

HOW TO USE INTERPRETERS



Q: How do interpreters work?

A: Interpreters are the oral bridge between two languages. The interpreters at Suzuki-Myers have received extensive training, and they have experience in variety of areas. This does not make interpreters experts in variety of fields, but they can readily train themselves by studying the job content before assignments. There are two steps for interpreters and clients to take.

Pre-Assignment: Even with high skill and extensive experience, it is very important for interpreters to study materials/speeches before assignments take place. This study includes familiarization with vocabulary (company-, industry-specific acronyms/terms, jargon), understanding of concepts, etc. At this point, interpreters might come across the need for further clarification, and pose questions about materials. Please be patient with interpreters if you receive such a request; we appreciate your cooperation providing our interpreters with answers. (Interpreters armed with such information are your strong allies!)

During Assignment: Interpreters' concentration while on their assignment is tremendous. They are focused on the process of listening to a speaker, interpreting into a target language, and listening to a speaker again. Thus, please refrain from interrupting interpreters (including passing notes, talking, etc.).

Q: How to decide which method to use?

A: The answer to this question involves providing us with some information. The more information you have, the easier it is for us to give you advice. Let's say you have 10 presentations lined up for one-day conference. Then, simultaneous interpreting would be preferable. But if your presentation were to last 5 or 10 minutes and you would like to spend more time for Q&A session to sell your products, consecutive interpreting would be better. If a situation requires very precise information transfer, we recommend consecutive interpreting. Please keep in mind that consecutive interpreting takes as almost the same amount of time as a speaker speaks (thus doubling the total time required). However, this should never be a deciding factor, because you might jeopardize your business chances/relationship by rushing to finish presentations. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you are not sure which method works for your situation.



Q: Why do we need to have a minimum of two interpreters for simultaneous/whispering methods?

A: An interpreter interprets as a speaker speaks. You can try this as you watch news on TV or listen to radio. Can you repeat what a speaker says as he/she speaks? Can you say exactly the same thing as the speaker says? Interpreters are not only doing this process, but also changing one language to another, using knowledge and studied materials while considering cultural implications. The longer you do simultaneous interpreting, the higher your exhaustion level is. It is said that human brains can have a high level of concentration only for 15-20 minutes. This is the reason a minimum two interpreters are required – the interpreters take turns. Most of the time, you will find interpreters switching every 15 to 20 minutes. By doing this, interpreters can take a little rest in between their turns, then go back right into interpreting. For some cases, we request having more than two interpreters based on the exhaustion level due to the high-level context, such as the normal procedure at UN meetings in Europe.

Interpreter-friendly environment

The bottom line is: interpreters are humans. They are not like machines where you feed in one language and out comes another language! When there is a heated discussion (or many people are involved) in a meeting, participants tend to forget to take breaks or even lunch. In order to keep the high quality and accuracy of interpreting we require, it is necessary for interpreters to be given breaks and meals. It is not easy for interpreters to ask for a break. Therefore, please plan breaks in your schedule. Also, interpreters appreciate it if you would be able to provide a glass or bottle of water, a chair to be seated, a table for placing a writing pad & utensils and a microphone (as needed).

