



How to find the **best translation partner**, and what they can do to help your company increase its revenue stream

So, your management team has decided you need to communicate with your international customers or expand into more international markets. Your first thought will be ‘Do we need a translation agency?’. Well, the answer is both Yes and No. What you are really looking for is a TRANSLATION PARTNER. A company that can work with you to achieve your international goals and make sure you are ‘speaking the right language’ for your brand.

Here is ALM’s “How to” guide on finding the right translation agency for your company.

Where do you start? Page 1 of Google?

The first page of Google is a good starting point and should in theory show you local agencies, among others, but as you know, page 1 can be overrun with paid ads, and you may miss your ideal partner. ALM recommends looking at a mix of resources and that you create a shortlist based on the following:

1. Referrals – ask people within your own company if they work or have worked with a translation agency before. You may have a documentation department, a marketing department, even a web designer, all unknowingly working with different agencies. By ‘centralising’ your approach, you will be doing your company a big favour, both by saving money, time and ensuring quality and consistency.
2. Page 1 of Google – go for a local agency and have a look at their website for any clues about how they work. There are other handy tips listed further down this guide.
3. What about taking a quick look through to page 5 of Google? Spread the search out. Not everyone’s websites hit that first page, and there are so many great translation companies out there, it would be a shame to miss them, as they may be the ones who will give you an excellent personal service and are usually willing to go the extra mile to help.
4. Social Media can also be a good place to look – LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook all have “looking for recommendations” features. You will be surprised by how many people are ready and willing to recommend and help.
5. A Language Association – there are a few associations out there, such as [The Association of Translation Companies](#) in the UK. All ATC members must adhere to a strict and professional code of conduct, which should give some reassurance.

So, now you have a shortlist of potential translation partners – what next?

You could simply send a document off to the different companies and hope for the best price if that is your only concern. But if you are genuinely looking for a translation partner to use as an extension to your business and to help promote your brand, why not invest the time in finding the right one? Here are our tips for narrowing down your shortlist:

1. Look at their website – how does it appeal to you? Does it align with your values and requirements? Look out for bad typos (which should ring alarm bells from the offset - after all, you're looking for a 'language' company).
2. What size of company do you want to work with? Will this align with your pricing requirements and expected capacity? A large company may offer a high-volume capacity, but equally, the pricing could be high. Small companies run by sole traders may be quite limited in what they can offer, and their prices might be too cheap to believe.
3. Their employees – what type of employees do they have? Can you see their team – does it look like you could work with their “people”?
4. Where is the company based? Does this suit your needs and requirements?
5. Accreditations – what accreditations do they have and what do they stand for? There are industry ISO standards that are actively promoted among translation companies (ISO 17100 is a specific translation standard which demonstrates a successful quality control system). ISO 9001 is also a strong indicator of a system of process and structure.
6. Specialisations – what industry do you work in? Which industries do your selected translation agencies work in?

Say you have the final 5 agencies – how can you reduce the list further?

If you have the time at this stage to take your research even further, now is the time to assess “best” fit for your company. Translation success should not always be based on cost and delivery time, albeit these two criteria can be important for large projects needed in a short space of time. Imagine your marketing department working hand-in-hand with the set of companies you have shortlisted. Do you think this partnership will work?

1. Send a quote/enquiry asking for best lead time and price.

2. How quickly does someone respond? Do they pick up the phone and give you a call to discuss your project from the offset? After all, you are potential customer; you need to know you are valued!
3. How do they handle the quote? Does the company discuss any pitfalls or potential ways of working that could help save you time and money?
4. Do they discuss technology systems such as Translation Memory?
5. What about if you ask them to do a test piece? Are they receptive? For an ongoing long-term relationship with a translation agency, a test piece is a good way of benchmarking which company is the best fit. But a test piece should be considered along with the other factors as discussed here and should relate to the type of documentation you would normally send for translation.
6. Have you considered including your international colleagues as part of the workflow?
7. Has the agency explained the different service levels they offer well enough for you to make a decision?
8. How does the agency manage its translation database and quality control – what is their added value?

Agency 1 and agency 2 could be potential partners – let's find that perfect translation partner!

At this stage, the test pieces could be that final indicator that pushes you towards agency 1 or 2. But don't let that be the single defining factor. How will you know that this agency is the best fit for you? It could be as simple as a good feeling based on your communications and the rapport you have built so far –in which case, go for it!

1. You may find that the way the agency describes how it wants to work with your company to ensure that you feel confident in their processes could sway you.
2. Communicating with your international customers requires the right content to be translated in a way you want your brand message conveyed (see our "How to..." Writing for international marketing).
3. Can the agency offer a way of working that includes input by the people who know your industry and company inside out – your employees! Collaboration is an integral part of the process.
4. Can the agency assess your project and advise on best practices to save you time and money?

5. Are they prepared to help you coordinate your internal staff members or your web developer in your translation projects if needed? How can they take the pressure off you to guarantee it is done 'right'?
6. Will you have a dedicated point of contact? Have you been introduced to the team? Do they offer a 'kick-off' meeting to make sure they know exactly what you need?
7. Can they provide you with references and demonstrate who they work within your field or domain?
8. Has either agency discussed whether they can take any of your historic translated content (if any) to include for recycling to drive down costs, improve quality and produce your translations faster?
9. What additional services do the agencies offer? Layout work for manuals and brochures, SEO services or customisation and automation through technology are all considerations in today's translation world.

There will always be a large number of translation agencies and freelance translators out there. Some are cheaper than others, but cheap isn't always the best way forward and more expensive doesn't always equate to quality. Choosing a translation 'partner' means just that, a company that can collaborate with you to increase your revenues, get your brand out there and improve your international customer experience. Translation agencies come in all different guises, and ALM hopes the above points help you to find that perfect partner.

Language Translations by Qualified Experts

ALM is your go-to translation provider for all language-related requirements. Contact ALM Translations to discuss your requirements or request a callback. Alternatively, for a quick quote, please complete our form, and we will get back to you shortly.

[REQUEST A FREE QUOTE](#)

[CONTACT ALM
TRANSLATIONS](#)