

## **Is there a need for a professional translator in northern Mexico?**

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Is there a need for a professional translator in northern México with so many bilingual employees available?

It is not the same to be bilingual than to be a professional translator. A professional translator follows a specific, detailed procedure. First, reading the original text; second, analyzing and comprehending the material, third, rewriting or producing the translation. Fourth, comparing the original text against the translated text and finally, proofreading the translated text as an independent writing.

Obviously, translating requires investing time to reading comprehension, and the language knowledge and writing skills to produce the same intended message in the target language. Remember all those agonizing high school essays? Believe me, that's nothing compared to a professional translation...

Professional translators are frequently perceived as not enough bang for the buck. And well, sometimes the bill does run high, but remember that just like buying dollar store toothpaste can result in lead poisoning, so can paying for dirt cheap translations result in costly lawsuits and public relations nightmares. When is a dollar store purchase a good buy and when is quality paramount? If you are simply curious about the general context of a website, for example, babelfish is an excellent tool. If you need to give your Spanish speaking clients a copy of a legal contract, or provide your employees with procedure manuals, well, not so much.

Consider not just the work and time invested that goes into a professional translation, but the fact that a professional translator is necessarily already acquainted with the subject matter and has the linguistic, semantic and cultural knowledge in place to produce the results wanted. Given all this, pricing per page, knowing that many will shrink the font to squeeze two pages into one reflects a translator that either does not value their work or worse, that \$50 peso per page translation *does* reflect the value of the translator's work. A professional translator, who prices ethically, will charge per word in the target language. This means that

an estimate will not be exact. Spanish tends to be wordier than English. A good translator will not be too far off from an estimate or will offer a maximum estimate, so that even if they did not estimate the language expansion appropriately the client is protected from unexpected sticker shock. Pricing per word is fair on everyone, so that there is no expensive charge for pages with just a closing line and signatures, or pages crammed with tiny font equivalent to two or three regular pages.

Bottom line, it's your bottom line. Can you afford to risk the quality of the translation projecting an image contrary to all the work, effort and money you've put into branding?

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