



# Global Brand Management

## An In-Depth Examination of a Centralized Localization Strategy for Successful Global Marketing

White Paper

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Within the framework of the ever-changing world economy, the focus on more effective global and multicultural marketing is an unprecedented opportunity for corporations. Both emerging global markets and in-country cultural affinity groups, such as the US Hispanic market, represent consumer bases that are growing not only in terms of population, but also in terms of per capita purchasing power. From marketing communications materials and instruction manuals to client-facing web and software applications, content has now become an inseparable part of the corporate deliverable and the customer experience in product and service companies alike.

The aggressiveness with which organizations pursue global and multicultural markets ranges widely. Some organizations rely on the minimum localization effort necessary (e.g., organizations that localize only what is required by law in the markets in which they operate); others provide only certain materials in-language but handle the process in a decentralized manner, reaping only a limited benefit from their investment. But now, although the absolute number is still small, there are more and more organizations taking a proactive approach to the process of global and multicultural marketing by engaging in various initiatives at the enterprise level. Through the use of best-practice technology and process, these initiatives allow:

- Greater consistency in brand-voice across all media of user-experience.
- Lower costs in complying with translation requirements by achieving maximum re-use of content across the enterprise.
- Higher customer satisfaction and lower post-sale support costs as a result of clients having a greater adoption and a greater unaided understanding of written materials accompanying a given product or service.
- Faster time-to-market for collateral materials accompanying products, mitigating the risk of missing a planned product launch date.

A centralized localization strategy is a critical factor in successfully driving the maximum ROI for a global marketing program. It is worth noting that a centralized localization strategy need not operate in conflict with regional in-country marketing programs. Quite the opposite: a properly implemented centralized localization strategy complements regional marketing initiatives by facilitating real-time collaboration and communication and by allowing the de-centralized production of marketing materials for maximum effectiveness in the local market. And all this is accomplished without deviating from centrally-approved terminology, brand standards, and marketing themes.

There are two key analyses that should be made when pursuing a centralized localization strategy. The first is to look at processes that manage the brand consistency of the marketing message in multiple countries/languages, and the second is to look at technology that may be available to facilitate this process for all marketing content, be it online or offline.

## LANGUAGE

Companies often spend massive amounts of money to define their brand in the source language but make little attempt to control/define it outside their native market. This can result in misrepresentation of the brand's image around the world and degradation of the brand's value in international markets. So, in creating a centralized brand strategy, it is important to first define how the brand is to be represented in the various markets/languages in which an organization intends to operate.

The fundamental strategy to be employed at the beginning of any globalization initiative is Language Pre-Flight. This stage involves collaboration with local market contacts so that, through their feedback, sign-off, and buy-in, global brand guidelines can be established on the front end. These guidelines have four key components: target market glossaries, style guides, brand identity guides and sample translations.

### ■ Glossaries

Glossaries are typically viewed as an investment in the brand and a first step towards ensuring consistent use of terminology across a multinational enterprise. They are typically placed on a secure web portal to make them easily accessible to geographically dispersed content authors. This way, content created in-language (i.e. not translated) can be kept consistent with all centrally translated material.

Prior to glossary creation, it is recommended that websites, existing collateral, and content from previous translation efforts be reviewed. Any brand-specific or industry-specific terminology should be extracted. This information should be used to create a master source language glossary. This glossary should then be reviewed by internal stakeholders so that any necessary revisions may be made prior to final approval via a predetermined process.

Once the master source language glossary is finalized, native-speaking linguists of the target language should review previously translated material to find any existing translations for the glossary terms, as well as to suggest translations for any terms that do not currently have equivalents in the target language. The resulting work should then be submitted to the relevant in-country reviewers whose final approval will render the material master target language glossary.

## ■ Style Guides

Style guides are created for the purpose of clearly defining the stylistic and grammatical conventions that are to be implemented throughout all content. These guides serve as a reference so that elements such as currency, distance, time, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar rules may be consistently applied in each target market, thereby ensuring that all translated text is seamlessly managed and appropriately adapted for each target market.

It is recommended that a master English style guide be created and then submitted to all internal stakeholders for any revisions and, finally, approved. Once this style guide is finalized, native-speaking linguists of the target languages should create corresponding market-specific style guides. Like the glossaries, style guides should also meet the final approval of in-country reviewers.

## ■ Brand Identity Guides

Brand identity guides are used to clearly define brand voice, which is then adapted to each of the target markets. Being able to refer to such guides allows all authors of corporate content to gain a complete understanding of the intended message to be conveyed about the brand.

At the start of this process, information is typically culled from source language brand identity guides, project briefs, and instructions on how to write for the brand and then adapted to create guides to be used for each target language. The following should also be considered during the creation of brand identity guides:

- Is corporate content to be authored in an active voice or passive voice?
- What is the level of formality that defines the way organizations collectively speak?
- What is the education level of the people being addressed?

Once the in-language versions of the brand identity guide have been created, they should be submitted to the relevant in-country reviewers for final approval.

## ■ Sample Translations

Language is subjective in nature. Therefore, in order to end up with the best product, due diligence in the beginning of any localization effort is a necessary part of the process. As such, it is recommended that communication be established between the teams creating localized content and the people responsible for using that content in the local market. This can be done through the use of sample translations.

### ▾ Key Language Pre-Flight Step: Glossary Creation

- 1) Extract brand- and industry-specific terminology from websites, marketing collateral, and corporate communications
- 2) Create master source language glossary based on extracted words and any proposed technology
- 3) Have source glossary reviewed by internal stakeholders and amended until approved
- 4) Native speakers of target language(s) should review existing translations for existing terms to match content of source glossary
- 5) Linguists craft translations for any terms that don't have in-language equivalents and review appropriateness of terms pulled from existing translations
- 6) In-country reviewers review/revise target glossaries until there is a consensus on final terminology
- 7) Glossaries should be stored online for access by geographically dispersed users

In order to create samples, it is recommended that a review be conducted of existing online/offline materials to try and find content indicative of what can be expected over the course of a globalization initiative. For example, this may include highly branded marketing copy, instructional copy, legal terms and conditions and/or abbreviated database text.

As soon as the sample content has been finalized, a linguistic team – consisting of a translator, editor, and proofreader – should be organized for each target language, either internally or through a language service provider. The teams should then submit a sample translation. This translation should be submitted to the in-country stakeholders for review. If the in-country reviewers require adjustments, the linguistic teams should be modified until the resulting adaptations meet expectations. If the initiative is time-sensitive, organizations can start with multiple linguistic teams and multiple samples at the beginning.

Once the in-country stakeholders have reviewed the sample(s) and helped define the target for linguistic success, the organization should then commit to and use those linguists for future translations. A common best practice is to hold a kick-off call between the linguistic resources and the relevant stakeholders within the organization before localization commences. It should be noted that if the content consists of various subject matters, it might be necessary to have more than one linguistic team. For example, separate members of the team may be needed to adapt highly branded copy vs. legal terms and conditions.

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## TECHNOLOGY

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The Language Pre-Flight process described above creates a language infrastructure to manage branded communications effectively in multiple target languages and countries. Integrating the pre-flight components with best practice technology will also help an organization deploy localized content to market consistently and efficiently. When combined with an effective global brand strategy, localization technologies speed up the translation process, allowing organizations to deliver localized content to market faster and at lower costs. A current trend in corporate technology is the centralization of content publishing, regardless of the end use of the content. Centralization of content publishing allows companies both to ensure that the corporate brand message is consistent across multiple channels, and to save time and money through content re-use and process automation. The same forces that make this a logical initiative in English are also relevant to the content for all of the languages/markets in which a company operates. Ideally, a company would have a centralized localization strategy that directly ties in technically with its centralized content publishing strategy.

Among the commercially available translation technology solutions are the following:

### ■ Globalization Management Systems

When residing in multiple repositories, content that requires translation can be difficult to access for translation – espe-

cially when this content is updated frequently. The challenge to global marketing teams is getting localized content to its respective market quickly. Not only is it crucial to maintain the brand's image by getting the most up-to-date information to the market, but localizing it provides the opportunity to strengthen and grow a loyal base of customers who see the most up-to-date content communicated in their language.

One way to address this challenge is through the use of a Globalization Management System (GMS). A GMS can integrate with content repositories, such as databases, file systems, and content management system (CMS) applications, to monitor those areas for new content or changes to existing content. Once an alteration has been identified, a GMS facilitates the extraction of content for localization, packages and sends it out for translation and, subsequently, restores it to the appropriate repository in a timely fashion. Not only does a GMS keep content synchronized and up-to-date in all markets and languages, but by automating many of the manual tasks involved in localization, it frees up internal IT resources. So, content is translated faster and time-to-market is accelerated, thus accelerating the process by which organizations can deploy products and content.

### ■ Hosted Portal Solutions

Streamlining the localization process through a GMS is just one way to improve efficiency during the localization stage. When multiple groups are requesting translations at the same time, it can be difficult for localization managers to oversee all translation requests. The deployment of a portal to provide more visibility into all the translation projects taking place is a common best practice. A portal allows business users to submit content for localization for any offline formats, as well as track enterprise translation costs and invoice status. Additionally, a portal can be linked to the corporate intranet and facilitate a centralized localization process.

### ■ Translation Memory

One of the greatest innovations in the translation/localization industry has been the development of translation memory, or TM software. TM software is used by linguists to produce translations that can be stored for seamless implementation into future language projects. Through the use of TM tools, organizations ensure that duplicate translations are never created and that similar content is translated consistently in any media in which it is deployed. Additionally, this ability to re-use multilingual content across multiple channels typically results in a significant reduction in localization costs and a dramatic increase in localization speed. When considering a GMS or a portal technology, it is crucial that translation memory be an integral part of these systems' workflow.

The most recent development in translation memory technology is server-side translation memory (SSTM). SSTM allows a group of translators working simultaneously on large volumes of content to leverage each other's work in real time over the Internet. The result is greater consistency, greater cost savings, and faster time-to-market for translated content.

### ■ Terminology Management

Terminology management software (TMS) is another tool in the suite of technology available to assist in developing a centralized localization and brand management strategy. TMS allows organizations to maintain the glossaries, style guides and brand guides created during the language pre-flight process in a centralized location that can be accessed at the enterprise level. This is typically hosted by either the company or a language service provider and is made available as a link on a corporate intranet. The benefit of a terminology management application is that it allows stakeholders (localization managers, in-country reviewers, marketing and brand managers, etc.) access to update key terminology so that it can be seen and utilized by translators in real time. Increasing the control that stakeholders have in managing their brand's terminology greatly enhances the consistency in which the brand message is communicated internationally.

### CONCLUSION

As the global economy rapidly expands, it is becoming increasingly critical for organizations to improve the visibility of their brands in international markets. This creates the challenge of understanding how to effectively communicate in these markets, a challenge made infinitely more complex by the cultural nuances of each market. Therefore the risks of incorrectly or inaccurately communicating brand-voice is magnified.

Organizations that practically address this challenge have had their corporate marketing groups collaborate with local offices to establish standards for communicating brand image into given target markets. The development of standards through glossaries, style guides, brand identity guides, and sample translations in the language pre-flight stage is an investment that pays huge dividends during the rollout of any global marketing initiative. Further, by utilizing the latest best-practice localization technologies, multinational organizations can dramatically improve the quality, speed, and efficiency of their communications in all media, as well as reduce costs and enhance the brand's effectiveness on a global scale.



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