6 Common Transcription Mistakes that Ruin an Accurate Transcription



An accurate transcription requires the focused attention of an experienced transcriptionist. Professional transcription services support that work with a quality control process that provides an additional layer of review before the file is delivered to the client.

However, a quality control process, no matter how thorough, cannot salvage a poorly prepared audio or video file. The following common mistakes have the potential to transform a simple project into a logistical nightmare:

Using Inferior Equipment

Academic, legal, and medical transcriptions can typically involve industry-specific terminology that can be easily confused or nearly impossible to discern if you are required to work from a recording made on an old microcassette recorder. Saving a few dollars on recording equipment can end up costing you in terms of delayed or inaccurate transcripts where it was impossible to hear what the speaker was saying.

Forgetting to do a soundcheck

This mistake can prevent the delivery of an audio or video file to a transcriptionist altogether. Something as simple as failing to press the record button or checking the sound levels before the interview or presentation begins can leave you with an inaudible file that even the most experienced transcriptionist will struggle to decipher.

Not providing supporting documentation

Complex material should be supported with appropriate documentation as a resource for the transcriptionist to use to clarify words, phrases or acronyms that may be unfamiliar.

Professional transcription services will provide personnel with industry experience, but even they may need help with project-specific jargon. Leaving them at the mercy of internet searches will simply delay the delivery date and increase your costs.

Setting unrealistic deadlines

Presenting a poor quality file with no supporting documentation and expecting immediate delivery will set your transcription project up for failure. Knowing the caliber of the material you are presenting for transcription places everyone on the same page, and while fast turnaround times are usually available, there is usually an extra cost involved if you want an accurate end product.

Not providing clear instructions

A transcription can come in many forms. Most professional transcription services will provide a verbatim transcription

as standard. Services beyond that, such as proofreading, copyediting, or delivering a summary transcription, may cost extra. Having a clear sense of how the transcription will be used should help to design clear project parameters.

Choosing the lowest cost option

Business transcriptions can often face budgetary pressures, but low prices are usually achieved by cutting costs and sacrificing quality. A low price is of limited use if the end product is inaccurate and delivered far beyond the promised deadline.

Accuracy is the most important criterion in any transcription. Taking preventive measures to ensure that you are presenting a high-quality audio or video file to a professional transcription service will help to ensure that you receive an accurate transcript that has undergone extensive quality control.

When you think about the potentially serious consequences of inaccurate medical, insurance, or legal transcriptions, should you really contemplate any other course of action?