

TCD NEWS

TCD Strategic Planning Conference

Volume 4, Issue 1 • April 2002

Lead article

With the ATA Translation Company Division now coming up for its fourth anniversary since its founding at the ATA conference in 1998, its principal officers are due for election. At such a juncture, an appraisal of the direction the TCD is taking and should take in the future seems appropriate, and therefore a Strategic Planning Meeting was held in February.

The venue was Milwaukee, home of Steve Iverson, TCD Administrator, and the delegates were asked to focus on defining the TCD's strengths and weaknesses, its Mission Statement and how to achieve its goals in the future.

The meeting's findings will be discussed at the TCD conference, to be held June 13-16 in Chicago (venue to be announced) with the objective of preparing some concrete proposals that can be laid before the TCD annual meeting in November in Atlanta.

This issue of TCD News will relay the main points of the Strategic Planning Meeting, to allow members to digest the topics discussed, digest their relevance and comment – or prepare their contributions for the June conference.

Quality Standard

In addition, the Strategic Planning Meeting further refined its ideas for creating a quality standard, to which TCD members can aspire. The idea is to set minimum criteria to distinguish those TCs able to meet the standards from others, giving them the right to special TCD status in return for a higher membership fee. The increased revenue and prestige generated by such a move will enable TCD to market itself to industry and commerce in general, and to form a platform to which translators/interpreters can market their services more effectively to TCs.

The outcome of the discussions on this topic is furnished in this issue in the form of an article by Suzanne Robinson of the TCD Best Practices Committee, in an article entitled "Update to TCD Members"

TCD goes online

The new TCD website is now up and running at www.tcdonline.org Many thanks go to Richard W. Antoine of MAGNUS International Trade Services Corp. (ra@magnuscorp.com) and Scott Bass of Advanced Language Translation Inc (sbass@advancedlanguage.com) for design, programming and content.

At this time, not all links are active, but the latest versions of the TCD best practices documents referred to elsewhere in this issue of TCD News are available on the site.

About TCD

The Translation Company Division (TCD) is a division of the American Translators Association (ATA).

Mission Statement

To promote, develop and guide our rapidly changing industry through the cooperation of our membership.

Newsletter

TCD News is the newsletter of the TCD. Readers are encouraged to submit articles, which are subject to editing. Articles reflect the opinion of the authors only, and do not represent the views or opinions of the editor or the administrator of the TCD.

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See page 4 for more information

A little light reading anyone?

Contributions to any trade rag are notoriously hard to come by, although a mark of how well the TCD and its newsletter the TCD News are established is the fact that nowadays, there's always sufficient material for the latter. This is in stark contrast to the early days, when we used to have to crib articles from other sources, notably members' own newsletters. But there is always room for more and we would therefore like to invite any readers to come forward with book reviews.

These can be of relevant publications to the translation industry, on topics such as localization, terminology management, technical writing, copywriting and so on, or even dictionaries.

If the muse comes upon you at some unearthly hour, jot down a few lines telling us about the publication you've been reading, including its relevance to our profession, the author, the ISBN number and your personal views and send them to the Editor, Robin Brown at robin@netcomms.dk.

Enjoy!

Robin Brown, editor.
robin@netcomms.dk

Notes from the TCD Strategic Planning Meeting – Milwaukee, WI Saturday, February 09, 2002

In Attendance –

Acting Administrator, Steve Iverson, Iverson Language Associates
Ellen Boyar, ISI
Suzanne Robinson, Liaison Multilingual
Scott Brennan, President-Elect ATA
Bill Graeper, Certified Languages Int'l.
Joe Jullie, International Language Services, Inc.

The first task of the meeting was to review the activities of the TCD over the four years since its founding, and to identify what has been achieved in that time, in the form of a list of strengths:

- Open communication between members
- Regular forum to discuss common problems
- Increased enthusiasm for sharing information
- Common agendas give us the ability to benchmark ideas
- Uniqueness of TCD – the only trade group available in the US
- Resources and Mentoring opportunities for members
- Increased partnering opportunities
- Facilitates networking between agencies and translators
- Increased visibility of Language Service Providers to
 - Translators & Interpreters
 - Customers
- Avenue of recruitment for new members.
- Vehicle for setting a direction of the industry
 - Professionalism and quality

Update to TCD Members, March 2002:

The following three draft documents:
ATA/TCD Code of Best Practices
Criteria for Compliant Membership in ATA/TCD
ATA/TCD Quality Standards

represent a three-year effort, incorporating significant input from the European Union of Associations of Translation Companies and the Association of Canadian Corporations in Translation and Interpretation, to establish a framework to define and encourage quality in the language services industry in the United States.

The draft Code was approved at the TCD annual meeting in 2000, the draft Criteria approved at the 2001 annual meeting in LA. The draft Standards were presented to the ATA Board at their March meeting, and will be presented for approval by the TCD members attending the summer conference in Chicago in June and the TCD 2002 annual meeting in Atlanta.

The creation of an enhanced level of TCD membership, "Voluntary Compliance Membership", will be discussed in June in Chicago. The intention is that an appropriate representative of a TCD member company that wishes to voluntarily comply with the requirements of the enhanced level of membership will:

- 1) Sign annually the enclosed draft "Statement of Voluntary Compliance with TCD" and abide by its stipulations.
- 2) Agree to be an active TCD participant by attending, at least bi-annually, the summer TCD conference and serving, at least bi-annually, on a TCD committee.
- 3) Pay annually a yet to be determined additional membership fee.

The beneficial use of the combined "Compliance" fees will also be defined through discussion in Chicago. The decisions will be sent to the membership by list-serve for further suggestions. The results will be presented for approval at the annual meeting.

These benefits may include a general public awareness campaign and/or marketing program to specifically promote the voluntarily compliant member companies.

You are currently encouraged to read the draft Quality Standards document and e-mail any suggestions for additions and/or changes to Suzanne Robinson (suzanne@emultilingual.com) by April 30. The documents can be downloaded from the TCD's website at www.tcdonline.org. As the document is intended to be finalized before the Chicago meeting in June, we must have your input by the April deadline.

Suzanne Robinson, Chair, Best Practices Committee,
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Having defined the TCD's strengths, its weaknesses then had to be identified, as in order to reach its goals, the TCD has to be aware of what stands in the way. Therefore a list of 'threats' was compiled:

- Lack of common understanding, within the division, of our goals and objectives
- Small number of volunteers working to achieve division goals
- Lack of discussion of who we are and why we are TCD
 - This will be addressed at the Summer Conference
- No appeal to larger companies
- Large diversity of the types of members means that we can't offer something to everyone
- A perceived threat to freelance translators and interpreters

The next step, naturally enough, was then to define an updated Mission Statement to help TCD further its aims and counter its threats:

Division Mission Statement

- To promote, develop and guide our rapidly changing industry through the cooperation of our membership. - Existing
- Identification of quality so we can develop confidence in our members
- Resources for member companies
- Forum for exchange of ideas

It was agreed to supply the Chicago conference scheduled for Thursday June 13 - Sunday June 16, with these ideas to come up with a finalized Mission Statement.

One of the more recent developments welcomed by TCD is the active involvement of ATA at executive level. Since TCD is a division aiming to represent corporate members of ATA, a body primarily designed to represent individuals in the translation profession, constant dialog with ATA is essential to avoid misunderstanding. This became particularly relevant in the light of TCD proposals to conduct a PR campaign to raise the profile of TCs to industry and commerce. Would such 'go-it-alone activities' clash with those of ATA?

The presence therefore of Scott Brennan, President Elect of ATA at the SPM was much appreciated, and gave rise to a debate on how ATA can help TCD within the framework of the association in the form of a brainstorming session. These were the results:

- What does TCD expect of ATA to meet its goals?
 - Membership status for Companies:
 - Companies are Corporate members - criteria to be defined
 - Networking with Translators/Interpreters
 - Conference resources for company staff
 - Public Relations initiatives
 - New ATA conference PR activities, similar to the DeeDee Meyers presentation in St. Louis
 - Hiring a PR firm
 - Sponsorships of PR Events
 - Kevin Hendzel - Aset International COO (ATA PR Committee) - to liaise with TCD
 - Identification of prospective TCD members who are corporate members
 - Steering Committee recommended that Bill Graeper be referenced on all new Corporate Members information as the new member contact
 - Mary David is responsible for our Division and will provide the info upon request.
 - Discussion regarding a different color badge for Corporate Members (possibly a flag?) at the ATA Conference
- Scott Brennan proposed that size and nature of a translation project might be offered to prospective clients as a criterion for determining whether a TC or translator/interpreter could best serve their needs.
 - Should a translator act as a Project Manager?
<http://www.ncata.org> - How to pick a translator/Interpreter (from Brennan)

Some debate centered around 'Active' Membership status, the way in which ATA has defined the difference between the bulk of its membership and those that have successfully achieved ATA Accreditation through examination. The current system of ATA Accreditation can clearly not apply to TCs, as a company by definition cannot sit an exam. Thus the need for a separate set of criteria for TCs.

The meeting went on to consider the future, asking:
What will TCD look like in 5 years?

- Tiered membership
 - General members
 - Compliant members (those that achieve compliance with the TCD Quality Standard)
- Regional meetings promoting TCD at the local/regional level
 - Scott Brennan suggested a one-day seminar that centers around a local speaker, with local topics for a "sharp" one-day meeting. ATA's existing professional development program can offer resources to help TCD plan these seminars.
Contact Marian Greenfield.
- Annual Conference
 - Appeal to Owners or Company Personnel?
 - Decided to offer subjects that appeal to the decision makers that are TCD and ATA members
 - Two days rather than one
 - Longer Roundtables - 1 hr from 45 mins
 - Limit size for Roundtables to 25 delegates
 - Networking time
- PR Program for members increasing company visibility
 - Will work in concert with ATA as they develop PR (See notes above)
 - We have needs different than ATA, however agree to work with them as they develop theirs

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Place
stamp
here

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To: