

ShopperTrak Retail Analytics – The literal translation dilemma

Situation:

ShopperTrak, now part of Tyco/JCI controls, offers retail analytics solutions to several countries worldwide. They needed an agency to take on what was effectively regional copywriting to ensure that their texts flowed in the target language yet conveyed exactly the right meaning.

The Issue:

The translations so far had come in for a lot of criticism in the varying countries. They often sounded like they had been translated word for word or by a translation machine. The regional managers were unhappy with the inconsistency of the texts and the stiltedness of the 1-1 translations. Oftentimes, the regionality of a text was ignored or translation machines had been used and offered literal translations which did not work.

In-Situ strategy:

Initially In-Situ was offered the chance to supply English into German translations. We submitted translation samples of a text provided by ShopperTrak. The client picked one which resonated with them, praising the fact that it was not just a translation but a “marketing” text as well and sounded more copy-edited and localised than translated. Following on from this, In-Situ was awarded translations from English into Portuguese. In-Situ’s Portuguese translator was an expert in retail, had owned a store for years and had first-hand experience of retail and marketing. After this followed Chinese, French, Italian, Spanish and Polish, all along the same lines. Glossaries were made of key terms which were approved by the client enabling us to have an approved list of translation terms.

In-Situ project plan:

Firstly In-Situ utilised and hired translators who were: A) Experts in the field of retail and marketing (i.e. who could also prove they had a background in retail and marketing as well as being qualified translators), B) Were native speakers of the language they were translating into, C) Had at least 5 years’ experience, D) Had lived in a English speaking country, E) Had a university degree and a translation diploma.

Results:

The client is happy with In-Situ's quality of work and their client gives them regular positive feedback. The glossaries help to avoid discrepancies. In-Situ now handles translations for ShopperTrak too, having started to offer translations into Turkish, Mexican, Brazilian and Russian.

“In-Situ came to us through an agency. We were so happy to work with them as the communication was always excellent and our queries were always answered within a few minutes. Turnaround time was amazing, and our regional managers were so happy that they did not have to spend valuable employee time correcting texts.”

Eleanor Lawson, ShopperTrak UK.

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