

## **Portrait of a Contender: Doris Marty-Albisser - By: JEANNETTE ØRSTED**

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### **Portrait of a Contender**



**Doris Marty-Albisser, MBA, CLS Communication, Switzerland**

*? The CLS-business model is different from that of your competitors. What are its advantages in your opinion? What is the customers' response?*

Our business model allows us to act as a business process outsourcing (BPO) partner to our clients covering the entire range of language solutions up to insourcing the clients' in-house translation teams. The clients' advantage is that they can focus on their core competence, and their employees benefit from working in a company where language services is the core business, thus offering new career opportunities. Our advantage is that we can maintain a very close relationship with the client and act as a comprehensive BPO partner offering clients their outsourced in-house teams, while giving them access to a large in-house know-how pool. At the same time this business model ensures increased quality and speed as well as substantial cost reductions of around 30%.

*? Why did UBS (financial services) decide to outsource its translation services? Is translation just another typical outsourcing/cost-cutting area? Are companies confident that the*

*level of quality is maintained? Have you ever experienced a situation where a company has re-insourced its activities?*

Translation service is not part of a core business of a bank, therefore it is a candidate for outsourcing. Yet it is an important function which requires professional attention. In addition, bank-grade security standards and confidentiality need to be adhered to. CLS Communication provides the infrastructure, technology and business process platform, which allow large corporations to fully outsource their in-house teams. Quality is of prime importance and can be ensured by taking over clients teams and/or building dedicated client teams. So far, no company has re-insourced its activities. Should this be needed, we can also offer implant solutions, with our employees working on the clients' premises.

*? In your experience what does it take to make outsourcing successful?*

A partnership approach, with both partners (client and provider) jointly striving to make the outsourcing a mutual success; a dedication of both partners for constant enhancement and cost optimization through ongoing process improvement;

A well structured, client-centric process

A long term view of a collaborative partnership; an outsourcing is not meant to be a short term "quick win" solution.

The traditional client - supplier relationship model fails in this dimension, especially if a client's exclusive focus is on cost cutting year by year without jointly working on the process side as well.

*? Do you think that the Swiss market is particularly favourable for outsourcing activities? Is there a tradition for outsourcing all sorts of non-core activities in a given business (like IT)?*

It is true that a number of non-core functions have been outsourced in the past 10 to 15 years. In my view, however, the outsourcing is not limited to Switzerland. The underlying reason is that multilingual business functions combined with companies focusing on core competencies is probably closer to reality. Other countries - the US, for instance - started earlier. In our business we see an increasing trend towards outsourcing in individual countries, such as Scandinavian states.

*? What would your expectations be for the international translation market in terms of growth?*

With globalization the international market for translation is growing and at the same time changing. The traditional word counting business is history - despite it being still alive. The winners are focusing more on comprehensive, tailor-made client solutions with value added services covering the entire value chain - from writing the source document through to publishing it (both in print and on the web). At the same time the international market is consolidating, with smaller companies joining larger firms and companies teaming up to extend their value chain.

*? Where do you see your company in five years? Could you reveal your company strategy (or parts of it)?*

We apply growth strategy to our key markets, focusing both on organic and external growth depending on the countries and markets. CLS Communication is growing along with the client base and extending the value chain along the content life cycle.

The translator and language technology

*? What will the role of the translator be in ten years?*

I would assume a translator will be more integrated into the entire content life cycle and production process. Multilingual copywriting/authoring is likely to become more important compared to pure translation work. Thus, the translator's work becomes more varied - from writing and editing documents with a knowledge base as a source, through to translating, acting as a consultant and project leader for clients. In my view, the future of translators looks bright providing they approach it with the right attitude and mindset.

*? Will the independent freelancer working from home be able to survive and keep up with the technological development?*

An independent translator will face a similar situation as the translator described above. Merely translating without actively educating oneself in technological developments etc. will not be enough. In fact, it is already not enough. In this respect, the future has started.

*? What would your best advice be to young translators today?*

I suggest that translators make use of globalization and grab the opportunities of gaining work experience abroad - especially in rapidly growing regions such as Asia Pacific. Also, we will be in desperate need of translators having a good command of Chinese as a source language. This will particularly be the case, once the Chinese companies will start with foreign direct investment and make their companies global.

*? What is the language tool market going to look like in ten years? What can we realistically expect to see?*

Hopefully, we will see fully integrated platforms with open interfaces within the language technology sector ranging beyond today's commercially available tools. In addition,- and I recon this even more important - the translation process will be fully integrated into the entire document and content production process, ensuring open interfaces, thus making solutions and service providers independent of software suppliers.

*? Do you see a possible cross-over from translation to authoring, given some of the tools that are available?*

Yes, absolutely. This will go along with the changing role of the translator, as mentioned above.

Doris Marty-Albisser (the person)

*? What was the market like when you graduated as a translator?*

In the mid 80's (so you see, I am a dinosaur in this industry) translators started to get familiar with word processors, worked with dictionaries and tried to compile documents with intelligent phrases and terms you might need one day. When this happened, you couldn't easily find what you had collected over the years. The market was still very immature compared to today's standards. Translation was an isolated function.

*? When did you start thinking about taking an MBA? What was driving you in that direction?*

In the early 90's, when joining a large bank and moving into management functions, I wanted to get a broader in-depth education on management and leadership issues.

? *What is your favourite success story in your business career? I assume that you have many.*

Tackling "Mission Impossible" tasks to come up with a solution. Outsourcing the in-house teams to found CLS ten years ago and the subsequent management buyout are some cornerstone experiences. Recently, it was our internationalization efforts, which changed our company completely. We are now a truly global company (although we still have some white spots on the map), serving clients on a global scale and - this is important - being able to offer our staff attractive career opportunities. That's rewarding and exciting!

**Interviewed by:**



Language at Work editor **Jeannette Ørsted**

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