



## Saving time and money and getting the best results

In the following 5 brief articles Paul Mason, senior partner in Cicero Translations, aims to give straightforward, practical business advice about translation and interpreting:

- [Translation - how to save time and money with proper planning](#)
- [Interpreting - getting the best from your interpreters](#)
- [Producing foreign language publications - how to ensure perfect results](#)
- [Foreign language films and DVDs - how to be sure they work well](#)
- [Getting your website translated - benefits and how to go about it](#)

### Translation - how to save time and money with proper planning

When you contact us to translate a document, remember to tell us about these 6 points:

#### 1 Target language or languages

Which variation of the language is required, e.g. is it French for metropolitan France, Martinique or the Côte d'Ivoire, Spanish for Spain or Argentina, Portuguese for Portugal or Brazil?

#### 2 Readership

Please tell us about the likely readership of the document in the short and longer term:

- nationality
- age
- gender
- specialists/non-specialists

All these factors can affect the translator's choice of style, tone and vocabulary, and determine whether or not explanatory notes should be added. Please let us know of any specialist terms which the target readership is unlikely to be familiar with.

#### 3 Deadlines

- Press for the longest possible deadline with your own clients (if relevant). Is the translation really needed for close of business tonight? Would first thing tomorrow morning be just as good? If so it may save substantial costs by
  - saving the need for splitting the translation between two or more translators;
  - enabling us to assign the job to translators in other time zones who will work on it overnight.
- Can we start on parts of the text while the rest is being finalised? e.g. in a legal document the appendices, recitals, uncontentious clauses on severability, entire agreement, applicable law, jurisdiction etc



#### **4 Background**

We keep confidential client information confidential. So give us as much information as you can. The more we know, the more we can make intelligent linguistic decisions on your behalf. Can we see any relevant documents already translated into the target language?

#### **5 Special layouts**

If you would like, for example, parallel text with the source language on the left and the target language on the right, both in shaded boxes using Excel or Word tables, just tell us.

#### **6 Amendments**

Is the document likely to need them? It may be better to wait for the amendments and then translate - it depends on the timing issues and the expected nature and volume of any amendments. Please discuss with us.



## **Interpreting - getting the best from your interpreters**

Your interpreters are viewed as representatives of your organisation; and they will want you to achieve your aims. Help them do so as follows:

### **1 Arranging interpreters**

- Book them as soon as possible. The best interpreters are much in demand.
- Tell us clearly about the venue, schedule and likely duration of the proceedings.

### **2 Briefing**

- Tell us in detail about:
  - the subject matter of the conference, seminar, court case or meeting;
  - the people attending and their background;
  - the hoped-for result.
- Let us have any relevant material - presentations, records previous meetings, emails.
- Look on us as part of your team and take us into your confidence. This way we can ensure our interpreters are fully briefed.

### **3 Conduct of meeting**

- Allow time before the meeting to welcome your interpreters, introduce them to your colleagues, review the briefing material and check their grasp of your objectives.
- Schedule some breaks. Interpreting is a high pressure intellectual activity. Pauses of 15 minutes every 1-2 hours will keep your interpreters focussed.
- Remember, professional interpreters spend many years studying for their qualifications, and probably several hours getting ready for your assignment. Show them respect and they will work even harder for you.



## Producing foreign language publications

If you want to produce a brochure, leaflet, manual or other document in more than one language, e.g. a German version of your English brochure for an exhibition, here are some recommendations for how to go about it. For advice specifically on translation of your website, see our piece below on [getting your website translated](#)

### 1 Target readers

As with any piece of writing, consider who the target or likely readers will be. In the above example, will they be Germans, or could they be Austrians, Swiss or other speakers of German? Consider too their age, gender and level of knowledge of the subject-matter. Maybe you just want a straight translation of the English or maybe you need to adapt it to your intended readers.

### 2 Writing the text

If you decide to adapt your document for the target readership, remember to avoid plays on words and idiomatic expressions. Here are two examples of English text which may not work in other languages:

Hotel brochure strap line:	"Get the full English!"
Manual for instrument providing rapid measurement of the flow-rate of liquids:	"0-60 in 9 seconds!"

Once your piece is ready, send it to us for translation. See our advice on [Translation - how to save time and money with proper planning](#).

Finally, though we always ensure our translations are accurate and idiomatic, we sometimes find that when they are published in a brochure, leaflet or manual mistakes appear because our clients have had our translations typeset by non-linguists.

Here are some actual examples we have seen:

- Missing hyphens and accents
- Incorrect use of lower case and capital initial letters e.g. in a heading
- Words split in the wrong place at the end of a line
- Paragraphs missing entirely
- Incorrect font
- Text running left to right in an Arabic publication
- Brochure in Italian bound in the Portuguese cover and vice-versa.

So please let us help you get the best return on your investment by doing the [typesetting](#) for you or [reviewing the material](#) before it goes to print.



## Foreign language films and DVDs

Cicero Translations regularly translates scripts and produces voice-overs or subtitles for promotional DVDs, training films and documentaries. If you have a film or DVD which you are considering producing in other languages, here are some choices we will be happy to advise you on:

### 1 Voice-overs or subtitles?

A voice-over is produced by replacing the voice of the narrator, presenter or trainer with another voice in another language. Subtitling leaves the soundtrack unchanged and instead displays a translation at the bottom of the screen, or if the language reads top to bottom at the side.

### 2 Voice-overs

If the presenter speaks to camera, we can produce a script whereby the words fit his or her mouth movements. This is called 'lip synch'. Alternatively a more natural script can usually be achieved simply by timing the delivery to fit the scenes.

### 3 Subtitles

We can translate the whole script and produce it as subtitles or produce an abbreviated version. The advantage of the first is that you can be sure no points are missed. On the other hand the abbreviated version may be less distracting so that even slow readers can follow the pictures on the screen.

### 4 Target audience

As with any creative production, the starting point is to consider who the film or DVD is for and make the choices above partly on the basis of which will be most effective in getting your message across to them. Consider their

- nationality
- age
- gender
- level of education

and consult us for advice.

### 5 Presentation

Finally, remember your film or DVD may need translations of the box covers, labels, titles and scene selections. Cicero Translations will be happy to handle them all for you.



## Getting your website translated

If you are reading this piece, you may already be thinking of having your website translated, or have decided to go ahead. If you want to promote your services in other countries you are quite right to be considering it. It is likely to be the single most cost-effective marketing investment you could make.

### **The benefits can be simply stated:**

More customers will read your website if it is in a language they understand.

- Clients are more likely to trust your website, so more likely to book.
- You will project a helpful, customer-oriented attitude.
- Translated websites attract more agents and distributors.
- You will increase your visibility on foreign search engines.

### **Once you have decided to go ahead, here is how to go about it in 12 steps:**

1. Complete the English version of your website as far as is reasonably possible. Ensure that the content is correct, up to date and search engine optimised. This may involve changes to structure and metatext as well as content, and is worth getting right before proceeding with translation.
2. Get clear about objectives > what to translate > into which languages  
Example: home page plus other top level pages, terms and conditions, FAQs and order forms into the languages of your top 5 markets.
3. Get quotation, including in your specification:
  - notes about your target readers (nationality, age, gender, level of education)
  - clear instructions about which pages to translate, and which languages (Portuguese/Brasileiro, traditional/simplified Chinese)
  - requirement to weave key search terms into the text
  - degree of licence to adapt, paraphrase and explain
  - translation of meta-text: page titles, descriptions, key words, alt-tags
  - insertion and testing of hyperlinks and navigation tools
  - insertion of translation directly into your HTML source code, PHP, Type 03 etc
  - advice on advertising the languages (flags, headings, pop-down menus)

**Note:** *steps 1 and 2 may be an iterative process. Experiment with various options until you reach proposals which will be effective and within your budget.*

4. Consider ways to save money:
  - Reduce risk and stagger cost by starting with 2-3 languages, testing them in the market and assessing the results:
    - Foreign language search engine hitstats up?
    - New agents or distributors?
    - More enquiries and orders from relevant markets?
  - Learn from mistakes, and if the investment has paid off, translate more of your website in the existing and additional languages.
  - Rule of thumb: translate just enough to make the customer think "This is the supplier for me"



- Do not try to save money by getting translations done by amateurs or machine translation. This will give your site and your business a poor image. If you must shop around for quotations please first read our advice on [getting a quote](#)
5. Consider your post-publication strategy re fielding enquiries in foreign languages, measuring success, dealing with updates, etc., and decide how these will be handled and who will be responsible.
  6. Shortlist or decide on your [preferred translation supplier\(s\)](#)
  7. Discuss and agree on logistics and trade-offs with your translators
    - how to keep your site easy to navigate e.g. logical folder structure
    - faithfulness to the original, versus fluency
    - translation versus localisation (e.g. changed emphasis, different FAQs)
  8. Discuss and agree on technical points including
    - country code top level domain (ccTLD - .fr,.es,.de)
    - dynamic website management
    - expansion and contraction
    - alt-tags, internal and external hyperlinks, flash files, graphics with text in them
  9. Get translations done.
  10. Once the translations are in web format, get your translators to check them. Mistakes may have crept in owing to your web developers not understanding the languages they are dealing with.
  11. Test them on some friendly customers or agents:
    - Are the foreign languages well advertised?
    - Is the site easy to navigate?
    - Is the language natural and idiomatic?
    - Do the hyperlinks work properly?
  12. Go live.
  13. Promote your website in your literature, to your customers, agents and distributors and with the search engines.
  14. Monitor the results. Keep a close eye on your webstats to see who is visiting your website, click-through rates, positions in search engine results for a range of key terms and so on. Google Webmaster tools offers a complete suite of tools to monitor your web marketing success.
  15. Decide on any next steps. Do you need to translate into more languages? More pages in the same languages? Change copy/content/structure to improve effectiveness.