

The Entrepreneurial Linguist

Judy Jenner



48 Short Pieces of Advice

A few months ago, I attended a translator and interpreter training session, during which a colleague came up to me, pen and paper in hand, and asked: “So, what is the secret to success?” I was a bit taken aback by this question, as there are no easy answers nor secrets, but I started thinking about her question. If I had to narrow any advice (useful or not) that I have down to very short nuggets, which would they be? I started compiling a list, and the results appear below. These nuggets are in no particular order of importance and are meant for both interpreters and translators.

1. Running a small business is hard. If it were easy, everyone would do it.
2. You are not entitled to be successful.
3. There are no real secrets to success, but start by working hard and by making smart decisions.
4. Do not compete on price. Find your competitive advantage instead. Do not become a commodity.
5. Get a website and a professional e-mail address.
6. Your success will depend on the quality of the relationships you form.
7. The Internet is your friend. Online marketing is mostly free and easy, so use it to your advantage.
8. No translator or interpreter is an island.
9. Have a positive attitude.
10. Avoid making the same mistake twice.
11. Do not start work on a project until you have written confirmation from the client.
12. Play nicely with others.
13. Set realistic goals and make a plan for how you will achieve them.
14. Take an honest look at your skills and improve them.
15. No one lands high-paying clients by mistake.
16. Take feedback for what it is: a valuable gift.
17. Without clients, you have nothing.
18. Be reasonable even when others are not.
19. Think before you send an angry e-mail.
20. Learn to be self-sufficient in terms of information technology and software.
21. Invest in your business by purchasing the best tools, dictionaries, and gadgets you can afford.
22. Keep your personal and business finances separate.
23. Improve your typing speed.
24. When asking others for advice, be respectful of their time and offer to take them to dinner.
25. Translators: read, read, read. There really is no substitute.
26. Do not complain about your clients publicly. Ever.
27. Do not complain about your colleagues publicly. Ever.
28. Your reputation is the most important thing you have.

Information and Contacts

This column is not intended to constitute legal, financial, or other business advice. Each individual or company should make its own independent business decisions and consult its own legal, financial, or other advisors as appropriate. The views expressed here are not necessarily those of ATA or its Board of Directors. Ideas and questions should be directed to judy.jenner@entrepreneuriallinguist.com.

Judy Jenner is a court-certified Spanish interpreter and a Spanish and German translator in Las Vegas, Nevada, where she runs Twin Translations with her twin sister. She is a past president of the Nevada Interpreters and Translators Association. She hosts the translation blog, *Translation Times* (www.translationtimes.blogspot.com). You can also find her at www.entrepreneuriallinguist.com. Contact: judy.jenner@twintranslations.com or judy.jenner@entrepreneuriallinguist.com.

Continued on page 38

The Entrepreneurial Linguist *Continued from page 25*

29. Your time is the only resource you have.
30. Stop talking about yourself. Ask questions instead.
31. Educate your clients about what you do without wagging your finger.
32. Tread lightly when correcting source texts. Be respectful with your comments.
33. You earn others' respect by providing high-quality work and by being helpful, friendly, and kind.
34. If a client corrects you during an interpreting assignment, stay calm and be professional.
35. Surround yourself with positive and good people.
36. Invest in your professional development by attending conferences, workshops, and webinars.
37. Volunteer your time. Learn to give before you expect others to give things to you.
38. Take care of your eyes and look away from the computer for 20 seconds every 20 minutes.
39. Exceed your clients' expectations by going the extra mile.
40. Send holiday cards and/or gifts to clients.
41. Keep a list of customer preferences. Become a customer concierge.
42. Keep all of your client files organized and back up your computer every day.
43. Contribute to a retirement fund.
44. Take care of your health and exercise.
45. Do not use your client as a sounding board.
46. Keep confidential things confidential. Buy a good shredder.
47. Go to at least one networking event a week (or a month: whatever works), even if you do not feel like it.
48. Be humble. Every great translator and interpreter can learn from others. ■



Looking for continuing education events in your area?

Check out ATA's online event calendar at www.atanet.org/calendar.

Upcoming Events

September 13-14, 2014

Tennessee Association of Professional Interpreters & Translators
Annual Conference
Nashville, TN
www.tapit.org

September 18-19, 2014

European Commission
Directorate-General for Translation
First Translating Europe Forum
Brussels, Belgium
<http://europa.eu/!Yn33fv>

September 20, 2014

Midwest Association of Translators & Interpreters
11th Annual Conference
Madison, WI
www.matiata.org

September 20-21, 2014

Brazilian Translators & Interpreters Association
V ABRATES International Conference
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
www.congressoabrates.com.br

October 3-4, 2014

The Alexandria Project
MedTranslate Conference
Breisgau, Germany
<http://medical-translators-conference.com>

October 4, 2014

Michigan Translators/Interpreters Network
5th Regional Conference
Novi, MI
www.mitin.org

Visit the ATA Calendar Online
www.atanet.org/calendar/

for a more comprehensive look
at upcoming events.