



Best Practices

Language Translations

Promising Practices

Written Translation

- Assess your situation and determine objectives & scope
- Balance linguistic accuracy with cultural competency
- Remember the medium is part of the message
- Ensure quality by relying on proven methodology
- Choose translation services wisely
- Take the guesswork out of translation budgeting

1 **Assess Your Situation**

- Broadly assess languages challenges
- Conduct periodic surveys of clients and potential clients
- Update the demographic makeup of your service area at least every two years
- Be aware of multiple dialects, idioms, forms of address and so forth

Language/Cultural Requirements

- Materials/documents to be translated
- Audience
- Languages
- Cultural Groups
- Population
- % of Plan
- Literacy in Native Language
- English Proficiency
- Generation
- Age Ranges

Determining Requirements

- Identify all languages needed
- Identify all countries and/or cultural groups
- Tally the population for each cultural group
- Identify % of total population of each group
- Determine whether each groups overall literacy level is low, medium or high. (work with members of the community)
- Determine English proficiency as low, medium or high
- Determine generational range for each group (according to length of time they have been in the country)
- List target age ranges
- Alert all vendors in printing or producing materials that multilingual versions are forthcoming



Materials (written translation)

- Rights and obligations
- Applications and enrollment forms
- Letters or notices on eligibility or changes in benefits
- Consent forms
- Complaint forms
- Any other documents requiring a response from the client

#2 Balance linguistic accuracy with cultural competency

- **Ensure genuine sensitivity and respect**
- **Understand background, cultural values and beliefs**
- **Recognize and anticipate misunderstandings**
- **Don't assume one size fits all**
- **Make cultural adaptation an essential step in translation**

Communication Grid

- Program elements that require special attention (message, names, slogan, graphics)
- Cultural touchstones and taboos: (idioms, symbols, colors, images, acronyms and mnemonics, etc.)
- Other cultural beliefs and values to note: (dietary, non-Western medical practices, etc.)

#3 Medium is part of message

- Form and matter go together
- Adapt message for each culture (style and tone)
- Localize multimedia applications (avoid flashing symbols--ADA)
- Manage content updates in all languages

Communication Grid #2

- **Add column to identify media for each**
- **Add column for localization**
- **Add required file format column**

#4 Quality by proven methodology

- Glossaries
- Style Guides
- Simple is better
- Language text can expand by 35%
- Leave extra white space

Phasing is promising

- Phase 1 Evaluation and Scope

- Getting to know
- Tech talk
- Deadlines and review cycle
- Ensuring cultural adaptation

- Phase 2 Planning and Setup

- Project staffing and resource planning
- Training and assimilation
- Project Planning
- Glossaries and style guides
- Translation memory

- Phase 3 Implementation

- Translation, Editing Proofreading
- Formatting and engineering
- Quality assurance and testing

- Phase 4 Maintenance, measurement, continual improvement

- Measuring success
- Reviewing objectives
- Updating tools and technology
- Follow-on planning

**Continual
Improvement**



**Planning
Execution
Evaluation
Maintenance**

#5 Choose translation services wisely

- Not all resources are the same
 - In house
 - Individual freelance translator
 - Existing advertising or other agencies
 - Professional LSP
 - Online translation management
 - Competent in- country translators
- Get references
- Ensure translation expertise in field
- Assess project management capabilities and methodology
- Evaluate tools and technology

#6 Take guesswork from budgeting

- **Start with Fed/State compliance**
- **Look at demographics**
- **Leverage past translations and translation memory for savings**
- **Save on desktop publishing costs**
- **Share documents with other organizations**
- **Focus funds where and when you need them**
- **Measure return on investment**



Translations Tips

- Be aware of government mandates
- Avoid Top 10 timeline killers
- Save time and money with translation memory
- Become efficient with glossaries and style guides
- Find peace of mind with good project manager

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Top 10 Timeline Killers

1. Unclear expectations; unclear roles
2. Unrealistic timelines
3. Inadequate preparation
4. Delays in starting project
5. Not enough time allowed for review/corrections
6. Holidays and vacations not factored in schedule
7. Missing files, fonts, images
8. Not anticipating potential issues
9. Format issues
10. Inadequate or incomplete translation memory

Civil Rights Compliance Staff

(CRCS)

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- ✓ Serves as departmental liaison for all civil rights related matters
- ✓ Investigates civil rights complaints
- ✓ Provides technical and advisory services to the department regarding standards and requirements of civil rights laws, rules and regulations
- ✓ Develops departmental policies, procedures and plans