

Why Translation, Interpreting, Document Services and Cultural Understanding Matter

[Part One of a Four-Part Series]

As with any reputable language services company, our marketing materials generally tell you what we do, how we do it and why we do it the way we do it more distinctively than others. An important question you may have is why what we do should matter to you.

The key point to be made is the reality that business is done globally now. No matter what business you are in, the global economy and the globalization of most industries dictates communicating with greater consideration to different cultural segments which may interact with your business or use your services or products.

However, true appreciation and understanding of the impact and growing need for a language service company's offerings begins with taking a look at why each offering matters. In this first of four installments, we will focus on translation. Part two will focus on interpreting, part three on document services and branding documentation, and finally, part four will discuss the growing need and value of cultural consulting.

Translation – Beyond the Word. Delivering the Message.

Three questions must be answered to understand why translation matters. 1) What does, "translation" mean? 2) Why focus on the languages in highest demand? and 3) Why translate at all?

What does, "translation" mean? As presented in a previous article, "What is Best for the Client? Free and Fair Translation!" (Volume I, Issue II) translation covers a wide array of approaches from literal translation to adaptation. On one end of the spectrum, the language service provider simply tells the language user what the original written piece said and at the other end, the provider becomes more involved in crafting a final written piece that is culturally relevant to the intended audience or end-reader. Effective translation encompasses a whole spectrum of services and covers such activities as localization, globalization and adaptation. It goes beyond merely translating words by taking a deeper look at what the piece is intended to accomplish. Whether it is a letter, brochure, ad, financial statement, contract, case study, website content, software, packaging, or patient information, how the translation is handled is dictated by how best to convey the information in other languages and cultures in order to reach the target audience.

Why focus on the languages in highest demand? In a recent *Market Watch* segment of our newsletter, we named Arabic, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, French, German, Portuguese, Italian and Spanish as languages in strong demand. These nine languages are among the top languages that *Common Sense Advisory* identifies as being used in the 25 countries that account for 85% of the global GDP. English, Russian, Dutch, Turkish, Swedish, Indonesian, Polish and Norwegian complete the list of most in-use languages. Given these numbers, it is likely that the customers you are seeking to reach in the various global markets are speaking one of these seventeen languages. Understanding which languages are in highest demand makes good economic sense.

Why translate at all? *Common Sense Advisory* has also documented that when it comes to those seeking information on the Internet, 52% of people prefer to – and some will only – buy where information is presented in their native language. Findings in an International Survey of Global Buying Preferences also showed that "language significantly influenced more important purchases" of 85% of the respondents. In December 2008, the *New York Times* argued that marketers have misunderstood Internet users in India because even though they speak English, they prefer to have content in their own language. That article also noted that Asia already has twice as many Internet users as North America and will have three times as many by 2012. Consequently, an important point is made that in order to reach *and* effectively bond with consumers, companies have to provide content in local languages where their business does business. While these two sources largely discuss content on the web, it is safe to assume that consumers react in a similar fashion when making brick and mortar buying decisions when encountering other written materials used to conduct business. Companies that are serious about introducing their brands to new geographical markets or to new cultural market segments need to consider the many options for translation if they are not already. Translation done right will enable a company to have people in these markets and segments develop an affinity with their brands. Additionally, content is also often aimed at other important audiences such as investors, which also have become a global market of opportunity.

Continued on Page 2 ►

A WORD FROM Avantgarde Translations

Welcome to Avantgarde Translations' **BEYOND THE WORD!** The last issue, which included articles on Free and Fair translation and on machine translation, is now archived at www.avantgardetranslations.com.

In this issue we take a macro look at why the services provided at Avantgarde Translations matter to business and a micro look at why companies should be looking at the Spanish-speaking market in the US – if they are not already.

Starting with this issue, **BEYOND THE WORD** is going green! If you want to receive it via mail, please contact us at (704) 496-2735 or info@avantgardetranslations.com. It can also be downloaded in PDF format at www.avantgardetranslations.com.



Research Notes & Analysis

When Avantgarde Translations conducted its strategy research through surveys of clients you asked us to keep our name, but change our logo. We did what you told us, and in 2007 received a Business Marketing Association Carolinas ProAd Award for the improvement in our Corporate Identity Package. As the last issue of **BEYOND THE WORD** was going to press, our efforts to revamp our image culminated with the news that the Avantgarde Translations logo and tagline had been approved as registered trademarks! Thank you for your advice! We will continue to listen to your suggestions about us and especially about working with you. Please visit www.avantgardetranslations.com to experience all that our company brings to the area of language services. Feel free to forward a link whenever you have an opportunity to refer our services.

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