

A Buyer's Guide For Interpreting Services

Insights into Interpreting



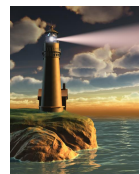
Introduction

Interpreting needs arise in a variety of situations and circumstances. Sometimes you will have plenty of time to arrange for an interpreter, while other times you may need an interpreter the same day, or within a few minutes.

When an interpreting need arises, what specific information do you require to place an order? How much lead time should you allow an interpreting service provider ("ISP") to arrange and confirm an appointment? What if you have an emergency? How does an ISP choose the right interpreter for the job?

This guide was prepared to help people who place interpreting orders work more effectively with an ISP and achieve higher levels of customer satisfaction.

The approach is based on four stages: gathering requirements, needs assessment, booking, resource selection and evaluation.



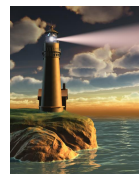
Gathering requirements

The more accurately you can communicate your needs, the easier it will be for an interpreting coordinator to identify the type of interpreting service you require and the qualifications of the interpreter best suited for the job.

Below is a checklist that will help you determine the scope of your needs. We recommend that you have all this information on hand prior to contacting an interpreting coordinator.

REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

1. Language required
2. Assignment type (medical, legal, insurance, social services)
3. Gender considerations
4. Name of a preferred interpreter
5. The file name and file/claim number
6. Appointment details (month, day, year, start time, expected duration, location)
7. Name of person who the interpreter needs to contact upon arrival
8. Name of the Limited English Person
9. Special instructions



Needs assessment

Once you have communicated the essential information, by phone or email, to an interpreting coordinator, they will review the details to gain a solid understanding of the requirements. Once everything is well understood, they will recommend the appropriate type of service.

SERVICE REQUIRED

The interpreting coordinator is specially trained to recommend the interpreting service that matches your requirements. Whether you require an interpreter for an appointment two weeks in the future, or you need an interpreter right away, the coordinator can meet your requirements.

The most commonly used services are described below.

Face-to-face consecutive

Face-to-face consecutive interpreting is bidirectional and takes place on-site in the course of communication between speakers of different languages.

Most assignments involve short consecutive interpreting which operates at the sentence level and is used in legal interpreting and most forms of community interpreting such as medicals, insurance and social service.

On occasion, such as in conference settings or simultaneous interpretation, real-time interpreting; speakers talk as they normally would, without pause, as the interpreter listens to one language and speaks in the other. This service is common when the interpreter is listening with headphones in a booth and speaking to a person or into a microphone for people with headsets.

Context of use

- Community centres
- Conferences
- Educational
- Government agencies
- Healthcare
- Legal
- Rehabilitation
- Social services



Advance notice

Providing your ISP with 2-5 days of advance notice gives the coordinator time to find the best interpreter available. It is possible to process an order for the next day but this reduces the number of options available to the ISP.

For a pre-arranged conference call, provide 24 to 48 hours notice. On-demand OPI calls require no advance notice (you can connect to a qualified interpreter in less than a minute). Set up with a customer account is easy and is done within 24-48 hours.

Over-the-phone

Over-the-phone interpreting (OPI) facilitates cost-effective consecutive communication between parties who speak different languages and are in different locations. All the remote interpreters will have been tested to the highest degree to ensure every call is handled correctly and efficiently. Service charges are based on minutes used and a nominal minimum monthly charge when used.

Pre-arranged and on-demand services are available

The beauty of OPI is flexibility. You can pre-arrange a conference call with a qualified interpreter or set up an on-demand OPI account that enables you to connect to a qualified interpreter in less than a minute.

Context of use for pre-arranged OPI

- Healthcare
- Legal
- Long duration assignments greater than 30 minutes
- When specific interpreter requirements are involved

Context of use for on-demand OPI

- Call centres
- Healthcare > Hospital emergency rooms
- Public service > EMS, fire departments, police
- Retail customer service departments
- Setting appointments with someone that has limited English proficiency (LEP)
- Short duration calls



Booking

This is the stage where all the order details get entered into the system and a confirmation is sent to you by email for approval.



- It is extremely important that you review the specifics of the order by comparing the information with your original checklist.
- After you confirm the order, keep the order confirmation # handy in case you need to change any of the details.

Should you find an error in the order details, contact the interpreting coordinator immediately so they can correct the information. Data entry errors do happen from time to time.

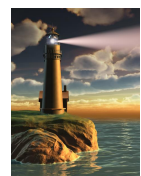
Resource selection

The interpreting coordinator relies on a resource base of highly qualified interpreters, and a database of information that contains each person's skills, experience and track record. The interpreting coordinator searches this information, builds a short list of interpreters and then communicates with the group (to determine who is available) before making the final selection.

HOW AN ISP BUILDS A RESOURCE BASE

A quality oriented ISP will follow a well-established on-dossier process similar to what is used by the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario (ATIO). The factors considered during the recruiting process include:

- Languages spoken, countries resided in and level of education received in each country;
- Linguist degrees, certifications, testing and training;
- Having passed a Language test (CILISAT / ILSAT / etc.);
- Years experience within specific areas of practice;
- Context-specific training and terminology;
- Performance history;
- Certification status by any recognized body such as the IRB or Ministry of Attorney General.



Professional interpreters typically have:

- A BA (not necessarily in languages or linguistics);
- Native or near native-level fluency in the foreign language as well as fluency in English;
- Greater than one year of specialized experience in interpreting, translating or other such experience requiring the use of English and the foreign language for which the interpretation/translation is being provided;
- Training and/or have been certified with a language proficiency test;
- Superior oral communication and customer service skills.

Evaluation

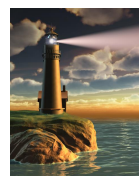
Feedback from you, and the people who have worked first hand with the interpreters, is extremely important. Most people don't complete surveys as the questionnaires are time consuming, and/or they believe their comments won't make a difference. A well run ISP will make it quick and easy for you to provide regular feedback (short e-mail survey), and should an issue arise, will respond to you promptly.

FEEDBACK BENEFITS EVERYONE

An interpreting coordinator will strive to assign the interpreters who have the best performance records on file. Interpreters work autonomously, so first hand client feedback is the only way the ISP can gauge performance and track concerns and compliments. Feedback also helps the individual interpreter determine what is working (areas of strength), and what isn't (areas requiring improvement).

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

An ISP requires a large number of customer survey responses in order to calculate meaningful customer satisfaction % levels. Generating high satisfaction levels from 1,000 respondents is much harder than generating the same high levels from only 100.



Summary

1. Gather all the required information prior to contacting an interpreting coordinator.
2. Fill any gaps identified by the interpreting coordinator.
3. Have a clear understanding of the interpreting coordinator's recommendation.
4. Review the specific details in your order confirmation.
5. Keep the order confirmation # handy should you need to change the order.
6. Provide feedback when requested by the ISP.
7. Encourage people who work first hand with interpreters to provide feedback.

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