



How to make money working freelance for translation companies

LINGUISTIC QUALITY

Goals:

Your work must reflect mother tongue fluency and sound technical knowledge of the subject you are translating. Translations should be written in an appropriate style, using impeccable grammar and spelling, without omissions. Consistent technical terms should be used throughout the same project.

Hints on how to achieve linguistic goals:

- Only translate into your mother tongue. (Standards may differ if you are translating "for information purposes only" instead of "for publication", or if you offer an unusual language pair. Check this first with your client.) Know your limitations. Only undertake subjects for which you are qualified and experienced or competent to tackle.
- Create, or obtain from your client, technical glossaries, to achieve consistency in the use of terminology.
- Build your own library of dictionaries and reference material.
- Ask considered questions and obtain all the reference material and support you can from your client.
- Establish your own circle of professional colleagues.
- Check your work carefully before despatch.

COMMERCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Goals:

To be well rewarded for all your hard work and to build a successful, mutually beneficial, long term relationship with one or several different translation companies or work providers.

Hints on how to achieve commercial goals:

- Offer competitive rates and agree them before starting a project.

- Always obtain written instructions and some form of purchase order for each project. Make sure you understand what is required of you before proceeding. Follow the instructions.
- Notify your client in writing if you need to increase your charges on a job because of a change in the job specification, as soon as you are aware of the need, e.g. if there is a demonstrable discrepancy in the word count. Do not increase your charges unless there is good reason to do so.
- Notify your client of any rate increases in writing.
- Offer good value for money. (For reasonable clients, try to 'absorb' some of your costs by not charging for every fax and phone-call which may irritate your client.)
- Invoice punctually for the agreed amount.

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR

Goals:

To be your client's first port of call when they have a translation requirement for your target language and technical field. To build a reputation for being an all round professional in the translation industry.

Hints on how to achieve professional goals:

- Be reliable. Meet delivery dates. Know your capacity and never take on too much.
- Show a responsible attitude to each contract.
- Notify your client as soon as a problem arises which might jeopardise delivery or quality. Discuss the problem and agree a solution.
- Be communicative, helpful and friendly.
- Be flexible, within reason.
- Be discreet. Do not disclose your client's business to anyone else. Never approach your client's client directly without their permission.
- Respond positively to constructive criticism.

- Be an independent problem solver, spot things like missing pages and don't pretend that the source text is all right if there is a glaring error. Clients and authors make mistakes and you can actually score brownie points by drawing these to your client's attention.
- Notify your regular clients if you intend to be away or unavailable for work.
- Abide by the ITI code of conduct.
- Attend as many seminars and professional development courses as you can.

TECHNOLOGY AND PRESENTATION

Goals:

To offer translations to your clients in a format which meets their requirements (assuming the requirements to be reasonable) as cost effectively and efficiently as possible for all concerned.

Hints on how to achieve technological goals:

- Buy the best hardware you can afford in preparation for software additions and upgrades. Seek advice about which computer/modem/printer will suit you best.
- Embrace new software applications and telecommunication systems in order to stay ahead.
- Get an answerphone or some other messaging device so that you are never totally incommunicado.
- Attend ITI technical workshops and share your problems and solutions with others.

Finally ...

- **Remember that you are only as good as your last job. Competition is stiff and you can't afford to let standards drop at any time.**

For any further information on the ITI please visit its website at:
www.iti.org.uk

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