



Marketing Translation  
vs. Transcreation

# Marketing Translation vs. Transcreation

Who doesn't want more money? Spending billions of dollars each year and rising, international customers and consumers are more important to US companies than ever. So how do you convince them to open their wallets?

### **It's Time to Get Creative**

While your great creative marketing and advertising content is key for stateside, English-only strategies, what happens when you go abroad or multilingual? Are you prepared to reach audiences who might think differently and have different values and priorities?

To increase sales, build brand awareness and inspire customer actions, your message needs to reach your target audiences in just the right way. But how?

**Translation may seem like the obvious solution, but when it comes to marketing and advertising for international audiences, transcreation is often a more effective route.**

We'll show you why.

In this white paper we take a close look at both translation and transcreation, including how they work and what they do for international audiences based on your creative marketing and advertising content.

### **It's All in There: What Translation Can Do**

Through translation, new readers gain access to information they otherwise would not have been able to understand or find.

Translation helps express the meaning of a text in another language. This allows the readers of one language to understand a message that was created for the readers of another language.

There are two schools of thought on what makes a translation good. The first favors word-for-word translation. The goal of this kind of translation is to express the original meaning as closely as possible, often mirroring the original text's structure as well, so as not to lose anything along the way. The second school

favors expressing a text's essential thoughts even if it means using different words or phrases from the original to convey an equivalent meaning. In both cases, however, the translation is usually framed through the cultural lens of the original text.

Modern translators typically apply both approaches to any text, translating words or phrases literally where possible and paraphrasing when, for reasons of style, context, etc., they feel it is most appropriate.

Translation is useful for a wide range of texts and audiences, particularly when the goal is to provide information. But sometimes, just translation is not enough.

### **Think Global, Act Local: What Transcreation Can Do**

Marketing and advertising aren't your run-of-the-mill text; they're a different type of message, emphasizing emotional resonance and inspiring action.

The success of marketing and advertising depends on messages tailored to reach the specific market so that consumers feel like you're talking directly to them. Content has to speak to consumers on a deeper level than just information. Readers have no interest in content that doesn't reflect their concerns and desires, that does not speak directly to them. Writing must reflect an understanding of their pleasures and their pains, and offer solutions to their problems. That's why marketing and advertising copy must go beyond mere information for multilingual consumers. They need transcreation.

**Transcreation is used to help brands become recognizable around the world by adapting marketing and advertising messages to local tastes and customs.** Not just texts like tag lines and web copy, but images and multimedia too. Successful transcreation requires understanding the target culture, as well as paying close attention to customs, context and humor.

How does it work? **Transcreators identify the goal, tone, style and emotion of the original message. Then they go to work creating the right marketing and advertising content for that particular target market – specifically designed to elicit the desired action.**

While copywriting is a key skill for transcreation, it isn't the only one required.

## How It Works: The Translation and Transcreation Processes

To achieve the desired results, both translation and transcreation require processes that are rigorously applied by specialized professionals. Let's dive into what these practices look like.

For translation, a professional workflow is composed of the following steps:

1. Translation
2. Editing
3. Client review
4. Editor reviews changes and provides rationale for acceptance or rejection
5. Client review and harmonization
6. Final decisions implemented
7. Translation memory, style guide and glossary are updated
8. Final delivery

Then for transcreation, a professional workflow consists of the following:

1. Copywriting: three options are provided with back translation for pre-identified items such as headlines, calls to action, etc.
2. Copyediting
3. Client review
4. Copyeditor reviews changes and provides rationale for acceptance or rejection
5. Client review
6. Final decisions implemented
7. Translation memory, style guide and glossary are updated
8. Final delivery

As you can see, translation and transcreation workflows are similar in the types of steps required and the order that the steps are completed. However, there are key differences.

Transcreation typically takes more time than translation does, as it's a more involved creative process. But more importantly, **translation is the heart of any translation effort and it starts with the source text, while copywriting is the key for transcreation and it begins with a creative brief.**

As a result, **translation retains the same message as the original, but transcreated content is localized and highly targeted to perform.** Who is responsible for this?

## **The People behind Professional Translation and Transcreation**

How good a translation or transcreation is depends on the skills of the people involved and how well they accomplish the necessary steps. But who are they? Let's explore the types of people you will find on these teams.

**Translators:** They master the source language and are educated, native speakers of the target language. Translators are experienced in translation work, have a deep understanding of the correlations between the source and target languages, and they have a good sense of when to translate more literally and when to translate using paraphrasing. Last but not least, translators are knowledgeable about the subject matter of your text to be translated.

**Translation editors:** They pay attention to the details. Translation editors ensure that the correct terminology was used, propose changes to make the translation more idiomatic and natural sounding, and improve the translation where necessary by keeping in mind points like culture, context, sentence structure, vocabulary and correct grammar.

**Transcreation copywriters:** They are first and foremost experienced writers. They are also native speakers of the target language and they work solely in that language. Like all copywriters, copywriters working on a transcreation project specialize in writing marketing and advertising messages for the target market. With the project's creative brief as a framework, they inform and inspire using your marketing message.

**Copyeditors:** They make sure that the text's intended message is clear and effective. To do so, copyeditors working on a transcreation project pay careful attention to issues such as tone, style, humor, word choice and multiple meanings to produce persuasive calls to action.

**Project manager:** The guiding hand behind each step in a workflow for translation or transcreation is always the project manager. He or she is experienced in quality assurance as well as in ensuring that the different parts of the project run together like clockwork.

Working together, the right translation or transcreation team gets results. But what can a client expect?

### **More Sales, Higher Brand Awareness, More Customer Actions**

Both translation and transcreation can help you reach new customers and consumers by sharing your messages with them in the languages they speak. However, transcreation goes further. It has the added benefits of localization and performance targeting. **Using your advertising and marketing messages as a starting point, transcreation is designed to create maximum impact for the target audience.**

You can't afford to ignore or be ignored by large international markets you may not fully understand. **Effectively reaching your target audience will result in more sales, higher brand awareness and other successful customer actions.**

### **Ready to Attract More International Customers?**

To discuss translation or transcreation for your organization, please contact Responsive Translation's Ken Clark at +1-212-355-4455 ext. 208 or [kclark@resptrans.com](mailto:kclark@resptrans.com).