

TO MAKE YOUR WEBSITE TRANSLATION A RESOUNDING FAILURE

'Faithfulness (in translation) consists of grasping the text and pouring it into the mould of another language, twisting it here, bending it there, putting it through all sorts of linguistic acrobatics that, in the end, render an entirely equivalent product.⁽¹⁾



1

Get your cousin to translate because they did an Erasmus year in Spain.

Why? Because a non-professional's text will contain errors. Vague notions of a language are not enough to avoid misunderstandings. Translation is a profession. A professional translator always translates into their native language.

There are plenty of 'false friends' in Spanish and English – words that look like they mean the same thing, but they don't – and your cousin might not be able to identify them, leading to a translation full of nonsense.

A text about 'carpetas' is about folders, for example, and not carpets!



2

Choose someone to translate your text just because they are a native speaker.

Why? Because a non-professional's text will be filled with spelling mistakes and syntax errors. Being a native speaker is not enough to be able to translate a text. You must have qualifications in the language, as each language has its own specificities. In English and French, for example, the punctuation rules for speech are totally different, and capital letters are used in different ways.

For example, a French translator can't translate the following: 'I'm late', he said. 'I'll try to finish it at the latest on Monday'. Like this: « Je suis en retard », dit-il. « J'essaie de le finir au plus tard ce Lundi. » Instead, it should be: « Je suis en retard, dit-il. J'essaie de le finir au plus tard ce lundi. »



3

Choose a translator who has little experience in your field.

Why? Because a non-professional's text will lack specific vocabulary. If your source text uses rich, specific vocabulary, you must aim for the same result in the target language.

So, make sure you use the services of a translator with experience in the relevant field (surgery, tech, fashion, goldsmithery, public works, etc.).



4

Blindly trust a machine translation engine.

Why? Because your text might end up containing massive grammatical errors and mistranslations. Machine translation is only useful for understanding a text or for conversing informally.

Unreviewed machine translation output must not be used for a public or e-commerce website.



5

Get a digital agency to deal with all technical aspects from the very beginning.

Why? Because the bill will be steep. The costs can really mount up.

Find out about the existing plug-ins and modules available, especially if you use platforms like Prestashop, Magento, WordPress, Drupal or Shopify.



6

Put together your own translation team.

Why? Because you might have to pay unnecessary costs. Unless you know you will consistently have a lot of translations to get done in the long term, it is best not to hire in-house translators.

You might go through a slow period and still have to pay a punishing wage bill, without receiving much business income.



7

Send every page of your website to be translated without assessing your needs.

Why? Because you might have to pay for unnecessary translations. If you ask for your whole website to be translated to make life easier for you, some of this work might end up being useless in your new project. First, focus on your product range, terms of use, terms of sale and size guide.

Which authority has jurisdiction in the event of a conflict? Do you readers talk in centimetres or inches? Litres or gallons? Degrees Celsius or Fahrenheit?



8

Request a translation without consulting your colleagues.

Why? Because you might cause problems and conflict in-house. Some of your content, services or products might not be relevant on an international market. What about postal delivery, colours, communication, packaging?

Translating a text from English into another language affects all of your company departments' areas of responsibility, such as R&D, production, marketing, SEO web writing, product range, logistics, etc. Consult with each one of them to check the content to be translated is consistent.



9

Request a translation without knowledge of the target market's regulations.

Why? Because you could get your company in legal trouble. The applicable regulations differ from country to country. For example, the NF quality label is really important in France, but means nothing elsewhere. In addition, the use of certain materials is allowed on some markets but not in their neighbouring country. 'Bio' and 'Organic' have different meanings, depending on whether you are in Europe, Asia and Latin America.

What guarantees can you offer new customers? What about your after-sales service and the language used on your contact phone number, in your online forms and in instructions for use?



10

Request a translation without a local SEO strategy

Why? Because you will be jeopardising your success on this new market. You carefully analysed the most popular keywords before writing your texts in English, and you must be just as thorough in your target language.

Work with a translator who is well versed in this essential aspect of website content writing. Validate keywords and any rules to follow with them before they translate your texts.



11

Only look for the lowest price per word when choosing your provider.

Why? Because you might end up being overcharged or with an incomplete service. Make sure you know what services are behind each per-word price. Are you paying for repetitions? Could you make the most of previous translations (in a translation memory)?

Does the price include a proofreading service? Is there an after-sales service in case there are any quality issues? Don't trust overly cheap services: they tend to be a false economy.



12

Exchange all content in Word format.

Why? Because this is a tedious, time-consuming solution. Copying and pasting Word content bit by bit onto your website is an old-fashioned method that wastes time.

What's more, the repetitive nature of the task increases the risk of errors. It is not suitable for significant projects with large volumes of text.



13

Don't interact with the translator before starting work.

Why? Because you might end up having to start again from scratch. Even if your translator is a reputable professional and your text is of a high quality, it is important to exchange with them before they start translating your content.

Share references and instructions with your translation provider. This way, you will avoid receiving an inadequate translation and having to start again from scratch.



Before launching your brand on a foreign market, make sure your business, product and company are suitable there. Do not simply transfer your website and product range word for word into the new market's language. A poor translation of your website will make prospective customers suspicious of your brand. This lack of trust will reduce your conversion rate considerably. It can even cause legal problems and damage your online reputation.

At a time when social media is blurring borders, you could even feel the effects on your local market of a problem hundreds of miles away caused by a translation error.

