

Add the finishing touch.

Why client side review is an important step in the translation process.



Introduction



Nobody knows more about your company, products, services and brand image than the people who work for your company every day.

Somewhere in your company there may be bilingual subject matter experts who would be very helpful in improving the quality of translated materials by acting as a “client side reviewer” (CSR).

Getting someone involved in the translation process as a CSR will pay dividends. Key activities include validating that key industry terminologies are utilized, checking that tone and manner fits with the brand, and ensuring that the product information is aligned with the specific market.

The source materials, and their respective translations, will be stored in a translation memory for future use which will improve consistency and make the CSR’s job much easier going forward. It also enables the translator to work on future projects with confidence.

If your company communicates in numerous languages, you would require multiple CSRs, one for each language pairing.

This document explains the client side review process in more detail and will help you create higher quality, more consistent translations by utilizing one or more CSRs.



Translations are assets

Source text is highly valued by companies as are the names of products and services, descriptions of functions, and detailed specifications. A considerable amount of time and energy is invested by subject matter experts from across the organization in areas such as communications, engineering, management, marketing and HR.

Why then shouldn't the translated equivalents be equally valued assets?

TERMINOLGY IS YOUR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

When it comes time to translate your valuable source material, only two people are usually involved... the translator and QA ("Quality Assurance") linguist. Chances are that these two professionals will have a limited understanding of the product or service, the company itself, competitive forces, etc. even after being provided with briefing information and reference materials.

The professional language service provider makes every effort to select the most qualified and experienced translator available, but that still leaves a gap between the translator's newly acquired knowledge and that of the subject matter expert.

The translator's work is an important part of your intellectual property and will be used in future translation projects to maintain consistency. Like the foundation of a high rise building, the translated assets need to be engineered at the outset to the highest quality standard possible.

ELIMINATE SECOND GUESSING



Translation assets composed of work that bears the seal of approval by both the ordering party and a CSR, enables translators to perform future work with confidence.

When a new project is in production with the translator, there is far less need for discussion or exploration since the terms added in the database resulting from past feedback are essentially a CSR validated glossary.

Helping the translator avoid second guessing and linguistic research will reduce errors while saving time and money. A win-win for everyone!



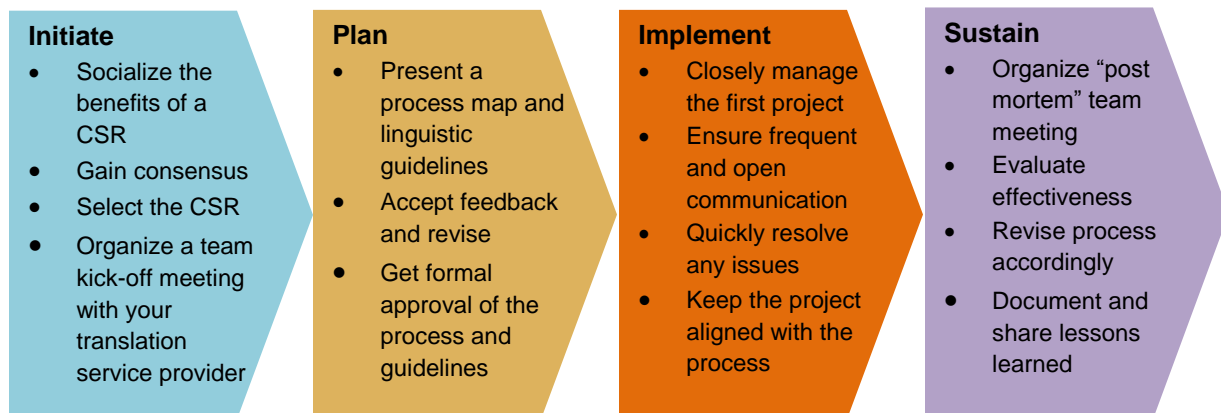
Getting started

Once you have made the decision to follow a translation process that includes a CSR for a certain language pairing, the key to success is having a well thought out game plan that is agreeable to all stakeholders. A good game plan will include a strategy for managing the changes to integrate a CSR plus a detailed process plan. One common approach can be used for one or more CSRs.

MANAGING THE CHANGE

People are more willing to buy into a process when they have visibility into a clear plan and value the expected outcomes. People also appreciate being asked for their feedback early in the process so any potential speed bumps can be identified, discussed and overcome.

More than likely you will need to tweak your workflow over time, so teamwork is essential to the process. The better everyone communicates, the more successful your projects will be. Here are the phases you should consider:



SELECTING A “CSR” FOR A SPECIFIC LANGUAGE PAIRING

As you can see from the four phases above, a lot of communication will be required between parties. Since the last thing anyone wants in business is a surprise, it is good to know exactly what tasks a CSR will be expected to perform, the linguistic knowledge they require and the different points of view that will arise in the process.



Time availability

More than likely the candidates for the CSR role will be doing another job within the company and have a minimal amount of extra time. Ideally, the CSR should have time flexibility so they can help you meet deadlines, especially as you get to the end of project which is typically “crunch time”.

The amount of time required by the CSR is project specific and your translation service provider will be able to give you some idea of the time required of a CSR.



Well-educated and fully bi-lingual

Chances are that your CSR will not be 100% fluent in both the source and target languages. At a minimum they should have a post-secondary education as well as strong reading and writing skills in the target language, and working level knowledge of the source language. If the CSR has a low level of linguistic skills, they will often misinterpret the professional translator’s work and request stylistic changes or introduce errors without even knowing it. These do not improve the impact or accuracy of the final product, but do add cost and time to the process.

What linguistic knowledge is required?

The CSR must have first-hand knowledge of your industry and products, so they should look closely at the key terminologies that have been translated and provide suggestions that will make the target translation more specific. Some of the terms the CSR should look at are:

- Specific text that should remain in the source language
- Technical terms
- Product names, features and descriptions
- Marketing taglines or corporate themes
- Desired phrasing of sentences or groups of words
- Acronyms

Understanding of your brand



The CSR should understand the branding guidelines of the company, especially how the brand is handled in the local market where the translation will be used.

The CSR should provide feedback on the nuances of the brand, the explicit brand promise, as well as any specific details that are critical.



Necessary market-related omissions prior to commencing translation

Putting language aside for the moment, it is quite common that products and services differ from one location to the other, yet source text/materials are often sent to the translation service provider in their entirety.

Clearly the translation service provider has no way of knowing what belongs in a certain market and what doesn't, so they will translate what is given to them without question. A CSR should be utilized to edit materials prior to starting the translation process which would save time and money.

LINGUISTIC GUIDELINES FOR THE CSR

Avoid stylistic or preferential changes

A stylistic change is when a passage is rewritten to say the same thing, but in a different way. Often clients see these types of changes as errors, and they are not errors at all. Professional translators are trained to know what is appropriate for a wider audience of people and are unable to predict the preferences of an individual.

To make sense of this, look at the flip side. How could an untrained person know if a translation will work for a broader audience?

Focus on terminology to help build a bi-lingual glossary (“termbase”)



In the translator's world, amongst the most serious kind of error they can make is a terminology error, so they are always eager to receive feedback on terminological preferences as early as possible in the process.

A CSR needs to understand that the translator is their partner, and that each time a term is changed, it is stored for future use by advanced translation management systems. Yes, there is more work up front, but the CSR's investment pays dividends down the road.

Weigh the quality of the source text against the translation

The CSR should be aware that high quality source text leads to high quality translations, and that low quality source text poses challenges to the translators. The CSR should ensure that the translator feels comfortable with the quality of the source text prior to starting work, and if there are deficiencies, that the client improve the quality or engage the translation service provider to perform source text editing.

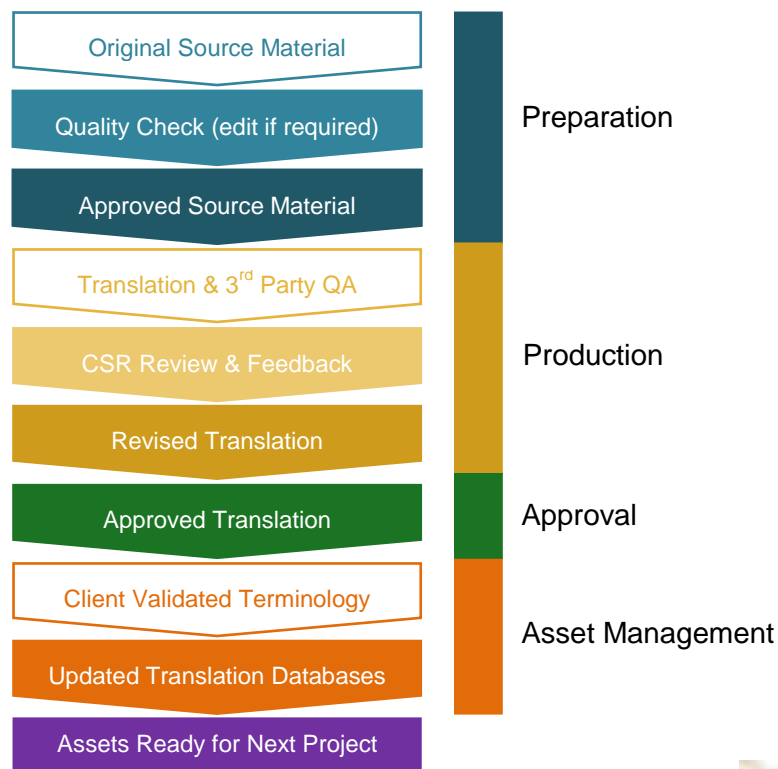


Common source text quality issues are:

- Lack of clarity or wandering off topic;
- Spelling, grammar and tense errors;
- Poor argument structure or bad logic;
- Weak sentence construction;
- Abstract word choices instead of specific ones;
- Flow is not good. Poor transitions between paragraphs or long sentences;
- Language level is too low, or too high, for the audience;
- Inconsistent tone and style; and,
- Redundant phrases.

Simplified process map

The following schematic gives you an idea for the basic stages in a translation process that includes a CSR. This is based on a simple small sized project. A very large or complex project would require an expansion of this schematic and would be developed and managed by a Project Manager.



Managing viewpoints

If you make five copies of a document and ask five different people to make corrections, you'll get five different results. Some of the changes will be the same, such as grammar and spelling errors, while other changes will be subjective (stylistic).

Stylistic changes are almost inevitable since languages have nuances and people by nature have unique qualities, likes and dislikes.



ERROR CORRECTION

Hopefully any translation errors that have slipped by the professional translator and QA linguist will be caught by the client or the CSR. These errors are usually minimal and are most often corrected in one round of changes at no charge to the client.

STYLISTIC CHANGES ARE CHARGEABLE

In the translation world, stylistic changes to a translation are not viewed as errors and as a result linguistic service fees apply. Clients will sometimes disagree with the translation service provider's assessment, especially when they feel there are extensive changes, the translation doesn't resonate with their team, is too literal or doesn't reflect the corporate style.



If a translated passage accurately communicates the object of the original thought, reflects the branding prescribed by the client, and would be understood and accepted by a wider audience, it is technically correct and acceptable.

Should this technical viewpoint not be acceptable to a client team when requesting certain changes, there is an escalation process that should resolve matters to everyone's satisfaction.

RESOLVING DIFFERING VIEWPOINTS

A third-party linguistic professional can be brought in to independently assess the translation and client requests to identify errors and stylistic changes. The findings are shared with stakeholders and usually lead to a fast and satisfactory resolution.

ALLOWING FOR STYLISTIC CHANGES

Knowing that stylistic changes are inevitable, it is a sound idea to plan and budget for them, especially when a CSR is involved since building a validated term base is important to quality, consistency and lower costs down the road. Allowing for a few rounds of stylistic changes will



take the pressure off of everyone, improve team work, and focus resources on the desired result.

Summary

1. A bilingual subject matter expert from your company acting as a Client Side Reviewer will help improve the quality of translated material and enable the building a validated termbase.
2. Your terminology is unique, valuable and an asset to your company.
3. Have a clear process for recruiting a CSR as they will be busy with their own work and will need to justify the time spent working on a translation project.
4. Ensure the CSR you choose has the required background, and is well-briefed on their role, responsibilities and limitations.
5. Work with your translation service provider to establish a process and set timelines for your project. Get buy-in from all stakeholders before proceeding.
6. Understand the difference between errors and stylistic changes, as well as how they are charged/not charged.
7. Add time and budget for stylistic changes and building the validated termbase.

