



multi lingual

website development



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Executive Summary

“If you're trying to persuade people to do something, or buy something, it seems to me you should use their language, the language they use every day, the language in which they think.”

-David Ogilvy

Localization aims for narrow markets to attract a wide Web audience.

A company cannot survive in the global marketplace without speaking directly to customers. Localized websites go beyond translation to identify cultural markers and regional idioms that connect businesses to likely customers wherever they live.

Businesses that adapt content to local languages, customs, and tastes are more successful than their competitors when it comes to attracting and retaining clients. Yes, the majority of websites are in English. But more than 70 percent of Internet users speak a native language other than English (Internet World Stats) and that is far too many potential customers to ignore.

Localization is not just for companies with a physical product to sell. Advertising agencies, website builders, tourism companies, and other service providers also have potential business outside the English-speaking world. Your website is the entryway to your business and you want to welcome as many visitors as possible.

Channel the Power of Localization

56.2%

of consumers say that the ability to obtain information in their own language is more important than price.

(Common Sense Advisory, Can't Read, Won't Buy: Why Language Matters on Global Websites, 2006)

A simple translation will not take a company very far in our international marketplace. Customers want more than just a few sentences in their native languages; they want to know that a business understands their needs and can deliver a solution. This requires a deep knowledge of the culture and community that is not visible when a site is merely translated into Chinese or German. Google Translate and similar tools can increase the confusion because they are inaccurate and do not recognize language subtleties.

Localization communicates content in a way that is culturally appropriate and understandable for the reader. It is a deeper and more meaningful process of translation and the difference between the two is the difference between a curious customer and a convinced customer, between a sales pitch and a sale.

Localization does not just fine-tune a translation; it reveals vocabulary and grammar preferences to uncover idioms, pop-culture references, geographic humor, and other emotional connections to a language. Language localization ensures that visitors to a website can understand not just the text, but also the company's commitment to their culture and its specific needs and desires.

Benefits of Localization



65%

of multinational enterprises believe localization is either important or very important for achieving higher company revenues.

(California State University at Chico, 2007)

LOCALIZATION SHOWS YOU CARE.

Customers do not want to feel like an item on a checklist; oh, we have something for Spanish-speakers now. They want to know that a product or service is specifically useful to them in their surroundings and in their business niche. You cannot convince future customers if you cannot speak their language, both literally and figuratively.

LOCALIZATION HELPS MINIMIZE RISK.

Imagine a pill bottle that says to take the drug once a day. If you speak Spanish, “once” is eleven, and this kind of confusion is serious and potentially deadly. When you are working with medicine, law, or other professions, you can avoid serious safety repercussions by providing an accurate translation and localized information.

LOCALIZATION AMPS UP YOUR MESSAGE.

When you delve into a language or culture, you learn exactly how to communicate and market to your future customers. Will your customer base respond to formal language or local slang? Will frequent contact make you look desperate and annoying or will it convince people that you are serious about their business? What kind of humor might your customers appreciate? Your message will appear specific and not generic if you can address future customers at their comfort level.

Three Steps to Building a Successful Localized Website

95%

of Chinese online consumers indicate greater comfort level with websites in their language.

(Forrester Research, Translation and Localization of Retail Web Sites, 2009)

1 A successful website in any language begins with a clear plan for content and that requires a detailed picture of your business' goals and vision.

- Who is the ideal customer for your product or service?
- Where does this customer live?
- Which languages or dialects will reach the largest number of these potential customers?

When you bring this kind of market research to the table, you can determine exactly where you are most likely to find customers, and that will save time and money. Most companies cannot afford to translate and localize into 200 separate languages or regional dialects and market research will help you find the match between your offerings and a particular spot on the map. It is easy to feel overwhelmed when faced with an entire globe of choices, but localization experts can help you sift through your marketing information to find the places where your company can expand successfully.

2 Create a strategy for your web presence. This could include all or some of the following:

- Register top-level domains, such as .mx for Mexico or .fr for France.
- Design a “landing page,” which is the page potential clients reach after they click on your advertisement. This page must communicate your company’s brand and message as well as your specific strategy for this market.
- Determine a clear goal for the website.
 - Immediate sale
 - Sales leads
 - Free distribution of a newsletter, article, book, etc.
- Think beyond text. Photographs, artwork, fonts, even color choices, carry different meanings across cultural and language barriers.
- If your site includes multiple languages, have an easy and obvious way for visitors to find their language microsite.

Develop and test an Internet strategy. Present two or three options to a group of native speakers and ask for specific feedback.

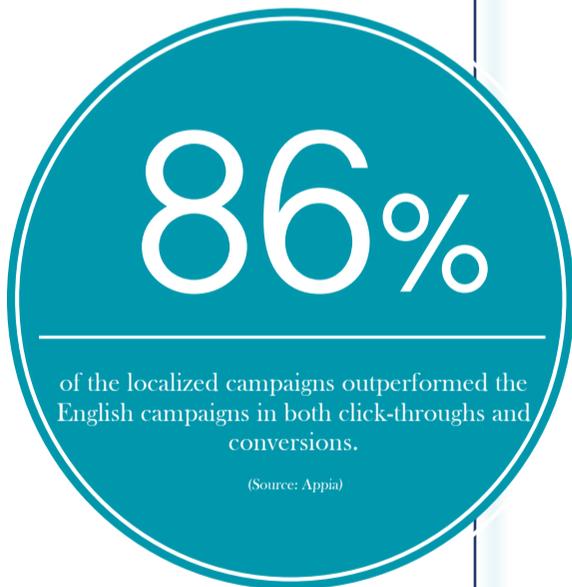
- Is the site easy to navigate, and can you find your language quickly?
- Is the language clear and appropriate?
- Are idioms used correctly?
- Would any of the language or images come across as offensive or insensitive to the culture?
- What changes could make the site more informative and persuasive?



3 Determine the best technological solutions for your site. The technology needs to work in tandem with your content to keep the site organized and to maintain updates in a timely fashion.

CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CMS). Most websites are created and published within a web-based CMS. You need to choose a CMS that will dovetail with your multilingual strategy. Your technical team can advise you but you also want to consult with your translators and content providers to ensure they can work successfully within the CMS you select.

- Is the CMS flexible enough to store and manage content in multiple languages?
- Is there an additional charge for localized user interface (UI) packs?
- Is it easy to set up individual sites for different geographic locations?
- Is the system easy to use and to update?
- Can the system handle languages that use characters or other alphabets, such as Hebrew, Arabic, or Chinese? What about languages that read right to left?
 - Can the CMS process payment in multiple currencies?
- Can you perform quality assurance and website functionality testing within the CMS?
 - Does the CMS publisher offer multilingual support?



APPPLICATION PROGRAMMING INTERFACE, or API. The API tracks updates to your parent site and notifies the translation provider of any changes to the CMS. Even tiny details such as currency and measurements can help customers streamline a purchase and therefore must be updated accurately.

71%

of North American executives expect revenues from foreign operations, sales and/or imports to increase.

(Chubb, 2008, Multinational Risk Survey)

GEOTARGETING. Have you ever visited a website and wondered how it knew your city or even your zip code? Geotargeting combines Internet marketing and geolocation to send a web visitor to the appropriate site. If you log in to eBay from Chennai, India, eBay will direct you to the Indian site. If you are logging in from Chicago, you will be sent to the U.S. site. Geolocation software can narrow the focus to a country, state, city, zip code, ISP address, or other criteria.

Geotargeting also can rely on visitor input. For example, the Ikea site allows a user to choose the location that will provide the best localized translation.

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (or SEO). A solid Internet marketing strategy uses SEO to ensure that your website appears near the top of searches related to your industry. One of the most familiar tactics is the use of keywords to drive traffic. The keyword appears multiple times on your site, someone uses that keyword in a search, and Google or another engine takes that person to your website. But when you add another language, keywords get a little tricky. For example, “coche” in Spanish is a car, but in Argentina, the word usually refers to a baby stroller. Same language; different product. In the United States, a boot is a heavy shoe, but in the United Kingdom, it is the trunk of a car.

The keywords must have:

- Strong relevance to the website
- Relatively high score volume in search engines
- Relatively high search rankings for the local market, including both language and cultural references
- Lead customers to the profit centers on your website

Conclusive Summary

“ According to Research firm IDC, web users are four times more likely to purchase from a company that communicates in their own language. ”

“ Visitors to websites stay twice as long on sites that are available in their native tongue, according to Forrester Research. ”

Emerging markets such as Russia, India, China, and Brazil are overflowing with consumers who want to take part in the international economy. You do not want to want to alienate these potential customers by marketing to them solely in English. Instead, set yourself apart from competitors and show your respect and interest in those customers by incorporating their language and culture into your marketing message. The Internet provides access to nearly any place you can find on your map and localization will allow you to take advantage of that technology to reach an almost unlimited supply of new markets and clients.