

Strange Brew

Formal Spanish Fermented with Golf Maintenance Translations

There are two schools of thought on how to communicate with your crew. One is to select and use words the crew can recognize and relate to; the other is to use only proper Spanish found in a translation dictionary. Therein lies the rub. Most companies use strange and bizarre words that may be in the dictionary but have little or no connection to the thing they are trying to describe. Don't believe me, take a look at your equipment manuals, instructions and labels that offer a Spanish translation.

I'm not going to name names or point fingers at any one translator, there aren't enough fingers. Did you ever wonder why your staff has given you a puzzled look when you try and describe an item in their native tongue? Some of the following have been used in the golf industry to describe specialized items. It is important to understand that some words are not translatable, meaning there is **no** equivalent in Spanish. A shortlist of such key words are: reel, bed-bar, (rotary) mower deck, and my favorite, - spray nozzle.

The word "reel" for some reason seems to get everyone's creative juices flowing in the industry. Here's some of the stuff currently being used to describe this one part of the mower:

- Rodillo (roh-dee-yoh) – it means roller, like the ones on the cutting units
- Navaja (nah-vah-hah) – it means penknife or jackknife
- Cuchilla (koo-chee-yah) – means blade
- Carrete (kah-rray-tay) – it can mean hose reel, spool of thread, tape reel, a roll of film, or a fishing reel
- Molinete (moh-lee-nay-tay) – it can be a windmill, pinwheel, exhaust fan, or turnstile
- Rodete (roh-day-tay) – a wheel, hair bun, or pincushion pad
- Tambor (tahm-boor) – means drum; the 55-gallon type as well as the musical instrument.

Talk about having your Spanish following the beat of a different drum...

For "bedbar," literal translation would be something like a "bar from a bed," which won't work, but that hasn't stopped people from trying. The most common two ways used are:

barra de cuchilla (**bah**-rrah day koo-chee-yah), which is "blade bar;"

barra de base (**bah**-rah day **bah**-say), which is "base bar."

"Spray nozzle" is a classic. One company calls it a boquilla (boh-kee-yah). That word means blowtorch tip, cigarette holder, or the mouthpiece of a musical instrument. Many companies have taken a fancy to this word as well. Go to your local hardware store, visit the Lawn & Garden department, and check out the nozzles for a garden hose. There, on the packaging in Spanish, is "boquilla." I wonder if they employ the same translator? The governor on an engine is a regulador (ray-goo-lah-dohr), but someone followed the saying, "if it looks like it, and sounds like it, it must be..." so they call it a gobernador (goh-behr-nah-dohr) which really is a governor, a person in charge of a State or Province, not an engine part. One company calls their grinder a rectificadora (rehk-tee-fee-kah-doh-rah), which is an electrical rectifier. I guess they're starting a new product line.

(continued on page 30)

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The sprayer we use on a golf course is a rociador (roh-see-yah-dohr); someone else calls it a pulverizador. That word is used to describe a perfume atomizer, a spray paint gun, or a carburetor jet. The blade on a reel itself is cuchilla de reel; some call it an hoja (oh-hah) which is used mostly to describe a leaf on a tree or a sheet of paper.

Two words being used to describe things on a sprayer are "sosporte" for valve bank and "aguilon" for boom. I can't find those words anywhere in Spanish. If you can, let me know.

I know it looks hopeless but progress is slowly being made. One company has hired a native of Mexico to run their Spanish training department. Another company is modifying its European Spanish manuals to the Mexican dialect. The ideal situation would be for all those responsible for the Spanish publications in their respective companies to get together and agree on what words will be used in the industry. Maybe they don't realize it

but one can insist that words in a document remain the same during translation. Until that time comes, we can call a reel something different every day of the week or just call it a reel...

Personally, I feel you should use whatever words work to describe a thing or action, however, make sure you let your staff know what you expect. Of course, be consistent.



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