How to Select a Transcription Service?

BE PREPARED TO DO SOME RESEARCH

Whether you have a regular need or a one-off project, [professional transcription services](#) can save you time and many headaches if you find the right partner that can be counted on to deliver accurate, high-quality work. However, if you rush into a contract because you are short on time or don't really know which criteria to use to judge potential vendors, the wrong choice can end up costing you time and money and giving you more headaches than if you had simply done the project yourself.

HAVE A CLEAR SENSE OF WHAT YOU NEED

Audio and [video transcription](#) work can present multiple variables that increase the complexity and cost of the project. Understanding what you need and when will help you to ensure that you are getting an accurate cost estimate and that each transcription service is being compared equally. The turnaround time, the type of transcription (verbatim or summary), the specific industry (medical, academic, legal, insurance, etc.), and add-on services such as [copyediting](#) or searchable files, can all add to the total project timeline and cost. If you're in the middle of a project crisis, you may

want everything yesterday, but bear in mind that a 'rush job' that delivers the same high degree of accuracy and quality as a scheduled job may cost more.

CREATE A SHORTLIST OF POTENTIAL VENDORS
A web search for *transcription services* will generate over 12 million results, with a dazzling array of vendors promising miraculous service at unbelievably low prices. If you're in a rush to get your project started, you may be tempted to stick with the first page of search results and select the lowest price, but this could place your project in jeopardy. A vendor can promise anything on a website. What separates the professional transcription services from the hungry freelancers is the evidence they offer to back-up their promises:

- *Name recognition* — have you heard of this company before? If you're looking for industry-specific work, does the company have a good word-of-mouth reputation within the industry?
- *Client List* — satisfied clients are usually happy to have their name associated with a vendor's website. Who else has this company worked with?
- *Testimonials* — specific details from a satisfied client can offer more insights than just a name on a client list.
- *Work Samples* — are there downloadable samples on the site, or can you request specific samples of work that is similar to your project?
- *Industry awards* — evidence of awards for quality and business excellence demonstrate a clear commitment to delivering work of the highest caliber.
- *Transparent processes* — a simple upload page with a promise to send your transcribed file right back to you should raise a red flag. The more information a transcription service is willing to share as to who will work on your project and how it will be handled, the

more reassurance you will have that you are going to receive an accurate piece of work in return. Look for specifics — does your academic transcriptionist have an academic background, or has he or she simply done a lot of [academic transcription](#) work?

If transcription projects are not a regular feature of your daily work, such a thorough investigation may seem like a huge burden. However, when you consider the administrative headaches that can ensue from a poorly-transcribed file, the effort is well worth the investment.