

Global Technology Marketers Series:

# Translation and “Localisation”



Making smarter decisions for developing and targeting content by region and country



After investing a large amount of time, effort, and budget in creating your content assets, there are swirls of advice about which of these assets are relevant to different global markets and which to translate or localize. The confusion itself has the potential to slow the process and that is the worst outcome as time-to-market is so important. You want to get things moving, but you also want to respect the real differences in markets that will make a difference to performance and brand perception.

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This white paper uses the insights from our recent [Global Media Consumption Trends](#) study, and our practical experience managing lead generation and regional and country-specific campaigns to provide basic guidelines to adapt your content appropriately to global markets without wasting time on activities that will not make a worthwhile difference in performance. Specifically, these best practices explore -- by content type and key global market -- when to translate and/or localize your marketing content and provide considerations for what topics to go after for particular markets. Understanding that not every marketer has time or resources to devote to this effort, we also offer tips on how to approach and prioritize translation and localization using minimal resources.

### Translation vs. localization

“Translation” and “localization” are often used interchangeably but actually mean very different things. Translation is the act of translating words and phrases from one language, into another language. The actual meaning of the content or document is intended to denote the exact same in both languages. The term ‘localization’ on the other hand, means to adapt content to better resonate with a specific culture. Examples of localization can include changing z’s to s’s for British English or by substituting all case studies of American companies to European or Asian companies. In some scenarios, translation can be an element of localization (e.g. localizing an asset for the German market might include translating it into German and referencing German regulations).

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Some marketers determine that a straight translation of their marketing collateral or copy is sufficient to prepare a US-based asset for use in non-English speaking markets, and in terms of outright performance of the asset in generating leads, this is true. Marketers that want to put an emphasis on how users perceive the asset once they have read it may want to invest in local case studies or references to local regulations.

## Translation vs. localization: A market-by-market perspective

Below is a simplified reference table by key country and asset type, providing guidance on when translation is sufficient and when localization may be necessary. Following the table is more detail, by content type, on how to further improve the ROI of your content.

	Technical White Papers	Case Studies	Webcasts and Podcasts	Video
UK	N/A	N/A	Use local speaker if local market knowledge is available	Use local speaker if local market knowledge is available
France	Translate	Translate	Translate/Localize	Translate/Localize
Germany	Translate	Translate	Translate/Localize	Translate/Localize
Benelux	N/A	N/A	Localize	Localize
Italy	Translate	Translate	Translate/Localize	Translate/Localize
South Africa	N/A	N/A	Localize	Localize
Australia and New Zealand	N/A	N/A	Localize	Localize
China	Translate	Translate/Localize  Use China case studies if available	Translate/Localize	Translate/Localize
India	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Japan	Translate	Translate/Localize  Use Japan case studies if available	Translate/Localize	Translate/Localize

### **Technical white papers**

Technology is technology – if the focus of your white paper is a strong, highly technical piece, straight translation will work in most non-English speaking markets. Across Europe, while there is a large English-speaking population, program performance improves when local language assets are utilized. There is a segment in every country market that will respond to English assets and in many cases these are very high quality leads, but to generate a critical mass of leads in a non-English-speaking country, translation is a necessity. Across Europe, smaller lead generation campaigns can succeed in English, but for larger campaigns requiring a higher concentration of leads per quarter, local language technical assets are essential for expanding the lead pool.

Similarly, in a recent TechTarget Asia-Pacific IT Buyer Survey, 63% of Chinese respondents and 75% of Japanese respondents indicated that they prefer local, in-language content specific to their region over English content. In these countries, English-speaking populations are much smaller, meaning the need for in-language assets is much greater. As translation fees trend higher in markets like China and Japan, many technology companies invest in translating only product literature but not lengthier white paper assets. Translating white paper assets represents a strong opportunity for your company to service and gain mindshare in these markets.

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### **Case studies**

Examples of technology at work are always powerful, but you will have more success if case study subject matter is relevant and adaptable for multiple markets. Across Europe, India, and Australia, translated American case studies can be useful as long as the profile of the business and the reason for implementation makes sense for the markets being targeted. However, in China and Japan, for maximum impact, case studies should be: 1. In-language and 2. If possible, profile a locally recognized business. If you have the budget and time, having a local case study will improve your results as prospects will see the case study as more relevant.

### **Webcasts, podcasts and video**

In the latest TechTarget Media Consumption survey, half of IT buyers across all regions note that they will not watch a video that is not in their native language. Yet, 56% of IT marketers surveyed in the same study indicated they mostly produce their videos in one version, format, and language. This signals a disconnect between what technical audiences need from streaming media options, and the practices marketers currently follow. Based on these results, the importance of having in-language streaming media is truly clear with most of the value in that step.

## Translating and localizing content on a budget

While all of the above information is valuable to delivering ROI on your global marketing efforts, we understand that resource constraints may keep you from applying it to all of your efforts and/or markets. It is always best to run a program and generate some leads than delay or cancel a campaign simply because you lack the time or budget to effectively translate or localize content. Many campaigns can perform well even when content has not been altered for local markets. Here are a few key tips to help you minimize your efforts but still get maximum impact:

- Remember, English is a universal language of business and your English assets will garner results across most markets. If necessary, concentrate your translation and localization efforts only on the markets that are highest priority for your business.
- Focus translation/localization on content/media that has highest usage rates in markets (based on global media consumption trends). In most markets, this is white papers and other text-based downloadable media.
- Consider translating only the strategic white papers that deliver the greatest response.
- Concentrate product literature localization efforts on data sheets with the most straightforward product delivery and specification information.
- Adapt existing case studies to be client-agnostic (e.g. mid-sized manufacturer) and/or add simple spotlight section(s) to reference similar success for clients in other top priority regions. Even a sidebar listing reference customers in other markets can give a case study more of a local feel.
- Translation/localization of videos – either through dubbing or subtitles – can be very expensive. On the other hand, podcasts are inexpensive and relatively simple to record and produce, so consider focusing initial efforts on translating/localizing podcasts as a way introduce streaming media content to specific markets.

## Putting it all together

Balancing content development is often the biggest challenge for any global marketer. Translation and localization efforts can often be time consuming and costly, but ignoring them may impact potential return on your content investments. In order to maximize your budget and get the most out of your efforts from the outset, you need to, identify key countries of focus within your target, determine successful content types to create based on those countries, choose the subject matter for the content based on what will resonate best across those markets, and most importantly, translate and/or localize your content accordingly *based on geographic focus and budget*.

Following these steps will maximize your global marketing efforts by helping you to apply budgets where you need it most and deploy the content strategy required to impact the markets your company values most.

## For more information

- [Resources for Global Technology Marketers](#)
- [Resources for Technology Marketing in Europe](#)
- [Resources for Technology Marketing in China](#)
- [Resources for Technology Marketing in Australia and New Zealand](#)
- Send questions to Renee Cormier ([rcormier@techtarget.com](mailto:rcormier@techtarget.com)) Director of International Marketing at TechTarget

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## About TechTarget

TechTarget (NASDAQ: TTGT) publishes integrated media that enable technology providers to reach targeted communities of technology professionals and executives in all phases of their decision-making and purchase process. Through its industry-leading websites, conferences and ROI-focused lead management services, TechTarget delivers measurable results that help marketers generate qualified leads, shorten sales cycles and grow revenues.

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