



Set the stage...  
for an effortless  
transition!

## EXECUTIVE BRIEF

### Transitioning to a New Translation Provider

Founded in 1983, Idem Translations, Inc. is a full-service provider of translation and localization services. Idem specializes in certified translations for medical device, biomedical, and pharmaceutical companies, as well as other organizations and entities working in the life sciences sector, such as contract research organizations (CROs), healthcare research centers, and institutional review boards (IRBs). The company is a WBENC-certified woman-owned business and holds certifications to ISO 9001:2008, ISO 13485:2003, and EN 15038:2006 (ISO 17100:2015).

Translation is an interactive collaboration. Your translation service provider needs to ask the right questions, meet your timelines, and provide you with reliable quality you can count on. Sound like a pipe dream? It shouldn't be!

The translation industry is highly fragmented, so agencies come in all shapes, sizes, and areas of expertise. If your current provider isn't the right fit, you have a variety of options to choose from:

- large companies that handle everything under the sun
- jack-of-all-trade providers that will accept any and all content (automotive, manufacturing, medical, legal, marketing)
- small and medium-sized companies with personalized services
- specialized providers who focus on the needs of a particular industry.

Idem has helped many customers transition from a previous provider. Without the right planning, however, this transition can be painful. Read on for our recommendations to ensure a seamless transition when you are ready to start fresh with a new translation company.

## Own (and organize) your translation assets

This is often the number one impediment to a smooth transition. First, you should be ready to hand over to your new provider all of your translated documents, specifically manuals, guides, and brochures. And not just the PDFs. To gain a complete understanding of your literature and be well-positioned for future updates, your new provider will need all of the component parts that make up a digital document, including:

- The source file (for example, in Adobe InDesign)
- Any special fonts you use
- Any images that the document contains and, if those images contain text, the modifiable version of each image
- The PDF you are actually printing or distributing, as reference material

Second, in addition to the actual translated documentation, it is likely that your team and your translation provider have worked together to build "helper" documents that facilitate the translation process, such as glossaries or style guides. Although you have seen these documents before, you probably rely upon your provider to manage and maintain them from one project to the next. There is a similar document, called a Translation Memory ("TM" for short) that you may not have seen, but which your provider will be

creating and maintaining for you in the background.

This TM is a database of past translations that enables the provider to give you discounts when you update your files or need similar files translated. All of these documents can be utilized by your new vendor to ensure:

- consistency with your past terminology,
- reduced costs per project, and
- streamlined onboarding for the first projects you handle together.

You have a large library of documents and a new provider needs access to all of it. If you're considering a transition, now is the time to organize your assets, understand what you have and identify what you need to request from your current translation provider.

### No-Brainer

Don't rely on PDFs alone! Keep an organized copy of your translation assets and all the files used to build them. In addition, regularly request that your translation provider send you an updated version of your translation memories (in non-proprietary TMX format), glossaries, termbases, and style guides.

## Brainstorm your pain points

Why exactly do you want to change translation providers? Is it a quality issue? Perhaps the process is too complex and takes too long? By understanding your pain points, you can:

- Ensure your new vendor doesn't repeat the same mistakes
- Have an internal benchmark by which to gauge this new vendor
- Build a case for change across your organization.

By taking a good, hard look at what has caused translations to be a problem, you may identify potential process improvements you hadn't previously considered. Discuss these items with your new provider to find out what options are available to ease the workload on your internal team.

You may have colleagues in other departments who are also struggling with translations. Their complaints about the current provider may be the same as yours or they may have brand new ones. Make them aware of your initiative and gather their input along the way. Maintaining an open and transparent approach can help you garner critical internal support across your organization.

### No-Brainer

Know exactly why you're switching providers and communicate this to the new translation vendor. This sets the groundwork for you to build a forward-looking process that will avoid these problems, both on their end and yours.

## Do your research (and compare apples to apples)

Change is hard, even change for the better. Before you fall head-over-heels for a new provider, understand what kind of partner they are going to be after the honeymoon is over:

- How proactive are they in asking questions to understand your organization, its needs, and why you're interested in switching?
- Do they seem willing to save you money by making use of any existing translations you already have?
- What is their proposal for maintaining consistency with the key terminology that is already in use for your product in international markets?
- Have they been easy to reach and quick to respond to your emails and calls?

A major hurdle to selecting a new translation partner is understanding how they stack up against the competition. Relying on a simple comparison of price per word is a common mistake. Translation providers do not all charge consistently: some offer a low price per word but charge more for things like formatting and quality control; some have a higher price per word that is more inclusive. Rather than pouring over rate sheets, consider requesting a sample quotation. Pick a past project that was relatively complex, then detail out what you want included in the quote so you can see exactly what you get for your money. Here are some things to consider when reviewing sample quotes:

- Does the quoted scope of work specify that the translation will be edited by a second, qualified linguist?
- Does it include details on the level of quality control that will be performed?
- What format(s) will be returned to you?
- Do you receive any kind of certification with each project?

- Does the provider hold standard quality system certifications for the translation industry (such as ISO 17100)?
- Does the provider hold the quality system certifications standard for your industry (such as ISO 9001 and 13485)?
- What happens if you need to make a change after work has started?

### No-Brainer

It's easy to focus on the price per word when looking for a new translation provider, but this can quickly lead you down the garden path. By spending the extra time to get a sample quotation, you get not only a better gauge on the provider's pricing, but important insight into how they operate. If your translation needs are complex, you might also consider taking the strongest contender for a test drive with a mock project. After the project is over, you can sit down to see how this new provider reacts to your project feedback.

## Don't create Frankenstein documents

It's tempting to be frugal. You already paid your old agency to translate your user guide, so you just need your new provider to handle the text that has changed, right? Handling documents piecemeal poses a number of technical problems for any translation professional, but there's a deeper reason to ask your new provider to review the translations you already have — ownership. By making your new translation partner responsible for the translations in their entirety, you can hold them accountable for the final quality of the documents you distribute. Down the road, if a salesperson or customer has a question that relates to any part of your translated documentation, old or new, you can rest easy knowing that your translation provider can help you answer those questions and make any updates that are warranted.

### No-Brainer

Ask your new provider to review your existing translations and integrate them into their system. If your translations are certified, your Quality team will appreciate being able to pull a single certificate when there is an auditor in the building. Not to mention the time and money you will save by keeping all your documents safely inside your translation memory!

You can absolutely make transitioning to a new language service provider pain-free. We would know: Idem has built long-lasting partnerships with many clients who came to us from a different translation company. Whatever your pain points, we can help you set the stage so that moving to a new, more appropriate provider for your company won't seem overwhelming.

## Get Help

For more information about how we can take the risk out of translations for you and your team, please visit us online:

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