

TEN SMART STRATEGIES FOR GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR TRANSLATION BUDGET

Translation is fast becoming a critical piece of every smart organization's repertoire. Whether your organization is global or local, communicating to clients, prospects and customers in their own languages is critical to your success.

Translation of pertinent documents gives you the ability to connect with people of many languages and cultures and those who are Limited English Proficient. Accurate translation also ensures that you remain in compliance with regulatory agencies that monitor translation requirements at the local, state and national level.

At Avantpage, we focus on bridging communication across cultures through translation. Our extensive suite of translation services allows organizations to create documentation and written materials that reach out to clients, customers and prospects through a variety of languages.

As an Avantpage client, the more you know about the translation process and how it works, the easier it is to create efficiencies and take advantage of savings opportunities. And the more you work with us, the more we learn about your organization, your clients and your translation preferences. This enables us to make educated recommendations and create a customized translation program for your organization.

We've put together 10 smart strategies for lowering translation costs. These ideas will help you work productively with us to implement and maintain a cost-effective translation program within your organization.

1. UTILIZE TRANSLATION MEMORY (TM)

Our Translation Memory (TM) software allows you to save specific terminology and style preferences for use on subsequent translations. TM also allows multiple translators to use the same assets in real time and work concurrently, and lets work on a project proceed with multiple languages simultaneously. This streamlines the translation process and makes each subsequent translation more cost-effective for you.

You'll also find that TM contributes to lowering costs by increasing translation quality and consistency, ensuring faster delivery times and giving you greater control over every aspect of your project. Real-time progress reports, simultaneous translation, correction and proofreading, more effective file filters and better stylistic and terminology compliance are just some of the stand-out advantages TM brings to the table.

2. CREATE STYLE GUIDES AND GLOSSARIES

Style Guides and Glossaries are critical for ensuring consistency and accuracy of your documents. This in turn lowers your costs by streamlining the translation process over time. Style Guides and Glossaries are compiled manually and reflect your organization's specific preferences for translating certain terms, words, phrases, acronyms, etc.

To create a client glossary, our team of language specialists will go through a sample set of your files and select terms that would need to be translated consistently for all your documents. Next, they will create a list of suggested translations and submit the list for your consideration. You would then have the option to review these terms and provide us with feedback. Once the terms are finalized, the glossary is uploaded to our online translation system and the terms are automatically highlighted so that the translators are aware that there is a “rule” in place about how to translate this particular terminology.

Style Guides let translators know linguistic and stylistic preferences (such as the audience and tone of the document). When we work with our clients, different opinions in writing style may create a great deal of back-and-forth communications, which can slow the translation process. Knowing in advance how you would prefer we handle things like acronyms, grammatical preferences, punctuation, audience reading level/background, etc., allows us to work more quickly and accurately to tailor the translation pieces.

3. BUNDLE FILES TO AVOID MINIMUM FEES

You can avoid being charged minimum fees on brief documents by bundling your translation projects together. If the amount of text for translation is very small, a minimum fee is charged instead of applying our usual per-word rate. The minimum fee is agreed upon with the client and is charged on a per-language basis, which means that if the same small document is translated into more than one language, the minimum fee will be applied to each language that the document is being translated into. It is important to make sure that you group brief documents together. This will help you avoid minimum charges.

4. GET ORGANIZED!

Translation project planning is key to making your projects as streamlined and cost-effective as possible. Prior to the project starting, feel free to consult with your Avantpage project manager about how to format your documents for translation, when they need to be delivered and what services you need us to provide for you. Also take into consideration that some languages have longer translation times than others, and plan your projects and deadlines accordingly. For example, 100 words in Spanish can be done the same day, but the same 100 words in Samoan may take two days or more. Also, be aware that we don't have a translator in-house for each language, so even if it's just three sentences, we still need to locate available translators and work with their schedules.

5. ENSURE YOUR INTERNAL REVIEWERS ARE QUALIFIED

When we submit a translation back to a new client for approval, the client sometimes has an internal reviewer read and sign off on the translation. Too often, organizations choose a bilingual employee or someone else who is not a linguist and not qualified. Incorrect changes may then be requested and mistakes introduced into a professionally translated document. This slows the process, jeopardizes the deadline and adds unnecessary costs to the project's final price tag.

It is important to make sure your reviewers are qualified—native speakers, authority on the subject matter, etc. Plus, make sure they're available when you need them as part of the project schedule. That way, valuable time and effort is not lost through miscommunication and misinformation.

6. SUBMIT CHANGES WITHIN DOCUMENT

During the review cycle, you'll save time and effort if you submit your changes electronically and avoid handwritten notes or scans. These requests are hard to read and difficult to implement. They add time to the project that you could end up paying for and could also

impact the document's quality if the comments are illegible or difficult for us to understand. The review process is much more efficient if the changes are made within the files themselves. If you are in MS Word, use the "Track Changes" option. If you are in a PDF, use the comments tool to indicate your edits.

7. SEND THE SOURCE FILE

A source document is the original file your piece was created in, and it is editable on our end. We also call it the native document. Examples of file types are: MS Word, Publisher, InDesign, etc. A PDF is basically a snapshot of the source file; it's not a file we can work with when doing desktop publishing. If given a PDF, we will recreate your file as best we can, but unfortunately, it's not the same thing as a source file—and time we spend recreating files adds cost. Uneditable documents are PDFs, faxes and scans (such as a scan of a medical record).

We know that the person submitting a translation project to us is most likely not the creator of the original file, but it's definitely worth the time and cost savings to track down the source/editable/native file in advance of sending us the project. It's also very helpful to verify there are no password restrictions with the file or to provide password information to us if necessary.

8. PROVIDE FINAL FILES, NOT "IN PROGRESS" WORK

Although it's tempting to want us to get a translation started while you finalize the English version of the project, this is a process doomed to mistakes and inefficiencies. It is best to have us start the translation process after you're sure your source file text is final and approved. In the long run, you'll save time and reduce the probability of mistakes.

9. PLAN PROJECTS IN ADVANCE TO AVOID RUSH FEES

Another way to avoid extra fees is to plan out your schedule so there are no rush charges incurred. These fees vary by project size, but generally, we ask for two business days per file (about 1,500 words per day). Feel free to consult with your Avantpage Project Manager about turnaround times and delivery dates. Work backwards from your deadline, and stay in communication with your project manager to ensure everyone's on the same page when it comes to delivery dates and deadlines.

10. USE AVANTFLOW TO MANAGE YOUR PROJECTS MORE EFFECTIVELY

We encourage all our clients to use our online project management system, AvantFlow. AvantFlow enables you to monitor your projects, request quotes, upload project files, leave special instructions and assign due dates. You can also retrieve past projects, store and organize project information and data and instantly access completed projects. The alternative to this is using email or calling to submit projects. If you've ever had to go through old "sent" emails to find a file or re-read communication notes, you know that it can take a lot of time and be frustrating, too. In AvantFlow, all files and notes are in the same online place—and as the client, you have full control over projects, revisions and deadlines.

AVANTPAGE TRANSLATIONS

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