

THE SEVEN MOST IMPORTANT RULES

OF SUCCESSFUL WEBSITE
LOCALISATION



SUCCESS FACTORS IN INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

Whether you are a successful SME or a young start-up, internationalisation is a central and existential milestone. In a virtually entirely globalised economy, ever more companies are stepping into foreign markets and expanding their business around the globe. The localisation of content relevant to marketing has a special role to play in this process. Decisive factors are the translation of the website and other appearances, and the transfer of product master data to new languages.

Professional localisation

As an important part of any localisation project, the translation must take its cue from the particular cultural framework conditions of the target region. The particularities of the country in question require focussed adaptation to ensure that users attach a sense of positive experience with your company's website, products and services. Misunderstandings during localisation can poison the entire undertaking.

It is a big step that will only be successful if the target group is addressed in the style that is characteristic of the region and subject-matter. It is where native speakers come into their own. They have an intuitive feel for the most appropriate expression and also know which choice of words might result in a faux pas. They enable and facilitate localisation and prevent mistakes. A good example of this are the subtle differences between British and American spelling. However, users will also pick up on and – wittingly or unwittingly – interpret regional particularities, e.g. differences in linguistic usage within Switzerland between the Jura Mountains and the Geneva lake region. An exact translation focussed precisely on the target group is there-

fore a decisive factor for the success of any localisation project. Nevertheless, the translation of texts is only one part of the work necessary to achieve a successful website localisation. When it comes to reaching international customers and interested parties quickly and efficiently in the digital world, the following seven steps are essential.

The most important rules of successful website localisation

Over the years, many project have confirmed the steps and components that are crucial to successful localisation:

1. Define an appropriate international URL structure
2. Commission professional, specialised native speakers to provide the translation
3. Assess the local relevance of your content
4. Consider cultural particularities and local laws
5. Ensure consistency of phrasing, punctuation, format specifications, etc.
6. Transfer search engine-relevant content perfectly
7. Adapt images, buttons and links

Rule No. 1

Define an appropriate international URL structure

As a rule, the following methods for defining an appropriate URL structure apply to different language versions and target markets:

- country-specific top-level domains, e.g. your-domain.de or yourdomain.co.uk
- subdomains to supplement generic top-level domains, e.g. en.yourdomain.org
- subdirectories under generic top-level domains, e.g. yourdomain.org/en/

Each structure has specific advantages and disadvantages. Local domain names may be unavailable, or technical reasons may impact on the choice available.

Rule No. 2

Commission professional, specialised native speakers to provide the translation

Professional translation is the most important success factor in website localisation. A number of standards should be observed which will make the crucial difference between a perfect and a flawed translation, and between your content reaching the target group or not.

- **Always choose a native speaker with specialist expertise to provide your translation.**
- **Commission additional editing or proofreading for complex and particularly important texts.**
- **Define the target groups and characteristics of the translation in terms of tone of voice.**
- **Ensure your source text is of perfect quality.**



- **Schedule enough time for translation, especially for more complex texts.**
- **Provide the translator (and, where applicable, the editor) with examples of texts you like, and develop your own translation memory.**
- **Ensure a style guide with glossary is used for your texts.**
- **Stay available for the translator during order processing so that any questions or ambiguities can be clarified quickly.**
- **Implement any corrections of the translated document immediately.**
- **Only use certified translation service providers with high technical quality and security standards.**

Only service providers who work in accordance with such standards can be relied on to deliver texts which fully meet your expectations. It is worth taking the time to compare providers carefully and really emphasise quality. Fewer errors and misunderstandings means lower costs, once you factor in your own time spent correcting mistakes.

Rule No. 3

Assess the local relevance of your content

The content and context of a localised text must be consistent. A good translation service provider stands out by not only providing high-quality translations but by their ability to assess the local relevance of the content and transfer it into the right context. This requires both thorough language expertise and a detailed knowledge of the region, the users and their habits. Without such skills and knowledge, content simply cannot be localised effectively.

Another important possibility to bear in mind is that content which was originally important may become irrelevant in the course of localisation. Such content must initially be identified and then either fundamentally reformulated and rephrased or – figuratively speaking – thrown out.

The following common examples illustrate some cases where particular care is needed during localisation:

- **Does it make sense to refer to phone support if it is only available at great expense from abroad, or not in the respective local language?**
- **Is the Swiss SME the right reference to cite in South America, or are there more appropriate local alternatives?**
- **Do national certifications or awards have any meaning in other parts of the world?**

It is often advisable to create content from scratch for the target country instead of localising. If this decision is taken, we recommend working with experts who not



only provide traditional translation services but also have expertise in transcreation of content – holistic translation taking into account the cultural context.

Rule No. 4

Consider cultural particularities and local laws

Not everything that is taken for granted and is uncontroversial in Western European culture can be used in translation in other parts of the world without adaptation. There are many examples for this. Many target markets are subject to religious framework conditions and associated sensibilities. This applies equally to imagery. In the Arab world, for example, pictures of scantily clad women will not go down too well. In parts of Asia, depictions of naked feet are a faux pas. Some cultures may react with irritation to any reference to alcoholic drinks or the character of Heidi in the Swiss alps, whether in text or image form. Even the colours of your website may carry different associations in different cultures. For instance, where the western world tends to associate the colour white with innocence, purity or joy, many Asian countries regard it as a symbol of grief and death.

Different legal requirements, such as the obligation to include a legal notice, data protection, price and tax information, revocation clauses, and information about performance periods are further aspects which must not be neglected during the localisation of a website. Texts cannot simply be translated word for word but should be localised by specialists with legal expertise.

Rule No. 5

Ensure consistency of phrasing, punctuation, format specifications, etc.

Different language regions tend to use different punctuation, date and time formats, and measurements. The German number “Billion”, for instance, equates to the English “trillion” (whereas the English “billion” is the German “Milliarde”); American English places the month before the day in its date format. The following may require attention:

- **Date formatting**
- **Decimal marks (full stop or comma)**

- **Characters (e.g. Arabic, Chinese, certain letters in Nordic languages)**
- **Direction of writing (from right to left instead of the Latin left to right)**

Rule No. 6

Transfer search engine-relevant content perfectly

Without a doubt, the correct translation of keywords and search engine-relevant content is a crucial element when attempting to position a company in a foreign market. The visibility of a website depends on whether the keywords with the highest search volume have been used and incorporated into the website in the right context. A number of different search attributes and metadata have additional significant roles to play. The relevant signatures and meta descriptions in the search engine must therefore be transposed to the new linguistic context by proven language experts.

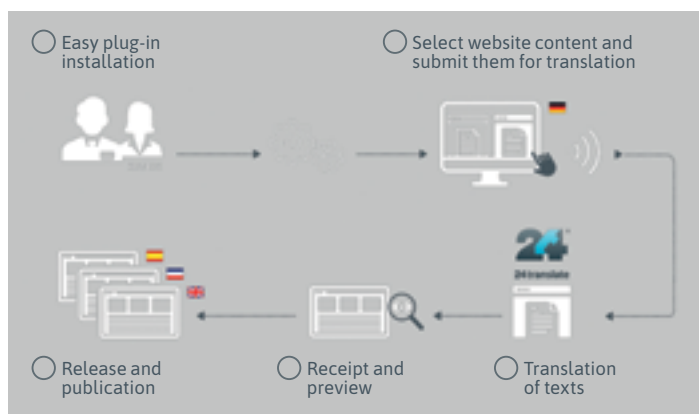
The following meta information and HTML attributes must be localised:

- **Website title and H1 header tag**
- **Meta description**
- **URL paths**
- **Anchors for all links, including in the website navigation**
- **Alt attributes of images**
- **Forms**

Rule No. 7

Adapt images, buttons and links

To create a professional website, all texts on buttons, in graphics and in screenshots must be localised. Attention must be paid to the fact that words and sentences in different languages can vary considerably in length. English phrases and expressions tend to be crisp and concise, whereas their equivalents in other languages – for example French – can be quite long. In some circumstances, adjusting the size of graphic elements is unavoidable.



An overview of the translation workflow management process

Individual solutions and customised projects for special customer requirements

Personnel and processes as cost factors: making savings in the right place

The use of human resources to enter translated texts into a content management system or e-commerce software is laborious, costly, and frequently fiendishly error-prone. It is worth comparing translation services and choosing a

provider who can offer a high level of technical integration. Translation automation can replace many arduous manual tasks and render them obsolete. This saves you time and money and increases the quality of your localisation process.

With the appropriate technical equipment, web content can be sent to a professional translation partner entirely digitally straight from the software (content management system (CMS) or shop system). You receive the completed translation by the same means, automatically into the appropriate location in the CMS.

Implementation is easy. The IT effort is minimal, and there is no need for editors to get to grips with new software. New or revised texts can be online in all target languages at very short notice, and can be kept up to date at all times. All content and areas of the website may be selected for translation – both pages and subpages and other elements, such as user-defined fields.

Seamless processing steps by parameter for even better translation quality

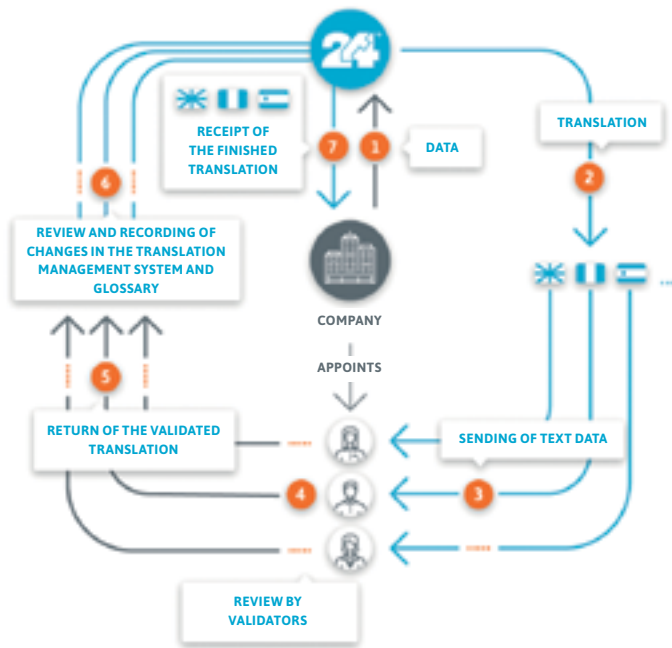
Translation quality is increased as copy-and-paste work steps become unnecessary. Translations are inserted automatically by parameter into the specified page structure, including in the required format. This lowers the error rate and eliminates many potential sources of errors. The use of translation memories and glossaries likewise lowers costs. They ensure that passages which have been translated before are automatically recognised and can simply be adopted, instead of translating them again and risking inconsistency. Text elements are stored in a translation data bank and used where required to ensure consistent wording. Identical elements are not paid for again. This significantly increases translation quality and ensures consistency in international communications.

Other benefits of a central translation automation platform include specialised workflows and digital tools de-

signed to provide a high level of data protection. All data exchange is secured by 256-bit SSL encryption. Suitable translation automation systems also provide convenient and transparent order overviews, where translation jobs can be tracked and edited at any time, i.e. around the clock.

Individual solutions and customised projects for special customer requirements

Although a good system will offer many “off-the-shelf” functionalities, some customers will need special, customised solutions – particularly when it comes to large projects. This is why some industry experts provide individual solutions and adjustments for localisation projects. In such cases, project managers and IT professionals will develop tailored solutions for specific requirements. Let us look at a real-life example of a successful, large-scale website localisation project. The popular brand tesa AG, a subsidiary of Beiersdorf, has been operating a business worth billions across the world for many years. Recently, the company planned a project to relaunch its international website. The process illustrated what really matters when selecting a translation partner offering a comprehensive service package, and when implementing a system.



Translation quality through automatic processes



CASE STUDY: HOW TESA WORKS WITH 24TRANSLATE TO LOCALISE ITS WEBSITE INTO 24 LANGUAGES

tesa AG was looking for a reliable translation service provider for its website relaunch. In addition to high-quality translation of the texts into two dozen target languages, tesa needed a technical solution to optimise the associated workflows. It expected the chosen service provider to integrate different internal tesa systems and different service providers into a translation platform.

24translate and 24technology put together a package for tesa that caters individually to its specific requirements. For tesa, sticking to the schedule was a top priority. Work on the texts started with editing of the source texts, followed by translation into 24 different languages. The initial editing was necessary as the website content had been compiled from various different company divisions and had not been written by native speakers. In order to meet the client's tight schedule, an in-house editor was appointed who was able to work directly in the tesa CMS.

For the relaunch project, a company-specific translation platform was used which was connected to a number of tesa systems and different translation service providers. The platform was equipped with a translation memory and a glossary and enables tesa employees to prepare shorter translations themselves, using an editor. Before the project started, the parties identified a whole range of aspects and challenges which would be critical to the success of the project and were mastered in its implementation:

- fast and effective in-house editing in close collaboration with tesa employees
- a tight project schedule for the website relaunch
- large text volume in 24 target languages

- integration of the tesa CMS into the translation management system

Regular, closely synchronised in-house editing ensured the homogeneity of the source texts. An individual translation management system (TMS) was developed specifically for tesa to automate the translation process. An interface (API) was implemented in the tesa CMS to create a seamless connection with the TMS. The entire order processing can therefore take place directly in the CMS, without any media discontinuity. Translation orders are sent without any manual processing, and imported back to the system once completed. The end-to-end workflow is complemented by an automated quotation process. This includes a fee approval system which guarantees tesa full cost transparency at all times.

OUR TOTAL COMMITMENT TO QUALITY AND INNOVATION SETS US APART

As a leading international translation services provider, 24translate has been connecting small and mid-sized German companies with the rest of the world for two decades. When expanding into new markets, global leaders such as tesa, Feintool, and ThyssenKrupp regularly rely on our technology and professional expertise. 24translate's customers enjoy 24/7 access to every aspect of our company's proven translation management system, which guarantees consistent quality and reliability.

About 24translate

Companies have been able to connect with the entire world for two decades, thanks to 24translate - one of the leading international language service providers. Our core competencies - specialised translations, text optimisations, as well as process optimisations across all industries - thus offer our customers our unique technical expertise and our advanced security standards, especially for very demanding translation projects.

Do not hesitate to get in touch with us if you still have questions or would like to know more about how to make better use of your multilingual communication potential.

We will gladly offer you individual and free-of-charge advice.

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