BEYONDTHEWORD
a publication of Avantgarde Translations, Inc.

Why Translation, **Interpreting**, Branding Documentation and Cultural Understanding Matter

[Part Two of a Four-part Series]

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Interpreting – Beyond What's Stated. Delivering What's Intended.

In Part I, the definition, value and necessity of translation in our global marketplace was discussed. Now, in this section, the focus will shift to the meaning and value of interpretation, the most common languages companies are asked to interpret and the reason interpretation services require a specialized skill set for the best end result.

What is "interpreting" and the role of an interpreter? The spoken word is as important as the written word in communication. When it comes to listening in a different language, the spoken word can be more easily misunderstood or not understood at all. Interpretation involves translating oral remarks. It is described as having to be done dispassionately. Why? Because accuracy in what is being said is essential to ensure the listener is being given the exact same information as was intended in its original language by the person speaking. The interpreter's role is not to make any assumptions or judgments, but to accurately and quickly present the communication with cultural sensitivity. Interpretation is used in a broad spectrum of venues including hospitals, the courts, business meetings and conferences.

Should the focus be on the languages in highest demand? Interpretation requires language service companies to provide services in languages other than those that are in highest demand. The major world languages – including Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese and Spanish – still drive a large part of the demand, but additional demand is created because people from any part of the world may be present in venues where interpretation is needed. The demographics of an area or make up of a conference will determine the additional languages needed in a community or setting.

Why interpret at all? The considerations on why to interpret are slightly different from those on why to translate. To be sure, and like with translation, there are often economic reasons. However, in addition, access to proper interpreting can be a matter of life and death, a question of justice or simply a reflection on your company. In hospitals for example, professionals are needed – in some places required by law – to give accurate information in healthcare situation. In legal settings, incorrect interpretation can lead to mistrial. At your company function, having professional interpreters can help things run smoothly. When you've spent time and money on a company-wide conference or other special event with international attendance, you want things to go well.

Why does interpreting matter? Interpreting is critical because it improves the ability of businesses to exchange important information with their customers and attract and retain new clients. For the best results, professional interpreters should be assigned in professional settings. Those interpreters should have excellent command of their source and target languages and preferably have a degree in translation and three to five years of experience in interpreting. Through their formal training and experience, professional interpreters should have developed some subject matter expertise and the cultural sensitivity often needed in interpretation settings.

Businesses that assess their local language needs and understand the legal obligations they might have and who fulfill those obligations using professional interpreting services will find that they are meeting their language-related business objectives effectively and efficiently while avoiding potential language-related liabilities.