#12: Service with a smile

It's sometimes easy to forget, but translation is only one part of the job. Communicating effectively and providing good service to our customers is equally important. At its best, communication makes the difference between a good customer experience and a great one, and ultimately can improve translation quality.

If in doubt ...

Great communication helps us ensure translations are spot on, both in terms of accuracy and tone. The following features can help you achieve this.

- Gengo's in-built comments feature helps to clarify any parts of the job that aren't clear. Even the most experienced translators find that they can't make sense of particular terms, acronyms or corporate jargon from time to time. Requesting more context from the client is the best way to avoid an error (or worse, leaving part of a job untranslated).

- The best translators can emulate a client's house style perfectly. We use the Gengo Style Guide as our default, unless customers specify otherwise. However, occasionally you might find yourself being pulled in different directions by a customer's text. For example, should it be "LEGO" or "Lego"? If in doubt, just ask your customer!

Of course, customers may not always be available to respond promptly to queries. When in doubt, translators should use their best judgement rather than allow the job's allotted time to expire. The customer will see your original comment upon reviewing the job and can still respond if they wish.

Translator's notes

Sometimes translators include notes in-line in a job to clarify particular terms. We generally advise against this for a number of reasons. Firstly, some customers use the Gengo API system to translate large-scale web content automatically and won't necessarily review the job in person. Equally, there's a good chance the customer won't speak the source language well and could therefore miss your note when reviewing the job.

Using the comment function is a great alternative here, as you can ensure your message goes directly to the customer.

Style

It probably goes without saying, but it's worth mentioning that customer communication should always be friendly, professional and polite. It's important to stay professional at all times, even if customers request corrections to a job or ask for a tight deadline.

Finally, we should always speak with customers in their preferred language. Gengo's new interface makes this easy—the comment box prompts you to write in the language of your client's choice.

Further resources:

- Gengo Style Guide
- Communication skills lesson

Posted by Daniel Harper,
German to English ST

Discover and learn with Gengo's unique resources for beginner translators.

Other Lessons

To talk about the lesson or ask questions, join our discussion in the Translator Forums.

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