

10 questions you should ask when placing a project for translation

By Sue Clark, MD

Midland Technical Translations (UK) Ltd

1 Does the company belong to a recognised body or hold professional qualifications?

With your company's reputation at stake, you need to be sure your translation supplier is up to the job.

MTT (UK) Ltd have been corporate members of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting since 1990 and fully subscribe to their Code of Conduct.

We've been ISO9001 certified since 1996 - our ISO procedures ensure our processes run smoothly and reliably.

Sue Clark, MD, a CIOL chartered linguist, has been involved with the professional translation industry for over 25 years and is ideally placed to help you get the best from your translation supplier.

We've been successfully helping businesses in the UK and overseas to communicate for over 30 years. Let's show you what we can do to help you.

2 What guarantees does the company offer?

- **Guaranteed delivery:** We undertake to deliver on the agreed date or we'll issue a 10% discount credit note in your favour, if you feel we have no justifiable reason.
- **Quality of translation:** We'll only use professional, mother-tongue translators to ensure you get the best translation possible.
- **Continuity:** We'll use the same translator wherever possible to ensure you get continuity of terminology and style
- **Speed:** We aim to ensure you receive a free no-obligation quote within 4 hours

A personal message from Sue Clark, Managing Director

"If for any reason you are not 100% delighted with our service, all you have to do is let us know. I will personally do whatever I can over the next 24 hours to correct the problem and will keep you fully informed."

3 How do I know my translation is accurate? After all, I can't read it!

It's all too easy to get a quick translation on the Internet these days, but do you really know what you're getting back? Just imagine the consequences if a technical term or a legal term were misinterpreted...

There are a few things you can do to make sure you're getting a quality service.

- Talk to one of your overseas contacts and get them to look at a sample
- Have your translations edited and proofread
- Try an in-country test of your translated materials
- Start with a small project
- Choose a professional supplier

At MTT, customer satisfaction is measured and monitored on a monthly basis. We consistently achieve a rating of 'excellent'.

We only use mother tongue professional translators, who have experience in your relevant subject area.

All jobs are checked in house before being returned.

Translations are usually for information only, but we also arrange translations for publication. *Please see our guide - Getting the right translation service.*

4 How do you charge?

MTT use the source word count to calculate your quote, after all that's what you give us to translate. For translation, we charge based on a rate per thousand words.

You always know what you'll pay before we start work, not when it's too late.

Some translation companies use the final document word count to calculate your invoice price, however this means you don't know exactly how much you're going to be billed when you place your order.

For more information on pricing, please see our Pricing Guide.

5 Who actually does the work?

Ideally only experienced translators should be used, with recognized qualifications and at least 3 years working in the field. A good company won't use teachers from local schools or universities, students or people who are linguistically fluent but don't have specialist knowledge or training.

Good translation companies have a pool of professional linguists working either in-house or on a freelance basis. The skill of the translation company lies in matching the correct translator to the document for translation, thinking about their experience in the area, relevant qualifications, research skills, time available and computer formats.

At MTT we assign a named project manager and a named translator, either from our in-house or worldwide professional freelance pool, so it makes it easy for you to request the same team again if you liked their work. We'll also encourage them to contact you direct if there are any queries, rather than having a game of Chinese whispers!

As a new customer we'll work with you to create a glossary you can approve so we always use your specific terms, regardless of which translator actually does your translation work. This makes it easy if a particular translator is unavailable or you need something in a hurry.

We also don't use machine translation, unless of course you'd like us to.

6 How long will it take – what happens if I'm in a rush?

A good translation company will be able to cope with a rush job, but will also know when the impossible can't be achieved with a suitable level of quality. They will be able to talk you through the options to help you make a sensible decision.

If you're really in a hurry, we can assign a team of translators to a project, though this may mean some loss of consistent style. You could also take advantage of our Guaranteed Express Service™ to ensure you get your job when you need it, if time is critical.

Translators work on the basis of completing approximately 2000 words a day, which allows time for checking and any research to be completed. In practice we can work more quickly than this if necessary, though if you bear in mind the time it took to write the original document, a similar length of time is usually required to translate it to a professional standard.

7 Can I talk to someone to see what they think of your service?

It's always difficult to know what a new supplier can do for you and whether they really can meet their promises. A good agency should be happy to let you speak to some of their clients to find out for yourself if they are what you need.

MTT have customers in most industries, but particularly in our specialist areas of Technical, Marketing and Legal – just ask if you'd like to talk to someone about how we have been able to help them with their language challenges.

8 What extra benefits does the company offer?

In addition to our award winning translation and interpreting service, MTT offer a full range of complementary services – everything you'll need from a language solutions provider and more.

You won't have to go shopping around or deal with more than one provider or more than one country - we'll do all the running around for you.

You'll want to be sure your language service provider offers everything you're likely to need. It's not easy to manage a multi-lingual project when you're dealing with suppliers in various countries and in different time zones, so make sure your service provider can deal with all the languages and extra services you might require.

We offer referral rewards and regular newsletters to keep you up to date. We're always delighted to come and visit you to discuss your requirements – we believe that when we meet people face to face we both gain a better understanding of how we can work together to the benefit of both parties.

Why not ask us about:

- video voiceovers and subtitling,
- multi-lingual websites
- interpreting for conferences and meetings
- transcription
- typesetting
- business cards or brochures from design to print
- certified translations
- International Media Contact Programme
- MTT Export Packages

9 I've found a cheaper quote – what can you do?

We don't set out to be the cheapest in the marketplace, neither are we the most expensive by any means. What we do offer our clients, as the testimonials on our website confirm, is a reliable service that's easy to use, friendly and gives a high quality of translation.

We've been in the business for over 30 years, we're professionally qualified and we work for clients across the world ranging from bluechip companies to small local firms and private individuals, with excellent feedback across the board.

There are a great many different translation services available, ranging from free Internet translations such as Google Translate and Babelfish to the massive multinationals. You'll also find a great range of prices. You'll need to decide who you feel offers the best mix of experience, accuracy, speed, flexibility and professional service – not an easy task.

If you're not sure who to choose, why not ask for a visit to discuss what you might require, request a free trial translation of up to 200 words, or take advantage of the chance to talk to one of our current customers to ask what they feel about the way they are looked after.

If you do have a tight budget, let us know and we'll see what options there are – there's sometimes a way to work round what may at first seem an impossible problem.

We all know price is important, but if you look at the way you price your own products or services, it's unlikely you're the cheapest. We believe we offer a fair price for the service we provide.

10 Why should I bother getting something translated or arranging an interpreter anyway?

How many more people could your website reach if you added a simple, targeted page in just 4 major languages?

English may well be the language of business today, but did you know that only nine countries in the world have a population where over 50% speak English?

It's proven that if you are looking for a quality product, it makes you more likely to buy if information and instructions are available in your own language.

If you're working with a supplier, wouldn't you get the best from them by negotiating and dealing with them in their language when appropriate?

Wouldn't it be safer to get a professional interpreter or translator costing maybe a few hundred pounds if it's an important project in which you've invested thousands or even millions of pounds?

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