



ALL IN THE NAME OF TRANSLATION

IF YOU HAVEN'T TRANSLATED YOUR CONTENT INTO OTHER LANGUAGES YET, YOU ARE PROBABLY WONDERING WHERE TO START. WHICH LANGUAGES? IN-HOUSE OR OUTSOURCE? WHERE DO YOU GET BEST VALUE FOR MONEY? WILL MACHINES EVENTUALLY REPLACE HUMAN TRANSLATORS? WHAT BETTER PERSON TO ASK THAN **ROY PEDERSEN**, FOUNDER OF THE MALTA-BASED MARKET LEADING GAMING TRANSLATION COMPANY **ALL-IN TRANSLATIONS**.

A lot can happen in 10 years.

But you knew that already, because you are reading this, and that probably means you are a gaming industry professional. What you probably did not know though is that the number of jobs for translators and interpreters has doubled in the last 10 years, and that the language service industry has grown by almost 75% in the last 6 years. At the same time, there are fewer jobs for journalists every year.

So one could say that the career of Roy Pedersen has followed a natural course. He started a career in sports journalism in Norway, but left for Malta almost 10 years ago. After several years in the gaming industry he came up with the idea of starting a translation company specialised in gaming, in 2008.

"While working in the gaming industry and frequently playing on online gaming sites, I saw a lot of examples of poor translation. It was obvious that the websites and the games had been translated either by someone who had no idea about gaming, or was unfit for linguistic tasks. I asked some friends from other countries to see if the tendency was the same for other languages, and they told me it was. No other translation companies were specialising in games either, so I found a gap in the market".

SIGMA: What were the key factors in making All-In Translations an industry leader?

RP: Hard work (obviously), quickly establishing a broad network in gaming, not being scared of taking risks, and karma. Some call it ethics, I call it karma, but either way I am a strong believer in operating at the highest level of business ethics and realising that what goes around comes around.

This came into play in the early days of All-In Translations. In 2009 a company ordered their very large website translated into 13 languages, but they went bankrupt before even uploading the translations. We never received payment, and we did not have funds to pay the translators that had already done the job. The bank account was empty.

It felt like I had two choices: To take the easy way out and file for bankruptcy, or to head for the bank and ask for a loan. I made the right choice, and almost overnight our reputation in the translation industry became outstanding. So the name of the company, All-In, is representative not only of our mentality, in terms of the subjects and languages we work with, but is also a fairly good description of what I have invested into!

In any case, the translators had not expected to get paid, and word got around quickly. Ever since, all of the best translators want to work with us, so it is just up to us to figure out which translators have the best ability to create precise and attractive translations about gaming.

We also secured a very important deal with Playtech shortly after the crisis back in 2009, and I am proud to say that Playtech is still one of our clients, along with other industry giants like Betsson, Tipico and NeoGames. We are also working with new exciting clients like Casumo, Tribe Lotto and 7Red to mention a few, and we recently translated Multi Lotto into Tagalog which is one of the newest among our 70 languages on offer.

I also quickly understood the importance of exceeding expectations when it comes to customer service, and I have established a talented team of project managers and others who are incredibly service minded and do an excellent job to keep the client happy every time they make an order.





SiGMA: More and more people understand English. Are online gaming translations necessary?

RP: Absolutely. All signs point to yes. Research shows that almost 73% of consumers say they are more likely to buy something online when the information is available in their own language. That's three in every four people, who want things translated. This research is not specific to the gaming industry, but in my opinion trust is even more important for an online gaming site company than for a typical e-commerce site. There are many ways of establishing that trust, but speaking to your players in their own language is one of the easiest and most efficient methods. Then again, you need to make sure that your translations are good, otherwise they can of course have the opposite effect.

SiGMA: At which stage should a gaming company consider having their content translated?

RP: I think it's worth thinking about from the outset. I am of course a little biased here, but I see no reason to wait if the company has licensing, a marketing plan and all the content ready in one language. The sooner you start, the sooner you will see an increase in the number of players. We also offer content writing services for clients who have the marketing plan ready but no one to write their text.

SiGMA: What considerations should be taken before and during the translation process?

RP: When I had a presentation at ICE in London this year I narrowed this down to five "tips and tricks". They are: 1) be culture sensitive, 2) provide context, 3) use professionals who are highly proficient native speakers, 4) use translators with subject expertise, and 5) involve the translators early in the localisation process, as it will keep you from pitfalls like creating a design which does not leave enough space for long languages.

SiGMA: What is your view on outsourced translations vs. in-house translators?

RP: In my opinion a gaming company has four options.

1) They can ask the internal customer service or marketing staff who speak the required language to do it, which will often result in poor quality or unhappy staff. Some companies can afford to hire full-time translators for some languages, and that is obviously a great resource to have if the budget allows, but I would recommend that the company really test the language skills of their candidates before hiring them, and their subject matter expertise. We added a service called 'proficiency testing of language candidates' a few years ago which is available to help with this.

2) They can hire a professional translator on a project basis, but keep in mind that it is difficult to find a proven gaming translator with experience in the industry, and who you trust to deliver to you on time and to the right standard. You need the terminology to be spot on.

3) They can hire a "normal" translation agency, but the prices will often be considerably higher than All-In Translations for example, and the translators might not be familiar with gaming terminology.

4) They can outsource to a specialist gaming translation company like All-In Translations, who can work with them on an "as needs" basis, even on the smallest texts, with fast turnaround times and assurance of excellent quality and professional results. This usually provides the best value for money. I imagine the biggest advantage of outsourcing translations to a company like us is peace of mind. The managers at the gaming company won't have to worry about anything related to the whole translation process any longer, and also they can reduce cost.

SiGMA: Which markets are more attractive now and where do you see the most potential?

RP: This is quite a difficult question, and the reply will always vary according to the current legal situation in each country. We did some extensive research on this topic before the World Cup this past summer, where we ranked the top 22 countries according to gaming market potential. The key things we measured were online behaviour, Gross Gambling Revenue (online) and legality/regulation. We ended up with Argentina as number 1, Brazil as number 2, Japan 3rd, then Mexico, Russia, Ghana, Colombia, Nigeria, Netherlands, and Germany in the top 10.



The first eight countries are in the list more because of their future potential than current sales, whereas English to German has been our most sold language combination this year. Traditionally the Scandinavian languages are very popular among our clients, but unfortunately neither of the countries from there qualified for the World Cup. All the findings from the research can be found in my blog on allintranslations.com.

Apart from that, I think Spanish and Portuguese are languages with a lot of potential, because you can localise the language variants at a low cost and reach large parts of the world at the same time. We have also done a lot of work from English into Chinese lately, and we were recently chosen as a translation provider for the newsletters and press releases of the Macao Gaming Show.

SiGMA: Are you afraid of robots taking over your business?

RP: Robots will never, at least not in my life time, be able to produce attractive and "sales-y" translations, and most of the translations we work with are in some way related to marketing. The parts that are not about marketing are usually about establishing trust, and on that front, robots have a very long way to go.

We try to keep up with technology though, and we have invested in software which allows us to create translation memories in order to increase consistency and it also means we can offer discounts for repeated segments. This way a company isn't paying for the same translation twice. We also offer something called full-context editing, which means that we proofread and review a translation once it has been uploaded to its full context, either on a website, a website optimised for mobile devices, an online game or similar, to make sure it fits, is appropriate and flows well. After all, you want it to be natural, and you don't want the text to sound like it was translated. The best translations never do. ■

Roy Pedersen and the rest of the All-In Translations team can be found next to the Wellness Area at the SiGMA, and at stand S35 in Macao from 18th - 20th November.