

10 Questions to ask when choosing a Translation Company



When taking the first steps towards establishing a working relationship with a translation company, there are many things to take into consideration. While there are a plethora of translation companies in the UK, from “one man bands” to large multinational corporations, it is essential that you get the right fit for you.

We’ve compiled this list of 10 questions you should ask translation companies before you take the first step, so you can make an informed decision.



#1

Are they an accredited company?

You can be assured that if the translation company you are intending to work with is a member of either ATC (Association of Translation Companies) or ITI (Institute of Translation & Interpreting), the company is reputable and you will receive a good quality service. ATC and ITI are the main professional bodies in UK translation industry and have stringent requirements for membership, such as full professional indemnity insurance and quality control procedures.



#2

Can they cover your financial losses if something goes wrong?

When placing new work you need peace of mind that you will be covered should the unexpected occur. In any translation work, accuracy is critical. A mistranslation or a small error on the part of the translator could lead to high legal costs or damages. This is where professional indemnity insurance comes in: the translation company should be insured so that all parties involved in the work are covered against any eventuality. The amount that the company is insured for should be in proportion to the value of your work.



#3

Can they provide customer testimonials?



Customer testimonials are a very easy way to gauge whether the translation company you are using is right for you and your industry. Most companies have testimonial pages on their websites, with general information. You can also ask the company to provide you with more detailed information about work they have done for customers in your industry, such as rough estimates of how many words they have translated, or who some of their other customers include.

#4

Do they have experience in your industry?

This is one of the most important things to ask the translation company you are thinking of working with. It is essential for the quality of your translation that the translation company has experience translating material in your industry and is well versed in the appropriate terminology. This is particularly important for translations for the medical and fire safety industries, where words save lives. Ask the company what their specialities are very early on in the conversation.



#5

Do they have a proven track record?

Find out if the translation company has a proven track record before you start working with them. Good indications of their track are how many satisfied customers they have, how many customers they have from your industry and are they willing to provide you with answers to your questions. Of course all companies have to start somewhere, however for larger or more critical work it's best to opt for a translation company with a track record. If you choose to use a company with no proven track record, ensure to get a free test translation and get the translation checked before making a final decision.



#6

Do they use Translation Memory tools?

The use of Translation Memory tools is now a standard practice in the translation industry. Translation Memory tools work by storing your previous translations. Where the same, or similar text occurs in another translation project or file, it allows you to reuse the previous text. This has three major benefits: consistency, time effectiveness, and reduced costs for you. The three major tools are Trados Studio, Memsource and MemoQ, and there are many more. You can also ask the translation company if their project managers have certifications in any of these tools.



#7

Can they deal with multilingual typesetting?

Multilingual typesetting is the process where your translations are made ready to be printed. The translations are formatted into your artwork so that they reflect the layout of the source exactly. While reproducing the work in the target language may sound easy enough, it does require relevant experience and high end typesetting tools. This is most evident for right to left languages such as Arabic and Hebrew: if the company does not use specialised tools, your translation could become corrupted and make no sense to your target audience.



#8

How will they deal with complaints?

Another key component of good customer service is the way in which the company deals with complaints when they arise. Ask the company you are planning to work with how they deal with complaints and whether they have a complaints procedure in place. Ensure you work with a company that will not consider the project complete, until you are happy with the end result.

Customer service is defined as the provision of service to customers before, during and after a purchase, after all.



#9

Can they work with your in-country reviewers?

Many companies who export their products and services have contacts in the countries they are exporting to, and also reviewers. While your relationship with the translation company is important, it is also very important that they have the same synergy with your contacts as they do with you. If you have in-country contacts or external reviewers, ask the translation company about their review procedures and if they are happy to work with your contacts after they have completed the translation on their side.



#10

Do they have a project management methodology

A structured project management methodology is essential to your project running as smoothly and efficiently as possible. The most efficient translation companies use project management tools and employ project managers with project management qualifications such as PRINCE2 or Agile. Ask the company about all of these considerations.



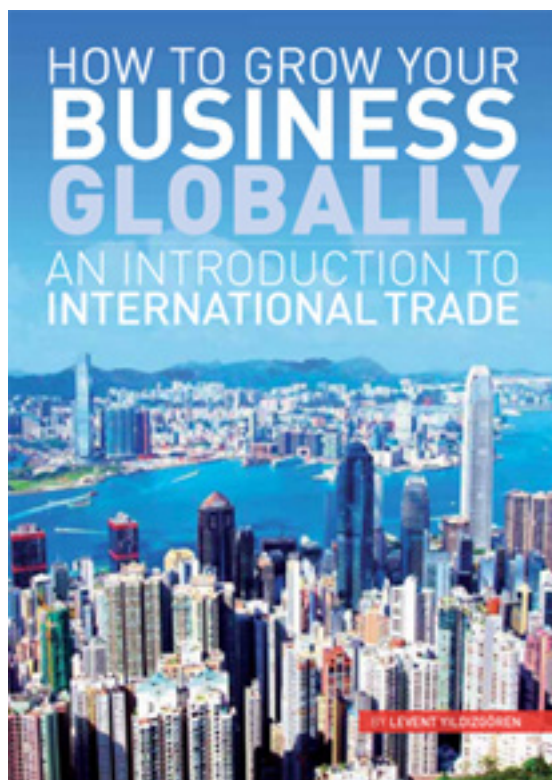
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