

LIONBRIDGE



GLOBAL TRANSLATION GLOSSARY A GUIDE FOR YOUR COMPANY

BY LIONBRIDGE

Characteristics of a Glossary:

Why a Translation Glossary is a Must-Have

Your Glossary as a Vital Reference

The Glossary Development Process

WHY CREATE A TRANSLATION GLOSSARY? WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

By reducing uncertainty in the translation process, a glossary promotes consistency, shortens the time it takes to translate a document, and reduces the overall cost of translation over time.

Having an approved glossary with input from your target markets will ensure that everybody speaks the same language and key concepts are not lost in translation.

Every business has its own language. Consider the term “drive.” As a verb, it can describe several different actions, such as operating a motor vehicle. In many cases, however, it is used as a noun to describe a computer device that stores data.

In other cases, there are multiple words that can have similar meanings. “Screen” and “monitor” are two examples. Both describe a device that provides visual output from a computer. You may prefer to use one or the other depending on context. Context is critical for meaning as both “screen” and “monitor” may have a completely different meaning when translating medical documentation, where patients can be screened and monitored.

Choosing the right word is a deliberate decision. Making sure everyone in your company uses the same term for the same concept requires discipline. All of this becomes even more complex as you attempt to provide this same information in multiple languages. If a word has multiple meanings, translating terminology from one language to another can be extremely complex, time consuming, and expensive. That’s why approximately 15% of all translation project costs arise from rework, and the primary cause of rework is inconsistent terminology.



A GLOSSARY IS YOUR REFERENCE FOR APPROVED TERMINOLOGY



A glossary helps you mitigate this consistency problem.

You may also hear it referred to as a lexicon, term base, or terminology collection. For smaller companies or projects, it may be as simple as a spreadsheet; larger multinationals and broad product lines require more automated or sophisticated methods to manage all the terms and translations.

The glossary contains your **key terminology** in your source language (typically English) and approved translations for that terminology in all your target languages. The glossary may also contain other metadata such as the definition, context, part of speech, and approval/review date. It is one of the key tools, along with a style guide and Translation Memory, to assure that all translated materials meet your quality requirements.

The glossary helps your translators make sure that each time a defined key term appears, in any language, it is used consistently and correctly. For example, the terms “laptop” and “notebook computer” are synonymous, but you should choose to use just one of these terms for all materials supporting your new product.

If you enforce that standard on your technical authors, you should enforce it among the translators and their materials as well. Moreover, the glossary becomes even more important for maintaining consistency if you use more than one translation partner. This is especially true in the case of tight deadlines when many translators may be working on various elements of a project simultaneously.

How Lionbridge Creates and Uses the Glossary

In the past, internal reviewers or a Language Service Provider (LSP) created glossaries manually. Today, most companies depend on an LSP’s automated **tools, processes, and experience** to create and manage glossaries.

To create your glossary, Lionbridge reviews your pre-existing source materials, style guides, and related reference materials to identify potential glossary terms. Some of this “term-mining” can be automated. Existing translations from previous versions of the product or from similar products can be leveraged using automated tools, helping the terminologists quickly find the correct translation for each term in the glossary. Then the translators provide the other metadata: usage, context, and definition.

Next, your company will need to validate the terminology for correct usage in each target language. Your in-house expert for each language, ideally based in the country where the translation will be used, needs to review the glossary to make sure each term is translated appropriately. After formalizing the development, translation, and management of your glossary, Lionbridge uses it during the translation process. The glossary provides a needed level of precision for the most important terms in your source material. As the translator works through your material, our Lionbridge Translation Memory (TM) tool automatically suggests sentences and phrases for translations of the text but also provides terminology from the approved glossary so it’s easier to be consistent in context.



CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE GLOSSARY



A well-crafted glossary is a powerful disambiguator. The best tools are easy to use and simple to understand, as demonstrated in these characteristics:

1.

An effective glossary is an **organized** reference. It is mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive. **Mutually exclusive** means that each term is included in the glossary only once. For example, a well-defined glossary will not include definitions for all of these terms: “car parts,” “car,” and “parts.” Instead, it simply provides a definition for “car” and “parts.” **Collectively exhaustive** means that all of the terms that require specific definitions are contained within the glossary.

2.

Glossaries contain only terms that are **specific** to your product. Glossaries do not need to contain terms found in other industry-standard glossaries or dictionaries. For example, the term “Integrated Online Terminology Management” describes Lionbridge’s Translation Workspace® (TW) service, which makes its customers’ glossaries manageable and accessible over the Internet. That term is specific to Lionbridge and should be included in its glossaries. The term “Translation Memory,” which describes a database of translated sentences and phrases, is used throughout the industry and should not be included.

3.

Glossaries should be as **brief** as possible. The larger the glossary, the more difficult it is to navigate. A glossary with many thousands of terms will simply slow down the translation process.

4.

Glossaries should provide a **context** as well as a **definition**. An effective glossary serves as a guide for the translator. It should not only contain the term, the definition of the term, and the translation of the term, but it should also provide context to help the translator comprehend proper usage.

5.

Glossaries often include a list of **Do Not Translate (DNT)** terms. For example, **product names** are typically not translated. Including these terms either within the glossary or in a separate list of DNT terms helps translators identify and render these terms correctly in the target language.

THE EVOLUTION OF A GLOSSARY

Think of a glossary as a living, breathing document, growing and evolving with your business, products, services, and value propositions.

As such, you and your Lionbridge team should establish a process of entering and reviewing changes, as well as storing and accessing the terms. You may want to plan for a review every six to twelve months as your company creates and encounters new terminology. Working together, you can make sure your glossary remains a valuable tool for ensuring consistency and clarity in all your translated materials.

FIVE BEST PRACTICES FOR DEVELOPING A TRANSLATION GLOSSARY

Based on many years of helping companies around the world develop and use glossaries, Lionbridge makes these suggestions for the best results:

1 Trust your team.

Consult with your Lionbridge translation team regarding which of your materials are optimal for glossary creation, taking into consideration the following:

- For **IT** companies, user documentation and corresponding user interface options are typically a good starting point.
- **Marketing** glossaries would be best served by including slogans and taglines as well.
- **Life Sciences** glossaries should take into consideration industry-standard terminology such as MedDRA, EDQM, etc. so as not to generate overlap.
- In general, adding product names and DNT terms is always a best practice.

2 Be specific.

For a new project, base your glossaries on the source material specific to that project. For projects that have already been translated, base your glossaries on the translated material, either segmented files or Translation Memories (TMs).

3 Stay on topic.

Focus on the core terminology of your product, processes, and company. Zero in on the most common, important, and potentially complex terms, as opposed to being all-inclusive.

4 Review everything.

Local experts should always see a final draft. When discrepancies arise among different reviewers, a good rule of thumb is that the most clear, self-evident translation should be retained.

5 Clarify language options.

Make sure you are clear about any language variance before you translate and validate the terms in your glossary. For example, specify which form of Spanish (e.g., Latin American or Puerto Rican Spanish) is needed.



THE GLOSSARY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



The process to create a glossary from the source files can be divided into the following main tasks:

1. Source File Preparation

Lionbridge ensures teams have workable files to proceed with automated extraction with our proprietary tool, Linguistic Toolbox (LTB). LTB accepts the most common writable file types such as doc/docx, xls, xls/xlsx, rtf, tmx, etc.

2. Terminology Extraction

Lionbridge will configure LTB to specify the required output and process the source files. The terminology extraction itself is automated and only requires machine time to complete.

3. Extracted Terminology Clean-Up

Like any other language process, the clean-up phase can be affected by the quality of the source, domain and subject matter, and many other factors. Customer-specific requirements must be considered when performing clean-up, which is a manual task.

Technical Clean-Up

First, Lionbridge recommends a preliminary technical clean-up of the raw terminology extraction to eliminate entries with numbers, alphanumeric strings and special characters as well as standalone letters and all other instances that are clearly not terms and can be considered noise.

Linguistic Clean-Up

The second phase of the clean-up consists of selecting the final glossary entries. This task must be carried out by a linguist who is familiar with the source language, the content, and the customer.

During the review phase, the linguist selects term candidates according to criteria such as relevance to the domain and frequency of use in the source material. General dictionary entries do not belong in a terminology glossary and must be deleted. Furthermore, the customer may have other non-linguistic

requirements that include adding only terms that are not present in existing glossaries or a maximum number of glossary entries. The output of the linguistic clean-up task is a glossary with a reduced number of terminology candidates.

Number of Terms in Final Glossary

The average number of terms in the final (cleaned) glossary would be somewhere around a 0.5% of the number of source words, but this can vary greatly depending on the source characteristics.

Note: Highly complex technical texts may produce a significantly large amount of terms. It is however not recommended to create glossaries larger than 200-300 entries. Larger glossaries may require much more attention and management effort.

4. Approval of Monolingual Glossary

When the final monolingual glossary has been prepared, it is sent to the customer or a Subject Matter Expert (SME) selected by Lionbridge, as agreed with the customer, for approval before translation.

5. Glossary Translation

This is a language-dependent task. The default format for the final glossary contains the following information columns:

source, target, part of speech, context and definition

Some customers also choose to insert blacklisted terms and approved synonyms.

6. Final Customer Approval

The final step in the glossarization process is to send the translated glossary to the customer for approval. Once this has been obtained, the glossary is ready for distribution, including uploading and linking to the corresponding translation memory as well as creating an automated glossary check for compliance.



About Lionbridge

Lionbridge partners with brands to break barriers and build bridges all over the world. For 25 years, we have helped companies connect with their global customers and employees by delivering translation and localization solutions in 350+ languages. Through our world-class platform, we orchestrate a network of passionate experts across the globe who partner with brands to create culturally rich experiences. Relentless in our love of linguistics, we use the best of human and machine intelligence to forge understanding that resonates with our customers' customers. Based in Waltham, Massachusetts, Lionbridge maintains solution centers in 23 countries.



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