

Wanted: Phone Reps Who Are Good Translators

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There are lots of hats you wear when you do business over the phone. The most important one is that of a **Translator** or **Interpreter**. Whether you are calling customers or they are calling you, people do not necessarily understand your products or services. Your role is to *interpret* or *translate* the information so that listeners see value.

What do good translators do? They use words that people comprehend- no jargon or “techno-babble.” They site examples and use analogies to be sure they are painting a picture that listeners visualize. For example, let’s say you call a small business owner with three locations to sell them software to better manage their inventory. That business owner is being pulled away from tasks at hand. The last thing he wants is a salesperson spewing something about software. However, if the translator paints a picture through words and examples of how his inventory can be controlled and the savings he can expect, the business owner will be hooked and will listen further. If, on the other hand, the salesperson does a poor job, the business owner is likely to disconnect. He doesn’t have the time or interest to listen to another “sales pitch.”

Policies and service packages can be confusing. Customers frequently call into help desks expecting full coverage. Because they misunderstand what they purchased or have forgotten, they get upset. They need someone to interpret the information when they are under stress. Good translators patiently explain the policy or service package using words like *“Service packages can be confusing. So what this means is that with the policy you purchased at the time you bought your laptop, any hardware is repaired and replaced at no cost until September of 2011. For example, if your battery goes dead, it is replaced. If your AC adapter goes dead, it is replaced. With your service package, technical support for software is limited to on-line support. There is a \$50 charge for talking to a tech as you heard in the recording. I know it is expensive, but given that you*

cannot currently access the web, this will be the simplest and fastest way to solve your problem. I know you were making a lot of decisions at the next time you purchased your computer, and maybe the two service packages weren’t clearly explained. For the next purchase, I strongly recommend you buy the full coverage policy. That way, no matter what happens, you will be covered.”

Finally, project updates with lots of numbers can be challenging to the Executives needing to make a decision. The mistake that many people make when reporting numbers is not to give them context or to go into too much detail. Good translators say things like *“What your employees spent on non-generic drugs for the first three quarters was five times the amount they spent on generic drugs. You can see that by specifying generic, you could conceivably save two million dollars annually.”* By succinctly stating what the numbers mean and tying them to the business, the analyst connects the dots for the listener and thus, makes it easy for the decision maker to determine the appropriate next steps.

As phone reps, it is easy to forget that listeners do not have the same skill set or knowledge level that we possess. While we are very comfortable with the lingo of our business, others may feel like they are listening to ancient Greek. Your role as a translator, not only make the listener more comfortable, but it makes your job easier as well since clear and easy to follow explanations lessen resistance and diffuse upset customers.

Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their face-to-face and over the phone communication skills. It is not what you know but how you communicate it that makes a difference. When you have to have impact, phone (847) 438-4480 or visit our website, www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com.

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