

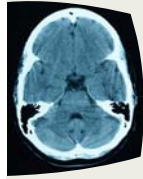


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# Connect *aia*

ATKINS INTERNATIONAL GLOBAL BUSINESS NEWSLETTER

## Benefits of Cross Cultural Training

Cross cultural training develops awareness between people where a common cultural framework does not exist and promotes clear lines of communication and better relationships. There are many benefits to be realized by both employers and employees:

Exposing people to unknown cultures and worldviews teaches them about others and most importantly about themselves.

Understanding others (and yourself) builds confidence and a sense of control.

Taking the mystery out of other cultures dissolves preconceptions, prejudices and stereotypes. This opens communications and relationships with others.

Mutual understanding results in greater

trust. Trust means a more cooperative and productive workplace.

Learning how culture can affect people's behavior allows one to deal with others with more sensitivity and understanding.

Opening your mind to other possibilities means approaching challenges more creatively at work.

Cross cultural training teaches people how to listen, what to listen for and how to interpret what they hear in a broader framework of understanding. Good listeners are good communicators. Both are great workers.

What will your business do with a more confident, communicative, sensitive and creative workforce? That is for you to decide.



Atkins International Associates, Inc. introduces a new, on-call interpreting service for our clients worldwide. Beginning in September 2008, we will offer foreign language interpreting services over the phone. This service is meant to help with day to day communications and to be essential in legal and medical offices throughout the country. Watch for more information!



# Translations: Proper Planning Saves Time & Money

In order to effectively communicate you may think all you need is someone to translate your words into another language. It's not that easy. The goal of any translated piece is not to simply convey words, but to convey a message. This message needs to be culturally sensitive to the foreign language population for which it is intended.



To this end, you need to work closely with your translation provider. It is helpful to have an early consultation with your agency project manager to discuss your needs and to plan accordingly.

The importance of planning cannot be under stressed. It will save you time, money and lots of headaches to plan ahead. Some important items that should be discussed in this initial discussion include:

Creating an initial copy that is appropriate for your target audience. You need to know the country and region of your target audience and the education level of the intended audience. Finalizing your copy now means less rewriting and lower costs later on in the project.

Spacing and layout – enough space needs to be allocated for the word layout. When translating from English to French or Spanish, the word count can increase approximately 20%. This number goes up for some of the Asian languages.

Go over any special or industry specific terminology the translators need to use.

Cost considerations – cost changes with language and word count. Additional graphics can also increase cost. Here is your chance to explore cost effective alternatives with your provider.

Set up timelines for the project. High-demand translators often have full schedules and timelines allow for them to plan for your project—and also allow you to

have the best translator possible. Also, setting up timelines in order to schedule translators at appropriate intervals will again save you time and money. Last minute rush fees are extremely costly.

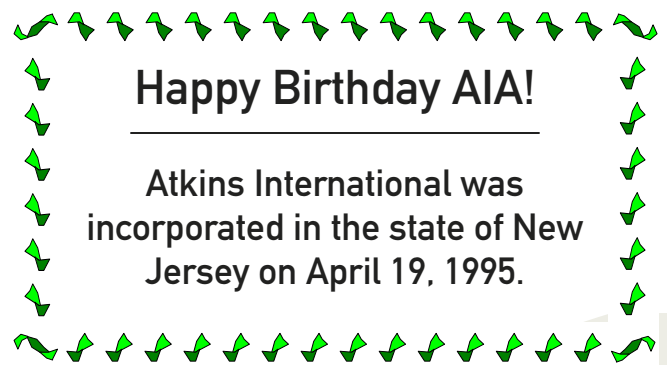
Timing is essential in ensuring a smooth cost-effective flow of translation work. Here are some things to look out for:

Get an estimate before the work is begun. Ideally you are able to present a globally written finalized document to get an estimated word count. If you are in a hurry, get this done quickly in case time is needed to negotiate.

If you cannot submit a finalized text for estimation, it may cost you more in the end. Do not think that changing a few words is a simple process. Translators do not translate word by word. Sentences and paragraphs are translated together to provide comprehensive meaning. Changing one expression, changes the meaning of its surrounding sentences. Changing a noun means going back through the document to check for gender agreement and correct pronouns throughout the text.

Allow time for proofreading. Most clinical trial managers prefer to have the translation reviewed by their staff and checked for formatting issues.

Identify who is responsible for each step of the production phase (including their area of expertise).



According to Internet World Stats ([www.internetworldstats.com](http://www.internetworldstats.com)) a website that tracks usage and population statistics for the internet, English is still the top language on the internet, but Chinese is catching up quickly. As of November 2007, 14.7% of all internet users (210 million people) do their surfing in Chinese. The number of Chinese speaking internet users has grown by 472% since the year 2000 and by 2010 may surpass English as the dominant internet language.



## International Relocation Part 2: Tips For Successful Repatriation Programs

In the last edition of *CONNECT*, we talked about how returning home from an overseas work assignment is more complex than simply returning home and resuming your old life in your home country.

Successful repatriation programs facilitate efficient reintegration into the home location while maximizing the employer and employee's return on the assignment investment. This article, a follow up to the original, explores suggestions for making an employee's return to his or her home country as stress free as possible for all involved.

When polled, Human Resources personnel identified the three top aspects of international assignments that pose the greatest risk to their companies:

1. Family difficulties while on assignments
2. Not taking advantage of the skills and knowledge acquired by assignees
3. Losing employees after repatriation

A successful repatriation program that addresses these risks begins before the employee even departs for their assignment. Information sessions on expatriacy and repatriacy should be held for both employees and family members. Pre-departure meetings should be held to discuss the employee's personal and professional plans for the assignment and to establish clear purposes and expectations. This includes communicating realistic expectations for the employee's post-assignment life back at home.

Another item that should be established before departure as well as maintained during assignment is a mentor relationship. Ideally the mentor is someone who has experienced repatriacy, is knowledgeable of the company and is

able to serve as the employee's advocate if necessary. Mentor and mentee should have frequent and candid contact throughout the assignment.

Constant communication with the home office is important. Studies show that continual communication means easier re-entry for the employee. The mentor-mentee relationship fosters this aspect as well as regular performance reviews and visits to the home office. During these communications, progress should be monitored and expectations should also be reviewed regularly.

Several months before returning to the home office, job opportunities that take advantage of the employee's new international skills should be discussed and established. The employee and the family should also start re-entry orientations led by an experienced repatriation trainer.

Once home, more orientation programs should commence. One should aid the employee in re-integrating into the home office work environment. Another should address the entire family's repatriation and any issues they are having upon their return. Ideally the family is able to meet with other repatriates in a group setting that is able to provide support and coping strategies for the challenges they are facing.

Expectations can make or break an international assignment. Repatriation services that support both the employee and their family pay off. By carefully planning out the purpose and expectations of the assignment, monitoring progress while on assignment and re-integrating the employee's new skills upon repatriation, both employer and employee should happily see a nice return on their investment.

### What The Experts Say

"...most people think (or perhaps secretly wish) that basic international cultural differences can indeed be ignored. Many people think 'cultural stuff' is an intuitive, soft skill that can simply be improvised on the spot. This can be a serious mistake, with a negative impact on the business bottom line."

-An excerpt from *Cultural Intelligence: A Guide to Working with People from Other Cultures*, Brooks Peterson



Have an idea for an article? Something you would like to see? Something you would like to submit? We are accepting submissions on topics related to language learning and acquisition, teaching methods, cross-cultural training and observations, diversity and translations or interpretations. The deadline for submissions for the Summer 2008 edition of *CONNECT* is June 1, 2008.

Send ideas or articles to [sherry.dineen@atkinsinternational.com](mailto:sherry.dineen@atkinsinternational.com).

# Grey Matters

If there were a magic pill that could keep your brain in a state of good mental health and prevent dementia as you age, would you take it? What if, instead of a magic pill, something as simple and fun as learning a second language would work? Studies have shown that acquiring a second language actually changes the brain and increases mental acuity.

There are two main types of visible tissue within the brain: white matter and grey matter. Grey matter is mostly composed of nerve cells and nerve tissue and its volume is associated with intellect (specifically the areas of language, memory and attention). The more grey matter in your brain, the more intelligent you are. Grey matters.

One such study, conducted by neuroscientist, Andrea Mechelli and her colleagues at University College, London, looked at the brain densities of people who were monolingual and bilingual. Brain scans revealed that "grey-matter density in the inferior parietal cortex was greater in bilinguals than monolinguals." The difference was especially pronounced in the brain's left side, which is known to control language and communication skills. The findings suggest "that the structure of the human brain is altered by the experience of acquiring a second language.

Another study, carried out by Dr. Ellen Bialystok and colleagues from York University in Canada, assessed cognitive skills of 104 middle class people of similar educational backgrounds between the ages of 30 and 88. Half were bilingual and half were monolingual. They found that those who knew two languages "were more efficient at all ages tested and showed a slower rate of decline for some processes with aging." "It appears... that bilingualism helps to offset age-related losses."

Added benefits of taking a language class include additional mental stimulation from organizing one's time to attend a class, do homework, and simply trying a new skill. Socializing with new people of varied ages and backgrounds is also a great benefit. People who stay social, age better physically and mentally.

So, stay smart, grow your grey matter and learn a second language!

To be removed from our email list, please contact [diane.burton@atkinsinternational.com](mailto:diane.burton@atkinsinternational.com)

*The mission of  
CONNECT*

With expertise in areas of language, culture and relocation, AIA will use the quarterly newsletter as a tool to unite and educate the global business community on issues of relevance for improving global business communication.

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## Who we are...

Atkins International Associates, Inc. is a global provider of language and cultural support programs including:

- Corporate language training
- International relocation support
- Cross-cultural training
- Diversity training
- Family support programs
- Language programs for children
- Interpretation services
- Translation services

Check us out on the web at:  
[www.atkinsinternational.com](http://www.atkinsinternational.com)  
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