ATA Client Outreach Kit
Skills Module

Using examples effectively

Whenever you present to potential clients, you should stress that poor translations are a business risk. A hard-hitting example is one of the best ways to make this point—but examples of poor translations abound. How do you choose?

Here are a few points to keep in mind:

- **Select examples that are relevant to the audience** and are translated into their language.
- **Aim for a simple punch line** that speaks for itself.
- **Avoid examples that need explaining.** Make it easy to understand what went wrong.
- **Mention direct, specific consequences** such as diminished image, reprinting costs, or lost business opportunities.
- **Don’t get into grammar** (“And here, the translator did not use the right past tense...”). Trust us: your business audience won’t get it—and they’ll drift off.
- **Don’t criticize other linguists;** simply say that “being bilingual is not enough to work as a translator.”

Your own practice may be the best source of examples for your audience, but ATA offers several good sources as well:

**Translation: Getting It Right brochure**
[www.atanet.org/publications/getting_it_right.php](http://www.atanet.org/publications/getting_it_right.php)

**Interpreting: Getting It Right brochure**

"The Onionskin" column in *The ATA Chronicle*

ATA’s collected images of poor translations