



# Small Changes, Big Workload

## Improving Translation in Hospitality, Travel, Tourism and Leisure





## AT A GLANCE

Hospitality, Travel, Tourism, and Leisure is an exceptional business in that its goal is to help consumers derive the greatest value and satisfaction from time away from home and office. Managers in this vertical who are responsible for providing the linguistic portion of a smooth travel experience can use this paper to examine their own translation processes and improve them.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Translating a pamphlet or property description attractively may seem like an uninteresting business problem – even a distraction – to a tour operator, but to a prospective customer planning a trip from the other side of the world, it is a godsend and a deal-closer.

In contrast to managers in most industries, those responsible for translation in Hospitality, Travel, Tourism, and Leisure work toward an unusual goal in customer satisfaction: If done properly, translations help their customers make the most of time away from home.

Attracting visitors and passengers in their own country is already difficult, but these managers must also attract guests from other regions, using foreign languages in almost every interaction. The travelers, seeking to make the most of their time out of the office and on vacation, are sensitive to miscommunication through poor translation; for example:

- ➔ A travel Website's abandon rate suddenly spikes because its new catalog and reservation infrastructure does not support multiple languages.
- ➔ The Website for a regional tourism office offers top-level pages translated into several languages, but sub-pages with supporting descriptions remain in the host country's language, ignoring the needs of important visitor populations.
- ➔ Foreign language maps, event schedules, and pamphlets at a theme park omit important updates not because of the expense but because of the work involved in translating and publishing a few words into multiple languages.
- ➔ Photographs of mistranslated signage on cruise ships or in hotels end up among comments on travel review Websites and social networks.
- ➔ Travelers complain to their friends that they "would have enjoyed the tour much more if there had been materials in our language."

How can managers in Hospitality, Travel, Tourism, and Leisure avoid these costly situations and attract visitors in multiple languages? Which technologies are at their disposal? What are common myths about translation in this industry, and what are the facts behind them? Managers responsible for providing the linguistic portion of a smooth travel experience can use this paper to examine their own translation processes and improve them.