



talking your language



5

STEP GUIDE TO
TRANSLATION DESIGN



Blackwood

In this 5 step guide we look at the key steps to achieving successful language design. In a global economy it pays to deliver consistent messages to international audiences. With thoughtful planning, English designs can be translated seamlessly with no loss of style or finesse.

1

A CULTURED APPROACH

Before beginning to design in a second language it's vital to consider the tastes and cultural preferences of your audience.

For example, UK audiences are considered a low-context culture - individualistic and task-orientated. Arabic audiences are considered high-context - collectivist, intuitive and relationship-orientated. Interpreting these cultural differences will inform the image or photographic styles and colour choices you make, ensuring that the aesthetic is appropriate as well as appealing.

Cultural differences may mean that what worked for the original audience is not suitable for the next. Although you will expect the designs to be close, it's not necessarily desirable for them to be the same. Think of the versions as sisters rather than twins.

STEP 1

TO UNDERSTAND HOW CULTURAL DIVERSITY IMPACTS BUSINESS

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2

LOST IN TRANSLATION

Delivering successful multiple language designs is as much about the planning and process as the production.

You may need to hire an external translation company to manage your content or work with an in-house department. Either way, managing the production workflow and maintaining version control throughout the project is key.

We believe the best way to achieve this is by adopting a fully editable soft proofing workflow using Adobe Acrobat and its suite of editing tools. Adding comments to designs and incorporating proof marks into your PDFs ensures a trackable and transparent transfer of changes.

STEP 2

FOR THE MOST ACCURATE PDF PROOFING
WE USE [ADOBE ACROBAT DC](#)

3

WHAT IS YOUR TYPE?

Make sure you research the typefaces available for different languages. If you are producing a design using different alphabets – for example in Russian and Arabic – make sure you can achieve typographic consistency, as Cyrillic and Arabic alphabets vary greatly to Latin text.

Not all OpenType (scaleable) fonts have multiple language character sets so check with a recognised font supplier, like [Linotype](#), before purchasing. This site has a helpful Language/Format option. Select an extended ‘Pro’ set and check the languages available via the handy globe view.

And if you want to use the same font online make sure that web versions are available to download.

STEP 3

[CLICK HERE TO FIND OUT WHAT TYPEFACES ARE AVAILABLE](#)

4

ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL!

A language designer's skill can truly be seen when adapting a design across languages. A good designer will maintain the essence of the master layout while interpreting the nuances presented by different alphabets and scripts, particularly the use of punctuation.

Be aware that translations vary in length. As a rule, Russian can run much longer than English, whereas French and Spanish are similar in length. Arabic can be significantly shorter.

Rather than resizing your text to fit, a language designer will apply subtle adjustments to leading, hyphenation and font weight, collectively reducing the content length and enhancing the overall translated experience.

STEP 4

[CLICK HERE FOR A GREAT GUIDE TO CORRECT PUNCTUATION](#)

5

“NATURALLY SPEAKING”

Translation design shouldn't be open to interpretation. While some languages are more familiar, regularly used and therefore relatively easy to work with (for example, French or Spanish), more complex dialects and scripts require designers who are fluent writers and speakers.

An experienced multilingual studio designs in many languages and understands the need for fluency when interpreting client proof marks and setting complex data charts and tables.

Blackwood regularly designs in English, French, German, Spanish, Turkish, Russian and Arabic.

STEP 5

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STEPS

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