Reaching a More Diverse Audience

Extension's Spanish-speaking audience has never been larger or more geographically dispersed. Our opportunities to serve this group are growing rapidly, but finding appropriate materials is sometimes challenging.

Options

As an Extension educator you can:

• use or adapt materials already available in Spanish
• develop original materials in Spanish
• translate English-language materials

The last option is used often, because subject matter specialists have already developed materials in English. If the English-language version works, you can simply have it translated into Spanish. Problem solved, right?

Actually, no. If the material was not written with translation in mind, it requires careful editing and attention before it can be useful to the Hispanic audience.

Manuscript Considerations

For translated materials to work for a Spanish-speaking audience, the English-language manuscript must follow the same principles of good writing you would use in developing any educational material. Be sure the material is clearly written and is at the appropriate reading level.

Translated materials must also take cultural differences into account. If not, they display insensitivity and risk offending the audience they are intended to help.

Common sense will catch most problem areas. For example, the use of football metaphors or references to "mom and apple pie" would be inappropriate. Subject matter specialists who are native Spanish speakers or representatives from the Hispanic community can help you identify less obvious trouble spots.

Declarative sentences that avoid colloquialisms, jargon, and complex structures are best for translations. This is true for technical as well as non-technical materials. Long strings of object modifiers like "Extension county level program building efforts" are generally not translation-friendly. Remember also that acronyms seldom translate well. If you must use acronyms, modify them for Spanish so that they make sense. If you include suggested readings, be sure publications listed are available in Spanish or have Spanish language equivalents.
Translations are most successful when the educational materials are succinct and, when possible, present important points in bulleted lists. Studies also show a preference for bilingual formatting and photos and drawings that appropriately reflect the target audience. In a household where more than one language is spoken, a bilingual publication not only can inform the reader about the subject matter but also can help him or her learn a new language.

Translation and Review Process

Texas AgriLife Extension uses the following process for translating and reviewing publications.

1. An editor prepares the English-language manuscript in accordance with established Extension policies and standards. Once the author and the editor agree that the manuscript is ready, it is forwarded to the Spanish-language editor.

2. The Spanish-language editor reviews the manuscript for reading level and potential cultural sensitivity issues, then solicits bids for translation from qualified service providers. The author is informed of the cost, and the job is awarded.

3. Once the translator returns the translation, the Spanish-language editor reviews it. The invoice for the translation goes to the project group.

4. After the initial review, the Spanish-language editor works with the bilingual subject-matter faculty or qualified students within the department or project group to perform a second review.

5. The project group may opt to subject the draft translation to field testing or focus group review. This step is highly recommended for materials that are expected to have a long shelf life.

6. When the translation is approved by the department or project group, the publication goes through the same design, printing, and distribution channels as all other Extension publications.

Translation Considerations

Machine Translation?

Don't be fooled into thinking that using translation software will give you the results you need. Though machine translation has matured considerably, currently there is no alternative to a qualified translator.

Estimating Cost

As you budget for translation, it helps to know that translators often bill by the word of target language output. Nine to 16 cents per word for non-technical text is average in Texas, but rates vary widely across the nation. More technical text can cost upwards of 20 cents per word. Also, the word count of an English language manuscript will grow by about 15% when translated into Spanish. This happens because Spanish uses more articles and is generally
"wordier" than English.

These formulas will help you calculate low and high estimates for translation:

- \((\text{English word count \times 1.15}) \times .09 = \text{lower range cost estimate for non-technical text.}\)
- \((\text{English word count \times 1.15}) \times .16 = \text{higher range cost estimate for non-technical text.}\)

These rates vary, but this formula will give you some basis for estimating translation costs.

**The Payoff**

Producing materials for a Spanish-speaking audience is more time-consuming and involved than producing materials in English. It takes time to identify and establish working relationships with qualified translators and reviewers, but the quality of the materials produced by this extra work demonstrates the level of commitment our audiences deserve.