

TIPS ON USING AN INTERPRETER

Interpreters are in great demand in the current global climate. With people from all over the world participating in business meetings, conferences and events, overcoming the language barrier naturally becomes the key to ensuring all attendees contribute and benefit from such occasions. The interpreter is an integral cog in the wheel of cross cultural communication. Knowing how to hire and work with an interpreter is a must for international business personnel.

Working with an interpreter offers challenges. Interpreters on the whole have a stressful job. Unlike translators they do not have the luxury of breaks and time to think. Interpreters have to perform 'live' and in front of an audience. In order to ensure you get the best out of an interpreter, good communication is necessary.

By way of offering some tips on working with interpreters the following guidelines may be of some use:

1. **REMEMBER THAT YOUR MESSAGE HAS TO COME ACROSS IN OTHER LANGUAGES.** Your company's image may well depend on the accuracy of the translation of your webcast, press conference or international meeting. Include simultaneous or consecutive interpreting in your planning at an early stage.
2. **USE PROFESSIONAL INTERPRETERS.** Members of professional interpreting bodies work to the requisite professional standard and determine success of your event. Remember that simultaneous interpreting is a job for the specialist.
3. **VIEW THE INTERPRETERS AS PART OF YOUR TEAM.** If they are included and properly briefed they will do a better job. If there is any specific jargon or idioms to be used ask them if they understand it. If you foresee any tricky issues or tense topics, prepare them for it. If you plan to give a speech or read from a script, give the interpreter a copy.
4. **WHILE SPEAKING THROUGH AN INTERPRETER ALWAYS ENGAGE WITH YOUR COUNTERPART DIRECTLY.** Even though you cannot understand what is being said, show interest, keep eye contact and remain focused. If you start to converse through an interpreter you lose any chance of building trust, rapport or confidence.
5. **TRY AND AVOID HUMOUR.** Most interpreters will agree that jokes do not translate well. If you are giving a speech and plan to start it off with a joke, it is advisable to consult the interpreter first to see if they think it will work.
6. **DON'T EXPECT THE IMPOSSIBLE.** Interpreters are not machines; an excessive rate of delivery may lead to loss of information. Bear in mind that the constant and active concentration required makes this work mentally exhausting.
7. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO BOOK THE INTERPRETER.** These professionals are much in demand, whether you need rare languages, technical specialists or proficient generalists.
8. **TELL THE SPEAKERS AND DELEGATES FROM THE OUTSET THAT THEY CAN USE THEIR OWN LANGUAGE, AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO DO SO.** They should, however, speak at a reasonable speed and clearly articulate figures, acronyms and proper names.
9. **TRUST YOUR PROFESSIONAL INTERPRETERS.** They are subject to a code of ethics and bound by the principle of absolute confidentiality.
10. **STICK WITH A WINNING FORMULA.** It makes sense to stay with a service provider you trust.

These guidelines should enable you to get the best out of your interpreter and consequently your business meeting, presentation, conference or event.