

3 Proven Localization Strategies to Grow Your Global Brand





Digital strategies and technologies have enabled companies in every industry to reach audiences they never thought possible. But in today's market, globalization is an imperative, not a nice-to-have. In B2C markets, global eCommerce sales make up a growing percentage of all retail sales. According to research from [eMarketer](#), global retail eCommerce sales will grow from \$4.89 trillion in 2021 (19.8% of total sales) to \$6.39 trillion in 2024 (21.8% of total sales).

The following countries will show particularly strong compound annual growth (CAGR) to 2023, according to [JP Morgan](#):

Malaysia	India	China	United States
17.0%	12.1%	11.2%	10.5%

B2B eCommerce sales are on the rise, as well. In 2020, global B2B eCommerce was valued at \$6.64 trillion in 2020, and is forecasted to grow at a CAGR of 18.7% from 2021 to 2028, reports [Grand View Research](#).

Around the world, more B2B buyers would consider eCommerce purchases. In fact, 70% of B2B decision-makers around the world are open to making new, fully remote purchases of \$50,000+, and 27% would buy \$500,000+, according to [McKinsey](#).

Asia Pacific
dominated the B2B
eCommerce market
in 2020, **capturing**
more than 60%
of the overall B2B
revenue.

– [Grand View Research](#)

Clearly, reaching across borders is something most brands will have to do—not only to stay competitive, but also to grow their business. However, reaching new audiences isn't enough. Brands need to communicate with customers in the most relevant way, taking into account more than just language differences. This is where localization comes in.

"Localization is more than translating content," said Martin Schlueter, VP Sales Central Europe, CoreMedia.

"It's not the same story in a different language. It's adapting to the culture, competitors, local needs, regulations, and the market as a whole."

To ensure your messages resonate with global audiences, you'll need to empower your local content teams, take a strategic localization approach to keep up with changing customer expectations, and deliver the huge amount of content demanded by audiences worldwide. Read on to find out how.





The Case For Catering To Local Customers

40% of consumers
say they'll never buy
from websites in
other languages

– [CSA Research](#)

Brands that get localization right will reap the benefits. Research shows that communicating with buyers in their native language can help increase brand awareness, earn trust, and build loyalty.

When it comes to content, language matters:

76% of online shoppers prefer to buy products from sites in their native language

75% of consumers say they're more likely to purchase from the same brand again if **customer care is in their native language**

65% prefer content in their own language, even if it's poor quality ([CSA Research](#))

However, those that don't localize effectively will find themselves falling behind. Miscommunication and customer misunderstandings could lead to brand equity losses. In addition, the language barrier can turn off buyers from the start.



What Makes Localization So Hard

Managing content across languages, countries, and sites can present major challenges for global brands. Here are some of the biggest hurdles brands are facing.

Streamlining translation workflows

For many organizations, translation is a manual, time-consuming process that involves copying and pasting text into Excel spreadsheets, emailing files back and forth, and then manually adding the translated text to their CMS.

Not only does this waste resources and increase the risk of errors, but because the process is so complex, many organizations avoid updating their content as often as they should. That means missed opportunities for reaching local consumers with valuable content.

Translating context, not just language

In addition to translating language, brands have to think about context—for example, where consumers live, what their values are, and what kinds of regulations are in place. Colors, images, and symbols must reflect the cultural norms of the country or region in which they appear. For example, the word “football” doesn’t have the same meaning in the US as in other countries, where it refers to soccer.

Some images may be offensive, such as certain hand gestures, and colors can have different meanings. For example, in Asia, white is worn for funerals, while in the west, people typically wear black to funerals. Taglines and slogans will also need to be adapted—and not just translated—or brands risk translation failure.

When it comes to products, you might need to communicate different use cases to different audiences. For example, some agricultural equipment in Europe is used differently than in India. While you might highlight climate control features in Europe, buyers in the Indian market would be less interested in those features. That means adjusting your imagery and content to fit your audience needs. By knowing what's appropriate to include in your messaging for different markets, you can stay relevant and avoid miscommunications that could damage your brand.

Ensuring consistency across all locales

With multiple sites in different regions, it's a constant struggle to keep content consistent across sites. Brands have tried to maintain consistency in various ways, either by centralizing their content management and pushing content out to regions, or using a decentralized structure, in which local regions pull the content they feel is most relevant and adapt it for their needs. Both strategies pose risks.

With centralized content management, local content teams may not feel that the content is relevant enough to their regions. On the other hand, decentralized management could open you up to inconsistencies in tone and content across regions.

Maintaining your content

After the initial launch of your global sites, you'll need to roll out content changes to different regions regularly. This is especially challenging for manufacturers or brands that sell products that require long-term investments. Maintaining content is much more complex for these brands than for a luxury fashion brand, for example. While a fashion brand may simply replace a sold-out product with another, a manufacturer needs to keep updating based on new features, services, or upgrades. That means tracking who in the organization is already using a particular piece of content, who should be aware there's been a change, and who is responsible for making that change.



If there's no one taking care of a local market, you have no other choice than to just push global content out to that market. But if there's someone responsible for working in that market, you need to give them the option to adapt the content and make it more relevant for their audience."

— Martin Schlueter
VP Sales Central Europe, CoreMedia



3 Best Practices for Successful Localization

From collaboration, scalability, and speed to efficiencies, quality control, and visibility across regions, a smart localization strategy that includes these three best practices will ensure you're providing relevant content to every buyer in your market.

1. Define your target markets

Imagine you're a brand that sells into 140 countries with 40 languages. You decide to set up 70 landing pages for your most relevant countries. While your most strategic countries will require investing in translation, you might decide to simply roll out the same content in English for the others, with simple customization options for your local office and products.

When defining your target markets, Schlueter recommends keeping workflows in mind, being realistic about your content resources and staying ready to shift at any moment.

"Customers need to think about which workflows fit their culture and how they interact with their subsidiaries," he said. "They need to be flexible, and open to change."

A needs-based approach to localization

The REHAU Group, a German manufacturer that operates in more than 68 countries, took a wait-and-see approach to defining their target markets. They began by translating the same content for multiple countries. Then they waited one year to find out which countries adapted this content, and which didn't. For those regions that managed and adapted their content, the manufacturer gave them more input and control over what they published. Content for the other regions was pushed out of headquarters, with no option to adapt content. By understanding how their teams managed content, they were able to implement a strategy that worked for their particular needs.



2. Determine your site hierarchy

When building your site hierarchy, it's important to structure your sites to make content creation as efficient and cost-effective as possible. This means being able to easily create new versions (or variants) of content from master content pieces.

"Inheriting content is the key to scaling your content as your company grows," said Ulrike Heidler, Director of Sales Engineering Americas, CoreMedia. "Many times organizations think about how they develop content

today, but what happens when you have 20 locales, instead of just five? You need to ensure you can build content to your requirements in a way that's scalable, now and in the future."

Your [site hierarchy](#) can be arranged in a few different ways:

- **Country-First:** Building your hierarchy around country works best when you have simple sites for each country, different product offerings, and content teams in each country who manage those sites. First you identify your countries, then filter down to language requirements.
- **Language-First:** With this hierarchy, you'll focus first on all of the languages you need to address with your content, and then the main countries that support those languages. Language-first helps you replace expensive translation with more simple synchronization. However, it's less effective if you need country-specific content.
- **Grouped:** With this strategy, locales are grouped based on an indicator the company values and is driving their content strategy. This could be region, currency, marketing strategy, branding, or language. Artificial group parents allow for easier expansion. The grouped hierarchy provides the most flexibility as it reduces the potential for major changes when market forces shift.

The hierarchy you choose depends on the goals and resources of your organization.



Content and asset management technologies have risen to the challenge of scaling content reuse, enabling easy recombination of content components to be delivered via an API across any number of channels. This is what's known as 'modular content.' Marketers should put modular content management practices at the heart of their operations to accomplish major strategic goals.”¹

— [Forrester](#)

¹ “Modular Content Is The Key To Customizing Experiences At Scale A Small-Scale Approach Enables Immediate Business Benefits,” Forrester, May 13th, 2021, by Ryan Skinner, Principal Analyst, with Oliwia Berdak, Anna Vyshnevskaya, and Christine Turley

3. Maximize your efficiencies

With so many audiences, languages, and cultures to address, content teams will need to do more—faster, at scale, more effectively, and efficiently. Here's how:

Reuse your content: One way you can ensure consistency and cost savings is to reuse your content. With a CMS that supports modular content, you can easily swap out portions of your content to accommodate changes in language, images, or devices without building entirely new pages from scratch.

Reduce duplication and speed up localization by providing local teams with content that has already been approved at the global level, allowing them to adapt as needed, while staying compliant with brand guidelines.

Streamline your workflows: The more successful your brand is, the more languages you'll need. Rather than wasting time copying and pasting, think about how to scale the translation process so you can easily roll content out to other countries when needed.

If your content management system is integrated with a translation memory (TM), you can easily streamline the process. A TM stores completed translations so you can reuse them in the future. When the system comes across a phrase that has already been translated, it automatically inserts the translated phrase, speeding up processing times, saving on translation costs, and promoting consistency.

However, even though translations are reused, says Schlueter, they're not reused across organizations, as translation companies strive to preserve the tone of each unique company. In addition, sharing TMs across different companies presents confidentiality and trade secret issues, as companies don't want their slogans or messaging inadvertently appearing in competitor content.



CASE STUDY

Scaling product content for a growing global audience

One of Germany's largest machine manufacturers, DMG MORI AG sells to buyers around the world. With an increasingly digital audience, the company needed a way to scale their web content across regions, while streamlining editor workflows. And they didn't have much time.

In order to sync the launch with one of their most important tradeshows, they had to roll out their site to eight regions in only four months. And, because half of their team worked in Germany, and the other half in Japan, they needed a solution that would bring their teams together.

With the help of CoreMedia Content Cloud and systems partner Arvato Systems, the manufacturer was able to create a taxonomy-based page structure that helped them reuse their content across products and increase efficiencies. They launched their new site in time for the tradeshow, expanding to more than 60 countries and 11 languages.



When speaking with two translation companies about their TM, they told me that they start with an empty translation memory for every new company they work with. The reason? 'We don't translate words,' they said, 'we translate language and tone, which differ from company to company'."

— Daniel Piegsa,
Head of Digital Marketing at DMG
MORI Global Marketing



Editors have saved hours with CoreMedia's content reusability approach, as they no longer have to manually create multiple versions of the same core content."

— Daniel Piegsa,
Head of Digital Marketing at DMG
MORI Global Marketing

Your Global Brand Can't Wait

Building a global brand means more than just reaching a wider audience. It means engaging customers with content in the language and context they relate to best. But coming up with the right localization strategy isn't easy. It means understanding your audience, workflows, and resources, and bringing them all together in the most efficient, cost-effective way. When you can do that, you'll increase revenues, boost productivity, create a respected global brand, and build a loyal customer following that no competitor in the world can touch.

» Questions about going global? Let's talk.

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Why CoreMedia?

CoreMedia is the digital experience and content management engine behind today's most iconic online brands. CoreMedia Content Cloud is a flexible, composable Digital Experience Platform (DXP) built on an agile CMS and advanced DAM that enables leaders in all industries to orchestrate personalized experiences, then deliver them to any channel – reliably, efficiently, and at enterprise scale. Marketers, merchandisers, and developers can work collaboratively and efficiently on omni-channel experiences that drive engagement, increase loyalty, improve brand visibility, and boost revenue. Leading global B2C companies (including Deckers Brands, Under Armour, Luxottica, PVH Corp, Finnair, and Deutsche Telekom) and major B2B firms (Claas, Emerson, and DMG MORI) create world-class digital experiences powered by CoreMedia. We are a company of visionaries, trusted advisors, and passionate experts.

