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Localization 101
The what, why, how & who of localization

Part 1: What is Localization?

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Localization (sometimes shortened to L10n) refers to the adaptation of content to meet the language, cultural and other requirements of a specific target market (or locale). The process involves adapting products, manuals, documents, brochures, software, applications, and websites for the local audience.

Subtle yet powerful
The most effective localization goes completely unnoticed. The new product or service is seamlessly launched into the market, as if it was indigenous. The brand becomes accepted and is successful in the new country or region.

Top 5 Marketing mistakes
You only really tend to notice localization when it's not there.

Drink this … and bring your ancestors back from the dead.
Pepsi's Taiwan launch "Come Alive with the Pepsi Generation" literally translated into "Pepsi will bring your ancestors back from the dead."

A good year?
Gap Inc. introduced high-profile 1969 jeans in China. While 1969 was a year of change and progress in the U.S., this was not the case for the Chinese during the Border conflict.

Do nothing!
In 2009, HSBC had to launch a $10 million rebranding campaign to repair damage done when its slogan "Assume Nothing" was mistranslated as "Do Nothing" in various countries.

We'll eat your fingers off!
When Kentucky Fried Chicken opened their first restaurant in Beijing in 1987, they encountered serious problems; "Finger Lickin' Good" came out in Chinese as "eat your fingers off".

The future's neutral
In 1994 Orange had to change "The future's bright … the future's Orange" ads in Northern Ireland because of a reference to the Orange Order. Implying the future is bright, the future is Protestant, loyalist.

Getting it wrong
Marketing and cultural miscalculations cost companies a significant amount of money in poor investment and lost revenue. Mistakes are bad for PR, affecting relationships with local consumers and governments. The damage is often irreparable. Some errors cause embarrassment. In serious cases mistakes severely damage the company's reputation and ill will towards the brand. In certain industries, such as medical and pharmaceutical, poor translations are a threat to public safety and can even be a matter of life or death. Because of what's at stake, quality is paramount. Choosing the right service provider is paramount.

About this paper

Upon reading this paper you will understand:
• What localization is
• Why to localize
• How to localize
• Basic localization processes
• The benefits of Translation Memory (TM)
• How to choose a localization partner
• The value that professional localization companies bring to the table

About EQHO

Established in 1996, EQHO is an ISO9001:2015 and ISO17100:2015 certified supplier of multilingual and multicultural communications solutions. For nearly 20 years, EQHO has been successfully enabling corporations worldwide to transcend cultural and linguistic barriers by providing a comprehensive range of high-quality, cost-effective localization solutions.

Translation vs. Localization

Translation is defined as the communication of the meaning of a source-language text by means of an equivalent target-language text. Translation is exactly what it says on the tin. Unfortunately, if the tin says 'bring your ancestors back from the dead', this poses a problem. Is it the translator's job to argue? As the examples prove, converting content into the native language is not enough. A translator doesn't consider context in the case of 'do nothing', or cultural symbolism where 'the future's Orange'.

Localization involves translation but also addresses significant, non-textual components of products or services. For example:

- graphics
- color choices
- image choices
- local currencies
- date format
- addresses and phone numbers

The bigger picture: Internationalization and Globalization

Ideally, a product or service should be developed so localization is relatively easy to achieve. Internationalization (I18n) evolved to facilitate the adaptation of content for wider audiences. Internationally-ready content is developed which reduces the cost of localization. It takes place in the early stages and involves planning and preparing for global markets. For example including illustrations in a user manual will reduce the amount of text to translate. Globalization (G11n) is the combined process of internationalization and localization.

GLOBALIZATION

Internationalization	Localization
	Translation
	Engineering

The world is becoming a smaller place. Increasingly, companies have to communicate in more than one language. Billions of people in the world do not speak any English; billions more have low levels of proficiency.

English may be widespread, and it may even be the language of international commerce. But, this bias means that 94% of the non-native speaking global population is overlooked.

World languages in numbers

- 7,000 different languages are spoken around the world.
- 2,200 of the world's languages can be found in Asia, while Europe has just 260.
- 6% of the world's population are native English speakers (508 million people).
- 75% don't speak any English at all.
- 1 billion+ people speak Mandarin, the most spoken language in the world.

Sales and marketing

Companies use localization services to help them reach new markets. With such a wide and diverse world of global consumers, potential for growth is vast. A rapidly increasing number of internet users, and growing trust in online shopping, means markets are more accessible than ever before.

Goldman Sachs predicts that by 2030, 2 billion people will join the middle class, many from emerging markets in Southeast Asia. Asian consumers are fueling many international industries, such as travel. Tourists from Southeast Asia are flocking to Europe and the U.S. in record numbers. The region's developing nations like Laos have growing middle class populations that are starting to spend on luxury items and vacations abroad.

These consumers demand products, services, and information, in their own language. The localization of products, services and marketing materials allows brands to be more successful in their chosen market. An industry study found that for every $1 invested in localization, $25 dollars was returned (LISA 2007).

Language Facts

7,000
the number of languages spoken around the world

6%
the percentage of native English speakers across the globe

75%
the percentage of people not speaking any English at all

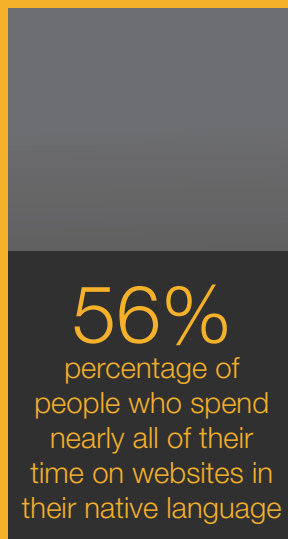**1 billion**
the number of Mandarin speakers

E-commerce

• Global online retail sales are growing and is estimated to reach $2,489 trillion in 2018 as compared to $1,888 trillion in 2016. (Invesp)
• Asia-Pacific B2C e-commerce sales grew 31.5% to $8.997 trillion in 2016. (eMarketer)
• Only 26.3% of internet users are English speakers, 24.2% are Chinese, 4.7% Japanese. (InternetWorldStats)
• It takes 12 languages to reach 80% of the world's online audience, 21 to reach 90%. (Common Sense Advisory)
• China boasts the highest number of people who buy goods online in the world, nearly $899.09 billion in 2016. (eMarketer)
• Global mobile e-commerce revenues amounted to $184 billion in 2014 and are projected to reach $669 billion in 2018. (Statista)
• Malaysia will rank first in terms of B2C e-commerce development with a compound annual growth rate of 23.7 in 2016 – 2021. (Statista)

Can't Read Won't Buy

The Common Sense Advisory surveyed 3,002 online consumers in 10 different countries over 4 continents in 2014.

• 56% spend most or all of their time on websites in their native language.
• 55% only buy from websites in their language.
• When faced with the choice of buying two similar products, 75% are more likely to purchase the one that has product information in their own language.
• 51% will buy products only with instructions in their language.
• 74% say that they are more likely to purchase the same brand again if the after-sales care is in their language.
• 51% would prefer to have content in their language, even if it's poor quality.
• 67% prefer websites navigation elements in local language even if content is in English.
• 72% would like to see product reviews in their language if nothing else.

Online Behavior & Languages

55%
percentage of the world population who only buy from websites in their own language

56%
percentage of people who spend nearly all of their time on websites in their native language

E-commerce Facts

$1,888 trillion
the value of online sales in 2016

4.8
how many times more likely it is for someone to buy when content is presented in their own language

21
the number of languages required to address 90% of the online purchasing power

2 billion
the number of additional people joining the middle class ranks by 2030

HR, training, health & safety

Multinational companies use localization services for corporate communications. In Laos for example, energy companies recruit many Southeast Asian nationalities. A company with a global workforce needs to communicate effectively internally, to the entire organization. In-house training programs, health and safety messages, and communications from senior management need to be consistent and in the appropriate localized form to each nationality. This increases productivity, ensures the safety of the workforce, and protects the company from liability.

Localization as a corporate strategy is proven to pay dividends. Forbes and Rosetta Stone reported that 84% of executives at international firms believe that employees are more efficient when spoken to in their native language.

Legal requirements

Many industries need localization services for legal reasons, such as complying with legal requirements in the medical sector. Most countries around the world require literature and labeling associated with medical devices or pharmaceuticals to be translated into the national language.

Given the life and death nature of medical texts, there is a strong emphasis on translation quality. The international medical industry is highly regulated and companies who need to translate documentation must choose agencies that comply with certain standards, such as ISO 9001, the quality system standard.

Corporate Strategy

84%

of executives at international firms believe employees are more efficient when addressed in their native language

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We are about to embark on a journey through the basics of localization, so before going into too much detail, now's probably a good time to start defining a few key terms which will come into play later on.

⚠ WARNING!
Localization Industry Jargon Alert

Glossary of key terms & definitions

Source files
You'll hear this term a lot when you work with a professional localization partner so it's important to know the meaning. Source files refer to the original project files in which the product was created. To the right are some typical source files for documentation, websites and software.

It's important to note that PDF files are not considered a source file as they are generated from another software application. Working directly with source files is considered a best-practice approach, leading to efficiency gains in terms of cost and time.

Localization engineering
The process of isolating and exporting translatable text from source files and re-importing translated text back into the original file source format, while maintaining the integrity of the file. This may include source code, tags, formatting/layout, table of contents, images.

Editing
Editing is the process of fine-tuning and polishing a translation ready for the target audience. The editing process can involve correction, condensation, organization and the consolidation of styles of more than one translator, As well as many other modifications performed with the intention of producing correct, consistent, accurate, and complete work.

Proofreading
Proofreading is the process of reviewing translation in its final output, such as a final published document (after Desktop Publishing, see Multilingual Desktop Publishing below). A proofreader will identify and correct human errors such as typos, and problems introduced via computer programs.

TE
TE or 'Translation and Editing' is a suite of services used in the localization of non-documentation projects. Translation is first performed by one or more linguists, after which a second linguist edits the translations to ensure the highest quality translation output (see Editing for more detail).

Examples of source files:

Documentation
.doc, .ppt, .xls, .ai, .idd, .mif

Websites
.php, .asp, html, .js, .xml, .fla, .csv

Software
.rc., .resx, .xml, .csv, xliff, .dlg, .exe

Note: The above is a list of common file types, and is by no means exhaustive.

Part 3: How to localize?

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TEP

TEP or 'Translation, Editing and Proofreading' is a suite of services used in the localization of documentation. Translation and editing (TE) are performed prior to Desktop Publishing (see Multilingual Desktop Publishing). Proofreading is then performed to ensure that no errors have been introduced during the Desktop Publishing stage.

Computer Aided Translation (CAT) tools

CAT tools are software applications used by translators to facilitate fast, accurate, consistent translations. Not to be confused with Machine Translation, CAT tools make translation an interactive process between human and computer. CAT tools enable efficient content recycling through the use of Translation Memories (TM). They also include terminology management features and various other linguistic tools and utilities.
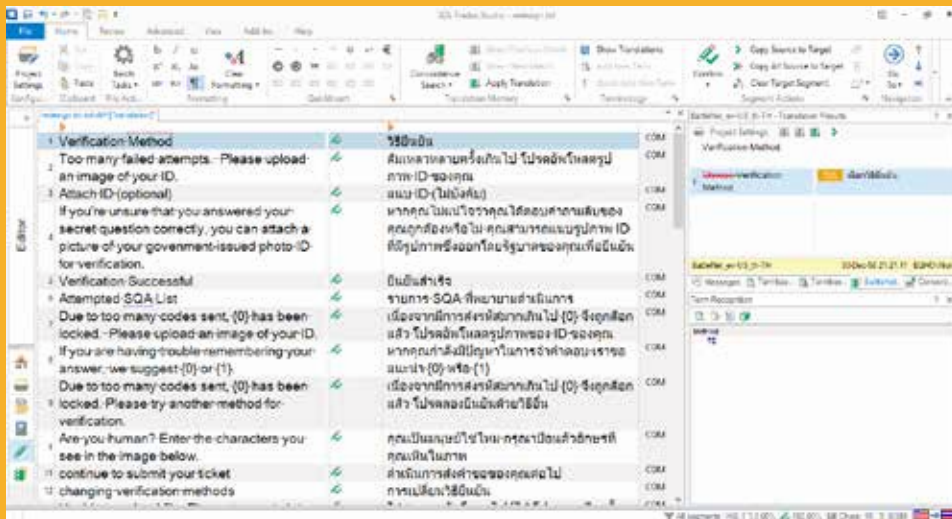
The screen capture shows the interface of a typical CAT tool. Source language can be seen on the left (in this case English), target language on the right (in this example Thai).

Translation Memory (TM)

A TM is a linguistic database that stores previously translated 'segments,' in order to aid human translators. Segments can be sentences, paragraphs, or fragments (headings, titles or elements in a list). The TM stores the source text and its corresponding translation in language pairs called 'translation units.' TM's are typically used in conjunction with CAT tools. Individual words are handled by terminology databases and are not within the domain of TM.

Client review

Client review stages are incorporated into project processes, works are signed-off, prior to advancement to the next stage. The client reviews the glossary, translation, and the final product.

Quality Assurance (QA) tools

Quality Assurance tools make it possible to automatically detect formal errors in translations and translation memories, and enable their quick and easy correction. The traceable error categories include omissions, inconsistencies, formatting problems, and terminology errors.

TRANSLATION
MEMORY

TRANSLATION UNIT

Source   Target

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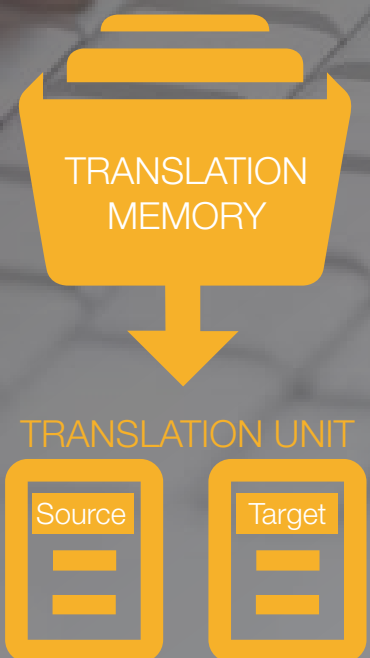
Terminology glossaries

A terminology glossary is a bilingual file (.xls, .csv) consisting of a list of terms in one language, defined and translated in a second language. They are typically used in technical subject domains to ensure correct use of terminology and specific company terms. The glossary is developed prior to commencing a project, usually the client will be asked to approve it before work starts.
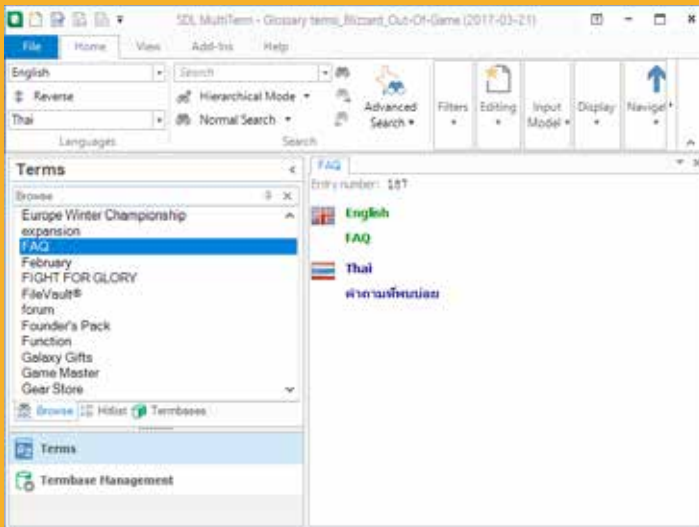
This screen capture shows Glossary/ TermBase in action. In this example (English:Thai), the term in the TermBase is the term 'FAQ'. The Context, Definition and the approved translation in Thai are automatically provided by the software to the translator whenever the term appears in the file. This enables consistent and correct translations of specific terminology.

Multilingual Desktop Publishing (DTP)

Multilingual desktop publishing (DTP) is the adaption of documents using page layout/formatting skills on a personal computer - including Macintosh (IOS) and PC (Windows). Skilled operators use desktop publishing software to mirror source file layout - text, formatting and images, after translation and editing. After DTP, proofreading is carried out.
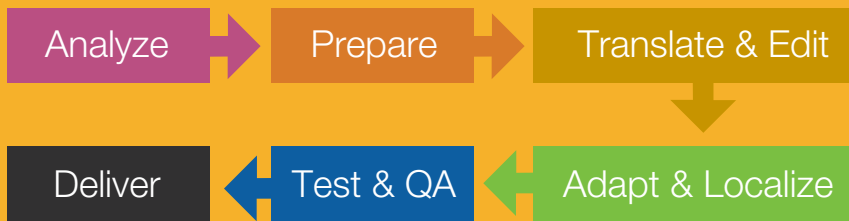
Desktop Publishing Software

InDesign
Adobe Illustrator
FrameMaker
QuarkXpress
Photoshop
Microsoft Office
PageMaker
Adobe Acrobat

Testing

Testing can be broken into 3 key areas: linguistic, cosmetic and functional.

1. Linguistic - the review of a localized product in its final format (web, software, multimedia) to ensure the language is appropriate in the final output format (live website, compiled software, video), usually in a test environment.

2. Cosmetic - consists of a review of aesthetic elements, which also includes cultural appropriateness for target markets.

3. Functional - reviews the application for functionality to ensure that it matches that of the source application.

Part 3: How to localize?

Project Process

```
Analyze  →  Prepare  →  Translate & Edit
                              ↓
Deliver  ←  Test & QA  ←  Adapt & Localize
```

Explanations

Analyze

- Consultation regarding requirements
- Source file validation
- Project scoping
- Process definition
- Resources, schedule & costs

Prepare

- File preparation (localization engineering)
- Develop terminology glossary
- Create translation memory (TM)
- Import glossary

Translate & Edit

- Leverage the TM
- Translate using glossary, style guides and reference material
- Separately edit the translation

Adapt & Localize

- Incorporate any local market changes
- Localize images; take screenshots
- Recompile localized files (localization engineering)
- Perform any additional engineering tasks

Test & QA

- Perform functional testing
- Perform linguistic testing
- Perform cosmetic testing
- Final QA validation
- Project evaluation and feedback

Deliver

- Delivery via email, dedicated ftp or other file delivery system
- 1 round of post-review changes
- Project assessment and improvement plan

TM in more detail

A TM is a workable database made up of a company's translations, normally one per language pair (e.g. English:Lao, English:Thai, English:Vietnamese) and in some cases per product line. TM's are the property of the customer, but are usually developed and maintained by the localization partner.

By leveraging the translations contained in the TM, all the content and the translated versions can be updated and recycled by the software. This has many advantages in terms of productivity, efficiency and consistency for future projects. Essentially a TM enables the perfect combination of automated and human translations: utilizing the computer for speed and consistency, and a professional translator for accuracy, context, and perspective.
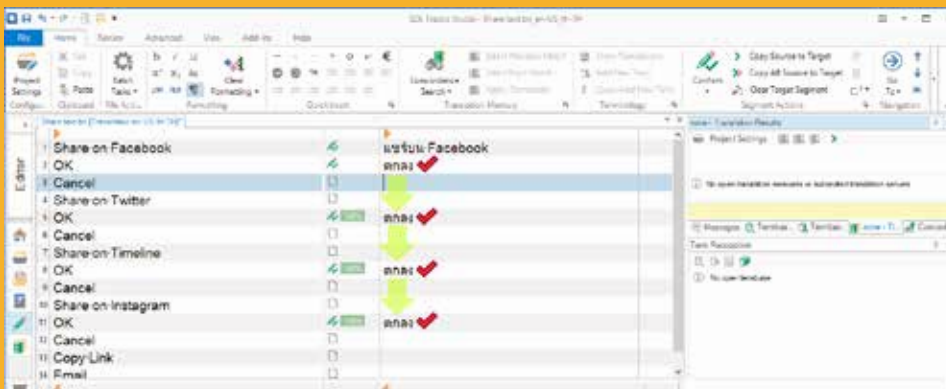
Key Benefits of TM
• Saves money by reusing previously translated phrases and paragraphs.
• Excludes spaces, numbers and special characters from the cost calculation.
• Reduces translation time, so projects are completed faster.
• Ensures consistent use of terminology across all projects.

Types of TM match:
And how they save your time and money

Repetitions
Repetitions are repeated segments which occur within content (web, software, documents), consisting of sentences, parts of sentences broken by punctuation, headers and titles. These are translated initially on first occurrence, and then propagated automatically throughout the file. As they will undergo review by the editor in the final stages, repetitions are charged, but at vastly reduced rates.

⚠️

WARNING!
Technical Content Alert

This screen capture demonstrates repetition. In row 2 the segment 'OK' first appears. After this segment is initially translated, the remaining file is propagated, and all further repetitions of this segment are automatically translated.

Part 3: How to localize?

100% matches

These are previously translated segments (from earlier projects) which are contained within the TM. They are leveraged against the new content and pre-translated automatically with a click of a button prior to project commencement. Segments pre-translated by the TM will be reviewed by editors to ensure correctness in the context in which they appear.

Before TM is applied
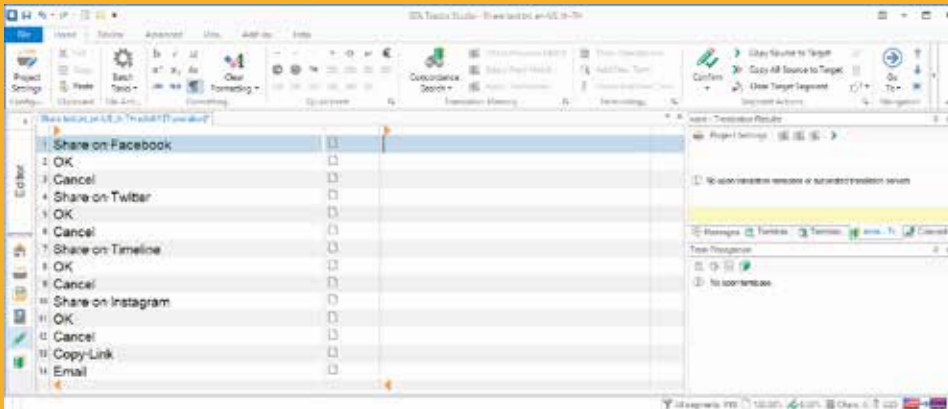
After TM is applied
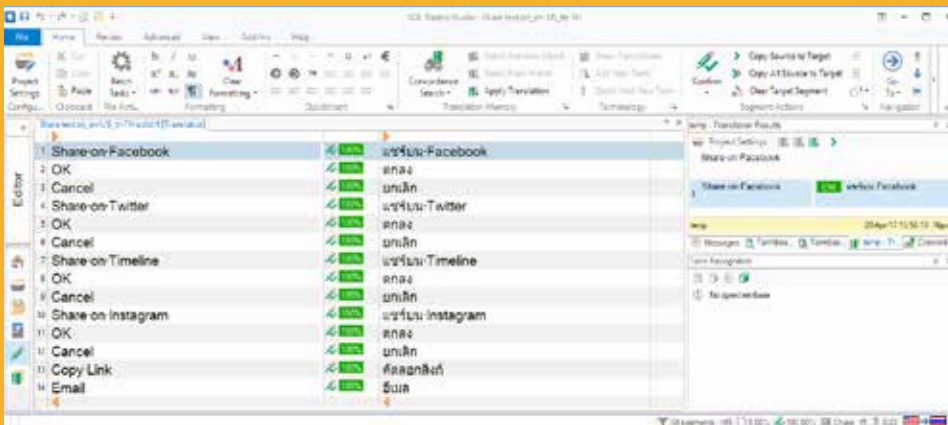
Fuzzy matches

Fuzzy matches are partially matched segments/sentences from the TM. The level of match (75-99%) will determine the translation effort and subsequent costs applied.

TM Discounts

75%
REPETITION

75%
100% MATCH

50-74%
FUZZY MATCH

This screen capture shows a document file prepared in CAT tool format prior to applying the Translation Memory (TM). The source language (English) is contained in the left column and the target language will be typed into the right column.

This screen capture shows the same file after the TM is applied. Much of the file is pre-translated using the translations stored in the Translation Memory from previous translations. The translator works on the remaining untranslated content and partially translated content (See 'fuzzy matches'). The editor reviews all segments for quality assurance purposes. This recycling saves costs, reduced time required and increases consistency with previous projects.

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A Practical Example of TM Savings: Tractor Manufacturer

A customer produces an operator manual (Manual A) for a tractor. The company is new and does not possess TM's. The manual contains 100,000 words, 15,000 of which are repetitions. For the first project the costs are as follows:

Content Break down	Words	Price Without CAT tools & TM	Price With TM
Repetitive content within Manual A	15,000	$1,500	$375 (75% cost reduction)
New (unique) content	85,000	$8,500	$8,500
Total	100,000	$10,000	$8,875 (an 11.25% savings)

The following year, the same customer returns with a project for another tractor in the same product line. The manual (Manual B) is similar - half of the features are the same, there are many similar but updated features, but it also has a significant number of new features. The size of the manual is still 100,000 words. This time, we use the TM created from the previous project (Manual A):

Content Breakdown	Words	Price Without CAT tools & TM	Price With TM
Repetitive content within Manual B	25,000	$2,500	$625 (75% cost reduction)
100% matches TM from Manual A	25,000	$2,500	$625 (75% cost reduction)
Similar material 75-99% matches TM from Manual A	30,000	$3,000	$1,500 (50% cost reduction)
New (unique) content	20,000	$2,000	$2,000
Total	100,000	$10,000	$4,750 (a 52.50% savings)

Note: The above is an example only. Repetition levels and potential for content leveraging varies by industry. TM's first need to be built by either alignment of legacy translations, or progressively over period of time.

A

Manual A

YEAR 1 TM Savings:

11.25%

B

Manual B

YEAR 2 TM Savings:

52.5%

Part 3: How to localize?

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Progressive content leveraging and cost saving across different industries
Cost reduction through the use of TM varies considerably across different industries. Savings can be dramatic (as seen in the above example) when localizing similar products. Or they can be steady and progressive, though regular localization of all of the company media – e.g. operations, print, web, legal, marketing and sales materials.

Industries yielding high match levels:
• Software & IT
• Manufacturing
• Heavy Industry
• Machinery
• Automotive
• Energy
• Medical

Corporate
While repetition and the potential for content leveraging in corporate communications content can be considerable, more conservative numbers can be expected than for technical subjects. Initial stand-alone projects yield anything in the region of 5-10%. Over the course of several years, it is possible for content leveraging and savings to reach 20%.

Technical industries
Technical manuals produced by the automotive industry and other technical industries yield high match levels. Models of cars within a single manufacturer typically share many of the same features. Language used in technical manuals tends to be similar in style - terminology, titles, headers, contents of lists are repeated. In some cases limited English vocabulary and simplified sentence structure are used (Controlled English). This combination of factors can lead to high levels of match and subsequent savings, particularly in product catalogs, service, maintenance and operating manuals.

Software and IT
In the software and IT sector, updated software releases can yield significant match levels between one version and the next, in some cases as much as 50% or more. This is reflected in the cost of localizing subsequent releases. Over a period of years, it is possible for software companies to save anything up to 80 or 90%.

Marketing
In marketing, copy is usually customized across all product lines. This tends to yield the lowest level of match and therefore progressive savings are unlikely.

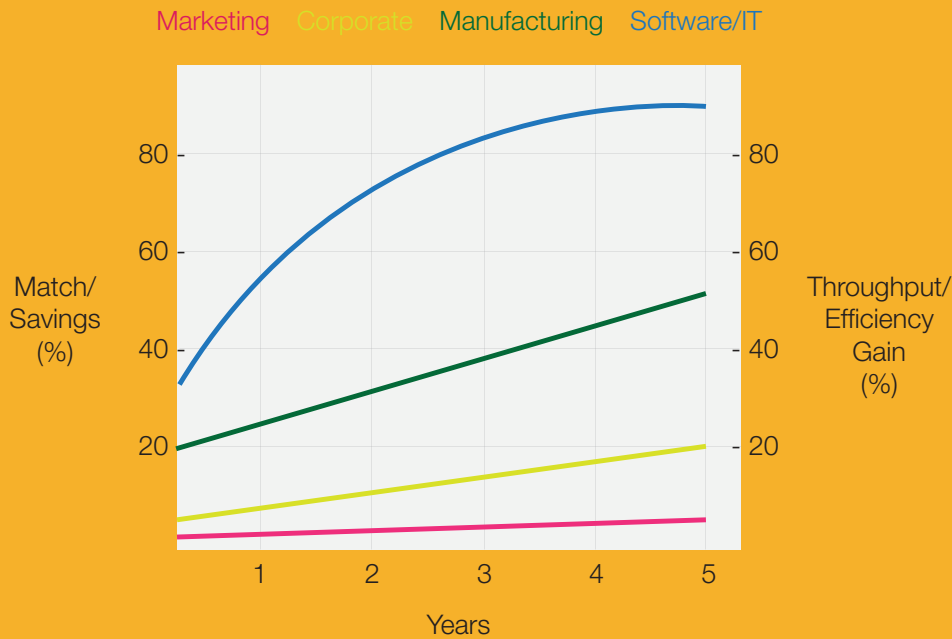**Corporate**

5-20%
Savings

**Technical**

5-50%
Savings

Software/IT

30-90%
Savings

Marketing

0-5%
Savings

Graph 1 - Progressive leveraging by industry over 5 years.

Marketing   Corporate   Manufacturing   Software/IT

Match/
Savings
(%)

Throughput/
Efficiency
Gain
(%)

Years

Graph 1 demonstrates progressive content leveraging over a period of 5 years in 4 core industry groups. The percentage match/cost savings are displayed on the left axis, and the typical throughput efficiency gain are displayed on the right axis. Savings increase in all industries over 5 years: Marketing from 2% up to 5%, Corporate 5% to 20%, Manufacturing 20% to 50%, Software/IT 30% to 90%.

Graph 2 - Progressive leveraging on a 3 million word project over 3 months.

Match/
Savings
(%)

Throughput
(Word)

Months
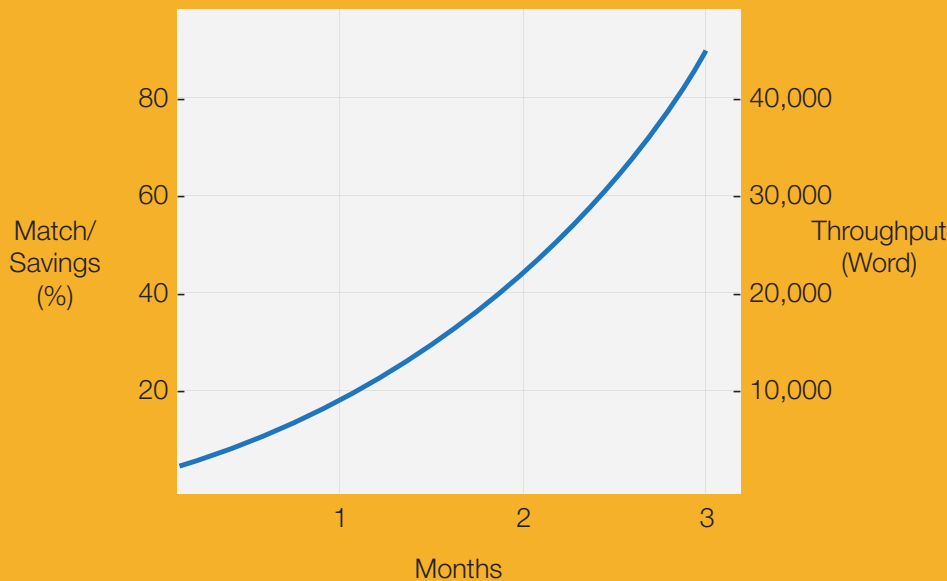
Graph 2 shows the progressive leveraging/savings on a large, 3 million word project, using teams working on translation memory networks. This graph illustrates percentage match/cost savings (left axis), and word throughput increase (right axis) over a 3 month period. The project starts at throughputs of 10,000 words per day, reaching 45,000 -50,000 words per day towards the latter stages of the project, thus demonstrating significant efficiency gains.

Localization Purchasing

90%

the percentage of companies globally that outsource translation and localization

In-house localization

There are a number of problems that arise with attempting localization in-house. Firstly, an individual, or team of native speakers is required. It may not be feasible to employ or recruit native speakers, especially for lesser used languages. If you require multiple languages it becomes very expensive.

Secondly, localization projects are complex. These days, businesses face the task of translating many different types of content - graphics, videos, websites, and mobile apps. Without making costly investments in translation tools and software, it can be extremely time-consuming.

It's no surprise that 90% of companies outsource some or all of their translation and localization work. (Common Sense Advisory).

Types of localization vendors

After reading about the localization process in Part 3, you'll understand that a vendor should be considered a long-term partner. Selecting a service provider therefore, should be a careful process. Here is an overview of the types of companies that offer translation and localization services.

Freelance translator

Employing an individual translator who works on a per project basis is the least expensive option. The downside is that it carries the highest amount of risk due to the lack of accountability. A single person will be unable to handle the volume of a large agency and hiring multiple freelancers is inefficient because it's so difficult to manage.

Local translation agency

A translation service based locally will be able to deliver high quality document translations. However, they are unlikely to possess the capabilities to meet the demands of a large corporation, e.g. volume, websites, multi-media.

Localization company - SLV or MLV

A multi-language localization vendor (MLV) is a large, worldwide organization that can provide high volumes of content in many different languages.
A single-language localization vendor (SLV) is usually smaller, located in one target country and focuses on one single language. There are many advantages in choosing an MLV as your localization partner. The company will have the ability to cater to all your language needs, offering a high level of service, easier accounting and legal processes.

What to look for in a language service provider

Wide-ranging project capabilities
Does the company offer a turnkey service no matter what the project entails - web, software, or media? Smaller translation agencies work mainly with documents. A localization company will have an engineering department and licensed tools to provide a complete service. In the case of website localization - a small provider may use manual cut and paste methods which result in errors, whereas in a larger organization, an expert will work directly with the source files.

Translator network and project efficiency
Can the vendor meet your content demands? An MLV will have a huge network, wide subject matter expertise, and be able to handle every language you need. This infrastructure combined with more advanced tools allows faster and more efficient translations.

ISO-documented quality processes
In Part 1 we looked at some of the real mistakes made by global corporations. Getting it wrong is not an option. In less mature markets, quality can be a major differentiator. Smaller companies don't tend to follow best practice multi-stage (translate, edit, proofread) processes, and they are unlikely to have ISO-documented quality assurance procedures.

Sophisticated technology and tools
The use of CAT, QA and TM tools is virtually non-existent in less mature markets. These tools deliver translations faster, with greater consistency, saving time and money. Initially, a small translation agency may be less expensive. However, through the use of specialized tools that increase productivity, a localization vendor will be more cost-efficient long-term. See the savings models in Part 3.

Content leveraging and discounting
Better technology allows vendors to offer reductions for repetitive content and even similar content. Typically a smaller company will charge by the page. This is a good indication they're not using CAT tools and cannot offer TM discounting. A localization company who uses TM will price by the word, otherwise it's impossible to apply the discount.

Superior project management and customer service
When choosing a long-term localization partner, it's imperative to ensure that you'll receive consistently high levels of service. Large established localization companies can guarantee this consistency with detailed customer management processes, tools and infrastructure.

Customer data security and storage
How does the company manage security, confidentiality and non-disclosure? A professional vendor will have strict NDA procedures, secure networks, back-up, firewall protection, etc. to ensure the safety of intellectual property and confidential information.

Turnkey services
Multiple formats
Efficient processes

Translator network
Subject matter expertise
Language diversity

Best-practices
Processes
Quality assurance

Translation tools
Publishing tools
Quality assurance tools

CAT tools
Translation Memory (TM)
Terminology tools

Level of service
Customer management
Infrastructure

Confidentiality
Non-disclosure
Secure data storage

Top tips

Always use Unicode (UTF8) compliant fonts in your product source products (websites, documentation, software). These will be compatible/ localizable in all major languages.

Ensure that you leave ample space in your products, or program products to allow for text expansion which generally occurs when translating from English into most other languages.

Use consistent language and sentence structure in your technical materials.
In addition to being clear for the user, this will yield more matches/ savings when you come to localize.

Maintain English language glossaries for your technical writing. This will make managing multilingual glossaries much more efficient when it comes time to localize.

Keep layered versions of any graphics that you may incorporate in your products. This will make it easier and cheaper when it comes to localizing them as they won't need to be recreated.

Manage your product source files well, including versioning. Having all the correct files to hand first time reduces time required to launch your product and eliminates unnecessary rework or re-creation.

Want to know more? Let's talk.

Get in touch with a specialist to find out how EQHO can help you get more out of your multilingual strategies.

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