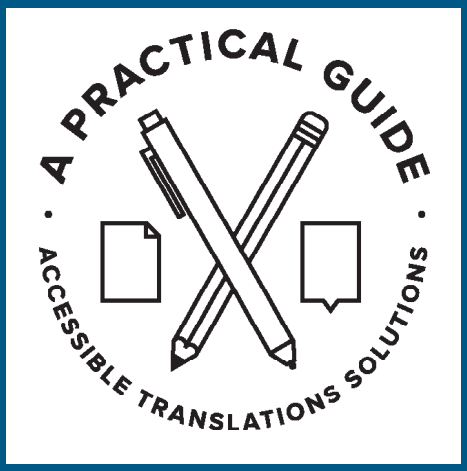

A Practical Guide to Working with Your Translation Team

The sign of a great translation is one that does not appear to be a translation, i.e., it reads as though it were originally written in the reader's primary language.

This can feel like a tall order. You've taken the time to prepare your English-language content with care, and now you need to find just the right translation team to prepare it in a foreign language. But how can you be sure your intentions and message are conveyed accurately and faithfully in another language?

A guide like this can help! Here's the checklist we developed at Accessible Translation Solutions with you in mind.

☐ Find a professional translator who translates into their native language and who specializes in the type of content you've created.

- Professional translators will work into their native language and will do so only in their areas of specialization. That's right! There are translators for just about any field or industry, so finding the right one for your content is key.
- If you would like to have your content translated into multiple languages, or if you have several projects in the queue, a translation company can help you manage your project(s) and assign your content to the most skilled and specialized translation team(s).

☐ Tell your translation team about the purpose/goal of the copy.

- Are you planning to give a presentation?
- Do you need to communicate internally with employees in their native language(s)?
- Do you plan to utilize the translated content as an advertisement, web copy, on a product label, etc.?
- Are you launching a product in another country or region?
- Is the purpose of your content to engage, inform, sell, etc.?

☐ Discuss the ideal reader of the copy with your translation team.

- What is your ideal reader's background and previous knowledge that might help how they receive or comprehend the content?
- What are their goals or expectations when they read your copy?

☐ Give the translation team a style guide to follow, and be prepared to discuss anything that might not work as well in the target language once translated.

- Consider the fact that punctuation might be handled differently in the target language. What might be considered a run-on sentence in English is often quite acceptable in Romance languages.
- If you do not have a preferred style guide, ask your translation team which guide might be most suitable for your content.

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☐ Provide and be prepared to discuss any words, terms, or phrases that your company or organization prefers, as well as any that are never to be used.

- Brand names, company names, product names, etc. are usually left in English. Discuss any names with your translation team that you'd like to have translated for your foreign-language readers.
- Are there terms specific to your company or brand that should remain in English, even though they are not necessarily product or company names? If so, please let your translation team know ahead of time so they can leave these terms in English instead of translating them.
- Do you have a glossary of preferred terms for your company, products, or services? If so, provide this to your translation team at the beginning of the project.
- Are there certain terms that should never be used in your industry or when talking about your brand? If so, try to provide a list of terms that your translation team should avoid, and leave some time to discuss alternative options.

☐ Consider active vs. passive voice in your translated content.

- If you have a strong preference, discuss this with your translation team before they begin. In Spanish, for example, passive voice tends to be used more frequently than in English. If this could affect the spirit of the message in your copy, it is best to discuss this beforehand.

☐ Discuss your preference with regard to using formal or informal language, especially with pronouns.

- To give another example in Spanish, copy written with the Spanish *tú* (you, informal is often seen in marketing copy or in very informal situations, whereas *usted* (you, formal) is used in more formal copy, like in business negotiations.

☐ Make yourself available for questions during the process.

- A great translation team will ask questions about the copy. It's better to answer questions during the process itself than to lose your message in translation.

☐ Clarify deliverables and deadlines.

- What kind of deliverables will you require for your project? If you would like additional formatting or design of your content, provide information and instructions, as well as fonts and image files at the start of the project. A translation company is usually equipped to help you with the design aspect, whereas most individual translators do not provide this additional service.
- If you have a hard deadline for when the translation team needs to deliver your project, let them know. If the deadline is tight, you may incur rush fees. Your translation team can also let you know if the deadline is unrealistic so you can work together to formulate a plan for delivery that you can both be happy with.

We hope this Practical Guide to Working with Your Translation Team is helpful. If you have any questions or would like to discuss the details of your project, please reach out to us using the contact information below.

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