DEALING WITH LARGE TRANSLATIONS

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The article refers to some ideas and steps in dealing with large translation projects.

It is mentioned that before starting a large translation project the manager needs to talk with his client and agree on deadlines, payment terms, delivery and establishing client contacts for information.

It is pointed out that to ensure consistency it is recommended to have only one editor on the project. The article talks about the importance of gathering background materials such as glossaries, existing translations on related subjects, dictionaries, industry publications and the Internet that will help make the translation faster and of a better quality. It is a good idea to create a style sheet if there are multiple translators, it will be a key tool to help ensure consistency of terminology, format, and tone. It addresses the project schedule, client deadline, and the final check.

Key-words: glossaries, translations, long – term projects.

Before you can create a schedule for your job, you need to know when your client needs the project completed and whether your client expects partial deliveries throughout the project. It is important to clarify payment terms at the beginning. You can request progress payment, either monthly or when certain objectives are met or a deposit in advance to maintain a cash flow. Make sure you and your client agree on exactly what you will deliver. An electronic or hard copy? Or may be both.

Finally, you should establish client contacts for questions. You might want one contact for administrative matters (deadline, volumes, payment issues and another for technical issues (terminology, clarification of concepts, software compatibility). Determine the best method and

timing for submitting questions. Assembly your team, you should try to have one editor on the project to ensure consistency. Establish the basic terms with your team at the beginning, including the volume of work they can do, their availability, their strengths and weaknesses and payment terms.[1]

Gather background materials. Your client may provide some of these, such as glossaries, existing translations on related subjects, related source or pictures. Other sources of materials include dictionaries, industry publications, industry organizations or associations, and the Internet. If necessary, create a glossary specifically for the project. This is useful for translations with multiple translators, as it helps ensure consistency of terminology.

Create a style sheet. If there are multiple translators, the style sheet will be a key tool to ensure consistency of terminology, format, style and tone. It should also address file management. The style sheet should be distributed to the entire team, along with the background materials and schedule.

Look closely at the material to be translated. Review it for potential problems as you go through looking for the best way to divide the job. Review it for potential problems as you go through looking for the best way to divide the job. If there is only one translator, then your task is to divide the job into smaller segments (chapters, separate documents, annexes). If multiple translators are involved, your task is more challenging. You need to find segments that are suitable for each translator (approximate volume, subject matter, complexity of formatting, etc.).[2]. You should notice segments that are related to each other in a significant way. If possible, those should be done by the same translator. If not, key terminology must be coordinated among the team. If there are any forms that recur throughout the project, create templates and distribute them to the team.

Create a project schedule using all the information you know (client, deadlines, translator sections, team member availability, and expected daily or weekly output). For long-term projects, you may want to be available for small projects for your other clients, so you might want to commit only part of your time to this project. Include all of these factors in your schedule.

Begin the translation, sending the source text along with background materials, the style sheet and the schedule to all team members. Remember the team will have many questions early on in the project, so be sure you have made time to answer them.

Monitor your progress against the schedule. Adjust it as necessary and send the new schedule to all team members. Do this as often as necessary.

Do a final check once the translation and editing are done and the editor’s changes are incorporated and proofed. This should ensure that the document is accurate, complete (no missing paragraphs, sentences, pages), consistent, and in order, and that it meets it expectations. It is a good idea to do a spot check as well. Although you should have been doing this all along, just prior to delivery you can select random sections or pages to check carefully (numbers, names, format, style of the consistency of section headings with the Table of Contents, and overall accuracy of the translation) to serve as one last quality assurance step.

Deliver the project on time and in the format agreed upon. As with any project, if you think you cannot meet the deadline, contact the client as soon as you realize there is a problem and negotiate solutions.

Submit your final invoice. Then take some time to review the project. What worked well and what did not? What did you learn that will be helpful for other projects?