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HOW TO TRANSLATE MARKETING MATERIALS

English is clearly the lingua franca of international business. Around the world, people of all cultures are peppering their native languages with English terms and phrases. This does not lessen the value of translation — it is simply a reflection of doing business in a multilingual marketplace.

Every business wants to develop a product or service that is desired on a global level. The main problem in achieving that goal is creating posters, advertisements and online pages that appeal to other cultures. Companies that learn to translate marketing materials effectively can find new outlets for their products. The following instructions will help translators be effective in their work.

Generate a list of slang terms and colloquialisms in foreign markets to make translation simpler. Your designers need to use buzz words, popular colors and appropriate images for target demographics when translating marketing materials. Remember that the shelf life for slang terms is often brief: today's "tight" will quickly become tomorrow's "tubular" (or the foreign-language equivalent).

Prepare for direct translation issues as you convert marketing materials for a global audience. There are many English phrases that are not translated directly into other languages, creating awkward wording in advertising. Create multiple phrases that address the topic of an awkward sentence before submitting materials for printing.

Utilize business translation software for basic marketing materials needed in major companies. SYSTRAN and other software companies offer packages for businesses that want to plug in slogans, product descriptions and customer testimonials into foreign languages.

At least two translators can be employed when converting marketing materials from foreign markets. One translator conducts a preliminary translation of competing materials in a foreign language. Another translator checks work for accuracy and suggests different phrases that make more sense.

Adapt marketing materials to print, television, radio and Web publications during translation.

Finally, conduct extensive studies of cultural trends and taboos before translating marketing materials. A brochure that is successful in your market may deeply offend consumers in foreign markets.