

In-Country Review Tips for Busy Professionals

REDUCE THE COST, REDUCE THE HEADACHES

In-country (or client) review is one of the most crucial, yet challenging, steps in the translation process. In-country review is the process by which the translated material is sent to an individual in the target country to review linguistic and formatting issues associated with a given translation project. The reviewer is generally a work colleague who resides in the subsidiary or branch office—most often a sales manager, country manager, or distributor—who has been asked to serve in this capacity. To ensure a successful review, McElroy Translation suggests the following guidelines.

THE GOALS OF IN-COUNTRY REVIEW

The overarching goal of an in-country review is to gain local acceptance for the product or product materials in the target market through the reviewers linguistic and product expertise. The goals and expectations of the reviewers should be established as early in the process as possible, since this task is rarely the person's core function.

WHO SHOULD PERFORM REVIEWS?

Ideally reviews should be performed by individuals with a linguistic background, solid product knowledge, and review experience. However, they are more often performed by local sales staff or distributors who have a vested interest in the translation quality, but no formal review experience. Therefore, it is critical that a clear set of guidelines or instructions be provided to ensure consistent and timely feedback from reviewers. Guidelines become even more important if you plan to have more than one person conduct the review per language. Your translation vendor can assist you in developing these.

HOW TO GET EXCELLENT IN-COUNTRY REVIEWS

We strongly recommend working with your translation vendor as early in the process as possible to establish review guidelines.

The first step in this process is creating glossaries and style guides before translation starts. This step will establish preferred terminology, usage of acronyms, punctuation, etc. Glossaries and style guides enable translators to incorporate preferred terminology and style at the outset of a project. Involving your reviewers in this process will give them the opportunity to provide valuable input up front and minimize the number of revisions later. Why is this so important? There is often more than one way to correctly express a concept or idea, and without guidance on key terminology, even a good translation that is faithful to the original text may not reflect the expressions preferred by your in-country staff.

The next step is to help your reviewers understand the purpose and focus of the review process by providing them with specific parameters:

- Adherence to glossary and style guides
- Consistency of the translation
- Compliance with instructions (i.e., items that should not be translated are correct)
- Country-specific measurements and other standards are met
- Accuracy of terminology
- Style (cultural appropriateness of aesthetic and/or writing style)

HOW SHOULD REVIEW COMMENTS BE PROVIDED?

Depending on the source files or document, there are different ways to communicate reviewer comments; however, in all circumstances the original translated text must show up in the reviewed document. For an editable electronic file such as an MS Word document, reviewers can make suggestions and comments using the change-tracking feature. If they are using an application that does not support change tracking such as Excel, or PowerPoint, they may be able to designate their comments in another way such as by using a different colored font.

Reviewers may also use a separate document to communicate comments. In this case it must be very clear to which text the comment correlates.

This will minimize follow-up queries from your translation vendor. In the case of multiple reviewers per language, it is best if the client coordinates and consolidates the reviewers' comments in a single document before sending to the vendor. Reviewer comments should be as clear and specific as possible.

HOW AND WHEN ARE REVIEWER COMMENTS IMPLEMENTED?

To avoid additional costs and delays in delivery, it is very important for reviewer comments to arrive prior to any formatting (DTP) activities for printed materials and prior to testing for software, website, or help materials. A delivery schedule should be agreed on at the outset of the project to allow translators adequate time to implement any changes. Your translation vendor will apply all valid changes. For some changes, particularly in the case of stylistic preferences of the reviewer, it is helpful for your vendor if the reviewers can be available to answer any questions that may arise during comment implementation.