



languageintelligence

Professional Language Services

⋮ White Paper

⋮ *Localization Requirements*
⋮ Survey / Research Industry

Localization encompasses more than simple translation. The goal is to produce materials that, in addition to having been translated, have been fully adapted to your target audience's language and culture. To this end, there are numerous requirements that must be met for successful localization. Though many of these requirements are the same for any project, certain requirements are more critical for the Survey / Research industry.

Accuracy

The need for accurate translation is crucial when producing localized employee or market research surveys. Great care is taken when formulating questions for the source survey so that they will be easily understandable and relay the intended meaning without being leading. Likewise, the same attention to detail must be applied to the translation process in order to preserve those qualities. Without this, the statistical analysis of your survey's results may be unreliable or worse, your end-user will be confused. Furthermore, terminology specific to the local office or market in which the survey is conducted, such as business divisions, job titles, product names, and slogans, must match what is used in that local office or market.

Turnaround Time

Another significant requirement is the need to deploy your surveys across all markets rapidly. Your clients rely on the data your questionnaires produce, and often they need that information as soon as possible. Once the source survey has been developed, there is usually little time remaining for localization, especially when all versions of the survey must be deployed simultaneously. When your team must work quickly and efficiently, you need a localization provider that can do the same.

Locale Awareness

Translation often uncovers many issues that either are overlooked in the creation of, or simply do not exist in the source survey. Date and time formats, currency, measurement scales, and even paper sizes vary from locale to locale. It is essential that these issues be addressed when creating properly localized surveys. Additionally, other, more enigmatic problems may exist in the source survey. Were colloquialisms used that are difficult to translate? Are racial profiling questions acceptable in the target locale? Are cultural assumptions made that do not apply in other countries? Not properly addressing these issues can dramatically alter your survey's goal, producing material that is unintelligible, humorous or even offensive.

Cost

Cost is always a factor in any localization project. Most localization providers will charge on a per word basis. However, simply choosing the provider that offers the lowest price per word can be detrimental. If your provider cannot meet the aforementioned localization requirements, many additional or even hidden costs may accrue. Client reviews may become longer and more expensive than anticipated. The quality of the final translation may adversely affect your target audience's reaction to your survey, which can negatively impact future surveys. Repeat business from your customers may decline. Although these consequences cannot always be assigned a dollar value, the cost is certainly high.

In order to avoid these pitfalls, make sure your localization provider has and uses the tools, techniques and resources needed to meet the requirements of Survey / Research localization.

Project Management

It is the job of your localization provider's project managers to ensure a successful project. The project manager is responsible for understanding your requirements, selecting appropriate translators and editors, providing those translators and editors with detailed instructions, and handling all paper and electronic files. They must be familiar with Survey / Research localization in general as well as the specific processes your company utilizes to produce final surveys. Accessibility is important as well, so that they can quickly answer any questions or concerns you may have. An adept project manager will point out potential localization issues before they become expensive and time-consuming problems, helping to resolve them quickly and efficiently. Through skill and experience, a good project manager can guarantee timely delivery for both small and large jobs.

Subject Matter Experts

It is not enough for the translators and editors who work on your projects to be fluent in the source and target languages. They must have expertise providing localization for the Survey / Research industry. With this expertise, they can construct questions in their native language that will be as effective as those in the source survey. Furthermore, experienced translators and editors will be intimately familiar with the various linguistic and cultural issues particular to the locale they are targeting.

Tools & Technology

The localization industry has seen the advent of many tools to aid the translation process. Translation memory (TM) stores source text and its corresponding translation in a database and will present these translations for reuse when translating identical content. Terminology management tools store commonly used and/or industry or client specific terms and will present the appropriate translation for these terms as the translator works. Both of these tools reduce cost, shorten turnaround time and help to ensure accurate and quality translations. Furthermore, a good localization provider can and should develop custom tools to work with your company's files in order to expedite the localization process.

It is imperative that the localization provider you choose is able to meet the requirements for localizing your materials. For the Survey / Research industry, most of those requirements are very specific. You should therefore make sure the localization provider you choose has the tools, techniques and resources available to provide what you need.

About Language Intelligence

Language Intelligence breaks down language and culture barriers to help you succeed in global markets.

Our language translation services prepare your documentation and our culture and language training programs prepare your staff. Language Intelligence combines experienced project managers, highly skilled technical staff and professional linguists and cross-cultural experts with an ISO 9001-2000 compliant quality management system to make your company a success in a variety of diverse global markets.

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