

Ten top tips for working with Business Interpreters

- 1** Make sure the interpreter has **enough information** about the assignment to allow time to check on terminology and clothing for a factory tour or site visit. This is best done when the interpreter is first requested. A **short briefing** with the interpreter would be useful, to outline your company's desired outcomes from the meeting.
- 2** There are many accents and speech styles. Everybody thinks that they speak clearly, but not everybody is right. It's a case of "**tuning in**". **Clear questions** and care with ambiguity make for successful transfer of meaning. **Beware of jokes**. They do not translate well and are often culturally inappropriate.
- 3** Interpreters should **not** be expected to interpret **videos unless** they have received a **full transcript** several days **in advance**.
- 4** Make sure you look at, and address your client directly, **using "I" and "you"**. The interpreter will maintain these forms of address and will only use the third person to signal a need to clarify something: e.g. "the interpreter needs to stop, because...."
- 5** Make sure the **interpreter can see everybody's face** (where this is practicable) **and** that he/she can **hear properly**, especially if you are some distance away and acoustics are poor. Excessive background noise makes the job especially difficult.

- 6** If the interpreter is delivering simultaneous whispered interpreting¹, try **to leave a short catch-up pause** every couple of sentences.
- 7** If the interpreter is delivering consecutive interpreting², **finish the thought** before you stop to allow the relay. **Allow the interpreter to complete the interpretation** at the end of each speech. The vital information or a key phrase may come at the end.
- 8** Interpreters take **notes** while listening, to ensure total recall when relaying messages. These are confidential and **should be destroyed upon completion of the assignment**.
- 9** **Break times** are rest times for the interpreter and must be respected. An interpreter who works through lunch will be engaged in the language switching process (working) all the time and will not be able to eat/rest. This will **damage performance** later in the day.
- 10** Please remember that **the interpreter's role** is specialist and specific to relaying meaning across language and culture. He/she is not there to undertake other roles e.g. secretary or personal shopper. This may cause **undue pressure** regarding **confidentiality**.

- ¹ Simultaneous interpreting is when the interpreter is listening, changing the language and speaking (whispering) all at once.
- ² Consecutive interpreting is when the interpreter listens and takes notes while one party speaks and then passes the message on in the other language, before the other party replies.

Where to go next

The Chartered Institute of Linguists.
The Institute serves the interests of professional linguists throughout the world and acts as a respected language assessment and accredited awarding body.
www.iol.org.uk

Institute of Translation and Interpreting.
Independent professional association of practising translators and interpreters in the UK.
www.tti.org.uk

BLIS Professionals. Database of international communication experts.
www.blis.org.uk/professionals

Regional Language Network NorthWest

To order copies of 'Business Interpreting - a guide to commissioning an excellent service' visit the publications page on our website or contact us via e-mail or telephone.

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This tent card has been designed to give tips/guidance to business people when communicating with clients through an interpreter.

It is not a definitive guide and is meant as a quick reference only. For more detailed help and advice contact the Regional Language Network NW (RLN NW)

The RLN websites are a gateway to many useful resources relating to language and culture.

BLIS Services serves as a single reference point for anyone looking to use or provide services in language and cultural expertise and includes:

BLIS Professionals

A quality assured database of translators, interpreters, cultural consultants and language trainers

BLIS Jobs

The job site for people with languages

BLIS Facilities

Providers of support services

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