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Spotlight on Translators



Freeman Financial Translation: Partner of choice for clients and translators

After studying French, German and linguistics at Cambridge University, Paul Freeman embarked on a career in finance – first as an auditor with Arthur Andersen in London and later in various positions with major US and French firms. “This cultural mix really shaped my outlook”, explains Paul. It also inspired him to adopt a rather unconventional business philosophy...

Your twin-track background originally led you into financial translation. What type of clients do you work for and what other areas of expertise do you offer?

Since 2001, we have handled translation projects for major corporations in France and abroad, but we have also worked with small and medium-sized businesses, law firms, accounting firms and advertising agencies. **We specialise in areas where we can offer added value:** for example finance and accounting (annual reports, financial communications, advanced IFRS expertise), law, marketing, advertising and research documents. In a nutshell, anything that demands technical expertise combined with excellent writing skills.

You are deeply committed to your business model. Can you describe it?

It’s all about creating a virtuous circle that leaves everyone – translators and clients – completely satisfied, so we can cultivate long-term relationships with them. Our goal is to give clients genuine added value by constantly striving to deliver the best solution in terms of quality and responsiveness. **For clients that have several providers, we aim to be the one that they will call when faced with a real challenge.** We don’t shy away from urgent projects and are often asked to translate mission-critical documents, where we make sure we choose the right terminology for the target audience, who may for example be shareholders, European authorities, or the general public.

Quality is also your key criterion when choosing your partners, and you cultivate close relationships with them...

That’s right. We aim to work with the best talent in the profession, so we do everything we can to accommodate our translators’ constraints and wishes. That means taking into account their preferences and events in their personal lives that may have an impact on their work. **We believe that the translators we work with should be treated in the same way as clients.**

How does that work in practice?

We work in partnership with over fifty subcontractors selected for their technical skills and their professional services mindset. I'm ultimately responsible for analysing the client's needs, assembling the best team of translators and reviewers for each project, and **ensuring that we deliver a premium-quality service**. We handle all types of French-English and English-French translation, but we also work with German, Spanish, Italian and other languages in response to client requests.

You seem to feel quite passionately about your profession. Is that what's driving you to shield it from the extremes of unfettered capitalism?

Exactly! I'm convinced that an excessive focus on short-term results at the expense of long-term interests has contributed to the current economic and financial crisis. That's why quality and relationship-building are at the heart of everything we do. **Our primary growth-driver is our reputation.**

Our business model, which carries our clients' stamp of approval, shows that capitalism does not have to lead to dehumanisation. We believe there is third way of doing business: **winning through sharing, while forging a partnership founded on trust and respect.**

The general counsel of a CAC 40 company called me at 10 p.m. one night to talk about a mission-critical document. We had to act fast and deliver very high quality. We got the job done, and the client was delighted.

An IT services client was bidding on a project worth over €10 million and needed to respond in English. That meant producing dozens of pages in only 48 hours. We delivered a pristine translation on time. And the client got the contract.