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[translation excellence since 1990]

Translators Hired As Copywriters

What It Takes

ATA 50th Annual Conference, New York, October 2009

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Definitions

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Copywriter:

develops concept and content

Translator:

re-creates predetermined content

--- >

sometimes called „Transcreator“

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BUT...

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To be a good transcreator
you need to know the copywriting
principles, and be good at them

- > “translators working as
copywriters”

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IN FACT...

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Re-creating predetermined content is
often more difficult than coming up
with new concepts and content from
scratch

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MORE DIFFICULT - WHY?

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**Limitations of creativity through
pre-set elements:
visuals
tonality
logics/reasoning**

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Objective of this Presentation

[translation excellence since 1990]

...do make sure everyone involved in the process is aware of the challenges

... and the time it takes to resolve those challenges

.... time is money

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Content

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- Part 1:
 - Opportunities, problems, DOs and DON'Ts in responding to requests – real-life examples
- Part 2:
 - Important concepts to keep in mind when doing creative work - recommended reading
- Part 3:
 - The creative translation process – style considerations – real-life examples - ten steps to keep in mind

Opportunities

[translation excellence since 1990]

**Increasing demand for translating/
adapting “marketing text” such as:**

- > PR copy
 - > press releases, newsletters,...
- > Sales copy
 - > high-gloss brochures, POS material,...
- > Advertising copy
 - > slogans, ads, direct mail pieces,...

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Problems

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- > Naive clients and/or naive translators
- > Agency PMs with no or little experience in handling advertising material
- > Advertising material treated like any other translation
- > Work involved in copy translation /adaptation often vastly underestimated

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Examples

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- > A proofreading job turns out to be full-blown copy-editing
- > Requests for making translations read “more idiomatic”
- > Copy-translating high-gloss magazine ads at “minimum rate”
- > Coming up with a “creative tagline” within the hour and for a minimum fee.
- > Providing slogans over the phone
- > New trend: post-editing machine translations!

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How to respond to requests

[translation excellence since 1990]

- > creative briefing
- > visuals
- > other reference material
- > payment
- > offer to deliver a translation that's close to the original, with an explanation of plays on words and possibly some adapted alternatives

Client education/arguments

[translation excellence since 1990]

- > Copywriting requires special talent, training and experience **in addition to** foreign-language and translating skills
- > To come up with good copy, you need to have a very **clear idea** of what the message is
- > To get that idea - "**the big picture**" - you need as much input as you can get (explanation of intended message, target group, purpose, where it will be used, visuals etc.)
- > Any professional copywriter would refuse to work without such input on the grounds of **unprofessionalism**

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How to handle requests

3 common scenarios

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DOs and DON'Ts

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- State reasons, show that you know what you are talking about
- Present a time estimate to underpin your arguments
- Give examples
- Try to help solve the problem (it might not come cheap but there is no such thing as a free lunch)
- Show that you are serious about it - be prepared to reject a job if none of your suggested solutions are accepted
- Be matter-of-fact, don't come across as desperate for a job
- If applicable, present arguments against TM software

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3 most common scenarios

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- 1: Providing marketing copy translation at minimum rate / as a free test
- 2: Translation and copy adaptation at normal word rate
- 3: Reviewing/editing poorly translated/ adapted copy

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Free sample request (1)

Hi XXX,

I am writing to check on your availability to help with a test from a new division of one of our existing clients.

As you will see from the attached document, it is a rather creative text. Given your experience in marketing translation, I would very much like for you to take care of the translation of this test for us. Since the client is not paying us for this job, I would also ask you to consider performing it free of charge as an investment toward future work if all goes well with the test.

Thanks for getting back to me asap.

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Free sample request (1)

[translation excellence since 1990]

What would you answer?

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[translation excellence since 1990]

Answer to free sample request (1)

Hi XXX,

Thank you very much for your request. Please note, though, that I do not provide marketing translations for free.

Marketing translations are mostly very time-consuming in that they require a lot of research and collecting creative ideas and honing and brainstorming and finding plays on words and re-reading a couple of times and honing some more etc. to give it the final touches ****on top**** of the translation per se (after all, this is copy that needs to SELL, or even SELL BIG).

That being said, I'd be happy to help you win this client and can offer to do the job at an estimated cost of EUR xxx.

Please let me know as soon as possible if you want me to proceed.

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Free sample request (2)

Hi Nina,

You have done some work for YYY recently (brochures) and they are now in the process of finalising press releases and adverts. Some of the headlines our client is using are very emotive and they have an initial concern whether the headlines can be translated with the same level of impact as the copy has in English. Therefore our client has asked us to provide a sample translation of one of the headlines free of charge.

Please find attached the headline which needs to be translated. Essentially this is copy writing rather than translation. The attached PDF shows the headline in-situ in the advert.

Would you be able to have a think about this and email me a suggested translation tomorrow?

I look forward to hearing from you.

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Real-life answer to a free sample request

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Dear XXX,

Please note that it is, of course, your business decision if you want to give a client, for whom we have already done work, and quite nicely so (meaning he knows we do good work), a free advertising job.

However, I am a professional and specialize in marketing and PR work. I have already proven that I can do these kinds of jobs. It is absolutely out of the question that I put hours worth of work into providing headlines free of charge, since I have got lots of other paid jobs to take care of and am not interested in being taken advantage of by a client looking for a free lunch, thinking we are too naive to know what we are worth.

I urgently recommend that test translations should concern „translations“ per se and not work that entails an entire creative process, costing hundreds of pounds/dollars/euros at every serious ad agency.

That being said, I'd be happy to help you with this test at a cost of EUR XXX.

I am looking forward to hearing from you!

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Minimum rate request (1)

[translation excellence since 1990]

Hi XXX,

How are you? We have a very small English > DE localization job for you, if you're available. The material is pretty entertaining so take a look! It's only 10 words, and we're hoping to get the files back by tomorrow at 3pm noon EST. We can pay \$10 for your help.

This job is a copy adaptation job, and the demographic is: Human Resource VPs, Recruiters, and Hiring Managers. The source text will go at the end of TV advertisements for the client.

Will you be able to help? Please let me know. Thanks

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Answer to minimum rate request

[translation excellence since 1990]

Hi XXX,

Thank you for your inquiry. Crafting supers for a TV spot is a very delicate job that requires careful thinking and brain jogging/storming. The taglines may seem easy but they aren't necessarily easy to convey in the same joking and succinct way in German. A literal rendering won't do. I also need to check out the reference material and get into the right contextual framework and comment on the reasons for my translation choices (possibly providing several alternatives for the client to choose from). All in all, that work is going to take a minimum of 2 hours.

My current hourly rate is xxx.

Please let me know if you want me to proceed.

Thanks,

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Editing marketing translations

[translation excellence since 1990]

Hi Nina,

Could you please vet the translation we had done (see attached Word file in German and English pdf). It's our most recent brochure.

Thanks,

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Answer to Editing marketing translations

[translation excellence since 1990]

Hi XXX,

I had a quick look at the German file. It is absolutely unprintable, far too literal and very (!!) un-German in terms of grammar, terminology, and phrasings. It would draw nothing but incredulous looks, laughter at best, if you printed this.

I recommend to have it re-done from scratch, I am not sure how much of the translation could actually be used and it's most probably faster to do a translation from scratch rather than trying to rescue what little there is that can be rescued.

I estimate around 12 hours worth of work.

Best regards,

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TM for marketing translations

[translation excellence since 1990]

•
Hi Nina,

I am writing to check your availability to help with the review of the latest update to our localized Website?

Project: XXX

Task: Review of File (900 words) provided using Trados TagEditor

Time: 0.5 Hour

Thanks,
XXX

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Answer to TM for marketing translations

[translation excellence since 1990]

Hello XXX,

Thank you for your request to do a creative review of a "high-gloss" selling copy (be it for a brochure or a Website). This text is very delicate, since it is meant to enhance your image and convince people you are the best choice.

Please note that

a) to come up with a selling copy for this amount (900 words) I may need as much as 2 hours or even more, depending on the quality of the translation (I can give a more accurate quote once I see the translation).

b) It is impossible for me (and for anyone who is serious about creativity) to provide my professional creative services in TagEditor. The only alternative that I can offer is to clean the current translation into a Word file, do the review/copy-editing there and then go back to TagEditor and insert all the changes, including new sentence structures etc., into the TagEditor file. I assume that would take me yet another hour in addition to what I'd need for the creative review.

Please let me know what you think of that.

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Critical Concepts for Creative Work

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What does it take?

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- Knowledge of consumer psychology
- Strategic positioning basics
- Open mind, broad generalist background
- Curiosity about everything and anything around the world
- Research, collecting ideas
- Perfectionism
- Taking pride in your work

Critical Concepts

[translation excellence since 1990]

- **Product Utility:**

Utility is the ability of a product to satisfy the customer's wants or needs

- Form
- Time
- Place
- Possession

Quoted from: Marketing
(Barron's business review series)
by Richard L. Sandhusen

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Critical Concepts

[translation excellence since 1990]

- **Some competitive strategies:**
 - Leader Strategy
 - Challenger Strategy
 - Market Nicher Strategy

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Critical Concepts

[translation excellence since 1990]

- **AIDA (or: AIDAs)**
 - Attention
 - Interest
 - Desire
 - Action
 - Satisfaction

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Critical Concepts

[translation excellence since 1990]

- Remember KISS?
 - Keep it short and simple!

Critical Concepts

[translation excellence since 1990]

- **Consumer perception:**
 - **Selective exposure**
 - processing only selective pieces of information
 - **Selective distortion**
 - unconsciously distorting information to become consistent with personal experience/feelings
 - **Selective retention**
 - remembering only information that support preconceived feelings and beliefs.
 - **Closure**
 - filling in missing parts

Based on: Marketing
by Richard L. Sandhusen

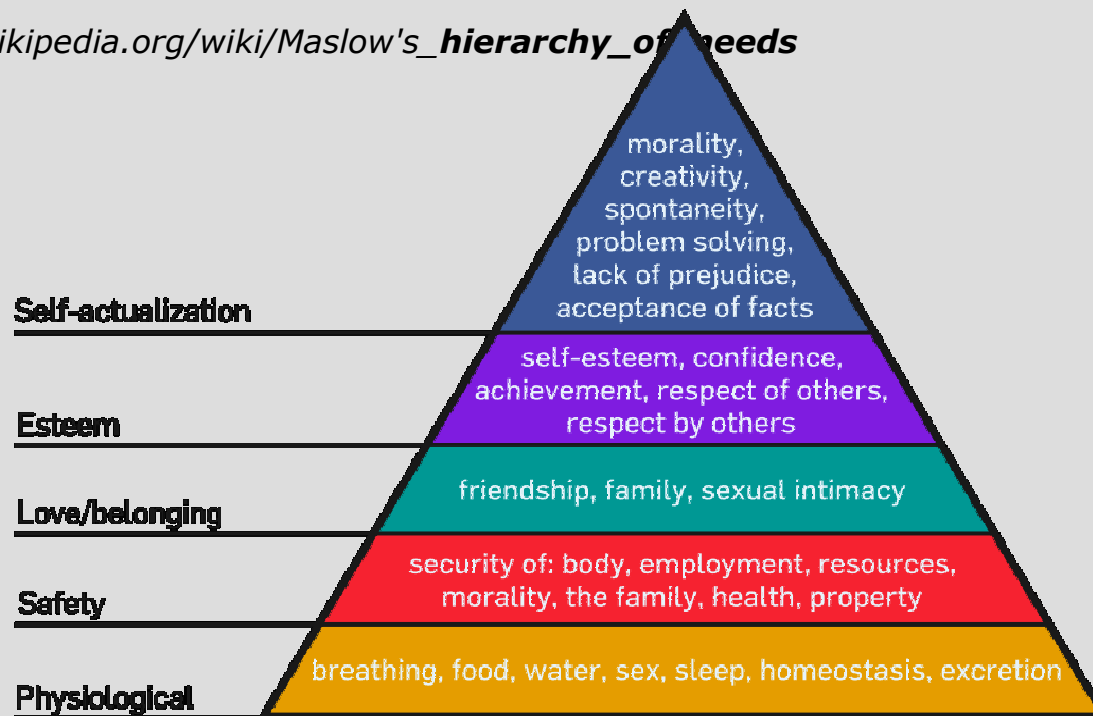
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Critical Concepts

[translation excellence since 1990]

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs:

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow's_hierarchy_of_needs



Critical Concepts

[translation excellence since 1990]

- **Consumer Decision Process:**
 - need recognition
(identify & fulfill / activate)
 - information search
(perceived risk)
 - evaluation of alternatives
(getting into the evoked set)
 - purchase
(purchase convenience)
 - post-evaluation
(buyer 's remorse)

Critical Concepts

[translation excellence since 1990]

- Positioning Concepts:

The only reality that counts is what's already in the prospect's mind. [...] The basic approach of positioning is not to create something new and different, but to **manipulate what's already up there in the mind**, to retie the connections that already exist. [...] The average person cannot tolerate being told he or she is wrong. Mind-changing is the road to advertising disaster.

To get inside the prospect's mind, you have to relate to what's already there.

Quoted from: Positioning: The Battle for your Mind
by Al Ries & Jack Trout

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Critical Concepts

[translation excellence since 1990]

- The Law of Perception
- The Law of Exclusivity
- The Law of the Opposite
- The Law of Sacrifice
- The Law of Candor

Quoted from: The 22 immutable laws of marketing
by Al Ries & Jack Trout

Critical Concepts

[translation excellence since 1990]

- **Narrowly focused brands:**
 - To become a global leader, you need to narrow your focus to stand for something in the mind of the prospect. You can't be all things to everybody. **Focus is the most important concept in marketing.** A brand should strive to own a word in the mind of the consumer.
 - Examples: Starbucks (coffee), McDonalds (hamburgers), Marlboro (cowboys), Volvo (safety)
 - Based on: Laura Ries & Al Ries
The 22 immutable laws of branding

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Critical Concepts

[translation excellence since 1990]

- Mental Elements in the Positioning Process:
 1. Minds are limited
 2. Minds hate confusion
 3. Minds are insecure
 4. Minds don't change
 5. Minds can lose focus
 6. Minds work by ear

Quoted from: The New Positioning
by Jack Trout with Steve Rivkin

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Learnings for Copywriters

[translation excellence since 1990]

- think as a target consumer
- keep messages clear and simple
- say it out loud, how does it sound
- focus on a single aspect
- create association with appropriate images, avoid inappropriate connections
- capitalize on the closure phenomenon (making them active participants)
- there is no second chance for a first impression

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The Creative Translation Process

[translation excellence since 1990]

- General style considerations
- (Samples) English > German
- Ten steps to remember

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Style Considerations

[translation excellence since 1990]

- Register depending on target group /type of text
- Did I understand it? Would I understand it?
- Visualize! Imagine yourself talking to someone- what would be natural / make an impact?
- Would that get me thinking? Or make me smile? Or would I think how boring, how flat?
- Less is more: Be to the point! Avoid redundancies (new info or just repeating?)
- Linking sentences, create a natural flow (cohesive markers, logical sentence transitions)
- Rhythm, musicality
- Research, collecting ideas and perfectionism

Sample 1 - Register

[translation excellence since 1990]

- **EN source:** You'll have a chance to enjoy the resort's central lagoon—a 250,000 gallon, free-form swimming pool, a newly-renovated 2-story fitness area, and lighted tennis courts.
- **DE 3rd-party translation:** Sie können sich auf der zentral gelegenen Lagune des Erholungszentrums verlustieren, einem Freiformschwimmbad von ca. einer Million Liter Wasser, das neu renovierte 2-geschossige Fitness-Zentrum besuchen oder die beleuchteten Tennisplätze ausnutzen.
- **DE copy-edited version:** Genießen Sie die zentrale „Lagune“ des Resorts mit seinem riesigen, tropisch angelegten Designerpool, das neu renovierte 2-geschossige Fitness-Zentrum und unsere Tennisplätze mit Flutlicht.

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Sample 2 - Tonality, emotional

[translation excellence since 1990]

- GO back in time some sixty years. GO to the BBB Motel where it all began. GO re-capture the spirit of the open road. GO take the BBB legend and reinvent it.
- *GO!* rund sechzig Jahre zurück in der Zeit. *GO!* zum BBB Motel, wo alles begann. *GO!* und genieße die große Weite der endlosen Straßen wie damals. *GO!* mit dem Pioniergeist einer Legende und definiere sie neu.

Sample 3 - Collecting ideas

[translation excellence since 1990]

- **The all-new BBB is a rider's cruiser.** [*.... virtues of engine effortlessly heaping immense torque down into the road even at low revs*]. **As it does so, an exhaust designed with consummate acoustic artistry tunes out all the treble and turns up the bass to create the BBB's unique freedom call.**
- **Die brandneue BBB überzeugt als Cruiserbike der Superlative.** [*.... stellt sich mühelos schon bei niedrigen Drehzahlen ein immenser Schub ein*]. **Dabei wummert die ausgereifte Auspuffakustik den unverkennbar satten BBB-Bass: die Freiheit ruft.**

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Sample 4 - understand & visualize

[translation excellence since 1990]

- **Raw & ready to go:** even naked and just as it rolls out of the factory, the TTT cuts a moody silhouette.
- **Starke Optik auch ohne Extras:** Sogar nackt und bloß, so wie sie vom Band rollt, sorgt die TTT für einen markanten Auftritt.

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Sample 4 - understand & visualize

[translation excellence since 1990]

- **Loaded for the street:** model shown features
- **Cool bestückt für die City:...**

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Sample 4 - understand & visualize

[translation excellence since 1990]

- **Hit the open road:** model shown features
- **Lässig gestylt für die große Freiheit:**

Sample 5 - research & perfectionism

[translation excellence since 1990]

- **EN original:** Exclusively available to XXX's live clients through the ZZZ Web site, forex trading signals offer highly interactive trading alerts that update automatically in real time, 24 hours a day, on a dynamic basis. **The trading signals track six technical strategies across fourteen currency pairs, consisting of two focused on range-bound markets, two on breakout, and two on momentum strategies.**
- **DE 3rd-party translation:** Durch die Trading-Signale werden 14 Währungspaare durch sechs technische Strategien überwacht, wovon zwei auf spannengebundene Märkte ausgerichtet sind, zwei dabei sind, den Trendkanal zu verlassen und zwei eine Momentum-Strategie verfolgen.
- **Copy-edited, based on research:** Die Trading-Signale werden dabei für insgesamt 14 Währungspaare basierend auf sechs technischen Strategien (zwei Range-, zwei Breakout- und zwei Momentum-Strategien) generiert.

Sample 6 - Register

[translation excellence since 1990]

- Communication is a fundamental challenge in global business. When success or failure is determined by how effectively you translate every phrase, you need a language partner with the experience, personnel and specialized expertise to get the job done right.
- Kommunikation ist eine grundlegende Herausforderung in der globalen Geschäftswelt. Wenn Erfolg und Misserfolg davon abhängen, wie treffend Sie jeden Satz rüberbringen, dann brauchen Sie einen Partner in Sachen Sprachen, der über die entsprechende Erfahrung, das Personal und das spezielle Fachwissen verfügt, damit die Arbeit richtig erledigt werden kann.
- Kommunikation ist das A und O der globalen Geschäftswelt. Wenn Erfolg und Misserfolg davon abhängen, wie treffend Sie sich in anderen Sprachen mitteilen, brauchen Sie einen Übersetzungspartner, der über die Erfahrung, Mitarbeiter und Fachkompetenz verfügt, um Ihre Kommunikation auf den Punkt zu bringen.

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Sample 7 - KISS

[translation excellence since 1990]

- **XXX for success in any market.** Time-sensitive. Complex terminology. Confidential. If these words describe your translation needs—then XXX should be your multilingual partner.
- **XXX für Erfolg in jeder Sprache.** Dringend. Komplexe Terminologien. Vertraulich. Wenn diese Begriffe ausdrücken, worum es bei den Übersetzungen, die Sie benötigen, geht — dann ist XXX Ihr Partner in Sachen Sprachen.
- **XXX steht für Erfolg auf jedem Markt.** Dringend. Komplexe Terminologie. Vertraulich. Wenn das Ihren Übersetzungsbedarf beschreibt, dann sollte XXX Ihr Partner sein.

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Sample 8 - Research

[translation excellence since 1990]

- Lastly, in June of 2009 accounts held with XXX will have access to MYXXX.com, an exclusive resource for live clients.
- Zu guter letzt erhalten Kunden mit einem Konto bei XXX im Juni 2009 Zugang zu MYXX.com, einer interaktiven Website, die ausschließlich unseren Live-Kunden zur Verfügung steht.

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The Creative Translation Process

[translation excellence since 1990]

10 Steps to Remember

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Step 1: Clarify rate

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State clearly in advance what sort of fee you intend to charge for your work. The industry standard is either time-based (hourly, daily, or even weekly flat fees) or project-based (per direct mail letter, per article page, per brochure).

Step 2: Request briefing

[translation excellence since 1990]

- > Company/Project Background
- > What product/service is being presented?
- > What target groups are we addressing?
- > What response do we want to elicit in the targets?
- > Where will the copy appear?
- > Visuals/Reference material
- > What is the tone of the copy?
- > Explanation of plays on words/specific terminology/phrases that need explanation

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Step 3: Delve

[translation excellence since 1990]

Review and absorb all briefings and visuals. Review them till they really sink in and you have captured the spirit and intended message. Make sure you have fully understood what the client wants to express (if you have not, ask!!).

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Step 4: Translate

[translation excellence since 1990]

Come up with a translation that is as close to the original as possible, even if it may not sound perfect at first.

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Step 5: Check

[translation excellence since 1990]

Proofread to make sure you have not missed or misunderstood anything.

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Step 6: Collect ideas

[translation excellence since 1990]

Put the material aside and check out relevant target-language sites on the Internet or other reference material (brochures, catalogs, etc.) to read up on the subject and collect ideas.

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Step 7: Edit

[translation excellence since 1990]

Read only the translation
and start editing.

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Step 8: Step back

[translation excellence since 1990]

Make sure you speak the reader's language.

Step back and try to visualize yourself talking to someone else.

How would you express a particular thought in your own language? What would sound natural?

Be to the point, do not waffle.

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Step 9: Deliver & get feedback

[translation excellence since 1990]

Deliver the job and expect some back and forth between you and the client. Do not worry if the client asks to have changes applied. That's completely normal procedure and does not necessarily mean your version is poor.

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Step 10: Invoice

[translation excellence since 1990]

**Write the bill, but do not write it
before the (end) client has given his or
her final approval!**

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Golden Rule # 1

[translation excellence since 1990]

Never gloss over anything
you haven't understood

(ask, research, research some more,
try to understand, visualize the situation)

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Golden Rule # 2

[translation excellence since 1990]

The more concise
the better it usually flows

(review, review, review)

In a nutshell

[translation excellence since 1990]

BE CLEAR (clearer than the original if necessary)

- If I don't understand it, chances are that others won't understand it either. So how can I phrase it in a way that the message is clearly understood the way it is meant?
- Ask yourself: What is the author trying to say? What is she trying to communicate? What is the important message here? And what then, is the best way to phrase it in my language so that the reader understands it and feels about it the way the client meant it?

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REMEMBER

[translation excellence since 1990]

Just o.k.
isn't good enough!