

I began my career working as an in-house translator and journalist at a German company that publishes trade journals for a variety of industries. Nearly ten years later, this publisher is still my best client. This relationship has given me a great deal of insight into the many benefits of subscribing to journals so I thought I would share some tips today for harnessing their full potential.

Before we get to these suggestions, I should add that seeking recommendations is the way to go when deciding on which journal to spend your hard-earned money. A simple Google search simply will not typically yield the best results, but rather the company that has spent the most advertising money. Consider starting a discussion on a LinkedIn Group in your area of speciality or asking your clients which journals they prefer to read and why.

I currently subscribe to four trade journals; I have pared down this figure over the past few years given the limited amount of time I have left to read at the end of the day. Three journals arrive at my office in e-mail format and one comes via snail mail. After a full day looking at the screen my eyes are normally weary so I will occasionally print out an electronic version and read it on the sofa with a cup of tea and a highlighter. I assuage my conscience by remembering that this approach is still better for the environment than having a copy shipped to me every week.

### **1) Keep up to date with developments**

The main reason why I started subscribing to trade journals was to keep abreast of developments in the recycling and waste management industry. One of the more magazine-like publications I receive is filled with advertising, but also has a large number of articles about new technologies. Another offers in-depth reporting on major topics that might not be found in mainstream media articles. Yet another often has scoops on behind-the-scenes happenings.

Knowing what is going on in my industry is indispensable for me as a niche translator. When company X calls me about a translation project it solidifies my image as a reputable service provider if I can let them know that I recently heard about their acquisition of company Y just a few days prior. For instance, last month I was on the phone with a potential client just minutes after I opened a journal to find front-page speculation that DSD, Germany's largest scheme for collection and recycling packaging waste, was soon to be sold. When I mentioned this to the other person on the line he expressed surprise that I had already read about these rumours even though Kansas City is

thousands of miles away from Germany.

## **2) Find potential clients**

Another great way to use trade journals is as a source of potential clients. One of the weekly publications I subscribe to even has a page listing each company that has featured in its pages, together with that firm's physical and virtual address. I tend to read through each journal with two highlighters – I use a yellow pen to mark any company that might benefit from translation services and a green pen to highlight any terminology (more on that in section four). I have an Excel file into which I enter these leads, and periodically I will select a few to contact as well as undertaking more concerted marketing campaigns close to major trade fairs.

## **3) Advertise**

Following on from this point, I think that it is worthwhile to remember that trade journal readers are a sitting audience when it comes to marketing your services. It is definitely advisable to find out how much the publisher charges for a decent-sized advert and see if you can fit it into your marketing budget. Splash out on a colour advertisement if you can afford it. Remember: just one medium-sized translation project can recoup the cost of advertising all year long. Make sure that you also invest the money to have a professional advert designed to reflect well on your image as a niche translator.

## **4) Harvest terminology**

I wrote a separate [blog post about harvesting terminology](#) a couple of years ago. Without wishing to cover the same ground twice, I would merely note that their function as a source of terminology is one of the main reasons that I continue to subscribe to a couple of these resources. Reading articles written by specialists has helped me to solve a terminology conundrum more than once. I have also found journalists working for these publications to be more than willing to brainstorm possible translations of new terms that do not exist yet in English.

## **5) Work for them**

Do not forget that trade journals might well need translators or proofreaders, as well. Two of the journals I subscribe to are published in both German and English. It is definitely worth dropping the editors a line to find out if they have a need for translation or editing services. You might be able to negotiate preferential advertising rates as a service provider. The trade journal that I work for is even nice enough to provide me with a free subscription to their German-language version as a side-benefit!