

How to

plan a multilingual meeting



How to series / PMM2007

Whether you're planning a multilingual conference or a small meeting there's a few things you need to consider when it comes to arranging interpreters:

1) Basic details

Venue, languages, number of delegates per language, dates, times etc.

2) Language

Which ones? Any specific dialects?

3) Meeting style

Presentation? Questions and answers? Round table and breakout rooms? All will pose different

challenges for interpreters and equipment.

4) Briefing

Try to brief your interpreter in full before a meeting and make them part of your team. Give them an agenda, a list of participants, notes on previous meetings or reference documents. Are reference documents and delegate packs already translated? Accurate on-site translation of text can be difficult to arrange at the event, so it's best to get notes translated beforehand.

5) Set-up

Make sure you allow time for the interpreter to get there early. Maybe even the day before. They can acclimatise to the venue, meet the people, establish lines of reporting, familiarise themselves with their equipment etc. It all makes the process much smoother.

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6) Environment

Interpreters need clear lines of sight to speakers (body language, lip reading and gestures are all important when interpreting) and presentations. Good lighting helps. Speakers need to be audible. Interpreting booths need to be accessible and well positioned. Will they fit into the venue you have chosen? Do you need us to check?

7) Clothing

Formal or informal? Wellies and hard hat? No joke... we've sent people for assignments in a variety of strange places.

8) Accommodation and travel

It's best to accommodate the interpreter in the same accommodation as the

delegates to maintain good relations. If this can't be done then we need to agree what the travel arrangements are to and from the venue.

9) Breaks

If interpreters aren't working in pairs you'll need to consider scheduled breaks for the interpreter to allow for normal human needs.

10) Security and confidentiality

Interpreters are bound by confidentiality agreements. However the equipment used isn't - radio interpreting systems aren't secure. Infra-red systems are.



Other documents in the How to series:

- How to work with Sign Language interpreters
- How to save money on translation costs
- How to use free translation tools online
- How to get the best from multilingual typesetting
- How to work with interpreters

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