

# THE VALUE OF FINDING A PATENT TRANSLATIONS PROVIDER

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“Even in times of operational efficiency, the demand for translations to support foreign patent filings still remains strong,” explains Jeremy Rosie, Director of Expert Services, Thomson Reuters, IP Solutions.

With the current focus on operational efficiency, we can expect that the level of patenting activity will decrease to some extent. Many organizations, forced to rein in costs, are curbing their investments in intellectual property by significantly reducing R&D budgets or requiring their IP departments to more tightly manage expenses. For some, this might result in a decision to bring translation services in-house, versus partnering with a patent translations provider.

Why would such a drastic measure be a mistake for organizations? According to a recent report from the World Intellectual Property Organization, while the number of international filings dropped in 2009, filings in several Asian countries continued to grow. China boosted its total patent filing by 29.7% from 2008, while Japan and South Korea also increased their patent filings in 2009 by 3.6% and 2.1% respectively. So despite the challenging global economic climate, the demand for translations to support foreign filings remains strong.

And what about the many larger organizations who, regardless of economic conditions, rely upon their in-house staff to perform translations? Many global companies employ professionals who are native speakers in a range of languages and who are also experts on a variety of subjects. But is this more cost-effective than partnering with an external provider? On the face of it, it seems to make sense. On closer scrutiny, however, some cases show that the use of in-house staff may cause more problems and indeed lead to cost inefficiencies.



## WHY SHOULD YOU PARTNER WITH A TRANSLATION SERVICES PROVIDER?

There are five major reasons why it's beneficial for organizations to rely on an external resource for their translation needs:

### **Fast Turnaround Times**

There are many occasions when case work or business decisions require immediate attention and fast turnaround times. But few companies have an in-house translation resource operating on a 24-hour basis to ensure translations are made available with minimum delay. However, external providers such as Thomson Reuters IP Translation Services can draw upon their global network of translators who are knowledgeable in all phases of the patent process – guaranteeing companies consistently fast turnaround times.

Furthermore, employees who are tasked with in-house translations often have other primary responsibilities. In some cases, meeting a

translation deadline may be secondary to meeting a deadline relating to their core area of responsibility. When translation needs are commissioned to an external provider, there is no need to worry about conflicting resources or priorities – their primary role is to provide companies with timely, accurate translations.

### **Cost Savings**

It can be very costly in terms of missed deadlines to tie up in-house staff with translation work. These employees should be spending their time supporting the business strategy rather than being distracted by other tasks. Using a translation supplier, which has globally distributed translation resources and a low cost base, will save costs for companies, compared to the true, full cost of completing the work in-house.

Also, keep in mind that translation needs may vary significantly across the year dependent upon a company's project workload. The most cost-effective way of dealing with this variation is to partner with an external provider. In this way a company only pays for use of a translator when the need arises.

### **High Service Level**

Another key benefit to partnering with a translations provider is obtaining project management support, especially for multilingual projects such as national filings following a PCT (WO) application. External suppliers assign a dedicated project manager whose job is to coordinate the whole process. Service providers are constantly improving and growing their translator network, enabling companies to gain access to an impressive and well-maintained talent pool.

### **Quality Assurance**

A badly written or inaccurate patent translation can hinder an organization's ability to exploit an opportunity or make the right decisions. It may lead to their involvement in costly legal action. And, it can even cost some companies their reputation. To avoid these issues, organizations need their translations to be supplied quickly and accurately so employees can focus on their core work.

To ensure quality, it's critical that organizations choose providers with experience in translating patents. They should be familiar with the background terminology and legal jargon of patents, plus have relevant experience translating the particular subject matter. They should also be trained to stick as closely as possible to the original text style of writing so as not to deviate from the original meaning. Most patents are technical in nature, and patent translators, unlike general or literary text translators, do not have much license to maneuver with regards to 'creative communication.' Translators must also avoid using language which may be specific to a particular company, the so-called "company-speak." Lastly, when translations are completed they should be passed through a proof checking process by a project manager.

### **Flexible Skills**

Organizations should choose a translation provider with expertise in related services. If a patent translation is intended for legal use, for example in patent prosecution or litigation, the translation staff may need to handle certification of the translation, conforming to the appropriate regional requirements. The translation staff may also need to have multilingual desktop publishing (DTP) skills and access to all the DTP templates necessary to provide patent translations, including graphics and formulae, ready-formatted for filing at the United States and other patent offices.

### **Summary**

There are many benefits in partnering with a patent translation services provider, including timeliness, reliability and cost-effectiveness. It allows companies to focus on its core business. And when requirements shift, budgets adjust and urgent situations arise, organizations can rely on providers to supply quality translations and consistency from project to project – so perhaps the most important benefit is peace of mind.

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