

**Translate Your Way
to a Big Paycheck
From the Comfort
of Your Own Home!**

AWAI

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Translate Your Way to a Big Paycheck From the Comfort of Your Own Home!

Congratulations on your desire to take charge of your own life, to set out on your own destiny, and to give yourself the life others only dream is possible!

Being a self-employed translator has been the answer to growing economic struggles and uncertain times for many people.

Working from any location in the world, they are able to use their language skills for profit every day of the year, if they choose. Because a freelance translator can pretty much set their own hours. Work is never lacking; in fact, clients come from around the globe with projects and materials in every niche imaginable.

Whatever your specialty, there's plenty of work to be done in the world of document translation.

According to the Department of Labor, interpreters and translators held nearly 41,000 jobs in 2006. Not surprisingly, about 28% are self-employed and many freelancers work only part-time. Employment of interpreters and translators is projected to increase 24% over the next decade alone.

Meanwhile, the earnings potential is quite substantial for a position that doesn't even require a college education. The world of translation holds a high earning potential of \$105,000 to \$125,000 per year for those working more than 30 hours per week, and those who work part-time earn anywhere from \$35,000 to \$65,000 per year. That's great news for you if you want to take the plunge into the world of a Document Translator!

It's no small wonder that the demand for translators has grown during the last decade as the influx of self-employed entrepreneurs has risen dramatically. Let me explain...

A translator takes a document written in one language (the source language) and produces the same document in a second language (the target language). The translator's job is not only to translate the words of the source language, but to convey

the meaning of those words as well. For this reason, the majority of translators prefer to translate mostly *into*, and not from, their native language.

When you first spread your wings in the document translating world, you'll soon come to understand a very important fact that will dictate how much money you make – or don't make – in this industry.

The Marketplace Pays for Value!

The only difference between someone who makes \$500 and someone who makes \$10,000 is directly related to the skills they bring to the table. It also depends on how the client will benefit from your work. One job might be just a simple letter translation... another might be legal notarized documents... and yet another might be medical procedures.

As you can see, the world of translation is vast and expansive. One thing is certain: The amount you can earn is up to you!

Translation is just now becoming popular in American colleges and there are a few Master's programs (yet no undergraduate programs) across the country. Some programs are Master's of Fine Arts, with emphasis on the translation of literature. And there are other programs that combine interpretation with translation, even though the two can be very different.

Certificates Are an Excellent Way to Break Into the Field of Translation

Getting a certification gives you instant credibility – even if you've never actually translated a document. And many newbie translators are able to take their current work skills and test-out of most of the certification process. Basically, this means that simply by taking a test, you can “opt out” of most of the training needed to receive a certification.

Here's the thing: If you can fluently speak a second language, you're a good candidate for translation. Add to this an expertise in writing and grammatical skills... and you'll be on your way in no time!

Certification is available at quite a few places. The best-known certification in the States is through the American Translators Association (ATA), www.atanet.org. They administer tests about once a month in locations worldwide. Another option is the American Literary Translators Association (ALTA), www.utdallas.edu/alta.

As a translator, you'll want to stay on top of the fields in which you work. Plus, you should have a thorough knowledge of the languages and the cultures you specialize in. An easy way to keep up on your language skills is by reading regularly in your non-native language (the Internet is great for this; look for an online newspaper in your language). This will also help you keep up-to-date with ever-changing vocabulary and slang.

Some freelancers work through agencies, which handle the marketing and business end of the work, leaving only the actual translation for the translator. Others prefer to handle the business end themselves – working solo and finding work on their own or through referrals.

Translation agencies can sometimes provide a more reliable workload. But as might be expected, they also pay less than “pure” freelancing.

When looking for an agency or even freelance work, you're bound to come across websites that aren't true agencies. Most act as a resource for matching registered freelancers with companies in need of translation services.

Some of the most popular ones you'll find are www.elance.com, www.trally.com, www.proz.com, and www.translatorsbase.com.

Specialization in the World of Translators

Many translators tend to specialize. This serves two purposes:

First, most technical areas require specialized understanding. By specializing, you limit the amount of specialized knowledge you'll need to have – and keep current on.

Second, it also limits the vocabulary (including industry lingo and technical terms) you need to master.

You may, however, prefer to work with more general business documents and websites. That's perfectly fine. You'll find ample work in these sectors as well. And that brings us to an area of specialization where the pay can be higher than average...

Legal and Notarized Translations

In a non-certified translation, the translator is sometimes allowed to give a personal style and tone to the text, to make it more appropriate for the target audience – but, of course, while keeping the meaning intact.

That's not the case with notarized translations. These documents often need to be an exact translation of the source and must always include a clause from the certifier affixed with a notary seal (only Notarized Court translators may use this seal). Additionally, the notarized transaction must be certified by the translator's signature, in order to be accepted by the courts.

The need for notarized translation for attorneys, corporate lawyers, and individuals is increasing. Some common uses of notarized translations include:

- Birth Certificate Translation
- Marriage Certificate Translation
- Divorce Certificate Translation
- Judgment Translation
- Last Will and Testament Translation
- Academic Degrees Translation
- Diplomas Translation
- Adoption Papers Translation
- Naturalization Papers Translation
- Immigration Documents Translation

What Is Website Translation?

In today's global marketplace, websites are a crucial part of a business' success. They generate revenue, offer avenues for promotion, and are an easily accessible means of providing information about a company and its products and services to a mass audience.

As commerce expands worldwide, many companies often look beyond their own geographic borders when they are considering expansion. And websites are an integral part of going global.

Website translation is the process of modifying an existing website to make it accessible, usable, and culturally suitable to a new target audience – one with a different native language.

For example, taking an U.S. website (in English) and modifying it for a Chinese speaking audience. Part of this process involves the translation of the content (including being aware of the appropriateness of visual content). Other aspects would include making sure the website can be found by foreign search engines. This is yet another area of the translation industry that can easily be made into a successful and rewarding career.

What Are Clients Looking For?

A business in need of translation services will seek out an agency or freelancer fluent in the source and target languages. Some also look for translators who might be familiar with their type of business. Typically, U.S. freelancers bid on a job based on word count. (It may be either the source or target language word count.)

Next, the translator simply takes the source document... commits it to paper (or electronic file format) in the target language... and then returns the completed work to the client.

How well the job actually pays is based on how quickly the translator can do accurate work. This gives great incentive to translate *into* your native tongue.

Does It Cost a Lot to Get Started?

Although the equipment needed to be a document translator is minimal, there are some very important items you'll want to have in your office. Besides a computer, translators typically need fax capability, a collection of dictionaries and reference books, word processing software, and Internet access. A high-speed Internet connection is preferable, since some documents may be quite large. Working with Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint documents is also fairly common.

Plus, there are costs involved in both the education and certification process of becoming a document translator. So if you want to become a professional translator, be prepared to invest some time and money into getting your credentials in order and researching what options are best for you.

But remember: *Every dollar you invest in your future moves you one step ahead on your journey into a profitable and rewarding career.*

You might want to invest in courses that keep you up to speed on the market. Or you might investigate courses in things such as copywriting, technical writing, legal writing – skills that can take you to levels you might never have dreamed possible! There are no limits to what you can accomplish if you are willing to continue moving forward.

An important step in getting started will be to assess your degree of fluency – in both your native and second language (or languages). You'll be required to speak fluently and read and write in both languages, including making the necessary sentence structure adjustments. That's because you may be working with such subtleties as idioms (or words used only in one language) and other slang expressions.

To assess your readiness, you may offer to do some pro bono work for a local church or charity. That experience will also give you the ability to access how long it takes you to complete the work well. And you can use this work as part of your portfolio.

Register with online agencies or “matching” websites such as those listed above – www.elance.com, www.trally.com, www.proz.com, and www.translatorsbase.com. The “matching” sites will often have lists of jobs you can bid on right away. Some have time limits or skill requirements, and all will give languages desired.

When working with such sources on your own, you'll want to make sure that you have several things in place to represent you as a business. Things like a separate checking account, a business name, a way to take payments (decide if you'll take checks, credit cards, online payments) are all necessary in launching your business.

When Looking To Launch a Second Career – Let Your Passion Direct You

When starting a new career, many people seek a total change, while others want to continue doing the same things they always have. One thing is certain – one of the best ways to launch a new career is to do something you are passionate about! Something that you're interesting in doing could prove to be the key to your future.

Each of the following questions can help you to decide whether or not document translation could be the tool for retirement for you personally.

Questions That Can Keep You on the Right Track

- *Where do you want to live and are you willing to travel?*

When starting a freelance career, many people dream of traveling and others can't imagine having to leave their home for work. To them, "coming home" means the longest highway they take is the strip from the kitchen to their office. In the world of document translators, some jobs won't require you to leave the comfort of your own home, while others may involve some travel.

For instance, some companies might want Internet communications done through high-tech computerized board rooms like Web Ex environments and group instant messengers. As you develop your new career, decide whether or not travel is an issue for you.

- *Are there things you are naturally good at that you aren't doing right now, but that you would build on?*

What are you good at now... and how can you leverage that into a new career as a document translator? Are there things that people always seem to recognize about

your work which you could make your trademark? Do you have a unique skill that you could bring to the business you are creating?

- ***What would you be doing if money was not an issue?***

When looking at college majors, many students have one primary motivator moving them forward: “How much money will I be able to make?”

While no one wants to build a career around a low-paying salary, settling for a high-paying, unrewarding job could be selling yourself short.

So, what would you be doing if money wasn't an issue? You might be pleasantly surprised to find that you could make more money when your career goals are lead by your desires, your passion before focusing on the financial rewards.

- ***Are you willing to earn less to build a stronger foundation?***

When you are first launching your business and building your portfolio, you might have to agree to work for less pay initially. Be certain that your goals and expectations are in line with your budget. Don't set yourself up for disappointment by expecting to have a big break immediately. Long-term planning and goal setting will make a stronger foundation for your business in the long run.

Places that offer opportunities for freelance projects might initially offer to pay less

I became a translator via a series of happy accidents. After taking French in school since seventh grade, I studied abroad at the University of Grenoble, France, for my junior year of college.

There, a professor recommended me for a part-time job as a trainee translator at the University's graduate school of business. This ended up involving work on an international marketing textbook that was subsequently published by Prentice-Hall. Back in the U.S., I taught high school French for 8 years, did a few translations on the side when people asked me, and earned an M.A. in French from Boston College.

After relocating to Colorado and having a child, I wanted to find a career that would allow me to use French and work from home, so I decided to try to make a go as a professional translator. Several years later, I'm certified by the American Translators Association and happily employed by a growing list of regular clients.

Corinne McKay, www.translatewrite.com

than you feel you are worth. However, by keeping a high standard of excellence, you'll soon have the ability to charge more.

Setting Up Your Budget and Pay Scale

When getting started in document translation, the hardest thing you may have to do is figure a budget, set up the costs of your services, and then calculate the hours you'll need to work to make the income you desire.

Typical rates for translation are as follows:

- Typed documents – \$0.10 per word
- Handwritten originals – \$0.12 per word

With some experience, you should be able to translate between 200 and 500 words per hour.

One consideration you need to address when translating is what turnaround time your client needs. Typically, turnaround falls in the following categories:

- Regular: 2 to 3 business days
- Expedited service: Same day or next day – for a 50% upcharge

Setting Up Your Home Office

Some people have no problems setting up and structuring their home office, while others struggle for some form of office-normalcy. The following basic items will be vitally important to keeping you on track...

1. A planner or calendar: When you create a schedule for your work hours, be sure to “map it” out on a planner or calendar. Decide when you are going to work and when you are going to take time off. Be *sure* you have time off built in your schedule.

While document translation is far more analytical than other forms of writing, it still requires a certain creative flair that must be kept sharp – and time off will keep you in shape for the task!

2. Office tools: You'll want to set up your office with the necessary tools you'll need. Some basic tools of the trade include a computer, printer, fax machine, a desk, bulletin board, pens, paper, and a phone.

The more professional your home office is, the more likely you will be to treat your business as a profession rather than a hobby. And treating your new translation business like a business ensures your earnings will stay high!

3. Office library: Be sure to keep your office library stacked with up-to-date reference books and booklets in your specialty. The ability to make find quick answers will make your job easier.

Keeping Your Skills Sharp and On Track

When launching your document translation business, you can work with very basic document assignments, brochures, booklets, website pages, etc. These jobs will require a basic level of spelling, grammar, punctuation, and proper sentence usage and structure.

If you are going to get into more advanced forms of document translation or even stenography or transcribing, you should have a large range of skills that enable you to excel.

For instance, fields such as medical, engineering, advertising, legal, and education translating would require more advanced skills. But the increase in fees you charge for these advanced skills make them worthwhile to learn.

If you feel your writing or grammar skills need some sharpening, online courses and self-paced classes could help fill the gap. Traditionally, the best writers are those who read a lot and are exposed to a lot of different styles of writing.

Develop good writing skills and your translating skills will go further. Most clients will not only expect, but they will also demand excellent writing skills for the higher priced projects that exist in the area of document translation.

Finding Clients

Prospecting is an important part of every major industry. In order to find new clients in your document translation business, you'll need to prospect. Whether you do so via the Internet, marketing, networking, or traditional agencies doesn't really matter. The goal is to make sure you have more clients than you know what to do with. (Many times a translation "firm" is started this way, with a group of people working together in their unique specialty.)

There are many ways to find new clients when you start your business. But a function of your translation business that many people forget is the need to *continue finding clients*. And this goes for any business, for that matter.

So whether you desire to earn a small part-time income or a more full-sized income in document translation, you will always need to be prospecting.

Think about other industries. The NFL, for example, never stops prospecting. Can you imagine if they did? And the computer industry continually prospects through advertising, both online and offline.

Networking Skills for Continued Business Development

One easy way to keep your business thriving is through simple networking. So, let's go over some tips for keeping the pipeline full.

Whether you want to work online or offline in your translation business, the ability to connect with people, know their needs and desires – and pair that with your strengths – is what will set you apart from the amateurs in your field.

Building rapport with your clients will go a long way to making your business successful. You might be surprised, but a simple "thank you" card could be the key to a long-term arrangement with a client. Remember, building rapport is all about making connections. So don't pass up any opportunity you have to connect – whether it be a "Thought you'd be interested in this" letter, a birthday card, or even a "Have a great day!" note. Doing this can increase your visibility with your client... and increased visibility often translates into more income.

Never underestimate good, old-fashioned communication skills. People will remember their dealings with you long after the translation job is completed. Treat people the way you would want to be treated.

You can work on improving your skills – and, indeed, you should – but what good does it do if you can't translate those skills into sales? Remember... *networking isn't about you!* It's about all the people you're going to serve.

Online Exposure to Create a Professional Portfolio

In today's technology-savvy world, online exposure to build your business can be accomplished through press releases, article publication, and social networking sites. Many online marketers use these tools exclusively to keep their business flowing. And you'll be surprised how easy it is to incorporate these practices into your document translation business plan to ensure a steady flow of clients.

Press releases can be used to announce new skills you develop or announce certifications you earn. They can also announce and advertise a seminar or training venue you might host. Plus, they can help land unique jobs with clients. And sending a press release once every 5 to 6 weeks can keep your exposure growing.

Article marketing is another very tangible way to acquire clients. Publishing articles weekly that can be easily distributed through article marketing websites, blogs, and forums can help establish you as an expert in your field.

Social networking is a new and trendy tool used online in branding since Web 2.0 (a new version of how the Internet operates in general) became very popular online. Rather than sending email or communicating through instant messenger, more than 50% of all people using the Internet communicate through online communities, forums, and specialty pages.

Start marketing yourself online in places where other translators or those who speak fluently in the language you have a specialty in “gather.” This will help in getting your name recognized as an expert in your field.

Many online professionals believe that, in the next few years, email might be used

less and less as social networking communications take the lead. So be certain to keep informed and skilled at these technological developments.

Plus, it's a good idea to join industry associations and network with others who are already doing what you desire. One of the keys to success in any industry is to learn from someone who already is doing what you want to do. Develop relationships with experienced translators and learn from their business growth. A personal mentor is a very valuable tool to add to your arsenal, to help keep both you and your business moving forward.

Keep Your Clients Happy and You'll Always Have a Paycheck

As an entrepreneur and a document translator, it is critically important to keep your clients happy. Doing so will ensure referrals – you'll become the go-to person for many companies.

Most importantly, you'll have a career that keeps paying you month after month, year after year. Always remember this rule of thumb: It is easier to keep a client happy with some flexibility and compromise than it is to have to acquire a new client every month.

Be certain to finish every project you do on time and on budget. Never miss a deadline, but if you must, be sure to always inform everyone involved ahead of time. When you notify a client as soon as you realize that, despite your best efforts, a project won't be performed on time – you'll keep good lines of communication open and everyone wins.

Make sure to keep track of your clients' preferences. Do not use email for people who prefer the phone... or call a client who prefers email. A little accommodation goes a long way towards ensuring repeat business. Learn good email etiquette where necessary, and be sure to keep all phone conversations on task and concise.

If you're not going to be available to take on a project or solve a client's problem, be prepared to provide a referral. Your client will still feel you have solved their problem. And you are "networking" with another translator. Perhaps they will refer jobs to you in the future as well.

In all of your dealings with clients, remain professional. If you encounter a problem, keep your emotions in check; don't take things personally. Remember, it's just business – and you are committed to building your business professionally.

To quickly ramp up your income, don't offer the lowest prices. Instead, offer the best service with outstanding satisfaction.

How Do I Retire Using This Opportunity?

It normally takes a while to build an impressive portfolio and client list. Unless you have a fair amount of money set aside, document translating will probably be a part-time business until you're well established. However, the flexibility afforded by document translation will allow you to work whenever it's convenient, so you'll be able to keep your "day job."

Once you've established yourself, an income in the high five figures to low six figures is not out of reach. This will give you the opportunity to set aside significant amounts of money, while providing tremendous flexibility and personal freedom.

Learn to Think Outside the Box on the Road to Success

One of the common denominators in the life of successful entrepreneurs is the way they think. A successful person, whether in sports or in business, has some very unique ways that they handle life in general... and it's these traits that set them apart from the majority of people.

Think outside the box. Look at the way other successful entrepreneurs work their businesses – and see if you can implement any of their tricks and strategies into your own business. You could even develop something that could change the industry this way! With the Internet growing and an ever-increasing number of people working online, new developments are always welcome and desired.

Never Give Up!

It might sound like a slogan for a football game or a pro golf tour, but the truth is

that the ability to press forward, to never give up, to overcome obstacles is imperative when working at home as a document translator.

There will be days when you are the only one keeping your business moving forward. Are you able to keep yourself moving forward? Never giving up is truly necessary to achieve the dream career you not only desire, but you deserve.

Stay Consistent!

Many home-business professionals struggle with consistency – or the lack thereof – in getting results. The simple answer is contained in that dreaded four-letter word: WORK! I'm going to let you in on a little secret that will keep you consistently moving forward in your business...

The reason most of us struggle with fear, inconsistency, and lack of focus is really quite simple: *We don't give our home business the same diligence and commitment that we give our boss every day on our job.*

This topic doesn't need a lot of elaboration or explanation. This is a principle that anyone can grab a hold of. The simple concept of giving your home business the same commitment to excellence that you give to your boss at work should shift your paradigm. Even better, it will help you create consistent results month after month.

The World of Document Translation Awaits You!

For many people, becoming a self-employed translator has been the answer to growing economic struggles and uncertain times. A self-employed translator operates as their own boss. Just the prospect of being able to set your own hours, create your own goals, and earn whatever you want, when you want it, is enough to get most people charging forward!

Working from any location in the world – from home or while traveling – translators are able to exercise their language skills for profit every day of the year. Work is never lacking – not with clients coming from far and near, with projects and assignments in every niche imaginable.

Document translation services are high in demand... and a career is waiting for you to make it your own!

Your future is waiting for you in the world of translation. All that is left is a decision on your part to go after your dreams and begin working now!

For a list of translation and interpretation programs, go to www.lexicool.com/courses_usa.asp.

Also, the following resources are available:

- The American Translators Association; <http://www.atanet.org/>. Links to conferences, membership, certification, and more.
- The American Literary Translators Association; <http://www.utdallas.edu/alta/>. Promotes literary translation through services to literary translators, forums on the theory and practice of translation, collaboration with the international literary community, and advocacy on behalf of the literary translator. ALTA is the only organization in the United States dedicated solely to literary translation.

If you have the desire – and the skills – to communicate in varied languages, this career choice could be for you. Take your time, investigate the options, and then get started. Remember, nothing happens without action!