

# ***RUNNING YOUR BUSINESS***

**Don't Get Lost in Translation: A Survival Guide  
to Open Enrollment Spanish Communication**

**Presented by: Melissa Burkhart**



**NAHU**  
PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT



With an MA in education from Columbia Teachers College, Melissa Burkhart was a teacher for ten years, working closely with Spanish-speaking students and their families. She learned Spanish in Ecuador, Spain, Colombia, and on the subway in New York City. In 2001, she established Futuro Sólido USA, a translation company specializing in bridging cultural as well as language barriers, which has served benefits and HR professionals for over 16 years and developed the Benefits Light Bulb Series, short engaging videos that clarify tricky benefits concepts for both English and Spanish speakers. Melissa has done numerous presentations and radio and television appearances, and her articles on issues relating to the Spanish-speaking workforce have appeared in various publications. A self-confessed nerd, she enjoys crossword puzzles, proofreading the New York Times, and singing in 3-part harmony with her family.

# Don't Get Lost in Translation: A Survival Guide to OE Spanish Communication

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FUTURO SÓLIDO  
U · S · A



# What we will cover:

- Preparing for OE: **Written Translation:** an obvious starting point
- Understanding your Mission (should you choose to accept it...)
- **Conducting Meetings:** Avoiding Pitfalls
- **Informal Communication:** Bilingual Supervisors
- Support for NAHU members





# But first...An Explanation of Terms

- What we mean by “Spanish Speakers”
- Understanding cultural differences is an art, not a science.
- The suggestions here are based on Futuro Sólido’s observations and experience.
- They ARE generalizations and of course there will be exceptions.



# 1. Written Translation...



Bilingual employees are usually NOT prepared to translate...

- Are their writing skills in Spanish professional?
- How will you know the answer to the question above?
- Speaking two languages does not mean you have professional writing skills in either...
- Not respectful of their time...
- HOWEVER, they MAY be able to help you choose the right provider...





*So you avoid this...*

*“Qualified dependents include, your spouse, concubine, and children under the age of 26.”*

*(Yes, this really happens)*





Domestic partner



Concubina



Concubine...or  
mistress...or  
girlfriend who is  
not your wife...



*Your client's employees...*

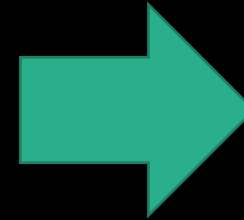
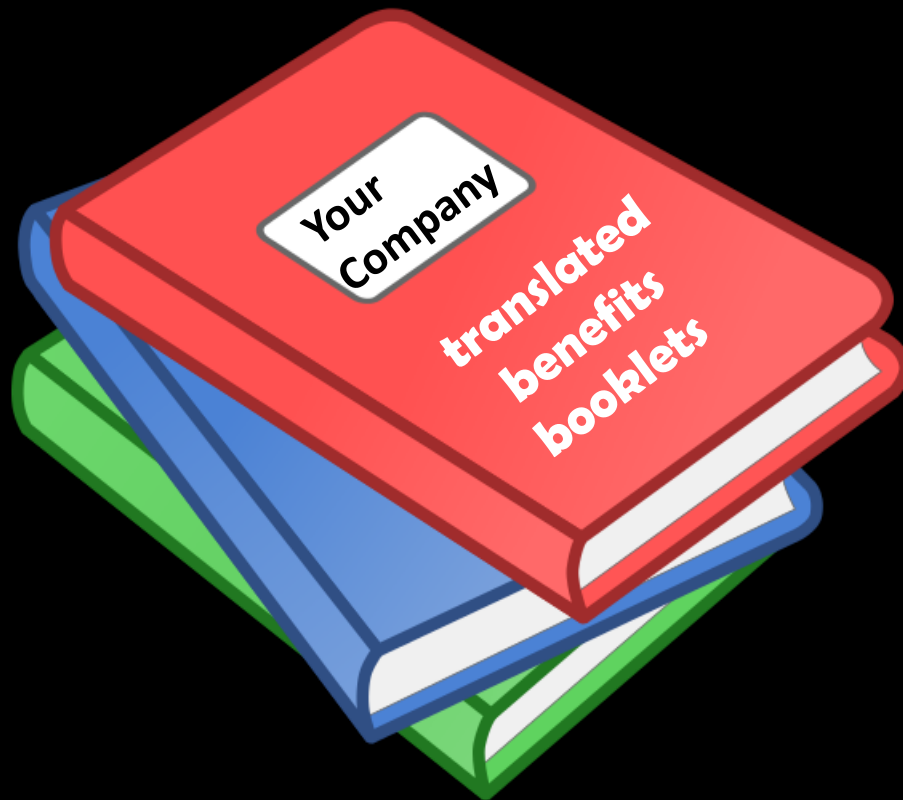


*You*



# But professional translation is expensive!!

So choose ONE vendor and you will save a great deal of money over time...



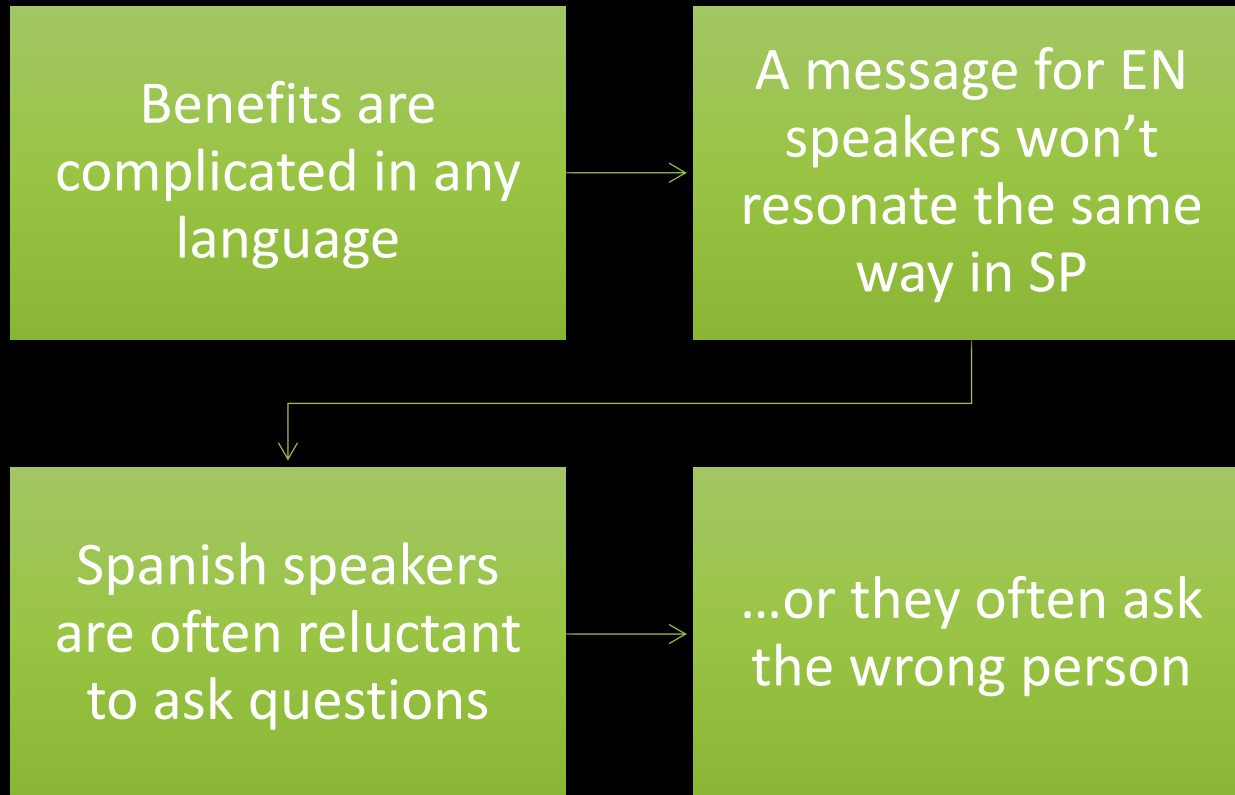
But you're not  
done yet!

Language  
Barriers +  
Cultural Barriers  
= %\$&#@






# Benefits Communication in Spanish is a tough mission...





## 2. Open Enrollment Meetings...



**HSA =  
Health  
Savings  
Account! 😊**

- Interpreting makes your meeting twice as long and twice as boring
- A good presenter will emphasize what is important to Spanish speakers
- Spanish speakers will be more likely to ask questions

Use a PRESENTER rather than an  
INTERPRETER

Again, it's tempting to use a bilingual employee, but...be forewarned!!

- May NOT buy into the importance of benefits
- MAY buy into ACA-hype (or the hype of the moment)
- May NOT be comfortable interpreting; will just fake it
- MAY be resented or disliked by other employees
- Often NOT invested in your success
- Unless you speak Spanish, you have no way to monitor what is being said





Whoever is conducting your meetings needs to be a dynamic presenter who can build rapport and is invested in YOUR success...



- Member of client's HR or benefits team
- A bilingual colleague of yours
- Professional benefits communicator who answers to you



But even the best presenters are better with good tools. Consider out-of-the box media, like video or print materials with more graphics than text. ...

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### 3. Off-the-Record Communication





A Bilingual supervisor is often the source of benefits information that is the most:

- Consistent
- Ongoing
- Trusted

Can make or break your message...





- Want to help employees
- Want to be perceived as knowledgeable
- Give misleading or incorrect answers to questions...

## On-board bilingual supervisors with the importance of benefits

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- Financial implication of benefits
- WHY their employer invests in benefits
- Where to send employees to get the best advice/right answers

Oh --



***Now I Get It!!***

And now the good  
news...Support for  
NAHU members



Discounts on our  
LIGHT BULBS

Preferred pricing  
on translation



# Light BULBS

BRINGING BENEFITS INTO FOCUS



So let's see an example...





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# Questions?

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