

Language services guidelines for the legal sector

By Shawn Khorassani, business development director of language services provider Prestige Network.

Language services for the legal profession is on the increase, with more and more legal firms adding to the offering they give their non-English-speaking clients by using the services of a language company. Also on the rise is the number of personal injury accident claims. And immigration to the UK remains at more than half a million (in 2008).

The UK's increasingly litigious society means that the legal profession's trend of the use of language services looks set to continue. With that in mind, language services provider Prestige Network has produced the following information:

What to look for when choosing a language provider.....

- How long has the company been established?
- What range of services do they offer?
- How much experience do they have providing the kind of service you need?
- How well do they know the market you operate in?
- How much experience do they have providing services for the language you need?
- Is the company accredited by the relevant Language Quality Assurance organisations?
- Are their translators and interpreters industry aware?
- Are their translators and interpreters culturally aware?

What you need to do.....

Good communication between you and a language services company is the starting point for ensuring that you achieve the best for your non-English speaking clients. Preliminary preparation is very useful.

When you make a booking, bear in mind these tips for getting the best results:

- Have as much information on the assignment available as possible, including any relevant documents to be translated
- If you know which language and which dialect is required, please inform us. We can help you, if you are unsure
- In many cases, language support can be provided very quickly, but it's best to make arrangements in advance
- Clarify any unusual procedures or regulations involved
- Be clear about the deadlines you need to be met
- If the booking is for an on-site interpreter, be ready to confirm the date, duration and location
- If you have used the company's services before, have your account details to hand

What the language services provider needs to do.....

As soon as the provider receives the go-ahead, they will find their best match of interpreter/translator skills and availability for your assignment.

When finding an interpreter or translator for you, the operations team needs to ensure that he/she has an appropriate qualification in legal work (such as a Diploma in Public Service Interpreting – Law Option, or an MA in Translations and Interpreting).

Other considerations in choice of linguist could include:

- Gender
- Social/ethnic issues
- Age
- Dialects

The linguist will be briefed with as much information as is available, including any factual information and background documents about the case.

For face-to-face interpreting, a pre-session could be arranged between you and the interpreter before the client arrives. This would give you the opportunity to go through:

- Factual information about the case
- The aim of the session
- Any technical terms you expect to use during the session

Prestige Network’s legal services team can be contacted on **01635 866888**.

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