

A few tips on ordering a translation

The Swedish Association
of Professional Translators

SFÖ



Sveriges
Facköversättarförening

Swedish Association
of Professional
Translators

When you call a translator, be prepared to answer some very specific questions.

WHAT IS THE TARGET LANGUAGE?

What language do you want your material translated into? Do you prefer a specific idiom (British, English, American English, Brazilian Portuguese, etc.)?

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE TRANSLATION?

Will you be using the translation in-house or sending it to your customers? Is it a sales manual? A contract for informational purposes only? Will you be presenting it orally?

WHO IS YOUR TARGET GROUP?

Will the people who read the translation be engineers, consumers, technicians, the general public, etc.?

WHAT IS THE MATERIAL ABOUT AND HOW MUCH IS THERE?

If you're prepared to explain what the topic is, its technical complexity, and the amount of material involved, the translator can more quickly determine if he or she is the right person for the job. A smart idea is to send a few typical pages for him or her to look at.

WHAT LAYOUT DO YOU NEED?

Do you want the translation back as text only, or are you expecting a special layout and format?

HOW WILL YOU DELIVER THE ORIGINAL MATERIAL?

You will obtain the best results if you provide the translator with original material that is clear and fully edited. Most translators these days would prefer you to e-mail the material as an attachment.

WHEN AND HOW DO YOU WANT TO RECEIVE THE TRANSLATION?

When do you need the translation back? Where should the translator send it and in what format? Is e-mail acceptable, or do you want a hardcopy?

The translator may have questions during the course of the project. Try to provide him or her with as much information as possible.

SUPPLY THE TRANSLATOR WITH REFERENCE MATERIAL

Ask the translator what reference material might make his or her job easier – such as descriptions of similar products, in-house glossaries, annual reports, and brochures. That way you're more likely to get a translation back that matches the terminology to which your company and industry are accustomed.

PROVIDE THE TRANSLATOR WITH A CONTACT AT YOUR COMPANY

The translator will probably be delighted to have the phone number of someone at your company who is knowledgeable about the topic at hand.

TALK WITH THE TRANSLATOR ABOUT SPECIAL CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

Should the translation be adapted to the cultural expectations of a specific group or country?

MAKE SURE THE TRANSLATOR HAS PLENTY OF TIME

Plan your project so that the translator has enough time. Just like the original material, a translation improves when it has a chance to ripen. If you're looking for instant results, the quality of the translation is likely to suffer.

CHECK THE TRANSLATION

Let someone in your office, or perhaps one of your sales reps, read and comment on the translation. If you make any changes whatsoever, be sure to involve the translator.

You turn over material for translation only after many hours of effort and discussion. The translator is not part of that process. Give him or her a chance to get acquainted with you and your company.

BUILD A PROFESSIONAL TEAM

If you develop a professional relationship with one or more translators, they can become fully familiar with your preferences, your style and your terminology. That's a win-win situation for everyone concerned.

LOOK AT TRANSLATION AS A LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP

Translation demands cooperation between you and the translator. Even if a translator is an expert in a particular language or subject matter, he or she can't possibly know everything there is to know about it. Translators may possess expertise in certain areas, but they aren't mind readers who can guess what terminology your company prefers.

In other words, it takes time for you to get to know each other. One or two small projects to start off with can be a wise investment in a long-term relationship.

MOST OF US MASTER ONLY OUR NATIVE TONGUE

It's a rare person who can translate well into a language other than his or her native tongue.

That's one reason why a translator is so valuable to you.

GET IN TOUCH WITH THE TRANSLATOR IF YOU DECIDE TO USE THE TRANSLATION FOR A DIFFERENT PURPOSE

A translator normally works with a specific target audience in mind. Get in touch with him or her if you plan to use the translation for a different purpose. Certain adjustments may be required.

The world is getting smaller every day. We communicate effortlessly and instantaneously across national borders, but we don't always understand what the other person is saying.

You stand to gain just as much by demanding professionalism in your translators as in all the other experts on whom you rely.

SFÖ members must meet certain professional requirements. That is the first step toward ensuring top-quality work.

Translation is a joint effort. Our recommendations and tips can lay the groundwork for a fruitful relationship between you and your translators.

We have compiled this brochure in the hope that it will help you and your translators understand each other better. Try putting a few of our ideas into practice and see if you aren't pleased by the results.

Even if you've been ordering translations for years, it's still possible that we have given you a little food for thought.

SFÖ is an abbreviation for the Swedish Association of Professional Translators. Since starting in 1990, we have grown to comprise 600 individual translators and over 20 translation agencies. Our official language is Swedish.

Member of the Swedish Association of Professional Translators

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