DYNAMIC LANGUAGE

Creating Localization-Ready Marketing Content: The Definitive Guide

Learn how to write marketing content with localization in mind to save time and money on your next localization project.



INTRODUCTION

What is content localization?

Thanks to the power of the internet, it's easier than ever to reach customers in markets around the world. However, global marketing isn't universal — your messaging will need to be adapted to different languages and cultures to resonate with audiences in other regions.

Enter the unifying power of content localization, the process of reshaping marketing assets (e.g. websites, advertisements, video content, and more), to feel "local" anywhere in the world. Content localization involves optimizing content to create a connection with end-users in a language and format that feels familiar and resonates with them.



Optimizing content involves more than simply translating text from one language to another. Content localization also includes modifying graphics and design; changing content to suit target preferences; converting currencies and units of measurement; using proper formatting for dates, addresses, and phone numbers; and addressing local regulations and legal requirements.

Localization can be a huge undertaking, especially if you need to localize a large volume of content across several languages. Luckily, there are steps you can take to streamline your source content before localization, which will save project time and expense.

In this guide, we'll cover why localization matters, as well as some helpful tips for writing localization-ready marketing materials.

Why is content localization important?

Before we share our tips for streamlining your content localization strategy, let's review why the process is essential for engaging foreign audiences.

Content localization is about ensuring your target audience understands your content — and by extension, your brand — in the proper context. Language barriers aside, many other factors can affect how content is absorbed, comprehended, and accepted.

Here's an example to help demonstrate the importance of localization. Imagine you are a US-based company selling potato chips, and you're ready to expand into the UK market. Although both regions predominantly speak the same language, there are plenty of language distinctions between American English and UK English.

In the UK, the word "chips" refers to what Americans would call french fries, while the word "crisps" refers to potato chips. If you tried to market your potato chips as "chips" in the UK, the target audience would likely think you are selling fries, which would impact the effectiveness of your marketing.

In this case, localizing your content and messaging to resonate with the audience as intended would include changing the wording used to describe your products.



By creating a user experience that feels native to the target audience, your content is more likely to be embraced and inspire action. Research has shown that nearly 73% of consumers prefer to buy products in their native language. Furthermore, 56% say that obtaining relevant information in their native language that addresses their locale is more important than price.

Tips for writing localization-ready content

Now that we've explained the importance of a content localization strategy for successful expansion into foreign markets, let's look at how to maximize your content localization budget. Since content can include written text, images, videos, and more, everything needs to work together in a cohesive manner.

The following are some helpful tips for creating "localization-friendly" content (i.e., content created with localization efficiency in mind). Since the volume of the source text determines the localization budget and project timeframe, utilizing these tips can help streamline the process to save time and money.



Write clear and concise content

An acronym long used in the marketing world, K.I.S.S. stands for "keep it simple, stupid." This sentiment is also applicable in localization, as clear and concise writing is easier to translate. Focus on delivering your message — as intended — in fewer words using these writing tips:

- Use simple sentence construction, avoiding slang and idioms
- Use the active voice rather than passive voice wherever possible
- Spell out acronyms
- Replace imprecise pronouns with nouns for clarity wherever possible
- Include articles before the nouns for clarity
- Define and use the appropriate product-specific terminology
- Avoid words with double meanings
- Avoid using double negatives

Writing content for localization is not the time to get cute, wordy, or philosophical. Stick to the messaging and intent of the content and write it as simply as possible to simplify the translation process.



Maintain your brand voice

Your brand has a voice, and retaining that voice across borders is essential. Although writing as clearly and concisely as possible will save translation time, it should not be at the expense of your brand identity; it's important to write like a human and use your brand's unique voice.

To find a balance between simplicity and personality, we recommend starting with very simple source content and building upon it to infuse your brand voice.



Use images to better convey your message

A picture is worth a thousand words. Often, an image can replace words to support the meaning of your content.

Using pictures over words where possible can shorten the source text length and lower your localization budget accordingly. Supporting visuals can also reinforce your content's message. However, be sure to use culturally appropriate images for the target audience.



Always provide context

Context is key to successful translation and content localization. It's imperative to include context (e.g. annotations) whenever possible to clearly communicate the message's intent.

For example, homonyms are words with the same spelling and pronunciation in the English language, but different meanings (e.g. crane, date, lie). Without context, a localization expert may provide an incorrect translation for these potentially ambiguous words.



Be careful with measurements and dimensions

Whether it is a unit of measurement or apparel sizing, properly translating dimensions in content localization is critical.

For example, a women's size 8 shoe in the US and Canada is equivalent to a women's size 6 shoe in the UK and a women's size 38-39 in European countries.

Correctly identifying dimensions according to your target market's standards will help avoid confusion.



Format dates correctly

Dates are formatted differently around the world. In America, dates are written with the month first, whereas European countries list the day first and do not include a comma (e.g. "January 1, 2023" vs. "1 January 2023").

Correctly translated dates are especially critical when localizing marketing campaigns with a definitive start and end date.



Format time correctly

Americans, especially those without military training, typically refer to time in AM and PM. In the rest of the world, time follows a 24-hour model. Incorrectly identifying the time in your content can be confusing and distracting to the end-user, and it's an easily avoidable mistake in localization.

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Need localization support?

As you can see, there are many moving parts to adapting content for foreign markets beyond simple language translation. Cultural considerations, language use, and other factors like time and measurement must be examined and adapted to resonate with target audiences in foreign markets.

The experts at Dynamic Language have provided exceptional localization, translation, transcription, and interpretation services to global clients for over 30 years. We utilize native linguists with subject-matter expertise according to each client's industry to ensure the highest quality translation and localization across all communication channels.

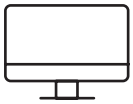
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