

MEET THE CLIENT

In March, the LRG held its first in-person Meet the Client event since 2019, with budding and experienced linguists alike hearing from a range of LSP representatives. **Abigail Harby** reports

Meeet the Client 2022 – lively, inspirational, and thought-provoking – was a hit with seasoned experts, students, and all those in-between. On 17 March 2022, translators and interpreters gathered for presentations followed by carousel discussions in a kind of speed-dating event for professionals. Thanks to the set-up, opportunities to mingle and gather advice and information were infinite. Each table was a blend of different languages, levels of experience, and fields of interest. With four to six participants in each group, we were able to interact with the visiting representatives and others in similar positions.

Back to live

After a warm welcome from Dr Lindsay Bywood, Senior Lecturer at the University of Westminster, and Pamela Mayorcas, ITI LRG Chairman, the event kicked off with introductions from four speakers with diverse linguistic, cultural, and professional backgrounds.

Despite some COVID-19 restrictions, it soon became

apparent that nothing beats a live event, with the combination of established and wannabe translators and interpreters bringing a lively buzz to the University of Westminster's Fyvie Hall.

The event began with presentations from the special guest speakers, comprising Miguel Ortiz of scrivener notaries and translators John Venn & Sons; Evi Xydia of global language service provider On Call Interpreters and Translators; Jacqueline Martínez Patiño of life-sciences LSP Dora Wirth Languages; and Nicola Callow of generalist LSP Surrey Translation Bureau.

With five minutes on the clock and Lindsay acting as moderator, each speaker introduced themselves, their job role, and their experience; presented their company's history, subject and language specialisms, and recruitment procedures; offered top tips for CV writing; and shared insights into the translation and interpreting industry.

No matter which specialism attendees were looking to break into, there were countless gems of information for established and budding linguists alike.

All speakers noted that a lot of recruitment is done by virtue of recommendations from linguists already on their books or from directories such as those provided by the ITI and CIOL, specialist translation websites including ProZ, and ITI network and regional groups such as the ITI LIFT and Spanish Networks.

Post-COVID?

For the interpreters in the audience, the panel noted that while the worst of the pandemic may be over (we think?!), remote interpreting now ranks above both face-to-face and telephone interpreting. If you haven't already and want to offer something else, it might therefore be time to get to grips with this new tech.

Whether you're just starting out or you're further on in your career path, all speakers noted that CPD is essential. Agencies look for this on applications and CVs, so it must be relevant and well-evidenced.

More specifically, when it comes to CVs, it was recommended that you include your name and language combination in the file name so that recruiters can see at a glance exactly

what services you provide.

It was also suggested that you ask for testimonials at the end of interesting projects or for work you are especially proud of, and from project managers you get on well with; they may come in handy in future.

Keeping an eye on industry developments is also a vital way to stand out from the crowd. Congratulating a company on winning a tender could be a great conversation starter for a potential employer.

Finally, making the right first impression is paramount. If you can't find a name or where to send your application on their website, don't send a general email – call the company and ask for a direct contact.

Short and Sweet

After the succinct and informative introductory presentations, the focus turned to the roundtable discussions. This purposefully condensed plenary session allowed more time for the 'speed dating' element of the event, with each of the four speakers plus several other professional linguists spending ten minutes with each table of attendees, allowing them to pose their own industry-, company-, or language-specific questions.

Nicola Callow spoke about the benefits of internships and summer placements for students or recent graduates to gain experience and get their foot in the door. Meanwhile, María Horcas and Ashlie Simpson of Strategic Agenda, which works with international development organisations, NGOs, local charities, and global companies, introduced us to a whole new world of translation, editing, design, and content writing for the development sector.

Top Tips and Tricks for Translators and Interpreters

1 Network, network, network – put yourself out there and talk to new people. You never know who the next person you talk to could be or where your next career opportunity could come from.

2 Know what you know and don't know, you know? – acknowledge your knowledge, your strengths, and your skills and emphasise those which make you stand out.

3 Hobbies aren't just for the weekend – highlight your interests, passions, and experiences on your CV. You never know – there may be a niche market out there just waiting to be discovered. They could even serve as the conversation starter that lands you your next job.

4 Be transparent and responsive – if you can't give a precise answer or don't know your availability right away, that's fine: send a reply saying exactly that. Any answer is better than no answer.

5 Specialise and diversify – deciding on a subject specialisation will allow you to accumulate specific thematic and terminological knowledge. Consider proofreading, editing, post-editing, or copywriting to fill the gaps when there are dips in demand.

6 Take every morsel of feedback you're offered – whether you're a freelancer or working in-house, remain open to feedback. Praise and criticism will make you a better linguist.

Several guests covered the fields and language combinations currently in demand and how these trends could change over the coming years. It seems legal, medical, and financial are all safe bets, although no realm should be ruled out completely.

Creative insight

Finally, Nathalie Reis brought up the topic of transcreation and copywriting and how a translator could utilise them to their benefit. If you're a passionate linguist and a creative thinker, this could be right up your street. Creative translation, transcreation, copywriting, or even exactly what I am doing now – article or blog writing – could be the perfect add-on to complement your translation, editing, or proofreading services.

The quote of the evening came from Pamela Mayorcas, who said she believes translators and interpreters, boasting linguistic and highly specific subject knowledge, are among the most intelligent people. Just to boost our egos even more, Lindsay Bywood added that they are also among the kindest people she's ever met, always willing to lend a hand and offer advice.

Both of these traits were abundantly clear during this collaborative and thought-provoking Meet the Client event, and thanks are due to the speakers and table hosts for volunteering their time to make the session a success.

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