



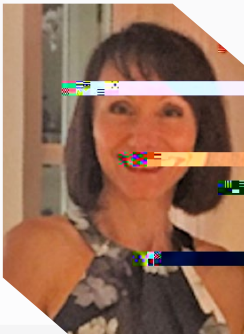
# Introduction

While most feelance and/or have experience of working in agencies, and advice for dealing with the latter has been well documented by CIOL through a webinar and publication, we decided to explore the relationship between feelance and/or working directly with their clients, in particular in the media. To this end, we invited experienced and/or, all members of the Translating Division Steering Group, and asked them about the advantages and challenges of working directly with clients and to give advice about how to find them. We hope you will find this a useful and interesting read, and we can see a feelance and/or.

**K C - MCIL CL**  
**Coordinator of CIOL Translating Division**  
**Steering Group**



# Working with direct clients / a freelance and/or



## **R** MCIL CL

Whilst there can be drawbacks to working with direct clients, such as the unpredictability of the flow of work and the risk of spending a lot of time on one single project, there are many advantages.

The first one is that you are likely to get a higher fee than if you get work via an agency. Also, by approaching clients within your area of specialism, you may end up spending more time doing the type of translation work you enjoy. Also, by dealing with a direct client, you may get a better sense of the overall project, and thus get better visibility as to where the translation fits within it, which is not only helpful for the translation task itself, but can also be rewarding in terms of understanding the part you have played in making the client's project a success.

Ultimately, there is likely to be a happy medium between working with agencies and with direct clients, which all depends on personal preference and experience.

So, for now, here are a few tips on how to increase your direct client base.

Get yourself known and reach out to your potential clients by networking and having a strong presence online.

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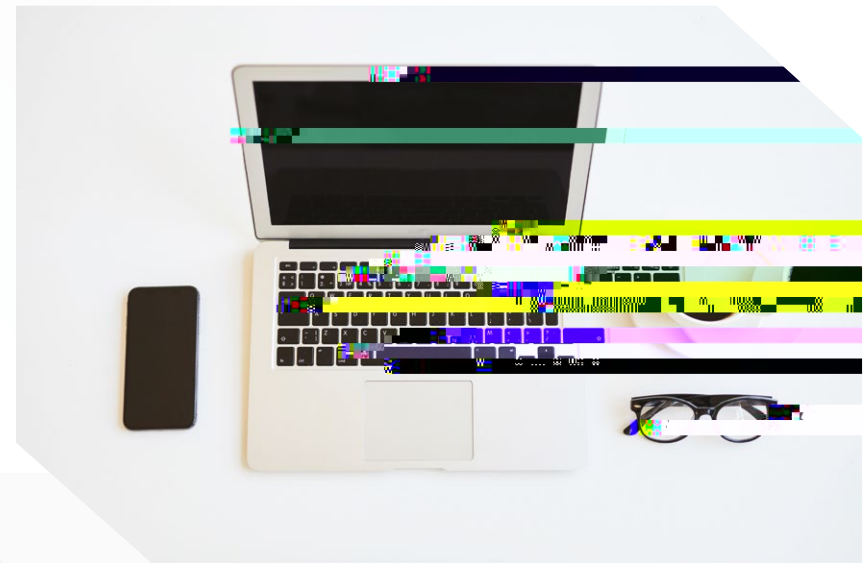
- Make sure you tell all your friends and acquaintances about what you do, as word of mouth can bring in clients, and of course, it's a good idea to have your business cards handy!
- If you're not already one, become a member of CIOL and any other membership bodies you think would enable you to meet fellow translators and other members of the profession. CIOL organises regular events like its Annual Conference and a raft of CPD events, while its divisions put together many half-day events as well as shorter online seminars which are worth attending as you are not only likely to learn something new, but you will also get the chance to make new acquaintances and possible business partners. It's worth knowing that CIOL is also on the look-out for volunteers to help at its events, so that's also another way to join in the fun and make friends in the process!

- As a linguist, you can feed your passion for languages by attending language fairs where you cannot only browse through the many stalls and pick up a few books, but you will also get to meet fellow linguists and hear about all the latest developments in the fields of teaching, translation, interpreting etc during the seminars that take place at the fair.
- Depending on your area of expertise, for example whether you are a legal, medical, technical, finance etc translator, one way to reach your potential clients is to attend events such as conferences, exhibitions and talks related to your particular specialism. If you do plan to attend such an event, it is useful to do some research so you have a clear understanding of the types of companies, attendees or exhibitors who will be at the event including anticipating their potential translation needs, which will enable you to approach them more confidently, market yourself better and target your services more effectively.

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- Create an Internet site and buy some advertising space in relevant publications, depending on your areas of specialism.
- Set up a LinkedIn account and other business-related social networks, and most importantly be active on those networks. This means posting regularly including, for example, feedback from clients and links to translations you have done so potential clients can see the breadth and quality of your work.

Wishing you all the best in your quest for new clients!





Working with direct clients / a freelance organisation

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# Working with direct clients / a freelance translator



**N R**  
**MA MCIL CL,**  
**Russian/Ukrainian Language Translator**

Once you have found your direct clients, here is some recommended advice:

1. Charge your highest rates (within reason). Direct clients respect professionalism and do not expect a good translator to be cheap.
2. Educate your client about what a translator can and cannot do. In many cases it would be an eye-opener for your client.
3. Explain to your client that translators could be their bridge to understanding cultural nuances and conventions of the target language culture, and that the client should pay attention to translators' suggestions on improving the translated text to make it better adapted for the target reader and to comply with cultural norms and conventions of the client's international partners.
4. Be professional and stick to the deadlines no matter what! If you slip once, you might as well say goodbye to your direct client. There are plenty of highly professional and competent translators around waiting to poach your client.
5. Ask clarifying questions during translation to avoid mistranslation, explaining to the client that your goal is to make the translation read as good as it was written in the original language (and sometimes even better).
6. Try to develop good long-term working relationships with your clients.
7. Keep your eyes peeled and your ears pricked! You never know whom you might meet and what might come out of it.
8. Be generous to other translators – if you recommend them to somebody, they might recommend you to their clients. Remember that direct clients rely on recommendations from trustworthy people for hiring a new translator.
9. Try to maintain a good balance between working for translation agencies and direct clients to increase your earning potential and to avoid the vicious circle of feast or famine.
10. Always be a pleasant and polite person to work with and mind your e-mail and phone manners! Direct clients often recommend a highly skilled translator to other potential clients.

Good luck with your first direct client!

# Working with direct clients / a freelance and a translator

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### MCIL CL Member of Council

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One may argue that any type of client is a direct client. In fact, many translators do not distinguish between translation agencies and direct clients. For the purposes of this contribution, a direct client means everyone else apart from translation agencies; a client

that is not acting as an intermediary between you, the translator, and the final receiver of the translation.

Direct clients have acquired a certain prestige over the years. It is perhaps generally accepted that having direct clients is better than working with agencies. As with everything, there are advantages and disadvantages.

It is likely translators may be able to charge direct clients higher fees, although this may not always be the case. Ultimately, it all comes down to the client's budget.

In addition, direct clients may not know enough as to how the translation industry operates. On the one hand, there is an element

of 'educating the client' when working with them. On the other hand, working with translation agencies may imply an established working relationship and process where work is streamlined, rates are agreed, contracts are signed, and everyone knows their role and required tasks once and from the offset.

Finding direct clients takes time and effort. Ideally, the clients come to you. Inbound marketing should place you in front of the eyes of your targeted clients. This requires market and client research,



# Working with direct clients / a freelance translator

**K C -**  
**MCIL CL**  
**Owner/Director of KLAS Languages**

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There are several advantages to working directly with clients as a freelance translator instead of through agencies.

Firstly, you are more able to negotiate your own rates with a client directly and you are more likely to be able to charge more than you would charge an agency as there is no intermediary.

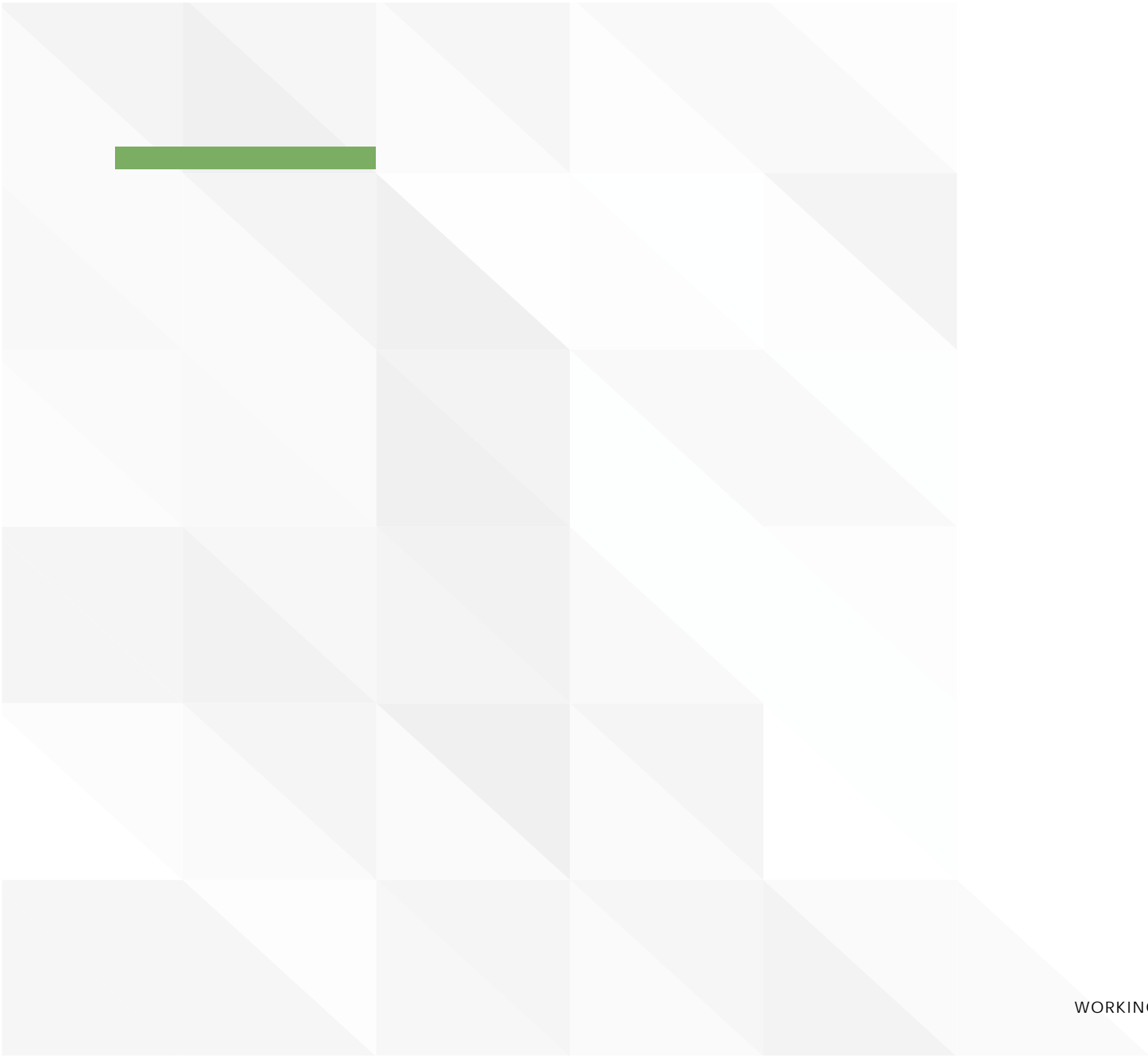
Secondly, if you have any questions regarding the project, such as terminology that you may not understand or regarding the formatting of the translation, it is easier and quicker to ask the client directly than going through a third party.

Dealing with the client directly, you are better able to understand their needs and you can establish a long-lasting relationship. If the client is happy with your translation and the way you have handled their project, from initial enquiry to delivery, they are much more likely to keep reverting to you in future for their translation requirements.

A direct client will also be happy to spread the word about your services, and recommend you to their relatives, friends, and colleagues and leave you positive reviews on your website or social media profiles.

However, dealing with a client directly has some disadvantages.

Often, a member of the public approaching you to translate a document, has never dealt with a translator before and the procedure needs to be explained to them, especially in the case of certified translations. You may also need to justify your quote; if for instance the document only has a few lines of text to be translated but has a complex layout with tables, boxes, logos, seals, signatures or lots of numbers (such as a school transcript or a bank account statement), you would need to explain that your quote also reflects the time spent reproducing the original formatting of the source document or the client may not understand why you are charging so much for just a few lines of text.



WORKING WITH DIRECT CLIENTS





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# About CIOL

