

WHEN TRANSLATION GOES WRONG



In 2009, HSBC had to spend \$10m to rectify a marketing blunder where their slogan "**Assume Nothing**" was mistranslated in several languages as "**Do Nothing**".



When attempting to build their reputation in Belgium, Ford's message of excellence - "**Every car has a high-quality body**" - was translated as "**Every car has a high-quality corpse**". Not the image they were expecting!



It's not only the words that need localising, when Proctor & Gamble launched Pampers in Japan, they kept an image of a Stork delivering a baby on the packaging. This confused local consumers as the analogy means nothing in Japanese culture.



Mistakes also occur when translating into English. Swedish manufacturer Electrolux attempted to launch their vacuum cleaner in the USA using the following message: "**Nothing sucks like an Electrolux**". You can imagine how popular their products were...



An employee of ASDA supermarkets was reprimanded after using Google Translate to translate point of sale signage into Welsh. Instead of locating "**Alcohol-free beer**" the translation offered customers "**Free beer**." Oops!



Coors Brewing Co. realised that converting slang phrases from US-English to Spanish might not have been the most sensible idea. Their tagline "**Turn it loose**" became "**Suffer from diarrhea**." Not a nice image to associate with the brand.



Like Ford, Pepsi delivered a scary message to the Chinese market when their tagline - "**Pepsi will Bring You Back to Life**" - was translated to "**Pepsi will Bring Your Ancestors Back from the Grave**." Spooky!



The Colonel's famous "**Finger-lickin' chicken**" took a while to take off in China after the first translation of their slogan called consumers to "**Eat your fingers off!**"

TOP TIP

Do your research! Before entering new international markets be sure to consider linguistic and cultural difference before localising your content.

Think about how your brand reputation could be damaged by poor translations, and investigate transcreation, multilingual copywriting or transliteration - especially when it comes to slogans.