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Yuri Ivanov of IVANNOVATION Language Management on How Technology Transforms Multilingual Communication

Yuri Ivanov, CEO

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"We create means of communication between cultures and speakers of different languages. Instead of separating people, we build bridges, we build mutual understanding. And we do this professionally and with passion." Yuri Ivanov

CEOCFO: Mr. Ivanov, what was the concept when you founded the company and what is your focus today? Mr. Ivanov: We founded the company 23 years ago in an effort to help companies to do correct and meaningful translations and software localization. We put together translation professionals, software engineers, and graphic designers. We started offering these services to companies, and it turned out to be a thing that a lot of them needed: many had talented software engineers, but not many had professional translators, let alone translators who knew how to translate software applications.

As of now, we probably do about 50% of our business with software companies. We have built a vast network of professional translators who specialize in various domains. This allows us to translate materials for many industries, such as construction, aerospace, legal, automotive, life sciences, and others. We focus on blending professional linguistics and latest technology to provide accurate, reliable translations. We build bridges between speakers of different languages of the world.

CEOCFO: What does correct and meaningful mean as far as translation? What was wrong with translation and what continues to be wrong with standard translations?

Mr. Ivanov: Even though translation is a 24 billion-dollar industry, there was and is a wide spread misunderstanding that translation is something everybody can do. All translators do is just replace one word with another, right? This leads people to choose the cheapest offer or even something like: "Oh your daughter studied Spanish in high school. Ask her to translate our documents." As a result, people are getting something which does not look like English, which seems to be an absolute proof that this is a great translation. Then they send it out there to the world and unpleasant things may happen because that non-

English document is inaccurate at best, or it does not mean anything and contains profanities at worst.

What I think correct and meaningful means is that translation is accurate in form, style, and content. Accurate translation relays the message of the source document in its entirety. To achieve that we hire only professional translators for whom translation is not a side gig. That means that our translators are not people who come home after their "real" job and sit down to translate. For our translators, translation is their main job, they know their topics, and they are experts in their domains. For example, if we need to translate something about internal combustion engines, we hire a translator who is very familiar with what internal combustion is and how such an engine works. Such a translator knows exact terminology, where, and how it is used. Such a translator is located in the country of the language in which we translate. This allows us to achieve not only the professional knowledge of the subject, but we also achieve the correct language which is used in this country for this particular topic. When a reader in this country reads this document, the reader sees it as if it was written in their language; they don't see it as a translation.

CEOFCO: How do you ensure that your translators are keeping up-to-date in their areas of expertise?

Mr. Ivanov: We are lucky that over the years we were able to meet and forge very good partnerships with various professional translators and translation teams. These people became our partners. We began by setting a pretty high bar and we keep working with these people, so if they were professional to start with, then their professionalism keeps going up. I think it is natural for any professional to keep his or her knowledge and skill growing. There are many in-person and online resources which our partners can use for professional development. They demonstrate this through additional certifications or knowledge of advanced processes.

The second thing is that we pay a lot of attention to customers' feedback. Knowing customers' opinion tells us whether something needs to be adjusted, corrected, or maybe looked at in more detail in terms of how we do translations and how our partners do their work. If necessary, we make an adjustment, although it is rare that an adjustment is needed because our partners are all very seasoned and knowledgeable people.

CEOFCO: How do you reach out and how do potential customers understand the quality?

Mr. Ivanov: This can be a difficult subject because not everybody grasps what is at stake. Our marketing department is trying hard to educate people on what a quality translation is and why it is important to hire a professional.

One of the hardest parts is to change the perception that some customers have of translation as a commodity they buy like printer paper. In fact, buying translation is buying expertise, industry knowledge, and state of the art processes. Behind the price of translation, there is a very detailed and technical process. The process

requires involvement of customer resources. Those customers who are willing to participate in this process usually win big. They get their budgets under control and they have happy clients overseas.

Our customers pay for translation only once. After any given sentence is translated, it is entered into a language database dedicated for that customer, and the translation reused in future documents for the benefit of consistency and cost savings. This concept is not new in the professional translation industry, but not many outside of the industry are even aware of it. For example, not many realize that if they make an initial investment in proper translation of their glossaries, or even creation of the glossaries, that this foundation will allow them to reap enormous benefits both in cost and quality downstream. Their content, terminology and phraseology will be consistent and maintained throughout different versions of the documents, different media, various approaches, and leadership in their companies.

CEOFCO: *Do you find industries that have higher regulatory requirements tend to look for better quality translation?*

Mr. Ivanov: I think most of them do. In medical care or law, for example, most companies understand that translation may really affect life and death decisions. Somebody can receive a life-threatening treatment or go to jail because of an error in translation. It is extremely important to translate exactly what the source says; otherwise it may have very bad consequences. And again, maintaining this level of translation is only possible with professional translators and technology.

CEOFCO: *Would you tell us about what you are doing at IVANNOVATION related to COVID-19?*

Mr. Ivanov: We have developed a system in which we have put together a large corpus of bilingual data in several languages. We offer this corpus to translators and to companies in case they need to translate anything which is related to the COVID-19 virus. Why is it important? This bilingual data provides a rather high jumping platform for a translator or company in an effort to understand a document in a different language. It is like a toolkit, which has many things ready to do the job right. Instead of searching hundreds of resources for the right terminology and meaning, translators and companies can use our system to jump ahead in the game because they have a lot of translated terms and sentences about COVID-19.

What the system does is helps the translator to see how something has already been translated, how a term or phrase has already been used by others in a particular context. It helps with the speed of translation, with correctness, and the cost. It also helps with the consistency of translations, so that there is no ambiguity between translations performed in US, Europe, or Asia.

We offer this system to translators free of charge, and to companies at great discounts.

CEOFCO: *In the press release regarding COVID, you talk about the need for translation technology. How does technology come into play for you and what have you been able to develop that others have not?*

Mr. Ivanov: We use the latest available technology to store, retrieve, and research data, i.e. translations. Our human translators have this whole multilingual world at their fingertips. This allows us to translate huge volumes of data, and do so quickly, correctly, and consistently. We train machine translation engines to produce meaningful, in-context translations. In case of COVID-19 materials, we train an engine to translate medical texts. This is a customized engine that is full of medical bilingual and monolingual data, which lets a translator do their part quickly and reliably.

CEOCFO: *Why is IVANNOVATION an important company?*

Mr. Ivanov: We are creators: we create means of communication between cultures and speakers of different languages. Instead of separating people, we build bridges, we build mutual understanding. And we do this professionally and with passion. We treat translation as a business which requires detail and precision. We believe that bilingual data is an asset for every company because if you really want to succeed in this world you need others to understand your message in their own language. We are against mediocre quality in communication. If people don't understand each other, they may not come to an agreement, so we build that bridge of understanding.

