

APRIL 2024



Be understood worldwide

Global Voice, Local Touch:

Top Tips for Partnering with Atlas Translations

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Table of Contents

Page	Title
3	<u>12 Steps to Improve Your Business With Translation</u>
4	<u>7 Translation Myths Debunked</u>
6	<u>How Translation Services Can Grow Your Business</u>
9	<u>Localisation - What Is It and How Can It Help My Business?</u>
10	<u>What Qualifications Should I Look for in a Translator</u>
12	<u>Translation Projects In Different Formats</u>
17	<u>Questions and Research During Your Translation Project</u>
18	<u>What Info Should You Send To Your Translator?</u>
19	<u>What About Proofreading or Other Services In My Translation Project?</u>
20	<u>Computer Assisted Translation (CAT) Tools in Translation Projects</u>
22	<u>Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII) And Your Translation Project</u>
23	<u>Typesetting and Your Translation Project</u>
24	<u>Can I Book An Onsite Translator to Work With Me?</u>
25	<u>What Information Does My Interpreter Need?</u>
26	<u>Is a Second Translator Needed for Proofreading?</u>
28	<u>Will My Translator Format My Translation Project for Me?</u>
29	<u>How to Successfully Brief Your Transcriber on Your Transcription Project</u>
31	<u>Are Marketing Translation Projects Different and What Is Transcreation?</u>
33	<u>Why Is My Translator Asking for Translation Project Reference Material?</u>
34	<u>What Should I Do While My Translation Project Is in Progress?</u>
36	<u>Translating Subtitles In a Translation Project</u>
38	<u>Can You Use Americanisation in My Translation Project?</u>
39	<u>Can I Split Up a Large Translation Project?</u>
41	<u>How Can I Find a Trustworthy Translator?</u>
43	<u>Providing Feedback on a Translation Project</u>

01

12 STEPS TO IMPROVE YOUR BUSINESS WITH TRANSLATION

- Think you don't need translation? Think again - read this blog about how translation can help you grow as a business:
 - www.atlas-translations.co.uk/language-services/
- Research your local area – how many people live near you don't speak English as a native language?
- Research your competition – if they're translating product listings etc. then maybe you should be too. How about starting an Amazon store?
- Research the market – is there a requirement for what you do or sell in another country? If so, we can help you with this.
- Check if your website is being auto-translated by Google when it's being viewed in another country. This could be doing you more harm than good.
- Use Google Analytics to see if your website is getting any hits from countries outside the UK. If so, see the previous point.
- Get a professional translation of your website Homepage and/or About Us page. It's a cost-effective way of marketing yourself to customers who don't speak English as a first language.
- Sign up for a 24/7 telephone interpreting account. It's completely free to set up, and you only pay for your exact usage. Open new horizons and the ability to conduct business in over 400 languages.
- Look at your marketing and advertising details. Is there anything which could be putting off people from other countries? Certain colours, numbers or images have negative connotations in some cultures.
- Think about your pricing. Would it help to list prices in euros and dollars, as well as British pounds?
- Think about your SEO strategy and terms. Is it worth translating these to raise your Google ranking in other countries?
- Consider translating a quarterly newsletter or bulletin to appeal to new and existing customers in other countries – and locally.

02

7 TRANSLATION MYTHS DEBUNKED

Translation is one of those professions that people have no real idea about. Are we sitting with ink pots and quills, poring over a dictionary? What do we do all day? Isn't it just a hobby? Can't anyone who has learnt a bit of a language translate? Are we not all redundant now, thanks to Google Translate and AI?

We're still here and we're not going anywhere, so let's debunk several myths which surround the translation and localisation industry:

Myth #1: Anyone who speaks two languages can translate

Translators have trained and honed their skills over many years, and they specialise in particular subject areas—be it computing, marketing, finance, tax, or wine.

As an English person, I couldn't claim to understand all of my mortgage paperwork... let alone translate it into another language!

Myth #2: Surely there is no need to translate this – everyone speaks English?

It's true that English is popular, but when people are doing business, shopping, or communicating, they want to be 100% sure they understand everything you are saying. Plus, it's a courtesy to cater to current and potential clients—in their own language.

If all your clients speak English, all that may prove is that you haven't attracted any non-English speaking customers.

Myth #3: Translators work on books, and interpreters just work at the UN and EU Parliament

Practically everything you pick up has a translation attached — food packaging, instructions for using your camera, instructions for your washing machine, your car manual, etc.

Interpreters are sent to conferences, court cases, business negotiations, and lots more. Once you start looking, you'll see that languages really are everywhere.

02

7 TRANSLATION MYTHS DEBUNKED (CONT.)

An easy way to remember the difference is that, in general, *translators* deal with *written* words, while *interpreters* deal with *spoken* words.

Myth #4: With Google Translate, technology, and AI, who needs a real person?

Google Translate is great to get the gist of a message, but if you want to be confident that you are using a professional, fluent translation, the only option is to use a person.

Currently, software like Google Translate or any type of AI can only go so far. It cannot handle nuances, cultural references, humour or complicated sentences. Most people will spot an automatic translation a mile away, and it may make them laugh — not so good when you want to be taken seriously in business.

Myth #5: All translators do is type one text into another language

No, there's a lot more to it than that. Take into account writing skills, top-notch grammar and spelling, working out what the original author intended, research and terminology checking, and add-in cultural considerations.

Translators draft a translation, revise and rework, and ideally sleep on ideas to allow them to tweak their work until they are happy with it.

Myth #6: With a good dictionary, Google Translate and AI, surely I can work out a decent translation?

See numbers 4 and 5. Because, no, you can't.

Myth #7: Translators sit around in dusty libraries all day and are out of touch with technology

In fact, translators have always been ahead of technology. They run businesses and market themselves as professionals, qualified and highly skilled in their area.

You're much more likely to find them in their home office using speech recognition software to take down work, learning through an online course, or continuing their professional development at conferences and seminars.

03

HOW TRANSLATION SERVICES CAN GROW YOUR BUSINESS

We meet many people at business shows and networking events who have never required language services before. Some had never even heard of what we do or considered that there could be such a thing as the 'translation industry'. It's always interesting to watch their faces change as we explain what we do and how our services help other businesses grow as they reach that 'Eureka' moment.

It's completely reasonable to be unaware of the existence of language services, or indeed the value that they can add to your business. The role of translations in business is usually viewed in the same way as petrol is for your car – a necessity purchase that is not needed unless unavoidable.

Someone who's never been pressed into looking into language or translation services could be forgiven for having this attitude. After all, what use could languages be to someone whose business is conducted entirely in the UK, in the English language?

Broaden Your Appeal

Take a look at the United Kingdom. Figures released in 2012 showed that 12% of primary-aged schoolchildren spoke English as a second language. In 2021, throughout the entire UK school system, around 20% of students speak English as a second language. These children are now, or soon will be, potential customers for your business.

The 2021 census indicates that over five million UK residents don't speak English as a native language. The top ten languages spoken by this subset are Polish, Romanian, Panjabi, Urdu, Portuguese, Spanish, Arabic, Bengali, Gujarati, and Italian.

In 2022, inbound travellers (tourists, temporary visitors) to the UK spent just under 30 billion GBP, down from 38.6 billion GBP in 2019.

03

HOW TRANSLATION SERVICES CAN GROW YOUR BUSINESS (CONT.)

Clearly, the UK has a large customer base of non-native English speakers, so how about trying to appeal to them? One key way to do this is to speak to them in their own language, and here's where we can help. By translating some part of your website, like the homepage or some of your product listings, you instantly forge a connection.

It's not just helping people to understand your offer more quickly, either. Put yourself in your potential customer's shoes and imagine being a non-native speaker in another country. It can be a lonely, even intimidating experience. So when someone makes the effort to reach out to you in a way you understand, it's a big gesture, not to mention the priceless feeling of familiarity they will draw from reading your message in their own language.

Taking this first step is relatively inexpensive, and you're more than likely to receive a return on your investment. If you're worried about then dealing with enquiries in languages other than English, we can set you up with the tools to handle these. A 24/7 telephone interpreting account instantly grants the capability to converse with anyone in any language.

Exporting/Importing

Then there's the rest of the world. If you've never considered exporting your products/services, then perhaps now is the time to look into this. While the economy in the UK is predicted to weather some hardships in the next few years, other economies are expanding. British businesses have a global reputation for quality, and you can make the most of this by exporting to some of these growing economies.

Even if you are a small business, you can try selling overseas on sites like Amazon to test the waters. We have helped numerous businesses with this process and can do the same for you. Translating the details of your products is a cost-effective way of appealing to a broader market base, and, if successful, we can provide ongoing support for your business.

03

HOW TRANSLATION SERVICES CAN GROW YOUR BUSINESS (CONT.)

Expanding opportunities

In a nutshell, language services can broaden your appeal to a wider base of consumers and present more opportunities for your business to expand. So, if you're one of those people who view language services as a nice-to-have rather than a necessity, perhaps it's time to think differently. Instead of looking at translation as the fuel you're forced to buy to get where you want to go, how about seeing translation as the road which can take your business to exciting new destinations? Get in touch today to see how we can help your business grow.

04

LOCALISATION - WHAT IS IT AND HOW CAN IT HELP MY BUSINESS?

What is Localisation?

Localisation is the process of making or adjusting a product or service to make it more suitable for a particular country, geographical area, etc.

A great example of this would be an organization preparing to market a product or service in a different country, e.g. KFC, an established American brand entering the Chinese market.

How can localisation help my business?

- Translation and localisation are very similar but also very different
 - Knowing the difference between translation and localisation while understanding the crossover helps with adapting globally
- Understanding new global markets is crucial for brand success
 - Brand checking is vital when promoting a new product in a new culture
 - Business expansion of any size requires localisation when moving into non-native territory
- Being open to using additional languages in business is a win-win
 - Realising that relying on others to “just speak English” is limiting and, at worst, damaging
 - Never underestimate the power of being inclusive in dialect as well as language
- Native-speaking translators are a must during any type of business translation

05

WHAT QUALIFICATIONS SHOULD I LOOK FOR IN A TRANSLATOR?

Translators and interpreters are fully trained, qualified and experienced professionals. Speaking another language does not make someone a professional linguist. Did you know that we reject around half of the applications we receive? Experience and qualifications are mandatory to begin a career in the translation industry. There are so many ways people find and come into this exciting and ever-changing profession:

By accident – doing another job

These people are already working in another career. Word goes around the office that they are bi-lingual, and before they know it, they spend more time helping with translation or attending meetings to interpret than doing their actual job! They discover that they really enjoy this, and are good at it.

By accident – doing a language-related degree

These people love languages, so they choose a language degree. Then, they discovered that they could have a career using their languages in translation or interpreting. They focus on this during their degrees and may do an MA after their degree.

With careful planning

These lucky people know that this is what they want to do from an early age! So they plan their education and possibly an MA to match.

With careful planning – from another job

These are people in other careers who have always loved languages, kept them active, and decided to take the plunge and make a career change. Every translation agency and end client will have their own criteria for applicants. All our linguists are very carefully vetted and considered, and have one of the following before their application can be considered:

- Formal higher education in translation (recognised degree)
- Equivalent qualification in any other subject + a minimum of 2 years of documented experience in translating
- At least 5 years of documented professional experience in translating

05

WHAT QUALIFICATIONS SHOULD I LOOK FOR IN A TRANSLATOR? (CONT.)

So what qualifications should you look for?

Well, as you can see, this can vary. You could find a bi-lingual website designer who discovers they enjoy languages more than designing websites. Or you could find a new graduate with a degree in Business and French, and an MA in Translation. This leads us on to experience, and there is no getting away from the fact that no experience = big risk. Plus, in the world of the internet, anyone can promote themselves as an "expert", so it's worth considering trusting an agency such as Atlas Translations for your peace of mind.

06

TRANSLATION PROJECTS IN DIFFERENT FORMATS

Word

Although formatting with Word is not particularly complex (as it may be for a PDF file, for example), clients usually want to receive a translation that matches the layout of the source text. A translation agency such as Atlas Translations will always ensure that what we deliver to the client is as close to what we have received from them as possible, just in a different language.

Another issue that you may encounter is spelling mistakes left in the translation. This is something that can easily slip by, and the longer the text is, the more likely this is to happen. Again, Atlas will ensure spell-checking has been completed and will always recommend proofreading for any materials destined for publication. The quality of the translation is, of course, our main concern, but we do care about formatting as well and as an Italian speaker would say... 'Anche l'occhio vuole la sua parte' (The look needs to match the substance)!

Excel

First and foremost, you should be aware that the spell check is not automatic for Excel. To perform a spell check, go to the 'Review' tab, then click 'Spelling' from the 'Proofing' group. This will perform a spell check on the text. Older versions of Excel may not have this function, so a way around this would be to copy and paste your translation into Word, which should highlight any spelling discrepancies. Make sure you haven't selected any cells before clicking the spell check or only these cells will be checked.

Another issue we frequently encounter with translating in Excel concerns formatting. The golden rule we follow is to replicate the source text as faithfully as possible. This is where the 'Format Painter' tool (found in the top left hand corner) comes in handy. Selecting the formatted source text and clicking the 'Format Painter' tool will load your cursor with its formatting attributes. Now if we click on our translation, it will be formatted to match the source. Often when typing text into a new cell the text will trail across the screen, so that only the first part of the sentence is visible. Clicking the 'Wrap Text' button from the tool bar will format the text to be contained within the parameters of the column, so that all the text in this row is visible.

06

TRANSLATION PROJECTS IN DIFFERENT FORMATS (CONT.)

If something is highlighted or coloured differently in the source, make sure these words/sentences are highlighted or coloured in any translation.

Excel is a popular choice of format for clients writing texts to appear with HTML coding. Often code will appear in brackets within the source text, and while this text doesn't usually need to be translated, it will probably need to be present in any translation. It's important to make sure this is copied across accurately, and that any formatting is retained. It's also worth considering what text will replace the code in the final version of this (it's not always easy to tell) and how this could affect your translation.

If you foresee any potential problems, do check to avoid any potential issues before they become problems. Last but not least, check that the translator has translated all the tabs. It can be quite easy to overlook, but I can't count the number of times we've received a translation back with missing tabs or when the incorrect tab has been translated – something Atlas will always check. Also be aware that it can be quite difficult to get word counts for Excel documents, particularly if there are multiple tabs involved.

PowerPoint

Translating in PowerPoint format isn't all that different from working in Word format, but there are a few things to be aware of.

It can be more time-consuming, particularly when slides are in a 'non-editable' format. Let your translator know if the featured tables and graphs need to be translated. They're often not editable, which means the translator will provide a separate file with these elements translated.

Although easily overlooked, there is a note section just underneath the slides where there may be some additional text. If there is text here, do you need it to be translated? Often notes left here are for reference and won't be required. If you don't point this out to your translator or agency then you run the risk of either having this text missed from your translation, or translated unnecessarily, adding to the overall cost.

06

TRANSLATION PROJECTS IN DIFFERENT FORMATS (CONT.)

Formatting is another aspect you need to take into account when translating in PowerPoint. The text in PowerPoint presentations is often designed to fit nicely within each slide. When translating this text into a new language, the length of sentences and words is, of course, different. We may, therefore, need to edit aspects like font size accordingly so that your translation fits the design. Bear in mind, then, that when you get your translation back, it may look slightly different from a design perspective.

PDF

There are three different types of PDF we generally receive, so the first thing to do is to ascertain which type of PDF you've got. We need to know this because it may affect a number of things, including cost, formatting and length of deadline.

Please note that the terminology used to describe the different types of PDF is only our in-house lingo:

1. **'Dead' PDF.** This is usually a scan or photocopy where the text is not in an editable format
2. **PDF created from Word.** Word files which are saved as PDFs can usually be re-opened with Word, which makes editing and translating the content fairly straightforward
3. **Designed PDF.** Usually these will have been exported from a design program such as InDesign or Quark Express. These usually contain a lot of design elements with graphics and images, often rendering the file too large to open and work on, with a program like Word. Translating 'Dead' PDFs

Translating 'Dead' PDFs

Of the three different types of PDFs, 'Dead' PDFs are the most time-consuming to work on because there's usually no way to format them other than manually reproducing them into a separate (usually Word) document.

Often, these are short documents such as birth certificates and university transcripts. Some translators refuse to work on 'Dead' PDFs at all because of the time and effort required to replicate formatting. If there are any tables, do these need to be replicated? This may involve additional formatting costs.

06

TRANSLATION PROJECTS IN DIFFERENT FORMATS (CONT.)

Also, it should be noted that any numbers will be included in the word count because they will need to be typed out in the target document.

Is all the text in the scanned document legible? Check this first, and if not, try to provide a clearer copy. Translators will not want to take chances guessing at illegible sections, even if just a couple of lines. If the text is handwritten, is the handwriting clear? If not, is it possible to get a typed-up version?

Our translators always check and double-check any names, dates, and numbers, as these are aspects they normally wouldn't touch when working in an editable format. If the formatting isn't important to you, let your translator/ agency know, as it will save time and possibly money! Usually, a basic level of formatting (maintaining headings, paragraphs, etc.) should suffice, and it will be clear how the translation corresponds to the source.

If the source 'dead' PDF contains tables or diagrams, how do you want these presented in the translation? If a simple bilingual table will serve as a diagram, the translator can take care of this. If you need diagrams replicated accurately, you may have to pay a designer for these aspects.

PDF Created from Word

These are the simplest of the three types of PDFs to deal with. Most often, they can be opened with Word (or alternative word processing software) and translated. We'll check carefully that everything has opened correctly in Word against the original PDF, as sometimes the formatting can become corrupted and text is hidden. If you have an editable version to work from, please send this to your translator/agency.

When it comes to finalising the translation, we can save the document in PDF form, so you have the translation in the same format.

06

TRANSLATION PROJECTS IN DIFFERENT FORMATS (CONT.)

Translating a Designed PDF

You may not be aware, but the beautiful brochure that you're looking to translate will have been designed by a professional designer using professional (and usually expensive!) software. Unfortunately, expecting a translator to replicate this is unrealistic. This is when we need to involve a typesetter in the process (see section 12).

If you don't need the translation to the same quality, we can use PDF conversion software to work on these, but the formatting will almost definitely not be the same as the original.

Generally, source materials in this form are things like brochures or leaflets, so translations will usually need to be typeset by a professional.

07

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH DURING YOUR TRANSLATION PROJECT

Whether you're dealing with a translation, proofreading, or transcription project, projects will inevitably raise questions and may require research. This is only to be expected as your team of translators seeks to gain a firm understanding of the source text.

Questions

Ideally, you should appreciate the necessity of clarifying any ambiguities and strive to answer any questions as fully as possible. After all, it's in your best interest to do so.

If you don't respond, translators will generally leave a note in their translation (the 'Comment' function in Microsoft Word works well for this), and someone will need to pick up on the points raised.

Atlas Translations will present any queries clearly, logically, and all in one go. We will list each query in the order in which it appears in the source document, stating clearly where the issue in question occurs within the document.

Research

Before raising any queries, our translators always do some research. However, sometimes, we find terms, in-house jargon, and abbreviations of which an external worker such as a translator is not aware.

As a client, you'll get the best result if you are responsive and understanding to any queries raised.

08

WHAT INFO SHOULD YOU SEND TO YOUR TRANSLATOR?

You have something that needs to be translated, and you've lined up a perfect translator/agency for the job. What do you need to send them to ensure they can do the best possible job by the deadline?

The most important thing is to send them the **source document**. Maybe read the document all the way through and try to think of any potential issues with formatting. Are there any cultural issues when localising the text to the target language? Is everything clear in the source document? Is all of the text legible? Have you had a similar document translated before? Whether good, bad or ugly, your translator will find any reference material helpful. Do you have particular instructions on style or tone? Formal or informal?

Don't be afraid to ask these questions—doing so will ensure your translator has a clear idea of what you want from the outset.

As your translator proceeds with the translation job, queries may crop up. You may need to clarify certain points to make sure your translation perfectly reflects the source text. We have discussed dealing with queries in greater depth in an earlier section, but being available to answer queries will save time and avoid delivery delays.

Another thing to consider is your own systems for receiving invoices. Does your translator/agency need a purchase order? Sometimes translators won't begin working until they've received this, so try to send it through ASAP!

If you require changes to be made to the source text you've already sent, make these clear by highlighting or making them in track changes. Working closely with your translator is possible even from a distance, and it's always the best way to make your business relationship work effectively and efficiently.

At Atlas Translations, we always appreciate collaboration and help from our clients!

09

WHAT ABOUT PROOFREADING AND OTHER SERVICES IN MY TRANSLATION PROJECT?

Calling our business Atlas Translations, I am always keen to point out that we don't just "do translation"!

Since 1991, we've offered spoken interpreting, proofreading, and typesetting services. At clients' requests, we've added SEO work, telephone research, and a whole lot more. **If you think you don't need any other services, think again.**

Do you need proofreading or certified translations? Do you need your translations notarised? Do you need expertise checking facts, testing web links, and so on? Did you know we can help with layout, subtitles, voiceover, and transcription?

When it comes to telling clients what we do, we could just send an email saying, "Hey, look what else we do!" and add a link to our other services.

Instead, we try to build a relationship with each client, carefully reviewing their work, asking questions about it, and seeing if there is anything else we can help with. Clients are delighted to find that we can handle projects, especially multi-lingual projects, from start to finish.

10

COMPUTER-ASSISTED TRANSLATION (CAT) TOOLS IN TRANSLATION PROJECTS

Since Atlas Translations was formed in 1991, we've seen the translation industry change almost beyond recognition. Technology has dramatically improved and found its place in the translation world. New software and tools aimed at helping translators perform fast and quality translations have been invented and brought to market.

CAT (computer-assisted translation) tools have been around for a number of years now. However, there are still many translators and clients who do not find CAT tools as useful as others do. Some people don't find them to be helpful, but the benefits become obvious later on. They realise that the more they work with CAT tools, the more productivity they will get out of them. Using a CAT tool can provide an advantage in terms of maintaining terminology and style consistency, quality control and efficiency.

As most CAT tool-using translators already know, CAT tools generally work with three basic functions: segmentation, translation memory, and a terminology database.

CAT tools usually present the document in a bilingual format and break up the text into segments, which helps the translator to easily read and translate the text. The source and target segments are saved together in a translation memory that can be reused in similar texts. This is great news for maintaining consistency and quality between documents.

A terminology database is usually included within a CAT tool. This is a multilingual dictionary, which allows translators to choose the correct terms for the text they're translating. Using consistent terminology within a document and throughout a project is extremely important – especially in technical translation.

Although a CAT tool may sound very similar to machine translation, there is a huge difference between them. Both use software to help create translations, but in completely different ways.

10

COMPUTER-ASSISTED TRANSLATION (CAT) TOOLS IN TRANSLATION PROJECTS (CONT.)

Machine translation is a rapid form of translation. The purpose, in this case, is to receive a usable translation in the shortest turnaround time possible. The quality of the final product is not preserved, and the text will most likely present grammar and syntax errors throughout. These documents would need to go through a process called “post-editing”, which involves a linguist reviewing the document and making sure the text is completely legible.

CAT Tools work in a very different way. They require a linguist to operate them in order to translate the document and ensure the final product is an accurate translation. This method allows the linguist to work faster while still maintaining accuracy throughout the document.

11

PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE (PII) AND WHY IT'S IMPORTANT IN YOUR TRANSLATION PROJECT

Should your translator have professional indemnity insurance (PII)? Straight answer – yes!

But seriously, to expand further, your translator is offering a professional service to a business. Professional indemnity insurance (PII) covers you and them if they are negligent or make a mistake which causes a business to suffer financial loss.

If you think it couldn't happen to you, read the following article by Doug Lansky, "Lonely Planet Founder Recalls Worst Publishing Mistakes"
www.huffingtonpost.com/doug-lansky/lonely-planet-founder-rec_b_670848.html

Not just translators should take out professional indemnity—consider accountants, IT consultants, business consultants, journalists, architects, financial advisors, engineers, and many more.

Rest assured, Atlas Translations has comprehensive PII.

12

TYPESETTING AND YOUR TRANSLATION PROJECT

What is typesetting?

Typesetting is the process of laying out a document in a particular format, usually in preparation for printing. We regularly typeset magazines, brochures, leaflets and business cards. Our work is carried out using desktop publishing packages (DTP) such as QuarkXpress and Adobe InDesign.

Who will carry out my typesetting?

All our typesetting work is completed by linguists who know the target language. They are aware of the correct hyphenation, capitalization, and punctuation for this particular language.

How can you supply the finished document?

We can supply documents electronically in a variety of formats. It is important to be aware that if the text is in a language that does not use the Latin alphabet, such as Arabic, Chinese, or Hindi, you may only be able to read the file if you have the appropriate fonts for that language. Alternatively, we can offer EPS files or PDF files, depending on your requirements.

Can I see the work before a final version is sent to me?

We always send proofs for your approval before producing a final version. Proofs can be supplied as PDF files or laser photocopies.

How do you charge for typesetting?

This depends on the language, the amount of work involved, and the format in which you would like to receive the final version. Each project is priced individually. If you can supply sample pages of the original document, we can get a good idea of your requirements.

13

CAN I BOOK AN ONSITE TRANSLATOR TO WORK WITH ME?

Working onsite for a client brings with it a different set of requirements for translators. First and foremost, agree on what is covered/included. This may seem like we're stating the obvious here, but it's important to have everything agreed upon upfront and in writing ahead of the assignment. Provide a purchase order as confirmation of the work instructions.

At Atlas Translations, we always agree on **a daily rate with suppliers for work carried out on clients' premises** – even if the assignment is only expected to last one or two hours. The reason for this is that the supplier will probably have to block out a whole day from their schedule to ensure their availability for the assignment. It's proper that they should be paid for this whole day. Also, if the assignment (though expected only to run for one or two hours) should overrun, the supplier won't need to rush off to be somewhere else.

We consider the standard working day to consist of 8 hours (usually between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., with a lunch break). If the assignment goes on for longer than this, we charge overtime at an hourly rate. Again, this should be agreed upon upfront.

Check what software and equipment the translator needs. Some of our translators prefer to bring their own laptops for in-house translation assignments. Think about what they'll need to work effectively, such as foreign language keyboards, CAT tools, Wi-Fi, and possibly a desk space.

Let your translator know ahead of the assignment if there is a dress code. While most offices have eliminated strict collar-and-tie dress codes, it's still important for the translator to be comfortable and in keeping with your office protocol.

Help with practical matters. Things like the closest rail or bus station, the best coffee, where to park, and other handy bits of information. You also need to agree on how travel costs will be covered and calculated. Is there a policy for mileage (if travelling by car)? All of these items need to be confirmed in advance of the assignment.

14

WHAT INFORMATION DOES MY INTERPRETER NEED?

First things first, check what type of interpreting you need. At Atlas Translations, we have a checklist we ask clients to complete so we have all the information we need.

Payment

Is the rate clear and understood by both parties? This is likely the most important thing to find out. We have a daily rate for interpreting, with an hourly rate for any overtime agreed in advance. This way, everything is agreed upon upfront, and there are no surprises. You should cover travel, and if the interpreter has to stay somewhere overnight, accommodation and meals should be provided.

Location

Where is the assignment? Is it easy to get there? If it's a long way to travel, does the interpreter need to travel and arrive the day before and then leave the day after? All these things should be considered before an interpreting assignment. As we've already mentioned, travel costs will need to be covered by the client.

Specialist Technology

Will knowledge of specialist terminology be required? What is the purpose of the interpreting assignment? Clarify this in advance to avoid any misunderstandings later on.

Supporting Documentation

Is there any supporting documentation for the interpreting assignment? Or are there any other items that will help the interpreter understand the assignment better? Atlas Translations offers services to ensure consistency in the terminology of the written materials and any spoken interpreting. Providing an agenda and list of names and job titles, at the very least, is a good start.

Cancellation Fees

Any interpreter will have a cancellation policy in place and enforce this as necessary. At Atlas Translations, we try our best not to charge cancellation fees. However, if a client cancels a booking at the last minute, then it's only fair that appropriate payment is made. Make sure you agree to a cancellation policy in advance of the booking and keep a written agreement.

15

IS A SECOND TRANSLATOR NEEDED FOR PROOFREADING?

While thinking about proofreading a few years ago, I was immediately reminded of reading “Eats, Shoots and Leaves”, and this quote sums up my feelings perfectly:

“Part of one’s despair, of course, is that the world cares nothing for the little shocks endured by the sensitive stickler. While we look in horror at a badly punctuated sign, the world carries on around us, blind to our plight. We are like the little boy in *The Sixth Sense* who can see dead people, except that we can see dead punctuation.”

Lynne Truss, Eats, Shoots & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation

Spelling mistakes and slip-ups happen to everyone; you only have to Google ‘hilarious typos’ to be kept amused for hours. (If you want further language-related entertainment, you should follow @HilariousTypos on X/Twitter, a feed dedicated to publicising amusing errors and spelling calamities.) So, how can you avoid having your work added to one of the many ‘Top 30 best typos’ lists?

Proofreading sounds simple enough, but thoroughly and effectively checking the work of the translators (and others) for mistakes can be a real challenge. It is all too easy when reviewing work to read what was intended rather than what is actually written on the page.

Firstly, if you have the time, then it is always a good idea for the translator to step away from the completed work for an hour or two before going back to review it. They are likely to skim over any mistakes in autopilot if they are proofreading content that they are very familiar with.

If you are proofreading, a university lecturer gave me the tip of reading the text backwards, from the end to the beginning, so that I focus on each word individually and pick up on spelling mistakes or omitted letters. By allowing enough time to proofread properly, you can focus on looking for one type of mistake at a time.

15

IS A SECOND TRANSLATOR NEEDED FOR PROOFREADING? (CONT.)

For example, start with spelling, then move on to punctuation before checking the layout. This is where a checklist can come in handy. You can't go wrong with a good list, and proofreading is no exception. Think about including things like spelling, punctuation, double or missing word spacing, capitalisation, formatting, website addresses, numbers etc.

What if you are proofreading another translator's work? In addition to what we've already discussed, there are a few other things to keep in mind. Regardless of whether the document is destined for publication or not, the proofreader should always aim to deliver a print-ready document.

It is vitally important to check that the language and style of the translation are consistent throughout the document and match up with the source text. Some alterations may be necessary, but try not to make too many changes, especially if they are stylistic choices.

Proofreading should be a collaborative task where suggestions are made—preferably using something like the track changes function. The original translator can evaluate whether they agree with the suggested alterations. If available, complete a feedback form to give the translator as much information as possible. It will help the translator in the future, and ultimately, you will receive a higher-quality document.

Atlas Translations offers proofreading in all languages, including English. Let us prepare a quote for you and help give you complete peace of mind. Not piece of mind.

16

WILL MY TRANSLATOR FORMAT MY TRANSLATION PROJECT FOR ME?

When working on a translation project, we sometimes find it difficult to deal with the formatting of our documents, especially when dealing with complex layouts. Acknowledging any alterations the files may suffer and trying to minimise the risk of formatting chaos is usually part of the translator's work. It's another important part of the translation project worth discussing with your translator.

Let's look at a few things to take into account regarding formatting translations:

Use of CAT tools for formatting

Computer-assisted translation tools such as Trados, MemoQ or Wordfast, often provide great support with formatting, as they can be configured not to alter the formatting of target documents. Sounds about right, doesn't it?

However, there are some things to take into account. While most translators nowadays use CAT tools, not all do, and they still face the same problem. Additionally, it is important to remember that when we translate a document, the characters in the target language can increase or decrease, thus altering the formatting of our documents.

Be specific about formatting

If you're not, translators will usually maintain the original format if possible. In case the format needs to be modified, it is advisable to make the instructions for the target document as clear as possible (use explanatory notes, pictures for reference, bullet points if necessary, etc.).

Working with dead PDFs

We are aware that it can be a real pain in the neck to struggle with dead PDFs—scans of documents whose characters cannot be recognised by translation tools, particularly when their format is complex. In these situations, remember that it's always a good idea to advise your translator that it would be acceptable to receive the documents in a different format.

17

HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY BRIEF YOUR TRANSCRIBER ON YOUR TRANSCRIPTION PROJECT

The first step on your transcription assignment will be to check over the audio file to confirm the language and subject matter. You'll also need to make sure the sound quality is high enough that you can clearly make out what's being said. Try to identify any areas of concern, such as background noise or temporary bad sound quality.

Next, agree upon a deadline and check that the number of hours being allocated to transcribe the audio is enough. We usually allocate one hour of work for every ten minutes of audio to be transcribed. Sometimes, if the audio is more dialogue intensive or the subject matter is technical, we'll need to spend a bit longer on the transcription. Make sure this is all agreed upon and understood before you go ahead with any job.

Note that we will always carry out a full transcription in the language of the recording, and only then will a second person (the translator) start their work on translation.

Transcriptions are required for many different reasons, and it is important to understand the end use of the transcription, as this will help us to provide what you need. For example, do you want to include any of the imperfections that creep into spoken language, such as hesitations (er, erm) or repeated words? Or would you rather have a cleaner text with these parts left out?

When transcription is ultimately used for subtitling, there is often a limit to the number of characters we can use in each line of our transcription, so you need to be aware of this from the beginning. Check these details before assigning the project.

Finally, how does the transcription need to be formatted, and how often do you want time codes (if at all)? We prefer to use a simple Word table template for transcriptions with columns for time codes, the name of the speaker, and the transcription itself. If we need to translate the transcription, we can add a new column for this.

17

HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY BRIEF YOUR TRANSCRIBER ON YOUR TRANSCRIPTION PROJECT (CONT.)

Sometimes, clients prefer using Excel for subtitles. Either way, if you've not provided a template for the transcription, it's best to advise us if you have a preferential format. Time coding is sometimes needed and sometimes not. We include time coding as a standard part of the transcription service, though some choose to charge extra for this.

Again, this comes back to the end usage of the transcription, but checking how often timings need to be indicated will avoid having to revisit this later on.

18

ARE MARKETING TRANSLATION PROJECTS DIFFERENT AND WHAT IS TRANSCREATION?

Some of the most popular subject areas we receive texts for translation are legal, medical and marketing. While it is common knowledge that legal and medical texts, which are known for their technicality and often written in a language unto themselves, require translators who specialise in these fields to work on them, the same can also be said for marketing translations and advertising texts.

Lacking the technical terminology immediately obvious upon inspection of legal or medical texts, marketing materials may initially seem straightforward to translate and present little or no surface difficulties with such technical terminology. However, these marketing texts are carefully and deliberately structured in a certain way and do require the attention of translators who specialise in this area. It is important not to underestimate these materials when working with them.

Your translator should think about the purpose of the text – WHAT is the author trying to achieve, and HOW are they doing it? Getting this right is vital to producing a translation which achieves the same effect as the source document. When translating, the 'HOW' may be subject to change according to what works in another language, but the 'WHAT' should always remain the same.

If you're unsure about anything, chat with your translator for clarification. It is better to do this as early on in the project as possible to avoid any potential delays.

Provide a style guide. Even if it is not in the target language, a style guide will provide insight to the translator of how you would like your written communications to come across to the reader and will give an idea of how the translation should be read. The first time we work with a client on any marketing translations or advertising materials, we ask to see any previous translations, even if you weren't happy with them – this will at least give us an idea of what to avoid.

18

ARE MARKETING TRANSLATION PROJECTS DIFFERENT AND WHAT IS TRANSCREATION? (CONT.)

We'll spend some time browsing the internet to get a feel for the brand and how you try to market your product(s). Marketing texts are often heavily stylised and a lot of thought will have been put into the style, so it is important to try and match this in the translation if possible. We'll consider if the style would be appropriate in the target language though. What is deemed friendly and informal in one language could be seen as rude and offensive in another. We'll try to flag any issues with the style with you.

Transcreation

Taglines and slogans are paramount in marketing and branding. If we need to translate these, we'll consider what will work in the target language. More often than not, it won't be a straightforward translation, and here is where transcreation comes in.

For those unfamiliar with the term, **transcreation is the process of adapting a message from one language to another, while maintaining the meaning and purpose of the original.** As an example, take the phrase "It's all Greek to me!" which makes perfect sense in English. However, it may not make any sense in the target language. In this case, we'll need to come up with something new that is different but carries the same meaning. We can provide a literal translation that will make sense, and back-translate the translation into English so you can understand the literal meaning. We can even provide a couple of options so that you can choose your preference.

Lastly, we'll try to think about the audience that the materials we are translating are aimed at. What is the demographic? How old will the reader be? This should help us with the tone of the translation. As a native speaker of the target language, the translator may well know the target audience as well as you do, or even better, so be sure to raise anything you consider to be problematic – ask lots of questions, and provide as much information as you can – your translator will appreciate it.

19

WHY IS MY TRANSLATOR ASKING ME FOR REFERENCE MATERIAL FOR MY TRANSLATION PROJECT?

Whether the source materials we've been given to work on are technical or fairly straightforward, if you provide us with some reference material, we'll make sure we use it efficiently.

The very nature of translation is subjective, so if you've had something translated before in a style you liked, it's beneficial to all parties that you provide this for reference when working on new materials. It'll help us with terminology, style, and tone and ensure that we deliver an end product we know you are happy with.

If we've undertaken a translation focused on a technical subject, we understand that you are entrusting us with something that could be crucial to your business or personal life. Sometimes we receive manuals for factory machinery or legal certificates, and if the client hasn't provided any reference materials, it's very important to find our own source of reference to use for the project.

We may need to check the website of the company the translation is for and make sure the terminology used is consistent with the client's preferences (if there are any existing translations). Another option would be to look at other similar companies' websites or at approved technical glossaries available on the web.

We'll ask you to provide any available reference material; technical manuals, illustrative diagrams, and specialised glossaries can be especially helpful.

In many instances, there can be several possible translations for the same term, and all of these can be correct, depending on the different context. The differences can vary depending on how formal the word is, the style you require or the industry in which that specific term is used. If/when we come across such a term, it is always best to raise a query for your attention or check with a specialised term base to avoid any mistranslations.

Following these steps should help us to provide a translation you will be happy with, and one that has been perfectly adapted to the necessary target language.

20

WHAT SHOULD I DO WHILE MY TRANSLATION PROJECT IS IN PROGRESS?

We're all about communicating here at Atlas Translations; it's one of our best assets. When we're in the office, we're available for clients and suppliers by phone, email, fax (a few people still use faxes), LinkedIn, X/Twitter... and in person, too.

With good communication, everyone is happier. Queries are quickly resolved, and potential problems can be avoided. Relationships become stronger, and there is a greater understanding of what each party needs. This way, they can better understand the pressures and constraints upon them.

When we work with translators and interpreters, we like to get to know them beyond a "here is your purchase order" level. We want them to become members of our team who just happen to be working somewhere else.

Most of our clients are the same. They may not know exactly what they need, or what we actually do. They may be up against time constraints and technical issues. Possibly they have never worked with languages before. So, first, we'll ask some questions – starting off with clear communication:

Who is the audience? What are you doing with the translation? Is someone else checking it? Have you had materials translated before?

For interpreting, we'll ask similar questions: Is there any available reference material? Will they be working with other interpreters? This, along with the usual where/how long/when.

Questions can sometimes raise more questions. This initial conversation may raise some questions you can't answer. This isn't a bad thing as you can find out the answer(s) at the start of the project rather than at the last minute when you thought the project was finished.

20

WHAT SHOULD I DO WHILE MY TRANSLATION PROJECT IS IN PROGRESS? (CONT.)

We're not afraid to raise queries and ask questions along the way. We hope you'll welcome these. We do try to save them up and wait until we have been through the entire document before asking them. Sometimes the answer may become clear at that point.

We'll even point out any spelling errors and/or factually incorrect text we may spot.

Once the job is complete, we like to check back in with you. Was everything OK? Could we do anything better or differently? Rest assured, we're always working to improve in all areas, no matter how small.

21

TRANSLATING SUBTITLES IN A TRANSLATION PROJECT

Subtitles play a central role in films around the world, allowing speakers of different languages access to films they would otherwise not understand. Many (if not most) film goers prefer subtitles to dubbing. This is perhaps because watching a film with subtitles doesn't take anything away from how the film was meant to look, feel and sound. It is therefore interesting to see how it works, and what to bear in mind while translating subtitles.

It is good to remember that reading text on the screen is very different from reading a document. In fact, when inputting subtitles in the video after a translation, it is important to keep in mind a few things. After all, you need to make it easy for the viewer to read the subtitles and follow what is being conveyed. The translation should be concise and communicate what needs to be understood as simply as possible.

For easy reading it is important not to place too many words/characters in a line while subtitling. There will also be a character limit to what you can fit on each subtitle. When translating subtitles, consider a character limit. Remember that people speak more quickly than they read. In all likelihood we won't be able to include everything being said in your translation. The most important thing is to convey the meaning of what is being said on screen. The subtitles should match the images appearing.

If the entire text cannot be placed in one line, then it's necessary to break the lines and keep these grammatically correct, which makes subtitles easy to read. If a proper division of the lines is not maintained, you'll end up with a jumble of sentences causing confusion to the viewer.

The best way to separate lines is after a punctuation mark and before conjunctions (and, because, or, etc.) or prepositions (for, on, in etc.). Also remember not to break down names, abbreviations, numbers, phrases, etc. that will make it difficult for the viewer to understand what is being conveyed.

21

TRANSLATING SUBTITLES IN A TRANSLATION PROJECT (CONT.)

Here are some tips that can be useful for translators and clients alike:

- **Research**
 - As with any translation work, you should always research words and topics that you're not familiar with.
- **Watch The Video**
 - If this is available and can be supplied by your client, it's usually very helpful.
- **Preservation**
 - Preserve the meaning of the source text but don't translate word by word.
- **Be Brief**
 - Keep sentences as short as possible. If your transcript is too lengthy for subtitles, viewers won't be able to read all the text while it is on the screen.
- **Character Limits**
 - Make sure each line doesn't go over the character limit set by your client. This will likely depend on the target language.
- **Keep It Simple**
 - Keep the nature of the target language in mind. When available, always choose simpler or shorter words. This will convey the same meaning without cluttering the screen.
- **Know Your Audience**
 - Pay attention to the social and cultural background of the people who speak the language. This helps you to better communicate the meaning to those who use the subtitles.

22

CAN YOU USE AMERICANISATION IN MY TRANSLATION PROJECT?

What is Americanisation?

Americanisation is the task of adapting a text for the American market. This is done by taking into account the differences in style, terminology and vocabulary of the text. Any tables, figures, numbers, names, abbreviations, punctuation, conversions, etc, will also be verified.

How do you price for Americanisation?

We charge by the hour for Americanisation. Please contact us ahead of time for a quotation, as each project is considered individually. We will always confirm all costs in writing prior to starting the project.

How long will it take?

This question can only be answered after we have the details of the project. The length and complexity of the documents to be Americanised will affect the answer.

Who will complete the Americanisation?

All of our Americanisation work is completed by qualified, professional and experienced writers. They also specialise in many sectors, such as health, legal, marketing, and information technology (IT). This means that we can match your Americanisation project with an appropriate, experienced writer.

Can I do anything to help?

We always appreciate any reference material or glossary of terms that may help with consistency of style and vocabulary.

*Additionally, we also provide **Anglicisation** and **Australianisation** services. If this is of interest to you, please contact us for more details.*

23

CAN I SPLIT UP A LARGE TRANSLATION PROJECT?

Often, large translations and urgent projects need to be split between different translators to ensure a deadline is met. Here are a few pointers on things to look out for when working on a split job.

Consistency in a Large Translation Project

The greatest issues with split translations involve the terminology and consistency of the translations. Having more than one person working on the materials will affect these. The best approach is to try to limit this as much as possible.

Hopefully, you will have the large translation proofread, which will add some consistency to the overall translation. Then again, maybe the translation is for information purposes only, and consistency is not too important. This is worth checking because then you won't have to worry too much about consistency, terminology, and style.

We will usually connect all the translators working on the job. At that point, terminology and stylistic choices can be discussed, and they can also help each other with any queries.

It is the project manager (or whoever is heading up the project) who is responsible for making the translation as consistent as possible. We point that out to try and alleviate any needless worrying. We know how conscientious and proud of their work most translators are, so we thought it was worth including.

Can a translation memory or glossary be provided? If you don't have something like this, some reference material or similar materials you've had translated previously would be useful. This should give a good starting point.

Something else to consider is the formatting. If we're working on a single large document which has been split up into different sections, consider how the translations will be pieced back together at the end of the project.

23

CAN I SPLIT UP A LARGE TRANSLATION PROJECT? (CONT.)

Ideally, the materials will be fairly straightforward to re-format. If it's anticipated that they won't be, talk to the project leader about this. In most cases we will assume that you would rather we spent more time on the translations and less time on the formatting, so you should be able to come to a compromise.

Contents pages and page numbering can cause problems so it's best to leave these until the end. It's also worth deciding if these can be left alone altogether. Sometimes (especially in Word), content pages pull the information from the titles of chapters/sections automatically.

However, when a large document is split up, translated, and pasted back together again in the new language, this can cause issues. It will depend on how the project leader wants to handle it. But be aware that this could create an issue and communication will lessen any negative impact on the project.

24

HOW CAN I FIND A TRUSTWORTHY TRANSLATOR?

Like most business relationships, it's not always easy to choose someone you trust. It's no different when choosing a translator, and it can be difficult to tell if they're genuine and trustworthy. These days, almost everything is done online through emails and social media, making it feel as though the next scam is lurking around the corner.

So, it's crucial to do some homework and learn as much as you can about your translators before you start working with them.

There are a few easy things that you can do to make sure they're the right translator for you, such as:

- A quick Google search of the company or translator's name should bring up some useful information.
 - If they're UK based, check for any details on the Companies House website.
- Visit their website (if there is one) to find out whether the company actually exists.
 - No website, not good.
 - If there is, make sure that the site's contact details are present and that they match what you already have.
 - Ideally there will be a landline telephone number and a postal address.
- Browse their website further to find out as much as possible about them.
 - What do they do?
 - How they do it?
 - Do they claim to be a member of a relevant association, such as the ITI (The Institute of Translation & Interpreting)? If so, check the ITI website to make sure this is the case.
 - Before you start any work, make sure that prices are agreed upon upfront and confirmed in writing or via a Purchase Order.

24

HOW CAN I FIND A TRUSTWORTHY TRANSLATOR? (CONT.)

Still not sure?

It may take you some time to do all your checks beforehand, but it is worth the due diligence.

If you've checked all of the above points but still have doubts, pick up the phone and give them a call. Less trustworthy translation agencies and translators will be reluctant to speak with you over the phone. That's not to say they won't do it, but by speaking with someone over the phone, you'll hopefully be able to tell whether this is someone you want to work with.

Most importantly, trust your instincts. If you don't have a good feeling about a supplier, don't be afraid to walk away. It's far better to spend your time and money working with a translation company you know you can trust.

Funnily enough, we know *just* the right people...

25

PROVIDING FEEDBACK ON A TRANSLATION PROJECT

Translating is very rewarding, and it's **always** nice to hear that a client is happy with our work.

Positive Feedback

At Atlas, we save positive responses on file and forward them to the linguists who worked on the job(s). This ensures that they have a glowing testimonial for their own records and that they also know that the end client is happy.

Aside from the nice, warm feeling that kind words can give us, we take careful note of positive feedback. If we've done something the client likes, we make sure we do it again. The next time we're contacted by the same (or a similar) client, we will have a record of the style and terminology we used previously. Now we will be able to reference this in the new project, ensuring the client is happy once again.

Negative Feedback

On the flip side of the above, if a client has rated our translation as not entirely satisfactory, we want to find out the reason behind this. Is the issue simply a matter of style? Maybe preferential terms were not made available to us? Or perhaps they were unhappy with the formatting? Whatever the reason, if we've not met our client's expectations, it is vital to find out why so we can avoid the same situation in the future.

We will ask the client why they were unhappy with our work and request specific examples so we can identify the exact issue(s). This may seem as though we're needlessly asking for information, but that's not so. We simply need an opportunity to demonstrate a method behind our work.

Our priority will always be to provide the client with an end product that they are happy with.