LOCALISATION FOR EU COMPANIES

TRENDS AND BEST PRACTICES

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#EULOCALISATION

Contents

Introduction

It's a known fact that consumers will typically gravitate towards the company they feel best understands them and their specific needs. And there's no better way to show that you understand the culture and needs of new markets than by speaking their language, literally. Adapting a website to the local market is the number one way a business can show its target consumer base that it is truly invested in the community and respects the population's heritage and culture.

According to a study conducted by the Common Sense Advisory, 56% of consumers say that the ability to obtain information in their own language is more important than price, and 53% said they felt more at ease when making a purchase in their native language. Companies who understand the significance of this know that localisation is a vital component of a global business strategy that will drive higher revenues. That's why it's no surprise that over 71% of Fortune 500 companies are already investing in localisation to reach customers in new global markets.

Now, more than ever, is the time to start localizing your content and expanding your reach. In this guide, we explore the global trends driving European companies to localize into new markets, the key challenges that all global companies face when localizing (and how to overcome them), best practices for targeting new markets and localizing content, and much more.

Understanding Key Reasons for Prioritizing Localization in Europe

Non-EU Markets on the Rise

In recent years, the rate of global expansion is reaching new heights across all markets. To accommodate for this, global companies are working hard to capture the great new opportunities from abroad. For example, leading travel companies like Booking.com are launching new campaigns to reach the strongly trending Asian tourist population and gain a substantial share of domestic markets abroad through business strategy and localisation. This is part of a greater wave of meaningful localisation by global brands recognizing this method as the key to getting a deeper reach into local Asian markets. Expect to see this trend continue as more global companies unlock the power of localisation to engage customers across all markets.

Maximizing Marketing Efforts

Failing to translate content into the native language of your target market leaves your marketing message open to misinterpretation. By translating content, businesses can be sure their target audience understands their message, understands their brand values, and, most importantly, understands the solution being offered.

Building Brand Loyalty

Not only does translating content make it easier for customers to get the information they need to make an informed decision, it shows that your company values customer interaction. This is most effective when it extends beyond the initial purchase. Studies even show that 74% of people polled would be more likely to make another purchase if post-sales support was available in their language.

Increasing Revenue

In addition to the CSA study, other studies have found the majority of people will only engage with websites in their native language and nearly half won't purchase products from a website that's in a foreign language. By translating content, companies increase engagement and conversions. Ultimately, localisation bridges the gap between technology and marketing. There are numerous ways to implement a Translation Management System (TMS) across platforms, and it offers a solution for needs that span multiple departments. Once implemented, companies find they derive significant value from streamlined workflows and are able to easily expand their efforts and projects as their business grows.

Overcoming the Top Challenges of Localization

Localisation is essential, but it isn't easy. Understanding the challenges of localisation when expanding into new markets will help your company better prepare for the road ahead and choose the Translation Management System (TMS) best aligned with your globalization strategy. After over a decade of helping companies of all sizes go global and providing a best-in-class SaaS translation platform, we've been able to identify the most common challenges that companies run into when localizing. Here are some of the biggest challenges of localisation and translation management, and how to overcome them.

Knowing Where to Start

Localisation is a growing industry. European companies looking to expand to new territories are often uncertain about where to begin. Before researching localisation platforms, it's important to understand the translation management industry and to hone in on your company's local and global business needs. Questions like how often translated content will be published, how many translators will be working on projects, and whether content will be uploaded manually or automatically are all key when choosing a TMS.

Securing the Necessary Resources

Successful localisation goes beyond choosing a translation management platform. Finding the right translators or translation agency is also important. High-quality translations lead to increased engagement, more conversions, and improved SEO efforts, while poor translations can make the company look unprofessional and can even run the risk of offending local customers.

Innovating Beyond Manual Processes

Traditionally, translations have been completed by putting translatable strings in a spreadsheet, sending the document to translators, waiting for confirmation that the document has been received, waiting for the translated strings to be sent back, then having developers manually enter the translated strings into the code or CMS.

Manual processes are not only antiquated and inefficient, they have a higher margin of error and are not as cost-efficient as streamlined automated processes. The truth is that with today's technology, companies are now able to translate and localize their content with far more advanced methods.

Building Timely Launches

Manual processes also contribute to delayed or extended launches, just like lacking the right translation tools does. This combination can lead to increased translation time, result in low-quality translations that often require a rework before being deployed, or force translators to use complicated source code that can make it challenging to clearly understand and accurately translate the source language.

Communicating Clearly

Without clearly understanding a brand's values, product benefits, communication style, and target audience, translators will have a hard time providing quality translations that will resonate within the local market. In addition to keeping the lines of communication open throughout the translation process and encouraging collaboration, it's crucial to provide translators with context for their translations through resources like glossaries and style guides.

Shopping Around

In a nascent industry like localisation, some EU companies choose to work with whatever platform appears to be the biggest or the cheapest. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to localisation, and what works for a Fortune 500 company may not work for a growing startup. What's most important is finding a solution that not only fits the company's present needs, but is also agile and can be scaled easily to accommodate growth.

Identifying Global Market Opportunities

Two major decisions in localisation are what to localize and where to localize. While you are gaining a stronger understanding of how to select which content to localize first, you should also identify which markets to localize into in order to capture the most global customers. Here's how you can approach the decision of selecting exactly which international markets to start localizing for first.

Understand Your Top Performing Markets

In order to know where you are going, you need to know where you are coming from. To do this — similar to selecting which content to localize first, which begins with understanding your top-performing content— start by understanding your top-performing markets to date. Go into your website analytics platform (i.e., Google Analytics) to see where your audience is coming from. From here, take a deep dive into the regions and markets that are driving traffic to your site. Following some analysis, you may be surprised at the insights you find; perhaps there is a small but growing audience from a market that you haven't even thought of before.

Get to Know Your International Audiences

While you're analyzing your top performing content, you'll also want to dive into the data of your international audience and traffic. Take a close look at which international markets are bringing in the most traffic outside of your main market. It's a straightforward concept, but it will dictate the first languages into which you should be localizing. Examine this carefully, as you may be surprised at the global markets that are trying to reach your site! Dive deeper than just the general continental areas and get specific with the countries and regions. Follow up with research on the languages spoken within each country and region, as some countries have varying languages depending on the region you are in. The more specific your research, the more targeted your language selection and localisation efforts will be.

See Where Your Industry & Competitors Are

There are two main approaches when trying to decide where to go with your localisation efforts: going where others have gone already, or paving your own path. Start by taking a look at what other markets are popular within your industry and amongst competitors.

Then, compare that list of markets to the one you've created from your website visitor analysis. With these two lists, you'll be able to make a thorough decision on which approach to choose. If there are clear, strong markets where others in your industry have built a presence and you have not, determine whether you want to localize there or perhaps start building a presence in uncharted markets to stay ahead of the curve.

Leverage International SEO Insights

Beyond market research, you can also leverage international SEO. Do this by conducting some due diligence on keywords that resonate in international markets, and see which markets may have a more established and thorough understanding of your industry.

This international SEO research will help you understand how easy, difficult, and relevant it will be for you to achieve high natural search rankings in other languages. Then, not only will you be able to select the best markets to localize into, but you will also learn how to optimize your international SEO to maximize your global localisation success.

Evaluating and Investing in a Localization Solution

Making the decision to localize your content is the first step towards building a global presence for your business and driving revenue from international markets. Once you're ready to dive into the vast world of localisation and translation management systems, it's important to be prepared with the right knowledge to help you assess the translation tools and methods that will best address your business needs.

Businesses that adopt a TMS will gain access to the technology and tools needed to maintain agile development speed, ensuring that adapted or localized versions of a website or product can launch as soon as updates are made to the source content. Unlike traditional translation workflows that rely heavily on error-prone manual processes, an automated translation process is efficient, maximizes available resources, and can be easily scaled to accommodate new languages as you expand into new markets.

Today's TMSs are filled with tools that enable better workflows and functionality. We know it can be easy to get lost in all the translation jargon, so we've honed in on the five key features that your TMS investment should be providing.

Team Management
Unlike traditional methods of translation that involve creating a spreadsheet of translatable strings, sending them for translation, getting them approved, and then making them available to developers, a localisation platform makes team management easy. Anyone can be given access, from developers and project managers to translators and marketers. This allows for open discussions and more collaboration, which will help ensure that everyone involved in the project remains on the same page. You'll also increase efficiency by automating the process and eliminating the need to send translations back and forth.

Translation Glossary
Rework from inconsistent terminology accounts for 15 percent of translation project costs, according to some studies. Creating a comprehensive translation glossary that includes industry and company-specific terms and phrases will help reduce costs, ensure consistency throughout your content, and create a cohesive user experience.

When translating, context is important because there are countless words, across all languages, that have multiple meanings. Let's use the word "home" in English as an example. "Home" often references where a person lives, however, on a website, the word "home" indicates the "home" or main page of the website. While the word for both these cases is "home" in English, the same cannot be said for other languages. In Spanish, the word for "home" that references the place a person lives is "hogar" while the word "home" on a website is denoted by the word "Inicio".

As the example above demonstrates, context is essential for delivering the proper messaging. To make sure your translators have the information they need to produce quality translations that engage your target audiences, you'll want to look for a localisation platform that gives you options for providing context, like attaching product or website screenshots to specific strings. Context is key to creating native experiences for your global users.

Automation

A localisation platform can integrate with a website or application through an API or Command-line Client to automatically collect strings for translation, which are stored in a central repository that anyone working on the project can access. Reviewers and managers can easily see which strings have been translated and are ready for review, and they can also leave additional comments for translators to provide context and ensure accuracy. Once translated strings are approved, the platform automatically pushes the translated strings back to the app or website.

Adding Value in a Competitive Global Market

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Go Global Today!

Localization technology is helping break down geographical and global barriers. To begin breaking down global barriers for your business, unlock the power of localization and try Transifex for free for 15 days. Sign up for your free trial today to start going global: www.transifex.com/signup.