

patronizingly) using only standard language. You can always modify it to match the degree of fluency you perceive at the other end.

Advertising and promotional material

Advertising and promotional material play a vital role in the initial interest in a product or service overseas. Pay attention to the publications and brochures that support and accompany your goods.

- Examine your current literature to see if it can be adapted to suit both your domestic and foreign markets. Some companies use English, French and Spanish, the most-used languages of trade, in their literature and catalogues to avoid the expense of separate publications.
- Make liberal use of colour photographs and illustrations of the product/service and its application to avoid the need for lengthy textual descriptions (and their translation).

*I am a great
believer in luck
and I find the
harder I work
the more
I have of it.*

Stephen Leacock
(1869-1944)

- Don't scrimp on translation costs. Hire first-class translators. Sloppy use of language can give rise to misunderstandings and to customer fears of potential sloppiness in your product or service.

- Check any translation done in Canada with an expert in the other country. Ensure that it reflects the latest language usage.
- Carefully examine the meaning and acceptability of a brand name or logo in the language of the country.
- Make sure it does not have negative or inadvertently humorous connotations.

- Make sure the colours you use in your material conform to local tastes and preferences.
- Metric is the standard of measurement in many countries. Ensure your specifications are metric or that you provide metric equivalents.

Know how to learn from your mistakes.