



Selecting a Language Professional for Your Next Project

If you are reading this article, then you are likely looking to hire a language professional to translate documents, localize software or serve as an interpreter in your business or healthcare setting.

If you have not previously worked with a language professional, this article will offer some recommendations for selection.

Prior Experience

A key to mitigating potential risks is the selection of a language professional with prior experience performing the type of work you seek.

Always request references from past client businesses or agencies. *Note that translators will not typically not share direct client information with competitors.*

View background information such as résumés, websites, online presence and social media profiles

Some translators have direct work experience in the domains, or fields, in which they translate. For example, there is value in working with an engineering translator with education and professional experience in the domain. However, translators without direct domain experience can also deliver quality work.

Sample and Test Translations

Coupled with background details, a sample translation is a text delivered to a previous client and can provide insight to a translator's skills. If the translator uses glossaries or term bases, then it is very likely that s/he is prepared to complete your translation immediately, with minimum consultation.

A test translation, timed or untimed, will also provide insight into a translator's ability to deliver a quality translation. Typically, test translations are a maximum of 250 words and are a subset of the translation project text, or a similar text.

Quality Assurance

In the language field, quality is ensured in a number of ways. For small, recurring tasks, it may be sufficient to retain a single language professional dedicated to your company on a long-term basis.

For large or critical projects consider:

- a pair of interpreters to divide the time worked
- a team of translators to share translation and editing work
- a programming and testing team for software and website localization

Glossary

domain | field of study, such as medicine, law, engineering, sociology

interpretation | translation of spoken words

localization | the adaptation of a product or service to meet the needs of a particular language, culture or desired population's preferences and tastes

translation | written communication in a second language having the same meaning as the written communication in a first language

thefreedictionary.com, merriam-webster.com, dictionary.com



*Author Mack McKay is a training, IT and language professional who has translated > 1 million words and taught Spanish to > 500 individuals as a university and adult education instructor, K-12 program teacher, independent contractor, and volunteer. **Get in touch!***

