

A Guide to Choosing a Translation Service



If you're not a specialist linguist yourself then looking into translation services can be bewildering and a little overwhelming.

In this guide, we'll be looking to break the process into easy steps so you can get the best from your time and investment.



Step #1: Decide on the Service You Require



There is a big difference between the skills of translating and interpreting. This means you need to think which you really need before approaching a company.

For example, if you wish to interact with those that speak a foreign language in the moment, then you'll need an interpreter.

Whereas if you're working in a text format, then a translation company is your best option – although many companies will offer both services.

Working with a professional translation business means that they can work with and/or produce documents that read fluently in the target language, because they understand the context's of both the source and target languages.

They act as a bridge over the barriers of the language in which you're working in; meaning they can carry over the original intention of the source text, using appropriate styles and expressions to connect with someone speaking a different language.

Anglia Top Tip

Translation companies write, whereas interpreters speak. Be clear on you what need from the start.



Step #2: Select the Right Partner



There are no set rules on the kind of translation partner you must use; there will be many different factors that decide how you select your partner, but you should consider the following:

- Of course, it's tempting to ask a bilingual staff member to translate for you. However, bear in mind that, while they may competently be able to speak a language, there's a big difference between speaking a language well and being a great translator. This is where mistakes creep in, and you may not discover them until it is too late.
- Ask all your prospective translation choices to send out samples of their completed works. This could mean websites, sales literature, brochures, legislative texts and more.
- Selecting from only accredited businesses will also add that extra peace of mind. In fact, most reputable translation businesses should be ISO accredited and may also carry indemnity insurance to safeguard the interests of their customers should something not go according to plan.

Anglia Top Tip

Don't be tempted to save cash by asking a bilingual member of your team – by investing in a professional service, you will receive a professional translation.



Step #3: Take a Different Approach When Working in Volume



Your business may require the translation of large technical manuals or similar documents that may be required in numerous languages. In this case you should consider the following to ensure you can find the right company to meet your needs:

- Look for an ATC accredited company that is used to managing considerable workloads in the translation of multiple languages.
- Some will be able to offer Computer Assisted Translation, which gives you a chance to inspect certain terminologies before the translation is complete. Your projects can then be stored in a database to ensure consistency in the future.
- If in doubt: ask. If the company is used to managing considerable workloads at any one time, they will have no problem telling you how many account managers and translators they have on their books.

Anglia Top Tip

Look for translation companies that are used to managing larger projects with high-volume

Step #4: Never Settle For Less



By working with only the very best accredited translation businesses, your organisation can benefit from the peace of mind and the quality of the final translations.

Approved members of the Association of Translation Companies are carefully selected, and therefore must adhere to a strict code of ethical and professional conduct and must carry full professional indemnity insurance cover to protect all parties.

Most of the ATC members will also be EN 15038, ISO 17100 or ISO 9001 certified.

When looking to get the very best from your investments and partnerships, consider:

- When communicating with your translation partner, be sure that all parties are clear on how and where the copy is to be used. There may well be differences in tone depending on whether the communication is used internally or externally. You can only get the most from your investment by outlining prior to any work taking place, where you intend to use the documents so your partner can determine how to phrase your documents.
- Most ATC member businesses will strongly advise that you send any proofs to your colleagues overseas, and your translation partner will liaise with them from there. This may be necessary for your translation professional to adapt the text to regional colloquialisms or to gain a better grasp of how your product or service may be used abroad.

Anglia Top Tip

All briefs must include the intended target of the document - different audiences may necessitate subtle changes in tone.



Step #5: Consider Your Budget



The cost of translation services will depend largely on the size of the document, the content and the translation language required.

Typically, you'll be looking at a basic rate based on the number of words, but you may be required to pay extra costs based on the target or source language. Remember:

- Documents such as legal contracts or technical documents will require the help of a specialist translator, which may be more costly and time-consuming.
- It's a good idea to approach several companies to gain an understanding of different pricing structures.
- You should expect to pay more if your job is urgent.
- If large portions of your final translation require considerable revision, you will be expected to pay more.

Anglia Top Tip

Gather an in-depth quote before any work begins and keep in mind any additional charges for big changes or short deadlines.



Step #6: Creating a Brief



As we've already mentioned, it's important that your translation partner is aware of the purpose of your document(s).

Approach, vocabulary, phrasing, and sentence length will be different depending on where your text will appear and what you wish to achieve.

Any experienced translator will probably ask this of you, so it's important that you know the answer yourself.

When developing a brief, be sure to avoid cultural references – this could be celebrities, sports, or literary and cultural metaphors – since these often don't translate effectively.

The same applies to imagery, which may not have the same meaning in your target language.

Anglia Top Tip

Develop a thorough brief, avoid cultural references and imagery.

Step #7: Agree Timelines



It may be tempting to ask, 'How long will it take?'. However, in this context there's no simple answer to this question, since there are so many variables, chief of which are the content itself and how you're looking to have it delivered.

Tell the company what your deadline is, and they will work with you to ensure that each stage of the process meets reasonable time frames on both sides.

Understandably you'll be keen to get the project running as fast as possible, but it's important that your translation company has as much information as possible at the outset – otherwise, the project will drag on and will likely become more expensive and frustrating for both sides.

Anglia Top Tip

Work together with your translation company, be sure to agree a realistic timetable for completion.

Step #8: Utilise The Services Available



In most cases, you may need more than just translation services.

Your required translation material may require design, website translation, desktop publishing and much more.

Depending on the language, these may be specialist services, as some languages have characters that aren't found in English and a foreign language can often use more words and space than the original source language.

Many ATC qualified translators will offer additional services to help your content reach new heights, so it certainly is worth utilising all of the services on offer to make the most of your investment.

Anglia Top Tip

Utilise all the services available to you to increase your reach and solidify your message.



Conclusion



"Like most good relationships in life, you'll get the very best from your translation company by developing a tightknit rapport. The longer you work with a company for, the greater the understanding between you will be."

"Long-term relationships mean that everyone can understand strategies, ideals and products and services, which means that the finished translation will be even better."

**- Mary Gilbey, Anglia Translations Ltd
Managing Director**

About Anglia Translations Ltd

Anglia Translations Ltd was founded back in 1992 to meet the growing need for quality translation services following the signing of the Maastricht Treaty.

We have almost three-decades of experience in this sector, working in a diverse range of industries in over fifty different languages.

Get in touch to find out how we can help you!

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