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Comprehensive Guide to Website Localization

The internet has made the world a global playground. We are no longer limited to servicing clients locally, and foreign markets have become desirable destinations for companies to operate. There are many reasons why companies decide to go global.

It might be because their ideal client profile matches a specific foreign market which is saturated with demand.

Game developers and publishers would not miss opportunities to enter Asian markets due to very high density of gamers among the population

Manufacturers of heavy machinery will prefer markets with developed logistics infrastructure and intense agriculture

A product can naturally gravitate to certain markets and countries due to its functionality, which is further proven by marketing metrics. So it makes sense to optimize user experience by localizing into those markets based on user data

## Specific industries gravitate to naturally and historically developed corresponding markets.

All these decisions are driven by one thing – growth. New markets mean new streams of revenue, fractured risks and global brand presence, but there's more to it than meets the eye. Let's dive in deeper to explore the value, challenges, and the steps to take when you decide to localize your website and justify your investment in localization.

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The Value of Website Localization

Growth has many forms and they all contribute to your global success in different ways.
In this section we'll look at what contributes to a successfully localized user experience.
Here are some core KPIs that are directly affected by localized content.

New User Attraction

Expanding to global markets is not just about translating content.
It's about opening your digital doors to millions of potential customers.
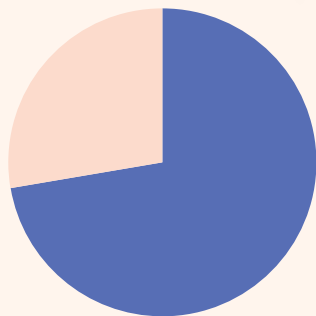
A study from Common Sense Advisory found that 72.4% of consumers are more likely to buy a product with information in their language.

By localizing, you are essentially amplifying your brand's voice to resonate with a larger audience.

Existing User Experience

Customer loyalty can be fickle, especially if they feel neglected. Regularly updating your localized content and addressing feedback in multiple languages indicates ongoing commitment. This not only retains existing customers but also encourages them to become brand ambassadors in their communities.

Brand Enhancement

When you localize your website, it sends out a clear message:
"We care about you and value your culture".
This creates a positive brand image, fostering trust and making users more receptive to your messages and calls to action.

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Edge Over Competition

In a saturated market, differentiation becomes paramount. Offering a localized experience gives you a competitive edge, ensuring your brand stands out and is chosen over others.

Sales Facilitation

Imagine walking into a store where no one speaks your language. Navigating through products, understanding their features, or even making a purchase becomes an overwhelming task. The same holds for websites. A localized website makes navigation seamless, product descriptions understandable, and purchasing processes straightforward, thereby reducing potential barriers to sales.

Feeding into Different KPIs

Every business has key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure success. Localized content plays a critical role in influencing these metrics.

A user is more likely to spend time on a website that speaks their language, thereby increasing the session duration.
Similarly, localized call-to-actions can improve the conversion rate by resonating better with the audience.

These changes can drastically improve metrics like user engagement, bounce rate, and overall sales.

Cultural Respect towards Target Markets

Every culture has its nuances, idioms, and symbols. By ensuring that your content is culturally relevant and sensitive, you foster mutual respect and understanding. This goes a long way in building long-term relationships with global users.

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Challenges of Website Localization

Website localization, while invaluable, is not without its challenges. That is why we use the term localization.

Here's what you should be aware of:

Language Nuances

Language is not just words but also culture, emotion, and history. Direct translations can sometimes miss these subtleties.

Idioms or phrases may not have direct counterparts in other languages and may require rephrasing to convey the intended message.

Maintaining Consistency

Ensuring a uniform brand voice across different languages can be challenging. It requires careful coordination between translators, editors, and brand managers to maintain consistency without compromising the cultural authenticity of the content.

Technical Difficulties

From right-to-left languages to those with unique scripts, the technicalities of website localization can be daunting. Websites might need redesigns to accommodate these changes, or plugins might behave unpredictably, leading to potential functionality issues.

Budgeting

The costs of localization can add up quickly, especially if you're targeting multiple languages or regions. This includes expenses for professional translators, quality assurance, technical adjustments, and ongoing content updates.

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Step-by-Step Guide to Localizing Your Website

Preparing for Localization

Pseudolocalization

Pseudolocalization is essentially a mock localization of your website. The purpose of this test is to ensure your environment supports the internationalization peculiarities that are going to be brought in. Pseudolocalization deals with specific symbols, spacing, text expansion, and other linguistic things that will present the potential internationalization issues you have to address prior to localization. It's a good way to reduce cost and potential issues down the road.

Style Guides

Before diving into translations, establish a style guide. This should detail the tone, voice, and conventions tailored to each language.

> While English content might be casual and direct, Japanese content might require a more formal and polite tone.

Glossaries

Maintaining consistent terminology across the website ensures clarity. This is where a glossary comes in. It should list key terms, brand names, or technical jargon along with their approved translations.
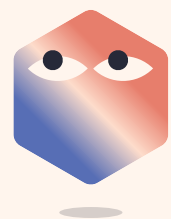
Roadmap and Expectations

Start with an assessment. Which markets are you targeting? Which languages are a priority? Do you need full or partial website translations? Answering these questions will set a clear direction for the localization process.

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Content Extraction

Wget & APIs

Functions like Wget allow you to download your website's content in a structured format. APIs, on the other hand, enable seamless integration between your website and localization platforms, automating the translation workflow.

> While TMS usually do a good job with content extraction, sometimes a more tailored approach is required to service content that is layered differently or hosted on custom systems.

Integrations

Several Content Management Systems (CMS) offer integrations with translation tools. This means that once a section of your website is updated, it can automatically be sent for translation, ensuring content freshness across all languages.

Translation Management Systems (TMS)

TMSs centralize translation tasks, enabling collaboration between translators, editors, and project managers. They also store translation memories, which save previously translated segments, reducing redundancy and cost.

Content Analysis

State of Content

Assess your current content's suitability for localization. For instance, content heavily embedded with cultural references might need adaptations, not just translations.

Budgeting

Outline your budget by considering various factors such as the number of words, language pairs, technical requirements, AI involvement and the chosen translation method.

> Different kinds of content require different decisions on resourcing. While some content is fine when done with AI assistance, a more forward-facing content that aims to create impressions would require a more human approach.

Setting Deadlines

A phased approach often works best. Start with key sections of your website and gradually expand. Setting clear deadlines ensures timely project completion. By understanding the values, challenges, and steps involved in website localization, businesses are better equipped to navigate the complexities and harness the vast potential of a global audience. You'll see an immediate increase in competitiveness in your target markets once localized and SEO optimized copy hits the public.

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Localization Execution

- **Localization groundwork**

  This is where localization teams come in. Once the systems and expectations are set, project management is what gets the train moving. Strings are pulled from your content platform and localized to the target markets you have chosen.

  Based on the strategy you've chosen, this can be done entirely by human translators and editors, by using Machine Translation and using editors to set the robot content right, or by using AI and AI content specialists to adhere to the technical, grammatic and style requirements of the target market.

- **Quality Assurance**

  In standard localization environments, quality assurance is a constant background process that allows localization specialists and localization engineers to react to issues immediately. Quality Assurance or QA tools provide transparent reporting and guides specialists on how to fix issues. If issues present themselves in published content, they're pulled back into the translation environment, fixed and re-published with the next content update.

- **Publishing Content and Live Checks**

  Once localization management teams are finished with the groundwork and quality assurance, it's time to push the content back to publishing. This happens using integrations set up in the infrastructure stage. So, the process itself is automated. The last thing that remains is doing checks for all languages in their live environment. We perform user checks and crawl all sections to make sure the user experience remains uninterrupted and there are no technical issues coming up after publishing.

- **Result**

  And that's it, your localized content is ready to start functioning and gathering data on the behavior and purchasing patterns of your local audiences. Gathered analytics will help with deciding on key content topics, SEO adjustments and possible content pivots you need to perform for your content to truly matter. It's all about gathering your data and being responsible in applying it.

Localization procedures at Native do not stop after submitting translations. We keep an eye on social metrics and SEO ratings and make content adjustments for your investments to matter long term.

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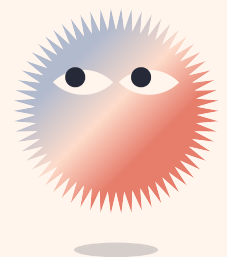
Conclusion

Website localization is crucial in today's globalized market. While it does come with its set of challenges, the benefits in terms of sales, brand enhancement, and user engagement are undeniable.

We hope this guide helped in simplifying and understanding the process, enabling a smooth entry into the world of global content marketing. With the right approach and tools, localization can elevate your online presence and set your business on a path to international success.
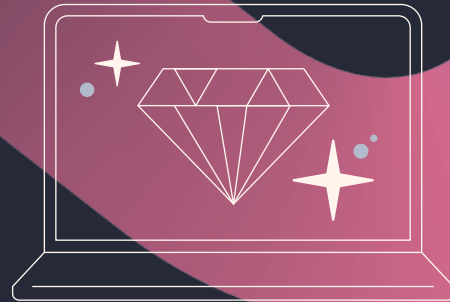
Native Localization takes website localization a step further.

While we are with you every step of the way – from localization strategy, to implementation and support, we also perform localization reporting.

Very often localization partnerships end once the translators deliver your translations. We trust in the continuity of the service and carry on monitoring your content to gather insights and optimize your efforts post-delivery.

In order for your website localization efforts to truly carry value, it needs to be observed real-time and adjusted in accordance to your digital marketing strategy.

Feel free to reach out to us at

hello@nativelocalization.com

to make your website localization efforts matter or to learn more on how we use analytics to help you decide on best markets to enter first.

Be Native in any market with Native Localization.