitting on your desk that need speedy completion?

To avoid these scenarios:

- Choose a company that is a member of the Better Business Bureau and the American Translators Association.
- Check the translation agency's website for testimonials or request references directly.
- Ask for the résumé of the assigned translator.

If you decide to use an individual rather than an agency:

- Find out what professional organizations they belong to and if they have any certifications.
- Review a copy of their résumé.
- Get samples of their past translations in a related industry.
- Ask for references from current clients.

Whether you are working with a translation agency or an individual translator, –make sure you receive:

- Weekly updates on the progress of the project and offer to answer any questions about tone and meaning.
- A written confirmation that the final bill will be based on the finished word count of the document if quoted with a per word price (verify whether the word count is based on the source document or the target document).
- A written confirmation stating that if you are not satisfied with the final translation, you have the right to have an ATA certified translator validate the errors, and that the hours spent proofreading and the word count of the errors will be reduced from the final payment.