

5 SMART STEPS FOR USING AN INDEPENDENT REVIEWER FOR YOUR TRANSLATION PROJECTS



Overview

When you're publishing content in an international market, it makes good business sense to use an independent reviewer for your translations.

An independent reviewer examines the content translated and localized by your translation and localization agency and, in so doing, can provide you – and your agency – with valuable feedback. The purpose of an independent review is to ensure the best possible success for your translation effort in new language markets.

Independent reviews can be particularly important when:

- You're working with a new translation and localization agency
- You're going into a new market
- You have special concerns about topical or domain expertise

Your independent reviewer can be:

- An employee you've identified within your company
- A trusted contact located at the target market affiliate/sales office
- An external consultant with subject matter expertise in your industry
- A reviewer found and vetted by an agency (for example, Argos provides this service) or another editorial services provider

Properly structured and planned, an independent review can give you peace of mind and improve the final product of your translation project and process in general.

At first it may seem a little awkward to tell your translation and localization agency you want an independent review; don't let that stop you. Quality agencies welcome the chance to work with independent reviewers. They know that if handled correctly, independent review will lead to a higher quality translation output. Independent review allows the agency to pinpoint areas for improvement in your translation process.

That said, whenever there's a new player in the mix, things can get complicated. Work with your agency to set things up the right way, and everyone wins.

Here are five smart steps the Argos team recommends in order to get the most value out of independent review.

1. Plan for independent review

Ideally, determine you want an independent reviewer prior to project initiation. Knowing from the start that you plan to include an independent review helps everyone build in time for the review and any necessary course corrections into the project plans. Convey to your stakeholders the importance of independent review for a smooth international release. That way you're more likely to get buy-in on scheduling time for review, for the benefit of the project as a whole.

Define independent review goals clearly. Is the reviewer examining the content for accuracy in translation, correct punctuation and grammar, style issues, adherence to corporate standards, domain accuracy, or something else? All of the above? Whichever it is, make that clear to the reviewer and your primary translation and localization agency. If you wish to use a scorecard approach or other editorial rating tool, plan and articulate that early in your translation process.

Make sure you have a clear process in place to resolve any issues that come up. Who has the final say? Making this clear can save you headaches later on. Your translation and localization agency can help you determine the best solution for any linguistic differences.





2. Choose an agency or reviewer

Decide how to hire. You can ask your translation and localization agency to provide an independent review service or decide to hire directly. A quality agency will always be happy to find you a reviewer and ensure you have direct, unfiltered access to that person. Avoid using an agency that won't let you talk directly to your independent reviewer.

Choose the right agency or reviewer for your project.

You need someone who:

- Thinks like the end users in your target market
- Has industry knowledge
- Lives in your target country
- Is a native speaker of the target language
- Is proficient in the source language (the language of the original content, before translation)
- Can – and has the time to – provide detailed, specific feedback and suggestions
- Understands what independent review is – and what is not

3. Schedule time for review

Build independent review into your timeline and plan.

Ask your translation and localization agency to include an independent review in your proposal.

- If you hire individual reviewers directly, generally add one day for every 5,000 words of a single language requiring review. Add more time for detailed bilingual review if your reviewer will be looking at the original language source content along with the translated content
- Add several hours of meeting time to examine the independent reviewer's feedback with both your primary agency and the reviewer
- Budget an appropriate hourly rate for independent review, depending on target language, timelines, domain expertise and other factors
- Plan an interim check with both your reviewer and agency (see below for more information)

Have a project kickoff call. Sound obvious? It's a "human factors" step businesses skip all too often. Have a short call with all the stakeholders to review the goals of the project, who will be doing what, and what the timeline is. Take this opportunity to make sure everyone is committed to the same goals and timeline.

As soon as is practical, have your interim check meeting.

This is the meeting where your reviewer provides feedback and perspectives on a translation sample. While many businesses skip this step, we recommend you use it anytime you're planning on an interim review. It gives your primary agency the chance to hear and examine feedback from your reviewer. You also hear the same things. Sometimes the meeting will go great — everyone is on the same page.

Other times, issues are uncovered, and decisions need to be made, or instructions to translators changed. The earlier this happens, the better the rest of the project will proceed. This is one situation where no surprises are the best outcome. End the meeting with a clear, concise action plan (or ask your project manager to provide one for you).

Decide whether additional interim checks will be needed.

This will depend largely on the impressions you, your reviewer, and your translation and localization agency gain from the first interim check. Reliable agencies won't shy away from having additional checks if a project merits it. Like you, they want the translation project to be as successful as possible and won't be afraid to correct course to ensure your message is as true to the original as possible.

4. Provide content for review

Provide the independent reviewer with your source content.

While independent review is generally a single language exercise, it will be useful to your reviewers to have original source language content on hand when they check a translation for accuracy or word choice.

Make sure both your translation and localization agency and the reviewer have the same project glossary or style guide.

Your project glossary helps everyone on the localization team use words and phrases consistently, while protecting your branding by referring to product names and processes appropriately. In other words, it helps maintain your corporate voice and messaging. Over time, this project glossary is reflected in your translation memories, adding consistency and precision to all your translation and localization projects, while saving you money and time. You may already have an internal style guide and glossary, or you can ask your agency to create a project glossary.

Make sure an interim data sample is sent to your independent reviewer. Your project manager will typically schedule this — and the interim check — as part of the base project. If you're managing the process directly, we recommend using emails, e-calendars, and phone calls to make sure your reviewer has an early translated data sample to evaluate.





5. Communicate

Pinpoint the issues and avoid acrimony. When people feel criticized, they can easily get defensive. Tell your whole translation and localization team that the fundamental goal is to get things right, not to point fingers in any particular direction. Then roll up your sleeves and dig in:

- **First, classify.** Are the issues style, grammar, punctuation, etc.?
- **Next, pinpoint.** Does the translation accurately reflect the source material? How does the translation mirror – or depart from – the project glossary and style guide? Which concerns are personal preference and which are data driven? If your reviewer and agency appear to fundamentally disagree, find out the “why” behind each opinion before rendering a final decision. Now, get the team to craft solution options. What can be agreed upon? Do you agree with the reviewer? What does the primary agency think?
- **Delegate problems to your agency.** Your project manager is there to shield you from the hassle of managing, correcting, and sometimes terminating the project. A well-managed agency is ready to identify and fix errors wherever and whenever they are found. If you feel problems aren’t solvable, ask your project manager to restructure the project so it meets your quality requirements.

Keep communicating. No matter how great your plan, things change. If your criteria for success change, let your translation and localization agency and independent reviewer know as soon as possible. Integrating change orders early is one key to getting you the best possible outcome.

It can be exciting — and even improve your successful release — to get early, in-context feedback on any project. An independent review — wisely applied — can help you get to market faster, while ultimately cutting costs for editing and quality assurance.

About Argos

Argos Multilingual provides global language solutions. With over 30 years of experience, we serve clients in the high-tech, life sciences, human resources, and financial industries.

We make it easy for businesses to grow globally and connect with expert talent anywhere in the world. With production centers in Europe, the Americas, and Asia, we follow a strategy of building robust programs for continuous translation and localization.

You can expect a long-term and transparent partnership, backed by innovative solutions around technology, AI & data, creative content, and quality assurance.

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