

## 7 Mistakes Freelance Translators Should Avoid

There are several measures you can take to establish productive relationships with your customers. Delivering high quality translations and keeping up with deadlines will play the most important part of course.

There are many important things that have been established through working with hundreds upon hundreds of translators and clients over the years, which must be shared with all professional translators: avoiding the seven mistakes identified in this article will help you have a long term relationship with your clients, and will more importantly, ensure that you run a stress free business.

- 1. CHARGING TOO LITTLE FOR YOUR CORE SERVICE.** Never sell your core service too cheaply. It will devalue your product and customers may not appreciate it. You can offer free test translations or reduced charges for your supplementary services such as job-checking or for translations of only a few words. If you charge too little for your core service in order to get new clients, you will despise them in the long run; and if you charge them less the first time, they will expect you to charge the same rate the next time they work with you. The relationship may suffer when you would, only naturally want to put your prices up.
- 2. BEING AFRAID TO ASK YOUR CUSTOMER QUESTIONS.** Do not be concerned with asking your clients questions about the files you are translating: there is nothing wrong with going back to your customer asking for clarification of words that maybe be difficult to read or understand. They will not think any less of you because you asked a question. Be sure, however to ask relevant questions, well in advance of the deadline.
- 3. THINKING YOU WILL LOSE YOUR CUSTOMER IF YOU TURN DOWN A PROJECT.** If the project offered to you is in a subject you do not know about, or a deadline you cannot meet, don't be afraid to turn down the project. Whatever the reason may be, being clear and open to your client about it will help you to establish long lasting relationships. Taking on a project which you cannot properly translate, or accepting a deadline which is not feasible will do more damage to the relationship than turning down a project for a perfectly valid reason.
- 4. ONLY GETTING IN TOUCH WITH YOUR CUSTOMER WHEN YOU NEED WORK FROM THEM.** Keep in touch with your customers regularly. Let them know how you are doing. Tell them about the new tools or software you may have acquired, and any new skills you may have learned since last working with them.
- 5. THINKING THAT YOU ARE THE ONLY TRANSLATOR YOUR CLIENT SHOULD WORK WITH.** Translation companies need to have multiple translators for each language pair they work with and in particular subject matters. Do not feel threatened if your client uses another translator and asks you to carry out checking or proofreading: this means they trust you and value your opinion.
- 6. NOT HAVING A SPECIALIST SUBJECT.** Without a doubt translators need to be able to cover a variety of subjects: they will also need, however, to have a specialism in which they have extra knowledge which sets them apart from other translators. Your niche will help you to become an authority in your particular field and the first port of call with your customers.
- 7. NOT COLLABORATING WITH YOUR FELLOW TRANSLATORS.** The translation community is global and we all have the same aspirations and challenges wherever we are in the world. There are many professional support organisations and associations out there for translators. Most successful translators are the ones that support their colleagues and share information.