

EFFECTIVELY USING INTERPRETERS

Language barriers can be a significant hurdle to overcome. Most audiences will appreciate your effort to learn a few key phrases of their language or dialect. But if you're not proficient in the language of your audience then working with a professional interpreter is a must.

- Meet with the interpreter beforehand to build personal rapport and familiarity. Where possible, utilize the same interpreter regularly so they become familiar with your style, approach, and topics.
- Ensure your interpreter understands the objective of your presentation or meeting. Beyond grasping your words they need to understand your intent and desired outcome.
- Provide an advance copy of your speech, presentation or reference material for the interpreter to review.
- Avoid the technical jargon, acronyms or slang that may be misunderstood by the interpreter or the audience.
- Maintain eye contact with your audience and don't move back or away from the audience.
- No screening. Make it clear you don't want the interpreter selectively translating comments. Neither should they answer question on your behalf, even simple ones, as this can undermine your credibility and stature.
- Finish one thought and then let the interpreter translate. Don't make the time you speak too long. It will increase the errors in the translation.
- Recognize the time constraints that result from "consecutive translation." Your presentation will likely take twice as long. Slow down, speak in shorter sentences, and pause frequently.
- Seek feedback to make the process better for you both.