

# IT'S A **JUNGLE** OUT THERE

*How to save time and money by cutting through the BS of the translation industry*

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So, according to your resume, you're fluent in a language you haven't used since high school. Your boss just called your bluff and asked you to translate a vital document.

Google translate looks tempting; it's free after all. But, like an unstable ex, you know it will come back to haunt you.

You find some translation company websites. They claim to be the best in every language spoken, ever.

You read their testimonials to find their customers use the exact same wording and syntax.

Upon closer inspection, their "customer" pictures look like they came from a discount stock image site.

You realize that translation is a highly unregulated industry.

With new companies popping up on the internet every day, there's been a steady race to the bottom.

Quality varies greatly making it difficult to find reliable resources.

We understand the struggle. Wasted hours searching for translators at our previous jobs inspired us to start our own company.

After a decade of translation experience as customers and as service providers, we know the industry inside and out. Now we are sharing our knowledge with you.

This guide will arm you with actionable info on how to get the most out of your translation.

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## WHAT ARE YOUR OPTIONS?

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You have three besides learning a second language for 10 years



### FREELANCE TRANSLATORS

Self-motivated, independent translators who usually work alone.



### ENTREPRENEUR- OWNED AGENCIES

Outsource to freelance translators with the lowest rates and perform minimal quality checks, if any.



### TRANSLATOR- OWNED COMPANIES

Usually translate files in-house and care more about quality. Charge more and keep their clients for longer periods of time.

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# YOUR OPTIONS



## FREELANCE TRANSLATORS

### + Pros

Typically eager to work.  
A good one will provide reliable, long-term translation solutions.

### = Cons

They are as easy to find as a needle in a very spread out haystack. Their quality varies and is not always correlated with their rates. They need someone to review their work, especially customer-facing documents and other sensitive material.

### ✓ How to recognize them beforehand

They usually won't have a website and their email host will be AOL or Yahoo.

### 🕒 When to use them

They are great for recurring projects with moderately tight budgets that you intend to review in-house.

## ENTREPRENEUR-OWNED AGENCIES



### + Pros

Flexible with their prices and deadlines.  
A good option when both are an issue.

### = Cons

Quality is not their priority. They mostly farm out translation to the lowest bidder to keep costs minimal. Files are not usually proofread, leaving you with the privilege of revising or even re-translating their work.

### ✓ How to recognize them beforehand

They are willing to accommodate your price range with aggressive discounts and provide moving target deadlines. They will make vague guarantees that can't possibly be upheld.

### 🕒 When to use them

When your budget is tight and you need a rough understanding of non-technical documents. Just make sure not to post their work on your website before reviewing it for accuracy and localization.



## TRANSLATOR-OWNED COMPANIES

### + Pros

Generally provide better quality translation and deliver on time.

### = Cons

They can be expensive as they have high fixed costs (in-house translators, proofreaders, editors, etc.). This is especially true if they have been around for a while.

### ✓ How to recognize them beforehand

Their rates are firm and they have set timetables for how long a project will take. Also, they won't promise the sun, moon and stars just to get your business. They'll see if you are a good fit as a client before taking on your projects.

### 🕒 When to use them

They are the best option for technical documents that require a high level of accuracy.

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# MORE TIPS

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## SAVE MONEY BEFORE YOU START

Translators charge by the page, which is determined by word count (e.g. 250 words equals 1 page). Why do they do this? Probably to standardize quotes, or maybe just to confuse you. So, before sending a file, ask yourself what needs to be translated. It is possible to eliminate a large portion of your text and reduce your costs.

Ask your translator to remove numbers and symbols from the word count. This will show that you are an informed client, or annoy the heck out of them. Either way, you'll save some money.

Try to get a discount on duplicate sentences. Most translators use software that can count the repetitions in a file. Don't pay twice for the same work.

Ask for a volume discount on large files. Most companies will subtract 5 to 10 percent on files which cost over 1,000 USD. Remember, the bigger the file, the less admin and marketing they have to do.

## STACK THE ODDS IN YOUR FAVOR

Find out what their procedure is. Check their website and ask them to clarify how they manage projects if necessary (spoiler alert, it will be necessary). Make sure they use both a proofreader and an internal review system. This will increase the likelihood that you won't spend all night redoing their files.

Remember, procedures, just like rules were made to be broken. Always have critical documents reviewed independently before showing them to your boss or customers.

## GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR TRANSLATION

Give the company a terminology list and ask them to update it. This is your insurance in case you have to switch translators at some point. Also, it will keep terms consistent in translated documents.

Feel free to ask for revisions if they are required. This will give them feedback and make them pay more attention to your files.

## SAVE TIME AND ENERGY ON REVISIONS

There are a million ways to translate a sentence (we counted). You can either hope your translator is a mind reader or provide a reference file when possible.

A reference file shows the original text and the translation side by side. This lets translators know the wording, sentence structure, style and tone you prefer. Most importantly, this will make life easier for both of you.

If you do not have a reference file, make sure to tell them exactly who and what the translation is for. The more details you give (i.e. selling cosmetics to Chinese females in their 20's from Beijing), the better your results.

Don't request deadlines that are too tight. A good translator can handle between 1,500 to 2,500 words per day. Any more and they might be tempted to split the file with another translator, leaving you with a mess of words that lack continuity.

Also, don't forget to leave time for proofreading and review, otherwise you can add them to your to-do list. Just remember, 5 pages (around 1,250 words) take at least 48 hours to translate and polish.

# GET CONSISTENT **QUALITY**



Translation is subjective. It's difficult for translators to know if they are providing the right level of quality. Once you receive well-translated documents from someone, let them know.



Make sure to request the same translator and proofreader if you are satisfied with the quality. They will be more than happy to accommodate you.



A good translation company will be eager to receive any kind of feedback. Never hesitate to voice your concerns or appreciation.

*“ I love looking for a good translator online ”  
- No one ever*

## DON'T BUY THE **HYPE**

Many translation companies will claim to provide the best results immediately.

Great translation, however, doesn't happen overnight. It takes a few files for even experienced translators to find the best word choices and sentence structure.

A good translator will consistently search for optimal solutions for you. Look for people who ask the right questions to provide better results.

## **THE BOTTOM LINE**

Translation quality comes down to individual talent and sense. Education, certificates, experience, association memberships and high rates aren't always the best indicators of high quality.

There are excellent translators with minimal experience and vice versa. A good way to discover the best ones is to “date” them by sending smaller files first.

We wish you the best of luck with your future translation projects. Feel free to send us a file for review.