

the Translation & Localization Industry

Industry Standards and What to Look For

When choosing a translation and localization provider, clients are able to make an educated purchasing decision only if they are aware of basic industry standards. These standards, which reputable and professional translation companies follow, range from reviewing the qualifications of translators, to using the latest technology for the most efficient, accurate, and secure translations.

In this whitepaper, we will examine these standards and their potential variances. Readers will be able to understand what companies are offering, whether they exceed industry standards, and where they may be lacking in their service offerings.



Industry Standards and Beyond: What to Look for in a Translation Provider

The Translation Providers' Qualification and Standard Offerings

Most reputable translation and localization agencies will hold an independent, third-party translation services certification. The current industry standard is the International Standards Organization (ISO) 17100:2015 Certification for Translation Services. The ISO 17100:2015 is considered the industry standard for translation process quality, replacing the EN15038 certification since 2015. ISO awards this certification to companies or agencies whose core processes pass a set of requirements and who possess the resources necessary to deliver secure, quality translation services.

“...reputable translation and localization agencies will hold an independent, third-party translation services certification.”

Reputable providers should also include in their pricing bid any additional services needed to ensure that they produce a turnkey product of your translation project. These included services often mean dedicated project managers, translators, editors, and proofreaders. Additional services include desktop publishing, website localization, Braille, and audio files for American Disabilities Act compliance.

RED FLAGS:



- The translation agency does not have any independent certifications or they have not updated their certification from EN15038 to ISO 17100:2015.
- The translation agency does not provide proofreading or desktop publishing support, or they do not include these services in their pricing bid.

The Translators Working for the Translation Provider

Reputable translation and localization providers need an in-depth vetting process to ensure they hire the best translators, which will include:



EDUCATION:

Did they go to school for translation or receive a translation-related degree?



CERTIFICATIONS:

Were they certified by an independent organization like the American Translators Association? It is important to note that the American Translators Association has a limited list of languages for these certification tests (for example, only 14 options for an English to another language test), so it is not possible for all translators of all languages to possess this.



ASSESSMENTS:

Did they pass a language assessment test from a legitimate source, such as the Defense Language Proficiency Test?



WORK HISTORY:

How much experience do they have translating? What specific industries do they have experience translating for, such as medical, financial, government, or business?

Reputable providers should conduct background checks on prospective translators and ask for references as an additional safeguard for protecting clients' documents. The interview process often includes a test project to vet translation skills. Current, verified translators then review test projects to confirm that the candidates' skills are up to the company's standards.

RED FLAGS:



- The translation agency does not have a standard procedure for vetting translators or are vague about translators' qualifications.
- The translation agency does not require a test translation project and does not run background checks on translators.

Industry Standards and Beyond: Methods and Tools

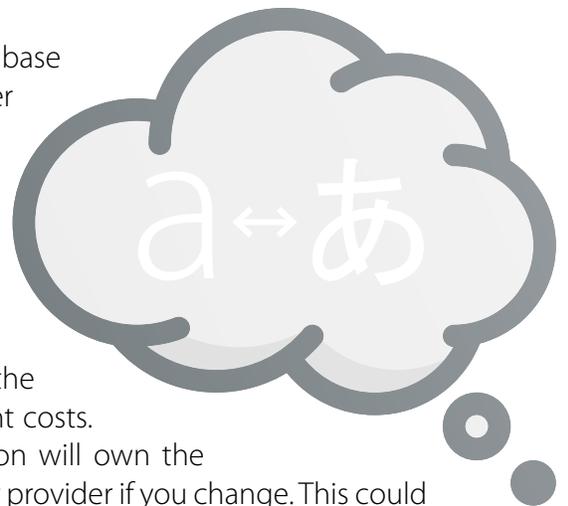
Professional translation and localization agencies use Computer-Assisted Translation (CAT) tools to increase quality, consistency, and efficiency. These tools include glossaries and style guides provided by the client or created by the provider, which help to increase turnaround times and keep the translations consistent and accurate. This is not automated or machine translation, like Google Translate or similar online translation engines, but software specifically designed to support professional translators.

The software breaks each input sentence of an uploaded document into segments. With the help of CAT tools, translators review any automatic insertions that are found in the terminology databases, and then find segments that need to be translated or revised.

Translation Memory

Most translation software includes translation memory: a database of stored words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs the provider has previously translated for you and can reference for future projects. It scans new projects for previously translated phrases and sentences for translators to analyze and compare. This also helps to ensure standardized translations for each client, and prevents source text from being translated multiple times.

Some agencies create customized Translation Memory for an entire health system or organization. Ask if the agencies can use the Translation Memory across several facilities, further reducing client costs. It would also be valuable to ask the provider if your organization will own the Translation Memory, and if you can import it and send it to another provider if you change. This could help keep translation continuity for your documents should you need to switch.



RED FLAGS:



- The translation agency says they do not use CAT tools, so the translations they provide cannot be used in the future to save time or money, or that they rely exclusively on machine translation.
- The translation agency is not willing to create a Translation Memory database for use across an organization, for additional client cost savings.

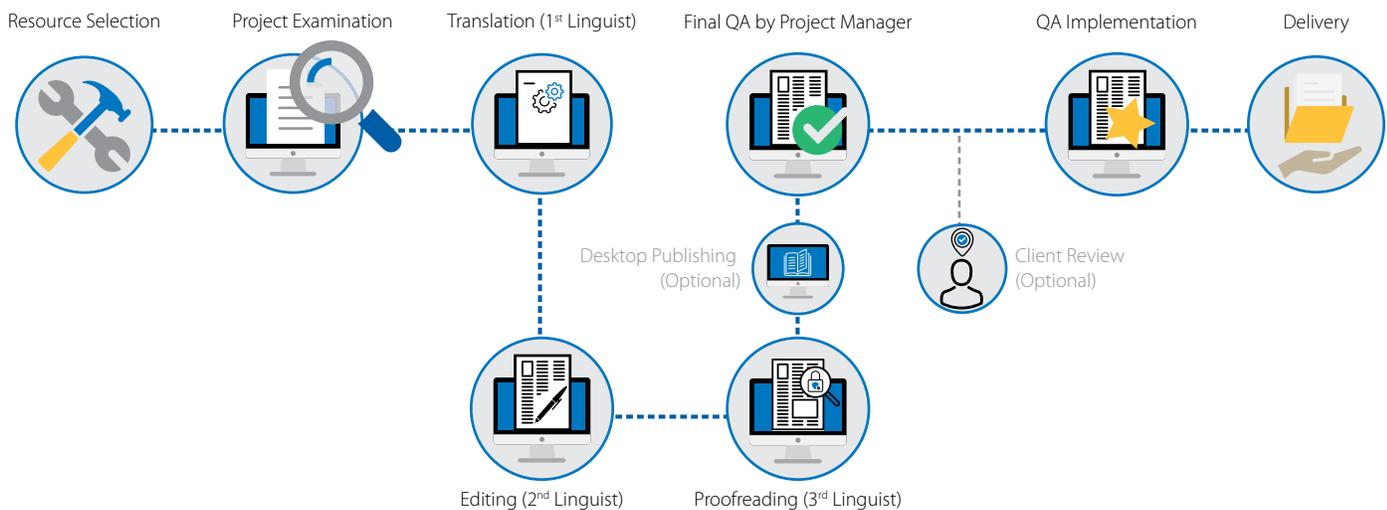
Industry Standards and Beyond: Process

Reputable translation agencies will have a system of checks and balances for quality assurance and control. In addition to vetting their translators, they will have a team of project managers, editors, reviewers, and proofreaders to review the translation and formatting for accuracy, quality, and visual cohesion. More people checking and double-checking each translation project reduces the likelihood that typos, inaccuracies, and visual mistakes will occur.

Quality providers have systems in place to keep their clients' confidential documents secure. In contrast, many translation companies send projects via email, where it then could be downloaded onto individual computers, increasing security risks.

“More people checking and double-checking each translation project reduces the likelihood that typos, inaccuracies, and visual mistakes will occur.”

CyraCom's process:



RED FLAGS:



- The translation agency does not have a process in place to verify translation accuracy, formatting, and a polished product.
- The translation agency does not have a system in place to keep your documents secure.

Do you have more questions, or want more information specifically about CyraCom Translations? Email us at TranslationsSales@cyracom.com.