



# languageintelligence

Professional Language Services

- ⋮ White Paper

- ⋮ *Translator selection*

- ⋮ The most significant QA step in the translation process

## What is a “Translator Profile?”

Whatever your company's product or service, preparing to globalize requires collaboration with a translation company who will work with you to understand your business, your goals and your process. Your vendor will begin this process by focusing on the specific project and then broaden out to include additional information they know is required to determine which translators will be properly qualified to localize your content.

At Language Intelligence, to help us formalize this process, we create a “Translator Profile.” The translator profile becomes an abstract representation of the linguist required for a given project and portrays the attributes to look for when recruiting for that project. The most significant quality assurance step taken on any translation project is assigning the proper resources.

If the proper translation resource is not assigned to a project all remaining quality assurance steps will be affected: Edit, proofread, review, etc. In other words, if the original translation “product” is not accurately translated, all consequent steps will be focused on correcting the translation rather than enhancing it. Obviously, this makes translator selection critical, and the construction of the translator profile becomes a logical and effective approach to translator selection.

## How do we begin constructing a translator profile?

The ability to construct a translator profile is a significant skill, and the application of this skill will affect the outcome of an entire project. Based on this, anyone involved in sourcing or managing a translation project needs to be able to construct this profile. For example, we have a Vendor Manager who is responsible for qualifying and recruiting our overall resource pool, but our Project Managers also understand the concept of the translator profile to ensure that they are applying the proper resources at the project level.

At Language Intelligence we create a translator profile based on detailed information gathered pertaining to each specific client and project. The profile will identify things to look for in a translation resource and even provide us with a method of weighting these various items. Some of these items are immediately apparent: Education, native language, professional achievements, accreditations in the source and target languages, awards, certifications, etc. These items, while incredibly important, are only meaningful to us if we have spent the time to gather the information necessary to construct a well thought out profile. In addition, although a translator may have already proven to be a highly skilled and qualified translator, the individual responsible for recruiting must delve deeper into the individual's experience and knowledge in order to appropriately assign jobs to him/her. The process then moves towards answering questions that relate specifically to understanding exactly what the client needs are.

For the purpose of this white paper, we will create a hypothetical client and translation project. Let's start with what we know; a client of ours in the Medical Device industry has developed a new type of blood analyzer that they would like to market in the European Union. They have a user manual and a software interface that they would like translated. Now we begin to develop an understanding of the client's goals as we mentioned previously.

Again, the more a translation vendor can learn about the client's reasoning behind globalizing their product, the better it can choose the most appropriate resources thereby producing the desired results. Here are some of the most important questions a translation vendor can ask: Why is the client localizing this content? Which specific languages and locales are they targeting? What is the end product? Who is their target audience? What is the specific content requiring translation and what is its intended use? Which steps in the translation process are necessary?

Let's answer some of these questions for our fictitious client and begin to build a translator profile:

Why localize?	To establish new markets for their product.
Which language(s) and locales are required?	French for France, German, Italian and Spanish for Spain (All European Union member countries and therefore subject to the regulations imposed by the E.U.).
What is the product?	A new style of blood analyzer (it functions the same way as traditional blood analyzers but is smaller and therefore may have broader distribution possibilities).
Where will it be distributed?	Hospitals, doctor's offices, clinics
What is being translated?	User manuals explaining how to operate the analyzer and process the data and the user interface software.
Who is the target audience?	Doctors, RNs, Technicians
Which steps are required and therefore, which steps require the assigning of a linguist?	Translation, edit, third party review, DTP review/QA.

From this information, we can begin to construct the translator profile and decide which linguists are appropriate for the various steps of this project. How do we ensure that we properly address the client's desired image, audience, marketing plan, launch locations, etc. Based on the answers to the above questions, a second round of information gathering begins with the goal of narrowing our focus to the detail required specifically for the profile. Should the translator live in-country? What subject matter expertise is necessary? Is it important that the translator have professional experience related to the subject matter aside from their related translation experience?

Even the age of the translator may be examined. For example, if this were a marketing survey for a new soft drink geared towards the 18-35 demographic, perhaps someone in-country and who falls within that age range themselves might be a better choice if it is clear that they have exposure to popular culture and advertising to their age group. Let's take a look at the answers to these questions.

The following is a sample of additional questions a translation vendor may ask:

Should the linguists live in-country?	Since language is a living, breathing thing, at least one of the translators, probably the editor, should be in-country.
What is the required subject matter expertise?	Diagnostics, chemistry, pathology, software.
Does this translator need an educational background related to this subject matter?	It wouldn't hurt, but it is not the deciding factor when weighted against relevant experience and references
Will age be a factor?	Probably not in this situation.
Is related professional experience necessary?	Yes, experience working with related clinical studies, diagnostic machines and/or health care would be beneficial.

## Pulling it all together...

Now, by combining the information we have gathered we can begin to construct our profile and start the selection and/or recruitment process. The data we collected in the first round of questions will allow us to key in on relevant translation project experience listed on a translator's resume. Since the blood analyzer is functioning in a similar way to traditional blood analyzers and does not implement a brand new technology, we can assume that translators that have previously translated blood analyzer content will have relevant experience. We also know that we will need a translator that understands both software translation and medical device translation. This may be a single resource, if we're lucky, but more than likely, this will be a separate linguist. Lastly, we know that we are going to have to recruit translators, editors, and reviewers. We may be looking for a resource that has experience working on these tasks specifically.

Looking at the answers to the second round of questions, we have learned that we will need to find at least one linguist in-country. We understand that education is important but will not be as critically weighted as experience translating this type of content previously (the translator selection trump card), or even professional experience.

## Time to recruit

Now that we know the criteria by which we will select our translators, how will we conduct the search? The next step is to create a list of keywords that we can use as search tools. In this instance, there are some key words related to a translator's education, translation experience and other professional experience that may be found on translators' resumes or CVs that may be appropriate choices for this project. We will be looking for certain keywords in each category. Using these keywords, we will identify translators currently existing in our resource pool and then determine whether we will need to recruit for this project specifically.

Education:	Medical science, chemistry, pathology, IT, computer software technology.
Translation Experience:	Medical Device, blood analyzer machines, automated testing systems, diagnostics, chemistry, pathology, clinical trial protocols, computer software, operator manuals, user manuals.
Related Professional Experience:	Medical doctor, laboratory technician, physician's assistant, RN, healthcare provider, software engineer, computer programmer, IT professional.

At this point, the advantage of having formally created the translator profile will become evident in the ease and confidence with the translator recruitment / assignment process is executed. Likewise, the value will be further reinforced when the translation step is executed on schedule and consecutive QA steps run smoothly. Once the concept of the translator profile has been understood and incorporated in to the planning step of every translation project, you will have addressed the most significant direct overall improvement to translation quality that can be made.

## 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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