



**American Translators Association**

*The Voice of Interpreters and Translators*

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## **ATA Client Outreach Kit**

### **Skills Module**

## **Getting invited to speak**

### **Survey your market**

Start by looking in your local newspaper, business journal or telephone directory, or by talking to well-connected people in your target industry, and identify business groups that can connect you with potential clients. Even very small towns typically have a chamber of commerce or other business groups. It may be helpful to attend a few meetings to get a better idea of typical program offerings before you submit a proposal of your own.

### **Focus on your audience**

The key to getting an invitation is to focus on the business needs of your target audience. Start by researching local or industry-specific conditions and/or statistics, such as demographics (population, languages spoken, etc.). Identify language combination(s), document types, legal requirements, and anything else that would be of particular interest to your audience, and make these your focus.

Think about when and why potential clients would need to buy translations. For example, small business owners with a mostly local clientele will have a different outlook than those who already have contacts in other countries. Likewise, looming legislation or current events can make translation-related topics timely.

Consider which of these ideas are relevant to your target audience:

- Poor or no translation can create liability.
- Well-translated materials allow businesses to open up new markets at home and abroad.
- Poor translation can damage a business's image and reputation; good translation can enhance it.
- Well-translated marketing materials can fuel international expansion and compensate for sluggish domestic markets.
- Well-translated materials can differentiate a business from its rivals, catching and holding the attention of potential customers or partners bombarded with promotional materials from other sources.
- Moving into foreign markets is a challenge at the best of times; translation can be planned and executed ahead of time, freeing time and energy for other priorities and improving a business's chance of success.
- Flawless communication with suppliers abroad smoothes supply chain processes and prevents costly errors in specifications or orders. Make a list of the needs your prospective client would have and use them to market your presentation to your target groups.

This sample letter can help you get started.

[www.atanet.org/client\\_outreach/skill\\_sample\\_letter.php](http://www.atanet.org/client_outreach/skill_sample_letter.php)

### **Think *what*, not *how***

Direct clients usually aren't interested in CAT tools, daily output, your degrees or alma mater, or references from translation agencies. They're focused on selling their products and services successfully: all they want to know is how you can help them do that.

To market yourself to a direct clientele, you'll need to concentrate less on how you do your work, and more on what you can do for your customers. Attending chamber of commerce or other business-oriented meetings and listening to members talk about their business challenges can help you identify the problems they face and the solutions you can offer.

### **Be patient**

Don't be discouraged if it takes time to score an invitation from the right group: the effort will be well worth it. ATA member Alina Mugford learned this lesson in her very first outreach effort:

*The operative words for my outreach effort were preparation and perseverance. It took me half a year to convince a local Chamber of Commerce to hold the workshop. Initially, I focused solely on one purpose: correcting misconceptions associated with the translation profession. The chamber greeted my proposal with smiles and pleasantries, but they did not think that the topic would be of interest to its members.*

*Did I mention perseverance?*

*Six months later, I broadened my approach to include three objectives: the demographics of the Latino market; tips on how to market products and services successfully to Latinos; and translation as a profession. This was the magical combination that finally enticed the chamber officials to approve my workshop.*

### **Read full article**

"My First Experience with Client Outreach: Trials, Tribulations, and Triumphs in the Trenches"  
Alina Mugford. *The ATA Chronicle*, January 2009, page 20.

[www.atanet.org/client\\_outreach/chronicle\\_jan2009.pdf](http://www.atanet.org/client_outreach/chronicle_jan2009.pdf)