The Consultant Interpreter

Consultant interpreters, in addition to working as interpreters, offer conference organisers a specialised service: recruiting and coordinating a team of interpreters.

Consultant interpreters are working interpreters who serve as a liaison between the conference organiser and the team of interpreters. They recruit a team of interpreters by working languages, subject matter, meeting location, and their knowledge of the interpreting market.

The role of the consultant interpreter is to provide the meeting organiser with high-quality interpretation services well-suited to the organisational needs of the meeting, while ensuring optimal working conditions for the interpreters. This service is generally compensated through consulting and management fees.

Although any interpreter may also work as a consultant interpreter, it should be noted that working as a consultant interpreter requires specialised skills and knowledge.

What consultant interpreters do:

1. Consultant interpreters have the necessary knowledge and connections to provide a quick and professional response to incoming interpreting requests.
2. The consultant interpreter obtains as much information as possible about the meeting (active and passive languages, subject matter, date, venue, time, number of participants, any planned recording of the interpretation) in order to determine the real language needs of the meeting and provide an accurate price quote.
3. He/she ensures that that the meeting room is large enough for simultaneous interpreting equipment and advises organisers on applicable ISO norms.
4. Once the quote has been accepted, he/she obtains written confirmation from the meeting organiser, such as a signed master contract with cancellation clauses, and then offers firm contracts to the interpreters.
5. When recruiting, consultant interpreters ensure that the team covers all required languages and take into account interpreter specialisations, as appropriate. The use of relay is kept to a minimum.
6. The consultant interpreter coordinates with the organiser to send all necessary documents to the interpreters, such as the agenda, minutes of previous meetings, prepared remarks, and session documents. He/she also obtains any existing glossaries and can organise briefing sessions for the interpreters if the meeting is technical.
7. If he/she is not a member of the team, the consultant interpreter can designate a team leader who is fully acquainted with the arrangements and will report back after the meeting. Even
when not present, the consultant interpreter stays informed to ensure the meeting runs smoothly and is aware of any possible improvements for future meetings.
8. When members of the Association act as consultant interpreters they are bound by the strictest secrecy, which is observed towards all persons and with regard to all information disclosed in the course of the practice of the profession at meetings not open to the public.

Recommended citation format: