
In today's market, the quality of your packaging and labelling is more important than ever. This extends to the quality of the overall look of your package and label as well as to the quality of the English copy and the translation thereof. Quebec consumers are very sensitive about this issue and feel that proper French is not only a matter of respect for their language but should also be a matter of pride to the company producing it.

Canadian Federal Laws require that mandatory declarations and descriptors on packaging and labels be bilingual. However, if you plan to market your product in the Province of Quebec, the second largest market in Canada, ALL copy on your packaging must be in English and in French in typesize of equal prominence.

When designing your package or label, remember that the French copy is approximately 20% longer than the English one. If possible, it is always helpful to send a rough layout of your label so that the translator can also be aware of space constraints imposed by any artwork and its location on the label. Your translator can then advise as to areas which might be shortened or eliminated in the French copy, if necessary.

Previously, a recognized trademark need not be translated. However, recent changes to the internal guidelines of the *Office Québécois de la langue française* in the Province of Quebec, may require the translation of a trademark. If you wish to francize a trademark, you will need to follow the same procedure as you did for the English one, i.e. trademark search and registration. You must be careful that the translation of your trademark is not in any way misleading, offensive or meaningless for the French market, bearing in mind that there could be slight variations in meaning or connotation between Quebec and international French. This also applies to any copy on your packaging.

An important part of today's corporate and product branding is consistency in both packaging appearance and vocabulary to ensure that your products carry a recognizable "image" for your customers. Be sure to inform your translator of any previous French vocabulary used or preferred terminology to ensure similar style and nomenclature.

When taking into account cost and time factors, remember that any slogan or promotional line must be "adapted" into French. This means that the translator cannot do a straight translation of the words but must adapt the slogan or promo line in a manner that will reflect the English while also giving it the same selling punch. For example, advertising for Christie's crackers with cheese in the middle reads "Mr. Christie's soft spot" while the French reads "M. Christie s'y connaît en tendresse" - "Mr. Christie's knows all about tenderness". In this example, "soft spot" is a well-known English expression which does not have a literal French equivalent. The French translator used a well-known French expression, "s'y connaît en", to know well about, combined with "tendresse" to convey the softness of the cheese spread between the two crackers.

Always proofread French typeset copy prior to final printing. Errors in hyphenation and capitalization are common and result in hard-to-read copy for French consumers. Spelling errors, including missing accents, can be costly and misleading - for example, the word "sale" without an accent on the final e means "dirty", but "salé" with an accent means "salted". Also, one wrong letter could dramatically alter the meaning. There was a case where 50,000 bottles of hair shampoo (cheveux) were transformed into "horse shampoo" (chevaux) because of one vowel error and had to be recalled by the manufacturer.

Taking into account all of the above prior to producing a final version of your packaging or label will allow you to be proactive and to present a more effective and eye-catching product to the English and French markets.

Accents are important in French.

Accents can occur on all vowels except 'y'.

Acute accent é appears only on e	(often referred to as the 2:00 accent)
Grave accent, on è, à, ù	(often referred to as the 11:00 accent)
Circumflex on â, ê, î, ô, û	(the hat)
Dieresis on ë, ï, ü	(the double dot)
Cedilla only under the letter c (ç)	

Be careful! Words can have a different meaning with or without accents. For instance, 'biscuits salés' with accent means 'salted biscuits'. Without the accent, however, they become 'dirty biscuits'.

In Canada, accents must also be used on capital letters, **except on acronyms** such as REER (French for RRSP where there is an acute accent on the second E).

Metric/Imperial: In Canada, we use the **metric system** of measurements, although it is permitted to use **both** imperial and metric measures. **It is the responsibility of the client** to do the metric conversions. *in FRENCH only inc.* reminds its clients to do so by indicating for example (xx cm) following the imperial measure.

Hyphenation rules are quite different in French. Your work should always be proofed after typesetting to ensure proper hyphenation.

Capital letters in heading and sub-headings with upper and lower case letters are only used on the first letter of the first word and in proper names. eg. *Great Deal from Rubbermaid!* Your French copy will read: *Offre avantageuse de Rubbermaid!*

Entire words in capitals are permitted. For example if your English reads: SAVE! Your French copy could read: ÉCONOMISEZ! Remember, accents do appear on capital letters.

The **dollar sign (\$)** should be after the figure and separated from the figure by a space, e.g. 25 \$. **Thousands** are separated from hundreds by a space, not a comma, e.g. 7 500 \$. **Decimals** are replaced with commas, e.g. 7 500,56 \$ or 1,26 %

A **space** must be left before a percentage sign % -- 50 % and before and after a colon -- Liste des caractéristiques : fabrication en plastique moulé. There is no space before a semi-colon, exclamation mark and question mark.

French quotation marks are represented by chevrons e.g. « Merci beaucoup. » There is a **space after** the French opening quotation mark « Bonjour » and before the closing quotation mark.

Vous vous, nous nous, faire faire. Those repetitions are common in French although they may appear as an oversight.

French business correspondence differs significantly in its salutations and closings.

For example, 'Dear' as in 'Dear Mr. Black' is not used in French. Instead only Monsieur (Sir) or Madame (Mrs.) is used. The word 'Dear' in French is used only if the correspondence is addressed to a personal friend. Closings such as *Sincerely* or *Regards* is replaced with a whole paragraph in French!