Book Summary

The CTP team created this summary to help our future certified professional translators with complimentary reading information about the uses of *The Translator’s Handbook* by Morry Sofer.

Here we have an easy way of reviewing the most important tips from the author of the book that certainly will be the key to a successful career as a professional translator.

Introduction

Translation exists in order to connect people through a better understanding and interpretation of our thoughts, actions, feelings, and even the literal translation of the words.

Chapter 1 – How to Get the Most Out of This Book – Uses of the Handbook

This book is meant to be a sourcebook for all translators and interpreters in all language pairs. Within this book’s summary, you will get to know the history of translation, the requirements for becoming a professional translator, translation techniques, and digital technology—which is a fundamental component of translation. This topic is constantly changing and we are always learning something new.

Most chapters in this book depend on the new or experienced translator’s needs. They are all very important if you are hoping to become a translator today.

You will also find it useful to read and take some notes from the appendices of this book which consist of a large resource of translation dictionaries, dictionary sources, translation software, translation training, interesting information about expanding your knowledge in a new area of translation, and much more.

Chapter 2 – Historical Overview of Translation
Translation is one of the oldest occupations in the world. It’s been around since the beginning of Christianity.

Before there was writing, there was speaking and all nations have always spoken different languages and dialects. Linguistically-gifted people used translation in order to trade, intimidate each other, and also to bring words of peace to other people back in those days.

In addition to having an important position and taking part in important decisions, a translator also had to be aware of how a mistake could damage his reputation. If anything went wrong, he would be responsible for any failed negotiation.

Translation was also heavily used by the church to translate the meanings of documents used for maintaining and transmitting cultures and traditions (including sacred writings and prayers) into many different languages over the years. The translation of the Bible was closely linked to the development of national cultures in the early ninth century.

The new openness in today’s world, the progress of global communication with the advent of computers, and the international awareness of many languages and cultures have played a critical part in shaping the history of translation and also in helping civilization take an important step into the next age.

Chapter 3 – Requisites for Professional Translator

The ability to translate a word or even one sentence into another language does not mean that one can be considered a qualified translator. Rather, it is necessary to develop this special talent, usually fueled by a passion for translating.

Translating is an innate type of skill – it is the ability to translate one language into another precisely, accurately, and in all of it meanings.

Here are the ten requisites needed prior to become a professional translator

1. Knowledge of both the source and target language – being fully familiar with both languages.
2. Familiarity with the culture in which the language is being used – knowing traditions, manners, and being familiar with people that use it.
3. Ability to keep up with the growth and changes of the language – words might change their meaning from time to time.
4. Making distinctions between the languages translated from and into.
5. Ability to translate in more than just one area of knowledge – interest in increasing vocabulary in a variety of related and unrelated fields of translation.
6. Facility for writing or speaking – must be able to translate accurately either orally or in writing.

7. Development of a good speed of translation – work fast without compromising the integrity of your documents.

8. Engaged research skills – the ability to acquire references to produce a high quality translation.


10. Consider the fact that certain languages are in high demand if you wish to be busy on a regular basis doing translation work.

The more areas a well-rounded translator can cover, the better the opportunity for developing a successful career. We find it very helpful to become proficient in several areas and it also makes it easier to add more.

Experience is still the most important key to an effective translation, and practice makes it perfect.

**Chapter 4 – Translator Self-Evaluation**

In this chapter you will have a chance to make an honest assessment of your current level of translation skills using the scale offered in this book. This will help you to identify your current position as a translator. This chapter will also help you to find out if you are ready to start making your living as a professional translator or if you need more time and experience to become a well-rounded translator.

**Chapter 5 – Translation Problems**

Here we have some generic language problems that present an extremely complicated means of communication. Reading this chapter will give you a better understanding of what translating really means. It is not just a replacement of a word in the source with another word in the target language; it also involves your personal judgment in making the right decision about a document’s contents and finding the best way to translate it. The intention of pointing these problems out is to help you understand what you will be up against as a translator and to prepare you to face these challenges as they occur throughout your career.

**Chapter 6 – Translation Techniques**

The topics considered in this chapter may help you understand what is necessary to continue with your translation assignments. It gives you an overview about information related to translation and business, the techniques used in translation, and other tools to help you handle the translation work.
You also have the chance to identify how you feel about certain types of translation work by answering the questions presented by the author.

Chapter 7 – Translation, Computers and Internet

Even though new technologies now surround us more than ever and continue to change at an amazing pace, translation continues to be a human function. Computer technology has helped a lot in the translation arena in increasing its productivity. It has offered us more than just word processing as it has also helped us to get in touch with the real world as the internet has been such an important source of information which makes the translator’s life easier. Translation software can save you time but you cannot rely on it entirely because the translation will not be as accurate as a human translation.

This chapter also has great tips for uses of the internet for translators: -- reference materials, online dictionaries, glossaries, and sources that will help you find cultural information.

Chapter 8 – Dictionaries, References Literature, and Terminology Management

The use of a good dictionary is very important for a translator no matter how good he is with the target and the source language. Having a dictionary as a reference source of information is crucial, especially as both language and knowledge change almost every day.

Having a good way of managing your sources of terminology is also an important factor. Keeping an organized and up-to-date terminology archive increases you chance of becoming a reliable translator in specific areas of translation.

Chapter 9 – Key Translation Areas

Here we have a list of certain translation areas that are considered more important than others when thinking about starting a translation business.

- Advertising
- Automotive
- Business/Finances
- Civil Engineering
- Computers
- Environment
- Law
- Social Sciences
- Telecommunications
The general requirements to work in these areas are: experience, good terminology management, and being prepared to approach the subjects carefully and selectively. It also involves the identification of possibilities available to you in each field, trying out new equipment and translation programs, staying in touch with your client, and making sure both of you have a good understanding of the terminology you are expected to use.

**Chapter 10 – How to Operate Successfully as a Freelance Translator**

This chapter is dedicated to those who may be considering a freelance translator career. There are many details you need to consider before launching yourself as freelance translator. We have listed a few below:

- Financial issues – you work for yourself, so make sure you know everything about your income, and be prepared to pay taxes.
- Pricing yourself – every piece of translation work is different so make sure to price them accordingly.
- Getting paid – here you will have to set up your own statements such as having a purchase order and perhaps getting part of the payment in advance.
- Record keeping – organization; make yourself an archive to keep all your files making your job easier when you are in need of a reference or even your client’s information.
- Establishing credibility - every effort is worthwhile to ensure the best piece of translation work.
- Independent contracting – it is important to maintain your professional integrity and not to make false employment claims.

**Chapter 11 – Sources of Translation Work**

You can either work as a freelance translator or find an agency to be affiliated to. As a freelance translator, you will work for yourself; that includes finding your own clients and working with them directly. Finding clients can be done through contacting law firms, embassies, and many other businesses that might be interested in your translation services. Sometimes these are unreliable sources of work, so you will probably find that your best bet will be working for a translation company.

Working with a translation agency does not keep you from finding your own clients, but you need to be sure you can manage your time and not over commit yourself. Remember, your reliability is your best asset.

**Chapter 12 – A Career as an In-House Translator**

To pursue a full-time translator career, you will need to consider these following aspects:
• Level of expertise – companies and agencies are usually looking for professionals with a strong background in their field.

• Translation training – a well-prepared translator has a better chance of finding a good in-house position; being accredited with any major translation organization can be very helpful.

• The right language – a full-time translation career is possible if you work with one of the major spoken languages of the world.

• Multiple languages – companies are usually looking for individuals who are able to speak more than just one major language.

• Pros and cons – steady income, benefits and everything else that goes with steady employment such as less freedom and flexibility. It is more likely that you will be working with just one specific area of translation and finding your work repetitive.

Chapter 13 – Training Programs

There are no academic degrees required in order to become a translator, although there are advantages to pursuing specific translation training since there is always a need for a highly specialized technical translator. It may also help you build your reputation and authority in a specific field of translation.

Chapter 14 – Oral Interpretation

Despite the fact that translation and interpretation may represent the same thing, they are very distinct from each other. Usually translation has a lot to do with actual text translation while interpretation is related to the ability to listen to information and reproduce the same message orally in the second language.

Interpreting requires different training from written translation and the area of work is not nearly as vast as professional translation.

Chapter 15 – Translator’s Organization

Being a member of a translation organization can help your career grow with the association. As their committees work to help their translators expand horizons, you will be provided with more work opportunities and more interesting work as a professional translator.

Chapter 16 – Translation a Lifelong Career

A translator never stops learning. Languages keep changing everyday and you will probably increase your knowledge of the language by continuing to learn new words and terms that in turn, will benefit your translation performance.