

## Chairman's lead article

Welcome once more to ATC News! This is the second issue, slightly delayed in order to be able to report on the results of the market survey commissioned by the ATC on behalf of its members. And it was well worth waiting for.

A special presentation was organised at the Royal Horticultural Halls conference centre in London on May 16, with Anne Rigg, CEO of the Business Research Unit, the independent market research consultancy appointed by the ATC, presenting the findings. A report on the presentation follows, although it will not contain any hard facts, figures and conclusions, these are being given on an exclusive basis to ATC members only – a powerful incentive for translation companies outside the Association to join us. All members are entitled to a free copy, which will be accompanied by a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA). The object of all this secrecy is to protect our £14,000 investment and safeguard the findings of the report for the benefit of ATC members only.

### Mr ATC

This issue will also carry an interview with the ATC's long-standing general secretary, Geoffrey Bowden. If you've ever wondered just what Geoff does from his lofty perch overlooking Regent Street, this is your chance to find out.

### Link-ups

As part of our drive to broaden the ATC's field of influence, thus raising the profile of the organisation and that of translation companies in general, we have been actively forging links with organisations that offer a synergistic effect. The ITI is an obvious one, with its Corporate Division, as is the EUATC and the American TCD. We've also formed a relationship with the ISTC (Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators – the people who often write what we subsequently translate). News of such organisations' activities will be featured in ATC News, but if you want to know more you can always visit the Association's web site and click through to our colleagues' own sites.

### EUATC and CEN quality standard for TCs

The European Union of Associations of Translation Companies (EUATC) initiated moves to define a European quality standard for translation companies some years ago, succeeding in debating and refining the criteria for such a standard almost to the stage at which they could be implemented. The aim was to create a set of quality criteria to which translation companies could aspire and that would be audited in the same way as the ISO standard. For the standard to have international recognition it needed the involvement of the European

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## Chairman's lead article (continued)

standards body, CEN. An approach was made to see if it would adopt the standard with the sponsorship of the EUATC and a meeting was held on January 30 at the headquarters of the Belgian Standards Institute in Brussels under the chairmanship of EUATC president Ferdinand Boucau.

Unfortunately, this is where things started to go wrong. The idea of a standard purely for translation companies – that would enable them to differentiate themselves from freelancers, 'letterbox agencies' and the less desirable Internet translation portals – proved to be unrealistic. CEN, by its very nature, has to consider standards applicable to all elements of an industry sector, and, in this case, representatives of freelancers and other interested parties had every right to be included in the process and were invited to the Brussels meeting. Consequently, the EUATC felt that it was no longer able to sponsor the initiative at European level, although individual member organisations – including the ATC – continue to work towards the standard on a national basis through their local standards body (in our case, the British Standards Institution).

Subsequently, the EUATC fell into disarray, and at the next meeting held on April 7, little prospect of any new initiative for which the EUATC could provide a platform was in evidence. The ATC Council is therefore going to review our continued membership of the EUATC. We would welcome views from the membership on this matter to help us make up our minds on which way we go.

### Conference

The ATC conference, to be held September 11 and 12 is taking shape. The theme is to be "Beyond Translation", taking a look at aspects of the translation industry members can use to increase sales, such as new or alternative markets, and will be returning to its familiar venue at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. You can get on a mailing list now to receive e-mail updates as the programme evolves by clicking onto the conference advance notice on the home page of our website. Book early!



**Robin Brown**

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# The UK Translation Market

## **'The UK Translation Market.' Report on the market survey commissioned by the ATC**

There have been numerous surveys purporting to study the UK translation industry. Indeed, there are at least two underway right now, one of them commissioned by Salford University, but they tend to focus wholly or in part on translation providers – i.e. translation companies and/or freelancers. Alternatively, such surveys concentrate on a single aspect of translation, such as localisation.

The ATC survey set out with a completely different goal – to survey the market of translation buyers in the UK, identify purchasing trends and thus define how best its members can channel their own sales/marketing efforts.

"In other words", said ATC Marketing Committee chair, John When, "we wanted a tool available exclusively to ATC members and that represents a benefit attributable solely to membership of the ATC".

Consequently, three market research bureaux were invited to pitch for the project, and a budget in excess of £10,000 was earmarked out of ATC funds. The London-based Business Research Unit was the successful bidder, and the survey was commissioned in March 2002 with an increased budget of £14,000 and a time horizon for the middle of May, surveying up to 250 companies – a figure which would provide a statistically reliable result.

The findings were presented at a special meeting of the ATC held at the Royal Horticultural Society's conference centre in London on May 16, by Anne Rigg, CEO of the Business Research Unit (TBRU). The ATC Marketing Committee was represented by Language Line's Yahia Rezgui, Peter Brabazon of Total Translations and 1st Transnational Translations' John When, who is chair of the Marketing Committee. The presentation was chaired by ATC Chairman Robin Brown.

John When set the scene by outlining the parameters of the research project, including the industry sectors addressed and the size of the companies approached – UK manufacturing and service industry companies with 50 or more employees identifiably engaged in export sales, and therefore with a definable translation/interpretation need.

One of the very first points Anne made was how difficult it had been for TBRU's team of interviewers to identify the correct person within the target companies responsible for purchasing translation – a familiar problem experienced by all ATC members!

Nevertheless, her intrepid band managed to conduct in full 200 interviews with translation buyers, asking a range of questions designed to establish:

- Current purchasing (i.e. sourcing) habits
- Future purchasing intentions (and thereby trends)
- Major languages required
- Major fields (e.g., telecomms, biotech)
- Best marketing tactics from TCs
- Estimated value of the UK translation market
- Awareness of TCs
- Awareness of the ATC

In addition to the 200 indepth interviews with purchasers using external providers, 50 interviews were conducted with companies claiming to handle all their translation requirements in-house. Here the research set out to determine:

- Reasons behind commissioning from within their organisations
- Who was executing translations
- The frequency of demand
- Whether using external providers would be considered
- Value of this part of the market

## The UK Translation Market

### Results

"The results were in many ways quite unexpected" commented Yahia Rezgui. "If, for nothing else, the exercise was worthwhile to get pointers as to how best we should spend our marketing budgets. There were clear indicators in the survey as to what sales media trigger the best response in buyers, and many of them will not cost us a fortune to implement."

ATC Chairman Robin Brown's sideways look at the results prompted him to observe at the meeting "The thought occurs that if getting on for a hundred ATC members all adopt identical marketing tactics at the same time as a result of the report, effectiveness will be blunted." Anne Rigg dismissed the point by reminding the audience "There's a huge marketplace out there!"

Due to budget restrictions, the survey concentrated on companies with more than 50 employees. Many members present commented that a surprising amount of business came from companies much smaller than this. It was felt that this profile would give a broad indication of the UK market and a factor was added to the calculation of the UK market value to take into account all the millions of smaller organisations.

"The figure arrived at was, I thought, modest compared to the numbers with a comet's tail of noughts after them often quoted by such organisations as LISA, but is nevertheless probably very realistic", was Robin Brown's verdict.

### Awareness

Surprisingly, when prompted to recall names of TCs, the big boys, such as SDL/Alpnet, Bowne Global/Mendez and Berlitz did not fare too well – but then neither did anyone else really. This probably reflects the ongoing dominance of the industry by freelancers.

Not unexpectedly the ATC's recognition factor was not as high as members would have wished. However, every company interviewed was told that the research was being conducted on the ATC's behalf and each received a copy of the members' directory (and the Secretary reports that he has fielded some calls from those companies since the conclusion of the research).

General Secretary Geoff Bowden points out, "The findings have provided the Association with powerful messages to attract new members and promote the value of purchasing translations from ATC members, as well as giving us excellent ammunition to shake the confidence of those companies who feel they are getting better value by sourcing their translation requirements in-house.

### Git your copy 'ere!

All ATC members have received their copy of the report on CD, together with the NDA. Members should contact Geoff Bowden, at [info@atc.org.uk](mailto:info@atc.org.uk) if their copy has not been received.

## So what are we getting for our money?

**An interview with Geoff Bowden, Secretary, PR consultant, conference organiser, Directory publisher and much more to the ATC.**

At the beginning of 2000, the ATC Council voted for an increase in the fees chargeable by Nexus Structured Communications, the consultancy in which one Geoffrey Bowden is a partner. The increase, the first in over ten years, was from around £25,000 a year to £35,000. No mean amounts of money, and no mean increase!

Now the ATC has a newsletter, one of its objectives should be to keep all ATC members in touch with what is being done in their name (and with their money, of course). An opportunity therefore to interview Geoff and find out exactly what he and his organisation give us for our money seemed appropriate. As someone active in other translation industry trade associations, one thing I have always admired about the ATC is the fact that we have a full time secretariat that combines a PR function. As far as I know, we are currently the only organisation to do so and I think it gives us an extra dimension – a means of influence that can be projected outside of our own ranks. I was therefore happy to take the time to interview Geoff, and hope that you share with me the insight into his activities I gained.

### **Back in time**

Geoff's involvement with the ATC goes back 22 years, when Murray Evans Associates, the PR agency where he was a director at that time, ran a sales campaign targeting trade associations and the ATC responded. At that time, the ATC consisted of only five members, but had ambitions to increase its credibility by attracting new members, organising regular meetings, generating PR and to establish an impartial secretariat able to represent the interests of all members equally. Murray Evans agreed to take the ATC on board and act as both secretariat and PR consultants within an agreed framework.

### **Early activities**

One of Murray Evans' activities was to publish the first directory of ATC members in 1985. Geoff

recalls that it was very difficult to get members to give up details of their companies and he laconically mentions that it still is. In the early days, this may have been understandable, as Murray Evans was an unknown quantity, but given that the ATC Directory is a major tool in the ATC armoury and is widely distributed (and of course, Geoff's own personal discretion and confidentiality is by now well-proven) members nowadays could be expected to be far more forthcoming.

### **Euro PR**

A high profile PR campaign was also launched in the early eighties, when Murray Evans organised a delegation to the European Commission, successfully recruiting the active involvement of two British Euro MPs, to highlight the need for the European institutions to purchase translation services from private companies, rather than rely on the expensive services of the Commission and Parliament's own in-house translators. The campaign generated a great deal of publicity in the national media, focusing attention on translation companies, but it took a long while before European institutions began to allow private translation companies a chance to bid for work. One consequence of the campaign was to come further down the line – the formation of the European Union of Associations of Translation Companies. It was realised, following a meeting with the then British foreign minister, Sir Malcolm Rifkind, that if we really wanted to lobby in Brussels the ATC needed to be part of a bigger European grouping. Geoffrey was part of the initial gathering, the annual conference of our Italian counter-parts FederCenTri in Sardinia that resolved to form the EUATC.

### **Languageline born**

Another feature of the ATC we nowadays perhaps almost take for granted is the unique Languageline helpline service. Love it or hate it, Languageline continues to generate leads for ATC members, and is a singularly effective means of promoting translation companies to translation buyers. Every enquiry to Languageline is automatically sent a copy of

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the directory and the details of the enquiry forwarded to all ATC members.

Languageline was launched by Geoff in 1986. It's a service that can only exist backed by a full time and impartial secretariat, and over the years has generated enormous awareness of the ATC and the benefits of using professional translation companies in particular.

With the advent of the World Wide Web and the ATC's own website five years ago, the ATC's reach was extended even more, and enquiries via the website to Languageline accelerated. Today, the ATC website attracts around 6,000 hits each month and another of Geoff's functions is to keep the site maintained, updated and at a high position on the major search engines. Languageline leads are now being generated via the web too, meaning that customers are being attracted globally.

### Change of name

In 1997, Geoff sold his interest in Murray Evans, which by that time had become known as Westminster Communications. Shortly afterwards, the ATC contract came up for renewal and he pitched against his old company and won. He formed a new company in 1997, called Nexus Structured Communications, which assumed the role of ATC secretariat. Although Nexus specialises in the UK healthcare sector, the ATC remains a valued client and Geoff invests his personal time and enthusiasm in serving us.

### Conference comes on board

By 1996, the ATC had become a substantial organisation, with 80 members and acknowledged as the main forum for translation companies in the UK. It was time to build on that platform and so the first ATC conference was planned.

Geoff and his team at his former company, along with member Bernard Silver of UPS Translations planned, promoted, organised and ran the conference, held at the School of Oriental and African

Studies, University of London. It was a success, not only in terms of bringing ATC members together and providing an opportunity to network amongst each other, but also as a way of raising the ATC's profile in the media, attracting additional members – and, last but not least, it was able to contribute to the ATC's coffers with a net profit.

Since then, the conference has become an annual event attracting up to 100 delegates.

### Current activities

So is Geoff sitting back and enjoying the recently awarded 'pay rise'? Far from it. In actual fact, his personal contribution to running the ATC amounts to approximately 45 hours each month, plus a further 15 – 20 hours of his staff's time. During the 90 minutes I was in the Nexus office conducting this interview, the Languageline phone rang several times – an indication of the success of Geoff's PR efforts in creating awareness of the ATC.

But although the Languageline is perhaps the most visible reminder we, the ATC members, have of the ATC, Geoff's activities go far beyond merely servicing these enquiries. To follow is a breakdown of what he and his personnel do for us:

- Writing and distribution to the media of press releases about ATC activities
- Giving interviews to the media as a result of PR activity, e.g. a recent interview with the Independent newspaper
- Conducting specific research projects, such as the recent poll of universities offering translation and interpreting courses
- Receiving and distributing Languageline enquiries via e-mail
- Research, compilation, publishing and distribution of the ATC Directory
- Despatch of the ATC Directory to all Languageline enquirers
- Liaison with the web designer for updating the website
- Contact with all members to update and publish the Directory

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- Invoicing and collection of subscriptions
- Handling and processing enquiries for prospective new ATC members
- Organising, acting as secretary and minuting four Council meetings per year
- Organising, acting as secretary and minuting four marketing sub-committee meetings per year
- Organising, acting as secretary and minuting four education sub-committee meetings per year
- Organising, promoting, invoicing and presenting the ATC Conference
- Liaison and attending meetings to represent the ATC with other UK and international bodies, such as the ITI, IOL, EUATC, FIT
- Bookkeeping, budgeting, VAT returns and liaison with the auditors
- Provision of professional services to members (e.g. legal advice, debt collection, insurance)
- Arbitration on behalf of ATC members

### Widening the scope

As if he doesn't have enough to do on our behalf already, Geoff's going to be even busier in 2002, as the ATC seeks to raise awareness of translation companies to an even wider field. Our aim is to differentiate ATC members from freelance translators, one-man bands, 'letterbox agencies' and the recent proliferation of web-based translation agencies. To do this, Geoff's brief is to widen the spread of mailshots and PR activity to a database of exporting companies, the media and relevant trade associations, such as the ISTC (Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators) and others.

Under Geoff's guidance, the ATC has been able to exert major influence on the formation of several overseas trade associations, including in Hungary, the USA, Canada and most recently the Baltic States and Denmark. The pioneers setting up their associations in each of these countries have leaned heavily on the ATC to help them define their role and objectives. What's more, the ATC has been able to play a major role in the efforts of the European umbrella body the EUATC (European Union of

Associations of Translation Companies) to define a quality standard applicable to translation companies.

*New initiatives for 2002 include:*

- Streamlining the subscription system
- Publication of the newsletter on a quarterly basis
- A professionally conducted market research study of the UK translation industry, the results of which will be free and exclusively for ATC members
- Sponsorship for ATC events and publications
- Revamping the website
- Redesign and re-launch of the ATC Directory

My conclusion from interviewing Geoff, is that the ATC is getting good value for its money. It provides a wide range of real services with direct benefits and more are on the way. The ATC serves as a model for other translation industry trade associations and is held in high regard – which only goes to emphasise the degree of success achieved by our secretariat.

Robin Brown



*ATC Secretary Geoff Bowden in jocular mood*

**LIFELINE LANGUAGE SERVICES LTD  
NOMINATED FOR BUSINESS AWARD****BY  
CENTRAL & WEST LANCASHIRE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY**

In December 2001, the 7-strong team at Preston-based Lifeline Language Services was short-listed for the local Chamber's Business of the Year Award 2001.

Presented annually in recognition of a company's achievements in business and the community, as well as its support of the Chamber, the Award is given by fellow members of the Chamber of Commerce and this year was presented at the Christmas Lunch at the Blackpool Hilton.

Lifeline was founded in 1990 by Lynn Everson, BA Hons, MIL, MITI, a member of the ATC Council, and prides itself on looking after its greatest assets: staff, clients and suppliers. The company has an ingrained belief that education never stops, encouraging and funding the staff to achieve more, leading one staff member to take the DipTrans while another is taking English A level and a third is polishing up her web design skills.

From providing interpreters in Cairo and the depths of the French countryside, to advising blue-chip global companies on language strategy, transcribing conferences or police interviews, Lifeline invests time and money to ensure all processes run smoothly – anticipating and removing potential difficulties before they happen!

The company is also actively involved with schools and universities, offering work placements for around 4 students a year, as well as taking every opportunity to publicise our profession at business events, and to dispel the "I'll get this translated at the kebab shop" mentality.

Fanatical recyclers, nothing is wasted at Lifeline – even used stamps go to charity! Members of the Chamber of Commerce Export Club, the company is also involved with Business & Professional Women (UK), Friends of Winckley Square and Marie Curie Cancer Care.

"We didn't win this time, but we learned a lot from just taking part, and that's what it's all about. I would encourage all members to seize every opportunity to promote the Translation/Interpreting profession," states Lifeline managing director Lynn Everson.

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### **The Language Service wins Customer Service award**

ATC member The Language Service won the Customer Service category of the Parcellforce Worldwide Small Business Awards. The event was held at the Millennium Hotel, Mayfair, London on April 25 and was compered by Michael Buerk of BBC News.

The scheme, in its 10th year, has become the major national Awards event of its kind for UK small businesses. Having made the final three contenders from over 3,000 national entries last year The Language Service was delighted to win this year's Award from over 5,000 entries.

Doug Embleton, Managing Director, commented: "We had been invited to enter the Awards again, having come so close last year. One of the most pleasing aspects of the whole process was that we were able to significantly add to the content of our previous application and show that our focus upon customer service and other key business areas were an evolving story rather than a set of rigid systems".

The Awards are open to small businesses across all sectors and pose some searching questions around financial management, business strategy and many other areas in addition to Customer Service. The

results are validated by the University of Durham Business School.

Doug added: "There are five different Award categories but since we are a service company the Customer Service Award was definitely the best category for us to have won. Many of us operate in a sector which, circumstantially, involves limited direct contact with customers. This limited scope creates an added impetus to optimise communications with and levels of service to customers. The Award is not only for all of our Team. It is also good to see a translation, interpreting and language training service be successfully associated with Customer Service."

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Doug Embleton (centre) with Michael Buerk of BBC News and Gill Ryan, Marketing Director of Viking Direct, sponsors of the Customer Service Award.

## NEWS...NEWS...NEWS

### Translating chocolate

Millward Brown, the UK's leading market research company, has teamed up with ATC member COMTEC Translations to study the chocolate eating habits of people around the world. As part of a project commissioned by one of the world's leading manufacturers of chocolate products, COMTEC is ensuring that all questionnaires used are culturally acceptable and stylistically correct for use in the appropriate part of the world.

The research aims to establish the levels of customer satisfaction with the different brands available along with where and how often chocolate purchases are made. Recent languages for translation/proofreading have included Hindi, Tamil, Thai, Taiwanese, Japanese, Bengali and Danish as well as others as varied as Bahasa, Xhosa, Czech and Mandarin.

According to Sally Brown, Project Management Specialist at Millward Brown: "We needed to find a translation company with the ability to provide fast, efficient and high quality feedback in a multitude of different languages. COMTEC has risen perfectly to that challenge".



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## EVENTS.....EVENTS.....EVENTS.....

**ATC Annual Conference.** 11-12 September 2002, at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

Theme: 'Beyond Translation'

Call for papers on the following subjects:

- 1) How creative writers and translators can work together to create successful international advertising campaigns – from design to implementation. Best practice cases invited.
- 2) Developing productive relationships with your freelance suppliers – establishing a clear working framework. Best practice cases invited.
- 3) Getting project management down to a fine art. Best practice cases invited.

Please send proposals for contributions to:

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## **OTHER PEOPLE'S CONFERENCES**

**ISTC Annual Conference.** 27-29 September 2002, at Burleigh Court, University of Loughborough.

Theme: Tools of the Trade: Keeping pace with developments.  
[www.istc.co.org](http://www.istc.co.org).

**Aslib/IMI Translating and the Computer 24 Conference** 21-22 November 2002, , at the CBI, London

E-mail: [nadamides@aslib.com](mailto:nadamides@aslib.com)  
Tel: 00 44 20 7903 0031

**ATA Translation Company Division 3rd Annual Conference.** 13-16 June 2002, at the Embassy Suites Hotel, O'Hare-Rosemount, Chicago USA.

E-mail: [steve@iversonlang.com](mailto:steve@iversonlang.com)  
[www.tcdonline.org](http://www.tcdonline.org)

### **ATC Legal Helpline Service**

The ATC's legal help line, a free service to its members during normal office hours, has published some new or up-date fact sheets compiled by the team of experienced lawyers who provide the over the line service. The latest fact sheets cover:

- intellectual property rights
- trade marks
- patents
- copyright
- design rights and confidential information
- insurance for small businesses

The ATC Business Support Line can be called from within the UK on 08707 45 45 45. Remember this is a free service to ATC members and, in order to access the expert legal support, you must quote the ATC scheme number when telephoning. The service operates Monday to Friday, 8 am to 6 pm, with the exception of UK public holidays. ATC members can consult the Helpline as often as they wish without charge. A full list of the fact sheets available (there are over 40) can be obtained from Geoff Bowden by e-mailing him on [info@atc.org.uk](mailto:info@atc.org.uk)