LILLIAN CLEMENTI
French-to-English translator

TRANSLATION PROJECT CHECKLIST

Use these tips to save time, avoid frustration—and help prevent translation disasters.

■ **Define your audience.**
Subject-matter experts or the general public? Company insiders, partners or customers?
Consider their language(s), profile(s) and expectations.

■ **Identify the language(s) you need.**
Spanish for Spain, Argentina or Mexico? Portuguese for Portugal, Brazil or Angola?
Professional translators can usually help you decide.

■ **Decide whether a computer translation tool can do the job.**
Depending on your needs, an online tool may be all you need—but use caution.
Ask yourself three questions:
   1. Is it confidential? If it is, avoid online tools—there's no guarantee of privacy.
   2. Does every word matter? If so, avoid online computer translation tools.
   3. Is it inbound/ for information only? Use computer translation tools—with a grain of salt.

■ **Prepare your text(s).**
Do you really need to have everything translated? Save time and money up front by
deciding what's relevant for your international audience and eliminating everything else.

■ **Adapt or delete content that is culture- or language-bound.**
If location matters, include a map designed for your international audience.
Think about your overall strategy and focus on your international audience from the start.
If you have a "triple A project," for example, make sure that all of the A's will work in
translation. If not, consider using a pitch that isn't language-bound.

■ **Define your process.**
Who will be coordinating your translation project? Who is available in your organization to
field questions? Who has the final say? Who signs the proofs? What file formats will you use?

■ **Locate talent.**
If you need a translator, professional associations can be a good starting point. Look for
experience, residence abroad, professionalism, and references (essential!). Note that most
professional translators work only into their native language and usually work with a reviser.

This checklist was developed by Lillian Clementi & Chris Durban.

- **Ask questions.**
  Vet potential providers by asking savvy questions—and get the answers in writing.
  > 1. Will your text be divided up among different translators? If so, how will the quality control process ensure coherence and consistency?
  > 2. Will your translation be checked by someone who knows both languages, or simply copyedited in the outbound language?
  > 3. Will you be able to talk to your translator? If she has questions about the text—and in many cases, she should—how will they be handled?

- **Have translators/translation suppliers sign an NDA (non-disclosure agreement) up front.**

- **Identify your goal.**
  Make sure your translators are aware of your target audience and the purpose of your texts—a good translator will generally ask for this information up front—and provide contact details for questions. Consult your archives: if you've had similar texts translated in the past, pull the related documents and give them to your translator as background.

- **Set a clear timeline for translation, delivery and review, and be sure your schedule allows for revision of final proofs by your translator.**

- **Make yourself (or a subject-area expert) available to answer questions.**

- **Leverage internal expertise to check quality.**
  Line up trusted internal experts or external partners to vet the work you buy, and remember that "bilingual" doesn't always mean "highly proficient" or "good writer."

- **Don't reinvent the wheel.**
  Let your colleagues know what has been translated and store translations on a shared drive or other readily accessible location so they're easy to find—even if you're on vacation. And be sure to send final versions of your text to your translator for her records.

- **Use downtime to look ahead.**
  It's handy to have your "About" paragraph available in key languages, along with relevant titles and functions for business cards and websites. And in some countries, translation of certain documents (e.g., consumer protection information and legal information on websites) may be required by law.

This checklist was developed by Lillian Clementi & Chris Durban.