

5 Translation Project Management Hacks

To Double Your Productivity

Discover how top-tier Project Managers deliver more translations, in less time.

Learn tricks of the trade, tried and tested by the world's leading language teams.



Astonishing productivity gains await...

**Ever feel like a hamster on a wheel that never stops spinning?
If so, you're not alone.**

Translation Project Managers face an often thankless task, with never ending pressure to deliver more for less. Well, it needn't be this way.

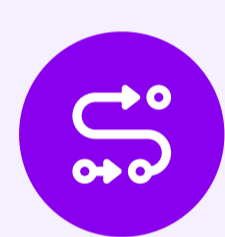
Better project management processes are the key used to unlock massive productivity gains and great job satisfaction.

By getting to grips with the way you manage projects end-to-end, you can dramatically increase the number of tasks delivered and reduce speed to market, without having to employ more people (or giving yourself a heart attack in the process!)

It's time to give yourself an unfair advantage and in this guide, we'll reveal how.

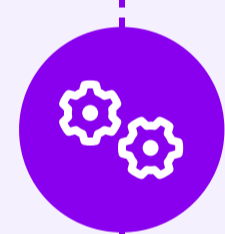


Discover the **5 hacks** that will change your working day



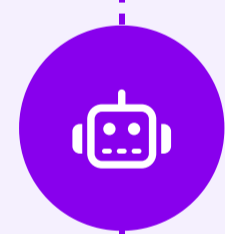
1. Optimize your workflow

Boost your team's efficiency by optimizing workflows to embrace automation, sweat the tech, and integrate seamlessly for round-the-clock project delivery.



2. Get your supply chain in order

Ensure your supply chain is running at full speed, by streamlining briefs, tracking performance, automating cascades, and equipping vendors for success.



3. Automate the boring stuff

Empower your PMs with automation that streamlines vendor interactions, quoting, negotiations, file transfers, quality control, alerts, and invoicing.



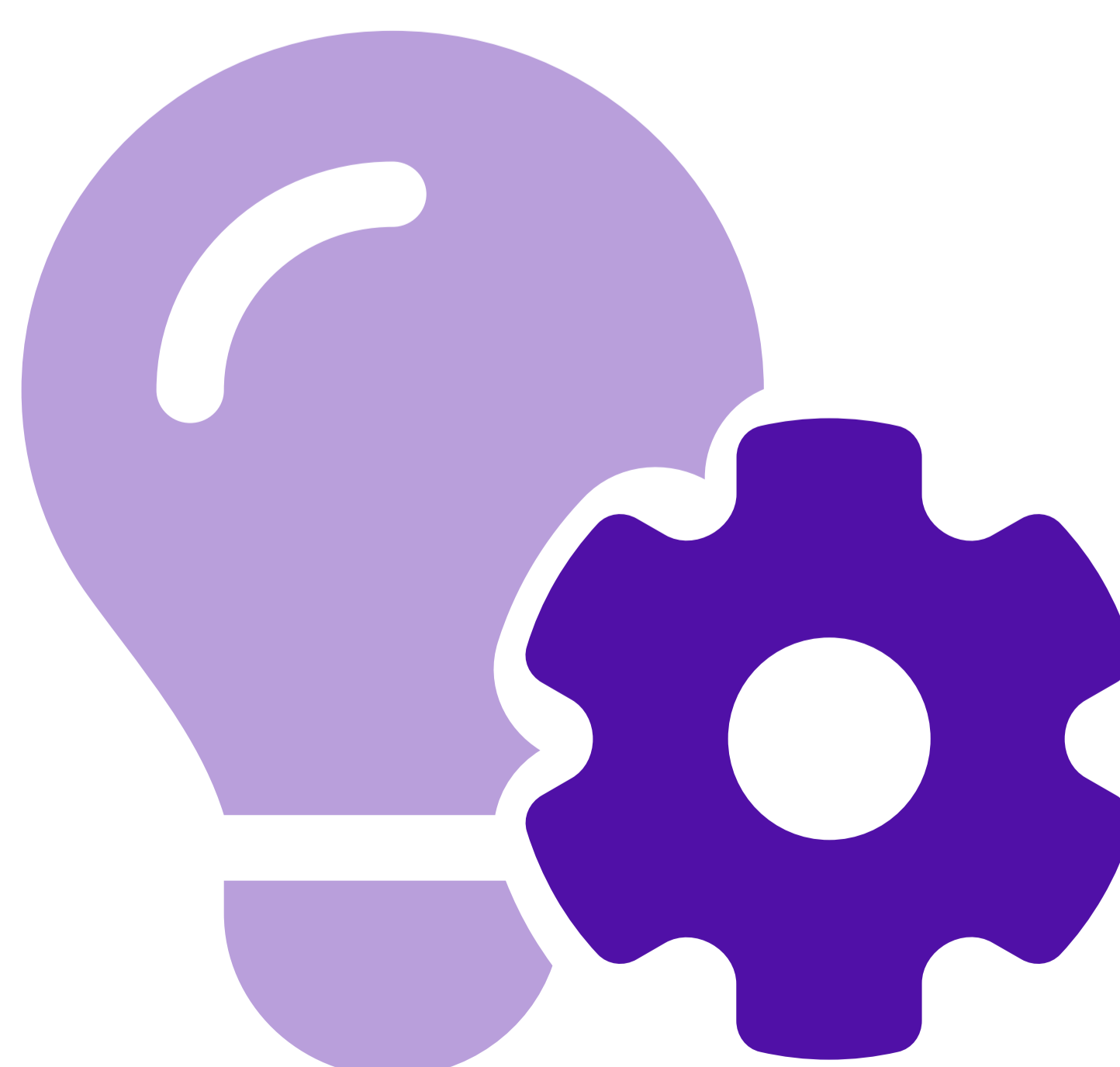
4. Show your vendors some love

Building unshakeable relationships with your vendors by providing feedback, recognizing achievements, and building a supportive community.

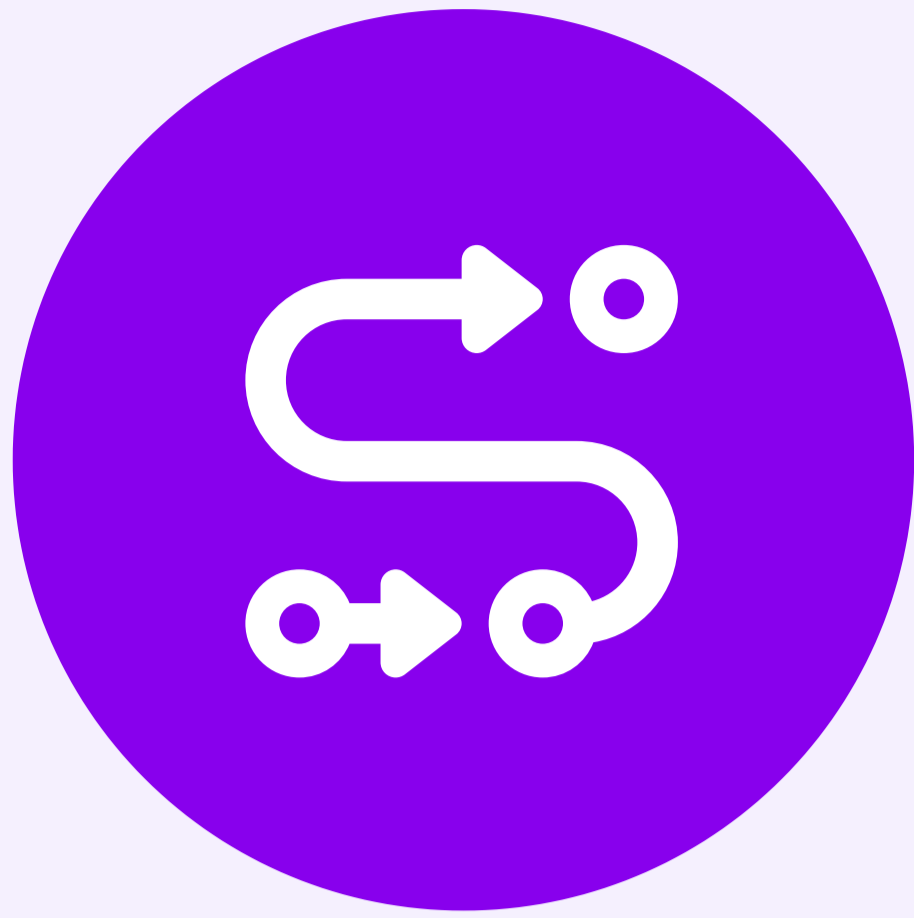


5. Get ahead of the curve

Boost team efficiency by prioritizing profitable areas and leveraging data insights to optimize procedures and resource allocation.



Hack 1: Optimize your workflow



If you don't optimize your workflow, you're always beholden to it.

Translation and localization workflows have a nasty habit of getting overly complicated.

This is usually the result of internal processes building up over time. But it's important to review the steps involved every 6-12 months to see if anything is adding unnecessary barriers to delivery.

Be sure to check the average time taken at each stage of the process, set benchmarks and then aspire to reduce those averages year on year.



Cull as many steps as possible - Be ruthless but test thoroughly!



Embrace automation - Take a step back and reflect on where you could now trust the tech to automate parts of your workflow.

Many Project Managers are rather timid when it comes to fully embracing workflow automation, yet it represents huge labor-saving gains. So take another look, determine where you should spend your time and where you should let go!



Sweat the tech wherever possible - AI, machine translation and translation memory all speed up project delivery from the translator's perspective.

So be sure to take the time needed to administer and regularly update things like your Term Bases, case sensitivity, rulesets etc.



Work around the clock - Just because you're tucked up in bed, doesn't mean your project needs to stop!

With an automated quotation process, vendor sourcing and conversion of quotes into projects, the translation process can run 24/7.



Integrate your systems - It's easier than ever to pass project information instantly between your preferred tools of the trade.

Say, for instance, you wish to kick start in your CMS, then push data through to your TMS and on to a dedicated Project Management Tool, before auto-creating CRM records, whilst allowing translators to use their preferred CAT tool and managing all your Accounting needs in one place.... that's entirely feasible!



Our client analysis revealed that project management may account for up to 30% of the total cost of a translation. But by employing a sophisticated management system, we can cut manual project management costs by almost 50%.

Andrzej Nedoma

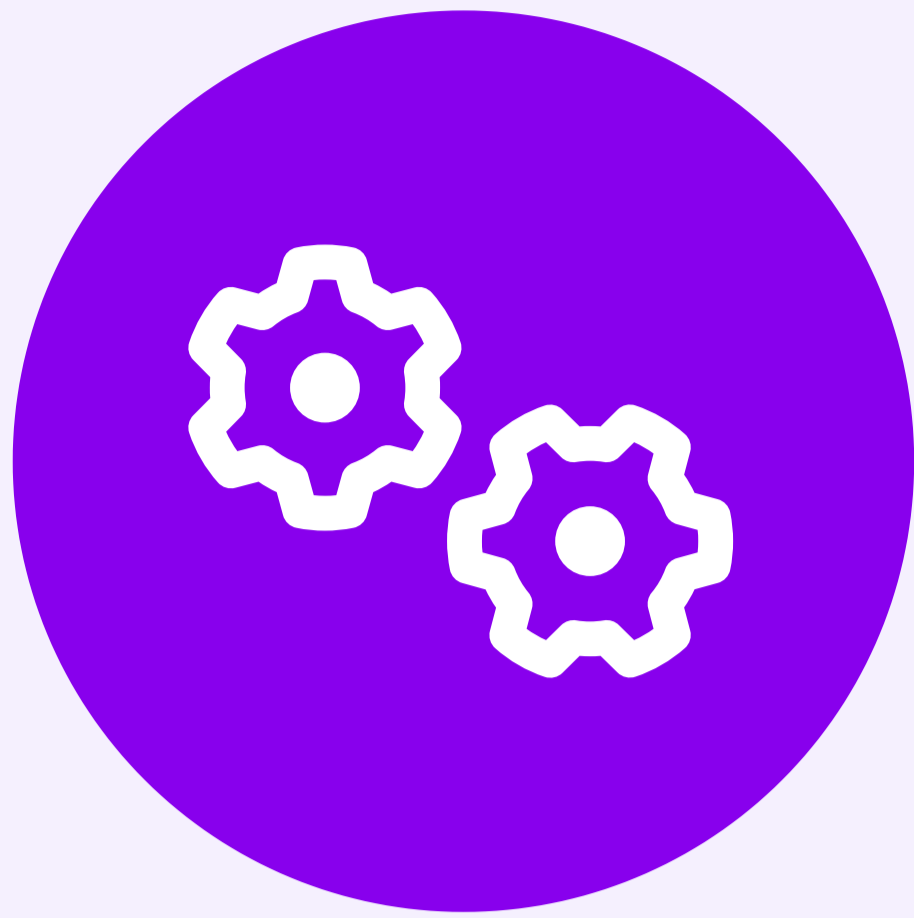
Entrepreneur, Business advisor, XTRF Founder



Bonus tip



Seek the advice of others in your field and regularly quiz technology providers about the latest upgrades in Project Management Workflow automations. An independent pair of eyes every so often could save hours lost on every single project.



Hack 2: Get your supply chain in order

Because one broken link can wreak havoc with your entire process.

Your suppliers can ultimately make or break your operation. Underperforming individuals can cost you dearly in both time and reputation. So smooth operations are underpinned by a team of people who often don't even work for your company!

Here are a few initiatives you can implement to ensure a gold-standard supply chain that delivers consistently exceptional work:



Unearth weaknesses - Poorly serviced language pairs or specializations equate to slow response times and sometimes poor quality work. So setting up robust real-time reporting into project types is essential. This will provide the insight you need to staff up accordingly.



Make things as easy as possible for them - Assess where your assets are held and how clear your initial briefs are. Take the time to review your briefing process now and you'll reap the benefits later. After all, rubbish in = rubbish out!



Track performance - You must measure quality scores, delivery times, availability and time to respond. Having this 'birds eye' view of your supplier's performance will allow you to set preference rules in your job allocation cascade in favor of top-performers, and reach out to under-achievers to address issues.



Embrace cascades - Ditch email, it's so last decade! Instead of bouncing back and forth between suppliers, simply pre-configure cascade rules that trigger whenever a translation request is received. Then let your Project Management tool do the heavy lifting in briefing project details, gathering quotes, negotiating timeframes and assigning work to suppliers that offer the optimum combination of price, quality and delivery timescales.



Give vendors the tools they need to succeed - Either allowing them to utilize their preferred CAT Tool for speed or fully equip your integrated tool of choice with all project materials in one central repository (better utilizing translation memory, fuzzy matches, in line assets etc).



Flexibility doesn't imply disregarding your expectations and requirements, whether they're yours or your vendors'. Clearly stating these expectations is crucial for fostering a successful and transparent collaboration.

Marta Wilk

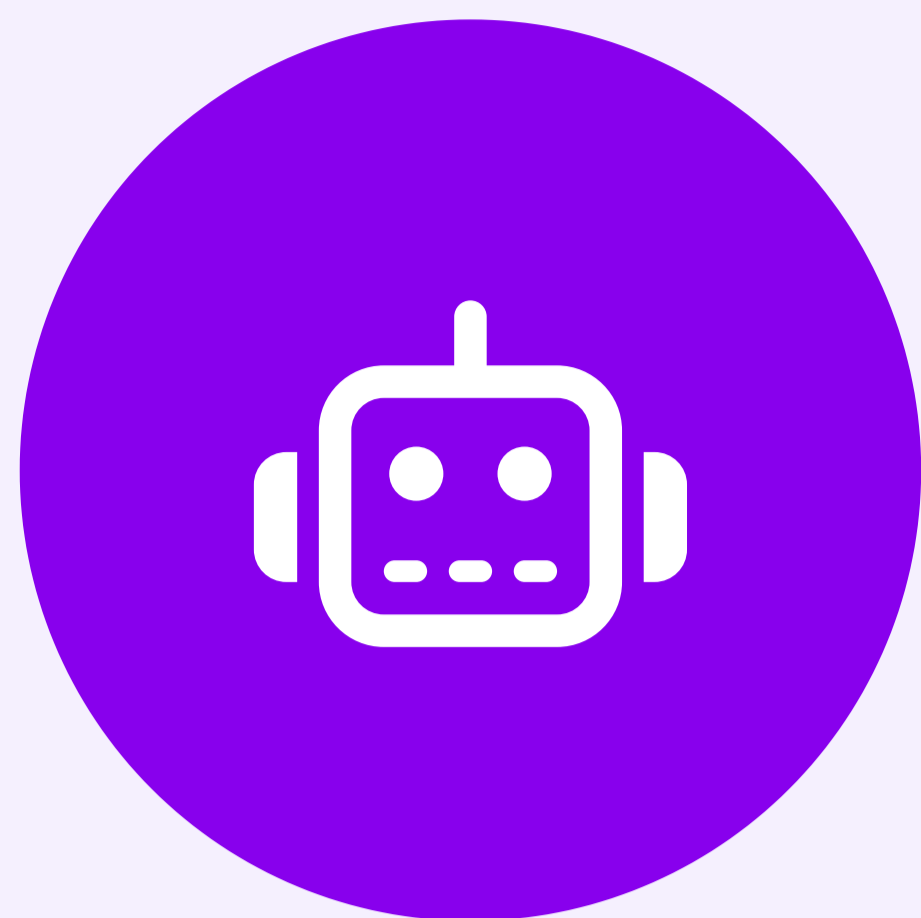
Senior Implementation Specialist at XTRF by XTM

The screenshot shows a vendor management interface. At the top, there's a search bar and an 'Add Vendor' button. Below is a table with columns: Legal Name, Status, Availability, Language Combinations, Country, City, Evaluation, and Completed Jobs. One vendor, Carry Jones, is highlighted. A detailed view of Carry Jones is shown below the table, with columns for Legal Name, Status, and Availability. The status is 'Active' and the availability is shown as a full green bar. There are also language pair icons: EN >> DE, EN >> JP, and EN >> FR. A star rating of five stars is visible next to the EN >> JP icon.

Bonus tip

By actively improving your vendor management processes with automations and user-friendly tools, you will achieve a level of flexibility & visibility that will sustain the interest and growth of your trusted vendors. Moreover, it will enable you to uncover and delve into new vendor networks, identifying exciting possibilities and talents. This will have an amazing impact on your teams - no more projects stuck due to insufficient resources!

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Hack 3: Automate the boring stuff

Get the bots to do your donkey work!

The role of a Project Manager is changing rapidly. But we believe with more sophisticated tech comes a wealth of opportunity for PMs wanting to spend more time in the less mundane aspects of project delivery.

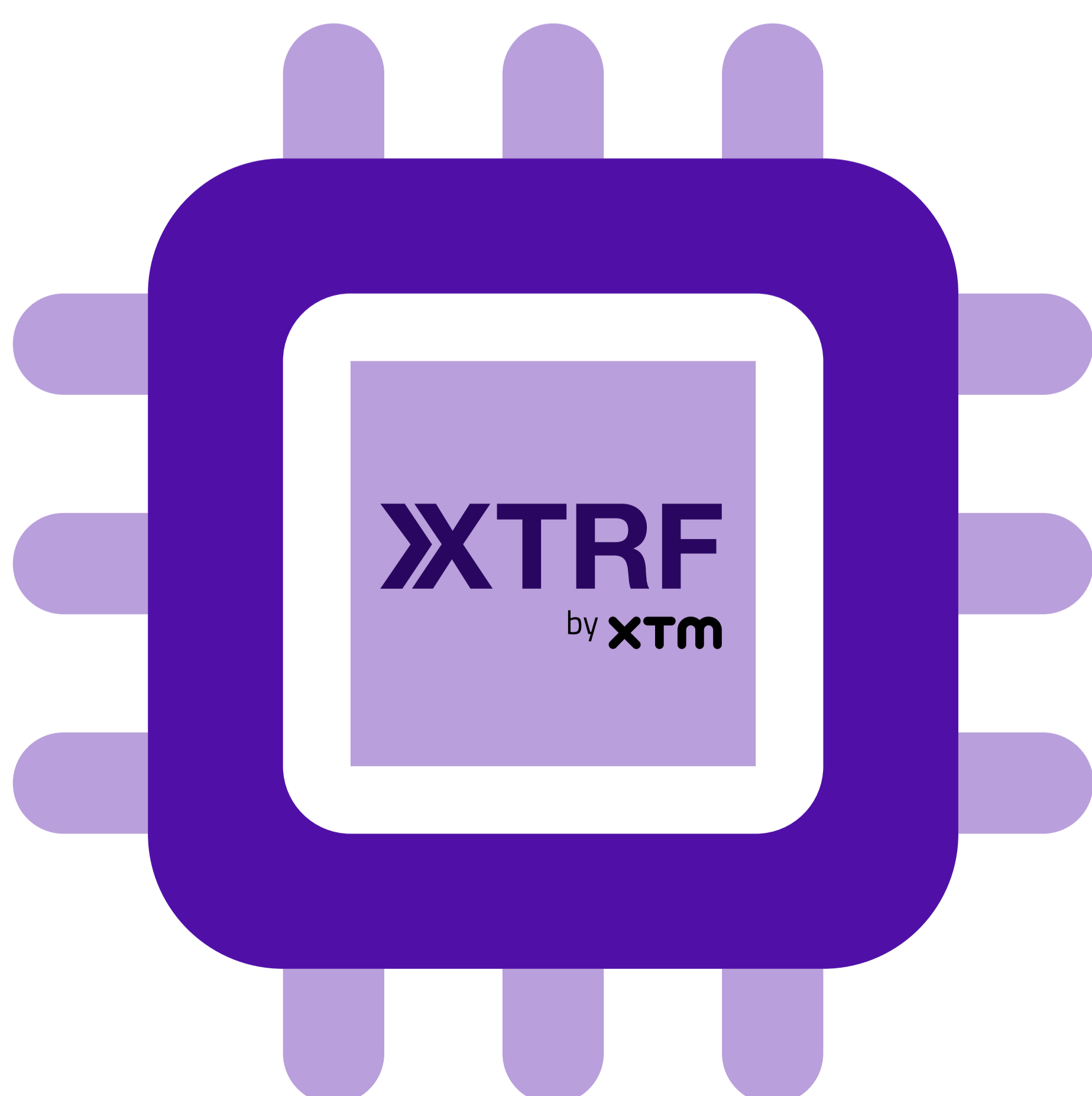
Steps you can automate in the translation process include:

- Inviting vendors to quote on work
- Quoting on jobs based on pre-determined rates
- Negotiating project timescales and rates via a chatbot
- File transfers
- Seeking quality control feedback
- Triggered alerts for linguists, PMs and other stakeholders
- Invoicing and payments - add receivables/payables using CAT file analysis



The manual adjustment of inline tags in one segment takes about 15 seconds. Over a month, we can estimate that a localization team could work on 50,000 segments containing inline tags. Placing these manually would take them 12,500 minutes, or 208 hours. As this can happen automatically, this manual work is almost completely removed. That way, over 200 hours can be saved per month, which is astounding.

Dr. Rafał Jaworski
Linguistic AI Expert at XTM international



Bonus tip

The journey to automate your processes may uncover multiple areas for improvement. After all, the effectiveness of automations depends on your overall data management and system configuration. Gradually integrating them into your day-to-day operations presents another excellent opportunity to closely examine potentially outdated or irrelevant processes that hinder project management efficiency.

Hack 4: Show your vendors some love



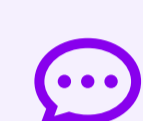
If you want them to move mountains, you'll need to exceed their expectations!

You need to secure super-fast delivery, at the best price, without the hassle of constant back and forth communication, right?

That doesn't sound like a healthy relationship to us!

In a sector where translators, proofreaders and DTP specialists feel increasingly undervalued, the difference between them accepting a last minute request from you or another supplier will be a positive affiliation with your team and brand.

It's essential you...



Provide constant feedback - Whether good or bad, your vendors will appreciate you taking the time to deliver constructive and meaningful feedback which they can action. Automated requests for support, followed by radio silence upon delivery of the work gives them no guidance and will ensure the relationship stays in a purely transaction rut.



Recognize achievements - By proactively recognizing great work in a timely manner, and associating that work to behaviors you wish to see more of, you'll help them to understand your brand values and company ethos.



Build a community - Treat your suppliers as extension of your in-house team and they'll feel a vested interest in delivering exceptional work, every time. Go beyond names on a database by hosting virtual and in-person meetups. Regularly schedule webinars. Over-communicate via all channels available. Harness live chat for automated instant negotiations, email for job notifications, host webinars and face to face events for education and networking... and you could even go old-school by picking up the phone every once in a while! (which is great for building a personal rapport).

If you follow the steps already mentioned to automate much of the mundane workload, your Vendor Managers will free up time to focus on this activity. So they can enlist an A-Team of localization pros who feel truly valued.



Be attentive and consider adding a personal touch occasionally - basing it on what you know your Vendor enjoys or the holidays they celebrate. It's a thoughtful gesture to reach out with updates or well wishes, demonstrating your care for them.

Urszula Pastula

Solutions Engineer at XTRF by XTM

Let me know
how I can help



Bonus tip

In this automated MT/AI-enhanced project lifecycle, where e-mail/phone communication can be ruled out, it is really important to add a human touch to your vendor management from time to time. You need that real human connection with your vendors and chatting with them about non-translation-related topics can be a good thing to maintain that special relationship.

Hack 5: Get ahead of the curve



Step off the treadmill every once in a while.

You can only streamline project management if you know what hurdles stand in the way of smooth day-to-day operations. All too often, we see companies chasing their tails to fulfill order types that aren't profitable or regularly requested.


Instead, why not pivot your language team to focus on in-demand areas where you can deliver an exceptional service and craft slick journeys here?

To do so, it's essential you have the reporting established to determine things like...

 Most and least requested language pairs

 Fastest vs slowest turnaround project types

 Most and least requested specializations

 Most expensive vs most cost effective language pairs

 High growth industries vs declining service areas

 Best vs worst profit margins

 Poorly staffed areas with a lack of supporting vendors

With these reports in place - and time set aside to review them each month - you can adjust your service offering, operational procedures and in-house resources to reflect key trends. You'll be better equipped to optimize resource allocation, and make data-driven decisions that positively impact your organization's efficiency and productivity in the long run.



Understanding where the trends lie in translation delivery isn't just about staying ahead; it's about crafting the future of your operations. Having the data to hand is like having a compass in a constantly shifting landscape; it guides us, empowers us to make informed decisions, and ultimately shapes our journey. By embracing data insights, you'll set a course for innovation and excellence that will allow you to scale language provision.

Olga Krzyżanowska
Implementation Team Leader at XTRF by XTM



Bonus tip

Take every possibility to network and engage your team members to have a fresh and dynamic perspective on the latest trends. Local industry events and online webinars are excellent starting points! As you review reports and results, you'll already have deeper insights into the market, fostering connections and generating ideas for enhancements or cross-selling opportunities.

Who are we?

At XTRF, we're skilled in overcoming the challenges companies face with translation project management.

Having started out life as a small, family-run LSP, we shared in the pains and frustrations of the localization community. Efforts to scale the company were hindered by rising operational costs and we were under constant pressure to deliver more for less.

So, we decided to build a Project Management system to alleviate those woes.

Back in 2010, XTRF was introduced as one of the very first commercial-class translation business management systems, which delivered a comprehensive, user-friendly, and scalable solution for LSPs and Enterprise language teams.

Today, being part of XTM's translation platform, XTRF is rapidly developing to deliver completed, automated project management at scale. We are already entrusted by hundreds of the world's leading language providers.

Fast forward to today, and XTRF is entrusted by hundreds of the world's leading language providers to deliver fast, automated project management at scale.

Why not challenge us to streamline your business operations?

Visit www.xtrf.eu to start improving your processes today.

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