



## *Tips for Buying Translation Services*

By Jiri Stejskal

In today's global economy, companies are faced with cultural and linguistic challenges which can only rarely be handled using internal resources. In order to be able to communicate with non-English speakers, companies typically outsource the translation to outside vendors. Use the list of "Do's and Don'ts" below when buying translation services:

- Finalize the source text before you begin the translation process, but don't wait until the last minute for translations.
- Do not ask your bilingual staff member to do the translation.
- Remember that there is an expansion factor in many languages and that the translated text may be longer than the source text.
- Inquire about the translation service provider's area of expertise.
- Ask for references.
- Find out if the translation service provider offers a single point of contact.
- Be involved. An inquisitive translation service provider is good news, provide the information they ask for.
- Indicate the purpose of the translation.
- Specify who the target audience is.
- Discuss the conversion of currencies and units with your translation service provider.
- Provide reference materials and glossaries whenever possible.
- Do not confuse "editing" with "back translation."
- Provide feedback to your translation service provider – positive or negative. An honest evaluation will improve your later projects.
- Remember that translation is a creative process. If it took you weeks to prepare the English version, you should not expect to have the translation back overnight.

Taking time to select a translation service provider that meets your company's needs will not only save you time and money, but will also lead to the development of a long-term profitable partnership. The value of such a relationship cannot be overemphasized as the translation service provider will get to know your product or service intimately and will be able to cultivate a specially trained linguistic team. At the same time, your company will be able to use the linguistic feedback to streamline its own operations and communications. Questions?

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