

High-tech marketing in ASIA - In what language?

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Different countries have different languages, different dialects - especially in China. However, there are countries in which engineers write English but most of the engineering documents are written in the local language. Nevertheless, the marketing language in some of the countries is English. Japan, China and Taiwan technical specifications will be written in Japanese / Mandarin but in South Korea and India in English.

When we write a presentation or plan to exhibit in the ASIA as well as formulate a marketing material or a dedicated website we give attention to the language of the target market in order to be as clear as possible and pass the messages to the audience.

There are large-scale high-tech exhibitions in ASIA, especially in China, Japan, Hong Kong and India, and in every market and country we will write differently.

Most Chinese do not speak any language other than Mandarin and the local dialect (Cantonese). In universities too, the material is learned in the local language and English is not commonly used. Although Cantonese sounds very different from Mandarin, both are written in similar characters. It is easy for engineers and decision-makers to correspond in Chinese, however it is generally correct to say that they will find it difficult to understand and read in English. Therefore marketing material such as a website, presentations and printed marketing material are highly recommended to be written in Mandarin together with English. It is even more important to translate the company name to Mandarin, especially when planning a pavilion for the exhibition.

In Japan, however, the use of English is more common so it is easier to use marketing material in English. Although it will make easier for the Japanese reader to integrate Japanese or a full translation of the marketing material, including marketing messages. It is very important that the translation will be accurate and correct with the Japanese language. It is important to use the correct characters and not translate Japanese using Chinese characters. While the Chinese customer will understand better when marketed done in Chinese, the Japanese client will do a good translation and feel that we are trying to be local Japanese (very important at the Japanese culture).

Exhibitions in Hong Kong, such as ElectronicASIA, which take place once a year, are characterized by an international audience, but the majority will be mainland Chinese. Therefore, such exhibitions required a combination of Mandarin and English in the preparation of the pavilion. The marketing material will always include the three languages: English, Mandarin and Japanese separately, ie a brochure for each language separately. Never the less, the pavilion will integrate English and Chinese, due to the majority speakers of the two languages.

An important hi-tech market is South Korea. The Korean customers are characterized by reading and writing good English, so there is often need to translate marketing material. In fact, translation into

Korean is not acceptable among foreigner high-tech companies and that also shown to the Korean customer that this is Foreigner Company.

In India the situation is simpler and there is no need to translate any marketing materials but to use English.

What about business cards? Business cards must be translated into Mandarin and Japanese. Separate cards of course, since the Japanese customer will not appreciate the understatement that the Chinese language involves Japanese. The Chinese business card will be translated completely but the Japanese card will include a translation of the academic name and title only.