



Language in Marketing

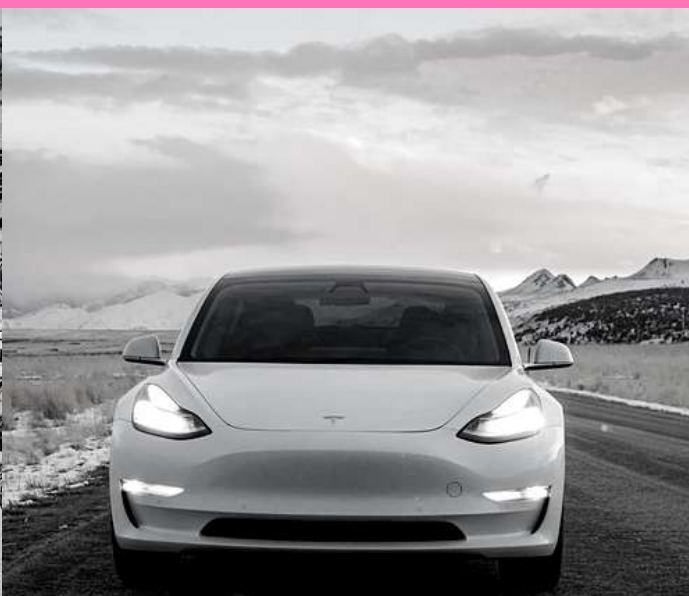
Transcreation and its importance
in brand expansion.



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INTRODUCTION



After discovering that its “Assume Nothing” campaign translated into “**Do Nothing**” in several countries, the British multinational banking company HSBC had to undergo a **10 million dollar campaign** to correct the mistake and re-brand.

In 2016, Luo Zhen was driving his new Tesla in Beijing when he engaged in the “self-driving” feature that the company’s localized Chinese website so strongly promoted. In reality, it was just an “assisted driving” feature, that led **Luo to crashing his new model.**

And who could forget the “**Are You Lactating?**” translation of the famous Goodby Silverstein & Partner’s “Got Milk?” campaign for the California Milk Processor Board, which amused no one in the Latino community.

DO NOTHING

SELF-DRIVING

ARE YOU LACTATING?

From monumental amounts spent in damage control, to car crashes, to slogans that spark no interest, the translation of marketing collateral is an art that few understand and even fewer can accurately implement.

IN THIS PAPER, WE’LL COVER THE IMPORTANCE THAT CULTURE AND LANGUAGE HOLD OVER MARKETING AND INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGNS, AND WE’LL EXAMINE HOW TO AVOID SOME OF THE PITFALLS THAT COULD COME WITH EXPANDING A BRAND.

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Why did some of the biggest brands have to spend millions of dollars due to mistranslation? Marketing translations 101.

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Everything you need to make sure your brand properly adapts its marketing strategy internationally.

THE NUMBERS

ACCORDING TO A
EUROPEAN
COMMISSION
STUDY FROM
2011:

9/10

Nine out of 10 Internet users said that, when given a choice of languages, they always visited a website in their own language.

19%

Nearly one in five Europeans (19%) said they never browse in a language other than their own.

42%

42% said they never purchase products and services in other languages.

BEFORE JUMPING INTO THE INS AND OUTS OF MARKETING TRANSLATION, YOU MAY BE WONDERING:

“WHY SHOULD I TRANSLATE MY MARKETING, ANYWAY? MOST OF MY CUSTOMERS UNDERSTAND ENGLISH, EVEN IF IT’S NOT THEIR FIRST LANGUAGE.”

FIRST OFF, IF YOU HAVE A WEBSITE WHERE YOU OFFER YOUR PRODUCTS OR SERVICES AND YOU HAVEN’T CONSIDERED TRANSLATING IT, YOU MIGHT BE MISSING OUT ON PRICELESS GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES.

AND THIS STUDY IS FROM 2011!

Since then, a decade of content has been added to the internet in your customer’s native language.

So why should they choose your website if it’s not speaking directly to them?

On the other hand, if your website is localized, but still haven’t seen the favorable impact in revenue you were expecting, perhaps you’re not really reaching out to them yet.

Think of how many brands exist that you don’t know about because they are not advertising to you. You might have a website perfectly localized in German, but if you’re neglecting German social media, German off-page content, and German advertising, you can’t say you’re reaching out to the German-speaking market.

KEY CHALLENGES

in Marketing Translation

FIRST, LET'S CONSIDER THE GRAND SCHEME OF THINGS.

WHEN IT COMES TO THE TRANSLATION OF MARKETING COLLATERAL, THERE ARE 7 MAIN FACTORS A BRAND SHOULD CONSIDER CAREFULLY WHEN THINKING OF EXPANDING TO NEW CULTURES:



SLOGANS

The nature of slogans makes marketing translation tricky. For example, the tagline **Come Alive! You're in the Pepsi Generation** that Pepsi used in the 60s was created for the American audience. When the time came for expanding this advertising to China, it didn't go so well. The translation came out **"Pepsi Brings your Ancestors Back from the Dead"**.



METAPHORS & IDIOMS

What does **"You have tomatoes in your eyes"** mean to you? How about **"There's no cow on the ice"**? And **"The thief has a burning hat"**? These are actually three idioms coming from Germany, Sweden, and Russia, and while they could easily be used in advertising for those countries, they would make very little sense to the English-speaking audience. The use of proverbs in advertising is a common practice, and yet it requires a special knowledge of a culture's folklore to accurately pull it off.



IMAGERY

Images tell powerful stories, and sometimes, they are exclusive to certain cultures. Proctor & Gamble realized they had a problem when they started selling diapers in Japan. **The image of a stork delivering a baby wasn't part of Japanese folklore, so consumers missed the reference completely.**



KEY CHALLENGES

in Marketing Translation



COLORS

Colors carry different meanings according to local culture. They can be associated with superstitions, religious beliefs, or political leanings. Orange, a mobile company in Europe had to change its advertising when entering the Northern Ireland market because **the color orange for the Irish signifies allegiance to loyalist causes and the Protestant religion.**



HUMOR

Just by watching a British comedy show and comparing it to one from the US, one can notice that our cultural makeup shapes our sense of humor. While—generally—British comedy tends to be subtle and make use of irony and sarcasm, American comedy tends to have more explicit punchlines, and strives for a happy ending and characters with redeemable qualities.

And this is coming from two regions that speak the same language!



BRAND NAMES

Brand names can be offensive or have a completely different meaning in another culture. For example, **Urinal is a health drink manufactured in Slovakia.** It is recommended to help keep the urinary tract healthy. But in other countries, the word translates into a plumbing fixture used in men's toilets.



NUMBERS

Some cultures attach meanings to different numbers. In many parts of the Christian world, 13 is an unlucky number. **In China and other areas of Asia where there are large Chinese communities, the number 4 is an unlucky number because its pronunciation sounds like "death".**

KNOWING THE MARKET

EVEN BRANDS THAT ONE CAN THINK ARE SYNONYMOUS WITH GLOBALIZATION ACTUALLY PRACTICE WHAT WE LIKE TO CALL **GLOCALIZATION** (A TERM COINED BY THE HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW IN THE LATE 80S), WHICH REFERS TO THE NOTION THAT **A BRAND IS MORE LIKELY TO SUCCEED IN ITS EFFORTS THROUGHOUT INTERNATIONAL MARKETS WHEN IT CUSTOMIZES ITS STRATEGIES FOR THE DIFFERENT LOCAL CULTURES IT WANTS TO APPEAL TO.**



McDonalds (over 100+ countries): The brand does not serve beef or pork in India, to respect Hindu and Islamic beliefs, and it has Kosher restaurants in Israel and Argentina. But it also adapts its menu to cultural tastes, like the green tea ice cream in Japan, and serving rice as a side dish in Indonesia.

H&M (over 60+ countries): In Saudi Arabia, where women are expected to be more covered, H&M's advertising showcases models wearing very modest clothing. However, in the UK, models are showing a lot more skin in the brand's display ads.



Starbucks (over 70+ countries): In France, where patisseries and coffee shops tend to offer very high-quality cuisine, the branch started selling Viennese coffee with whipped cream, and continental items such as brioche. And in Saudi Arabia, the company had to change its logo because it was considered too sexual.

/ THE ANSWER: TRANSCREATION /

**TRANSLATION + CREATION
= TRANSCREATION**



TRANSCREATION REFERS TO THE ADAPTATION OF AN ADVERTISING MESSAGE FROM ITS ORIGINAL LANGUAGE INTO OTHER CULTURES, WHERE THE ADVERTISED PRODUCT OR SERVICE WILL BE MARKETING. PROPER TRANSCREATION ENSURES THAT THE CONTEXT, TONE, STYLE, AND INTENT OF THE MARKETING MESSAGE REMAIN ACROSS REGIONS.

There are 3 distinct features that distinguish transcreation from translation:



**CONTEXT IN
CONTENT**



RESOURCES



**RETURN ON
INVESTMENT**

/ TRANSCREATION /

CONTENT IN CONTEXT

In transcreation, the content is not only translated into a new language, but adapted to the culture it's targeting. This is where humor, imagery, colors, and proverbs come into place. And this is where a **deep understanding of the culture is key** – we recommend considering only transcreation professionals that are native to the culture you're directing your strategy to, or at least consider the use of a native consultant.



RESOURCES

Transcreation requires more money and time than translation. This is because it not only requires a solid knowledge in languages, but a deep understanding of the new culture's folklore, idioms, humour, preferences, and ways of consuming content. Transcreation also requires creativity to come up with slogans and marketing material that entice and appeal to the new audience, and are as "sticky" as your original versions.



RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Coming up with a customized marketing strategy and content for your new audience ensures that you'll gain the interest of an audience that potentially doubles or triples the size of your current one. When done right, transcreation can have a lower cost than localization, but yield incredible benefits, as you will be marketing towards a brand new range of consumers. **It has the potential to be the one key investment that truly skyrockets your brand.**





EXPANDING YOUR DIGITAL MARKETING

Now that we explored what big names like McDonalds and H&M do in terms of their traditional marketing campaigns, that include product and price adaptation, logistics, and point of purchase campaigns, let's dive into digital marketing, which is what most brands are choosing nowadays as their main channel.

And it's easy to see why: in 2019, number of internet users is 4.388 billion worldwide, and the number of active social media users is 3.484 billion. The audience is there, and the return of investment is, too: with a small fraction of what you'd pay for a 10 second tv-spot ad, you're able to target the right audience, optimize your copy, and measure the results through digital marketing.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU WANT TO TAKE YOUR DIGITAL MARKETING ABROAD AND REACH NEW AUDIENCES?

4.388BILLION

INTERNET USERS



3.484BILLION

ACTIVE SOCIAL MEDIA USERS





LOCALIZATION

First things first: Localization. **If your brand is online, localization makes sure that your website's copy, assets, and all your content is properly adapted to the culture you want to target.**

Beyond word for word translation, localization involves work in areas of design, development, and marketing, to make sure your digital product aligns with the formatting needs and legal requirements of the new region or locale.

Besides text translation, localization can include the voice over or subtitling of videos, the design of new UX visuals, and the adaptation of any other multimedia file you have on your website.





INTERNATIONAL SEO

Now, let's say you have a fully-functioning website in French.

How do you make sure that the French-speaking market will find it online?

That's where Search Engine Optimization comes in. An international SEO provider will conduct extensive keyword research to know which terms your target audience searches for, and will optimize your website to fit such terms for it to appear in those search results.

"But, can't I just simply translate the keywords I have in my original website?" **well, no.**

**Search terms vary greatly between countries,
even if they speak the same language!**



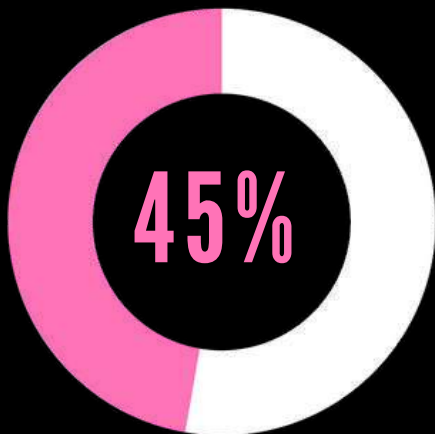
Taking us as an example, our US clientele knows that we offer "certified translations". However, *our UK customers don't go by that term.*

For them, we have optimized our content to match their keyword "sworn translations".

If this varies so much inside the same language, imagine how much it varies when it comes to different languages!



GLOBAL SOCIAL MEDIA



OF THE
WORLD IS
ACTIVE ON
SOCIAL
MEDIA

288MILLION

GROWTH PER YEAR



45% of the world's population is comprised of active social media users, and the worldwide total is growing by 9% each year (288 million people).

And according to a recent Global Web Index's study, internet users spend an average of **2hs and 22minutes per day** on social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

So if you're not present in the places where your consumers are spending 2hs of their day at, you're definitely missing out.

Finding a company that takes care of your social media presence globally can seem like a daunting task, but the results of speaking to your international customers in their own language and in the platforms they frequent will put your marketing strategy above your competitors'.



GLOBAL PPC ADVERTISING

PPC advertising in other countries should be easy, right? Simply translate your advertising copy in your target language, optimize your audience for the country you want to market to, and presto!

Well... no, *again*.

There are 2 factors to take into account when it comes to international PPC advertising:

- 1** Like traditional advertising, you need to consider the new culture's humour, proverbs, and puns when writing copy that converts well. **Digital ads typically are limited in the amount of words you can write, so it's important that you capture the customer right away.**
- 2** Just like for organic search results, for your ad to perform well on search engines, your copy needs to include the keywords for which your website is optimized for, and that your buyer personas are searching for. **Again, as well as for SEO, this requires an extensive keyword research beforehand.**

A TURN KEY SOLUTION

Translating your marketing material, localizing your website, or applying the principles of transcreation to your social media content isn't a DIY activity.

Guarantee a successful expansion by allying with a multicultural team of highly-experienced experts.

We, at Day Translations, provide top-notch cross-cultural solutions, from document translation to marketing localization.



WE OFFER:

- **Localization Services** for your digital products
- **Global Web Design** and Web Development Services
- **Global SEO Services**
- **Global Social Media Services**
- **Global PPC Advertising Services**

We'll put together a team of native translators, consultants, developers, designers, project managers, and marketing experts to deliver the solution you need to meet your goals at an international scale.

We work in every single language, and are ready 24/7 to provide you tailored assistance.

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