



CĂLĂTORIE PLĂCUTĂ!

(Bon Voyage!)

*What every manager should know
about Romanian translation*



COMMUNICATION. IN ANY LANGUAGE.

*Since January 1, 2007,
Romanian has begun to
play a more prominent role
in international commerce.*





When in Romania, do as the Romanians do.

When Bram Stoker wrote his great English classic, *Dracula*, he never actually visited Romania, but he could have fooled the blood-thirsty Count himself. Stoker described Romania's breathtaking countryside, the towering Carpathians, the winding trails, the mysterious castles and countless other local details with amazing accuracy.

So can you. Even if you're not in line for the next Nobel Prize for literature, you can recreate your messages in Romanian as seamlessly and accurately as anyone actually born in Bucharest. And like Bram Stoker, you don't need to quit your day job to do so.

Stoker was able to achieve such incredible accuracy because he did his research – thoroughly – beforehand. All of his information



was taken from third-party sources, and from what our favorite psychics tell us, his only complaint was the unavailability of this



particular guidebook in the 19th Century.

But as far as you're concerned, that's no longer a problem. By taking a few minutes to read the information in this guidebook, any English-speaking manager can learn how to deliver accurate Romanian translations on time and on target, every time.

Bine Ați Venit! (Welcome!)

On January 1, 2007, Romania became the 27th country to join the European Union (EU). Overnight, Romania's official language began to play a more prominent role in international commerce. Possibly, in fact, more so than at any other time in Romania's history.

The Romanian language is spoken by about 25 million people. Statistics vary from country to country (sometimes greatly), so the precise number of speakers isn't actually known. Along with Romania, Romanian is the primary language of Moldova, a country of 3.4 million people. It is also an officially recognized language of the autonomous Serbian province of Vojvodina, where it is spoken by about 30,000 people.

In the Republic of Moldova, the language is referred to by government authorities as Moldovan, rather than Romanian. The Republic's constitution specifies Moldovan as the national language, and the majority of citizens consider Moldovan to be their mother tongue as well. From a linguistic perspective, however, there is only



one Romanian language. Except for a minor difference in spelling (comparable to the difference between British and American English), the two languages are practically identical.

Romantic roots for Latin lovers

Unlike most people believe, Romanian is a Romance language, not a Slavic one. It's a direct descendant of Vulgar Latin, and it's closely related to Italian, French, Spanish and Portuguese, rather than to Russian, Polish, Czech or any of the other Slavic tongues.

In fact, Romanian is close enough to Italian that when Italian is spoken slowly, many Romanians can grasp the meaning. Some Romanians even joke that "Italy is such a beautiful country, it's a shame the people there speak such terrible Romanian."

If you're a trivia nut, you'll also want to know that despite its linguistic roots, Romanian was written centuries ago in an old version of the Cyrillic alphabet, rather than its Latin predecessor. In Moldova, the Cyrillic alphabet was used until 1989. (Just think how impressed your friends will be when you casually mention these little tidbits as if anybody who didn't grow up in a cave should already know them!)

Today, Romanians continue to use a variant of the Latin alphabet in all but religious texts. When written, Romanian looks somewhat similar to the other Romance languages.



Latin Alphabet Soup

The modern Romanian language has an alphabet of 28 letters. Sort of. The standard alphabet is shown as follows:



A a Ăă Ââ B b C c D d E e F f G g H h
I i Îî J j K k L l M m N n O o P p R r
S s Șș T t Țț U u V v X x Z z

Since your goal is just to produce accurate translations from English to Romanian and not to host a Transylvanian TV show, there is no need to know how each Romanian letter is pronounced per se. You should, however, pay special attention to five letters that don't exist in English.

The letter “ă” is pronounced like the vowel sound in the English word, *perk*. The letters “â” and “î” are pronounced identically and have no direct English equivalent. (The closest approximation might be the vowel sound in the negative English expression, “Ugh!”) The consonant “ș” is pronounced like the “sh” sound in *ship*, and “ț” sounds like the “ts” in *cats*.

As you can see, each of these letters includes a diacritical mark (another great tidbit to impress your friends with) that isn't in the English alphabet. To add to the alphabet soup, Romanian also uses the letters Q, W and Y when they occur in foreign words like *Quebec*, *whiskey* and *yacht*.

Even more foreign letters find their way into Romanian because the Romanians tend to keep foreign place names in their original



language, rather than adapting them to their own spelling. Unlike in English, the German city, *Munich*, for example, maintains its original German name and spelling – *München* – in Romanian.



But don't worry. If you work with a qualified Romanian translator who understands your business, solving alphabet problems will be as easy as ABC.

Design/Layout Guidelines

Some languages require many more words than English does to convey the same meaning. Some require considerably less. When it comes to translating between English and Romanian, however, the difference in word count is minimal. Below is an example of how the following English paragraph looks when translated into Romanian:



Romanian is a Romance language, closely related to Italian, French, Spanish and Portuguese. Because of Romania's geographic location, many people believe Romanian is actually a Slavic language, similar to Russian, Polish and Czech. It isn't in the Slavic family, but because Romania is surrounded by so many Slavic neighbors, many Slavic words are actually found in the Romanian language. This mixture of Latin and Slavic influences is one of the reasons Romanian is often considered to be one of the most beautiful languages in the world.

Limba Română este o limbă latină înrudită cu Italiană, Franceza, Spaniola și Portugheza. Datorită așezării geografice a României multă lume crede că Limba Română este de fapt o limba slavică, similară cu Limbile Rusă, Poloneză sau Cehă. Limba Română nu aparține limbilor slavice, dar fiind înconjurată de țări de origine slavică multe cuvinte de origine slavă se regăsesc în Limba Română. Amestecul de cuvinte latine cu cele de origine slavică îi conferă un farmec aparte, de aceea Limba Română este considerată una dintre cele mai frumoase limbi vorbite pe glob.



As you can see, the English and Romanian paragraphs alike both require eight lines of printed copy. But in most instances, your Romanian translation will be slightly longer than your English



version. If your translation is intended for printed materials, make sure to leave enough white space in your original English version to plan for any excess space requirements your Romanian layout may require.

By doing so, you'll avoid the need to create an entirely new design for your Romanian materials. While you're at it, you'll save your company both time and money as well. How do you say "hero" in Romanian? "Erou!"

Perfect translations – every time!

As every manager knows, one day you might be a hero, but your reputation can change faster than a vampire turns into a bat if your next project is a failure. By following the simple procedures below, however, your Romanian translation projects will always be a success.

- Make sure to double-check your numbers ... literally!

Whereas commas are used to designate "thousands" in English, Romanian requires periods. Conversely, there is no such thing as a Romanian "decimal point." Instead, Romanian relies on commas to indicate decimals. See the differences below.

ENG	ROM
1,000	1.000
1,000,000	1.000.000
25,500.50	25.500,50
0.50	0,50



Since incorrect numbers are one of the most common translation errors, always check your numerical punctuation carefully. And remember, English and Romanian numbers aren't identical. Period.

- Send anyone who wants to rely totally on translation software straight to Dracula's dungeon. Translation software should only be used to help the translation process, not to replace the need for a professional translator. Without the involvement of a qualified professional to ensure accuracy between both languages, your project is virtually guaranteed to fail.
- As mentioned earlier, pay special attention to Romanian vowels with diacritical marks that don't exist in English. Omitting or using the wrong accent mark is by far the most common mistake translators make when converting English to Romanian. The moral of the story is to double-check for accent mistakes during the proofing process. And when you're finished, double-check again!



- Most importantly, make sure a qualified and objective third party proofs your translation and provides feedback before it's produced in final form. Ideally, your third-party reviewer should be a Romanian speaker within your own organization or your established international network. If there are



discrepancies between your first translation and your reviewer's point of view, these differences must be resolved before the final translation goes to press.



By following these few guidelines, you'll be able to deliver successful Romanian translations time and again. For more information, contact your Conversis representative. In the meantime, good luck. Or, as they say in Romanian, *Noroc!*

