

How to Build a

# MULTILINGUAL WEBSITE





# INTRODUCTION

Overseeing a website localization project to serve customers in new markets can seem overwhelming. There's a lot to consider, and even more at stake. This is especially true if you're facing pressure to succeed in international markets; you may be tempted to act fast and build the plan as you go.

That could be a costly mistake.

To get the most value from your localized website, you must take the time and craft a strategy that can articulate your goals, create a framework for decision-making, and map out a tactical plan to succeed. Plus, the process of planning can ensure that you don't miss important issues you might not have considered before you start.

We've created this guide to help you move logically and thoughtfully through all the steps involved in building a multilingual website that can serve your business for a long time to come.



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# DO YOU NEED A LOCALIZED WEBSITE?

Let's start with the most basic consideration: *Do you really need a multilingual website?*

Multilingual sites represent a significant upfront investment, and require ongoing maintenance and updates. As a result, some organizations choose to serve global customers exclusively with their flagship websites, leaving international visitors to use browser-based machine translation solutions to understand the content.

But there are strong arguments for offering localized websites to customers, partners and investors, including:

- Demonstrating your commitment to a new market with localized content
- Honoring customers' preferences to conduct research and transactions in the language that's most familiar to them
- Stand out from competitors with a truly customized, localized online experience
- Support in-country sales teams and channel partners with translated content
- Ensure compliance with local laws and regulations

# CHOOSING THE LANGUAGES YOU NEED

If you've decided to build one or more multilingual sites, you must choose which markets and languages to support. There are several factors to consider:

## YOUR GEOGRAPHIC MARKET

1

Your choice of language for the website depends on the country or region you're targeting. Some countries, such as Italy or Sweden, speak only one primary language, which keeps things simple. But if you're expanding into India and Latin America—whose residents speak a number of different languages—you must consider which ones are most commonly used in business. Data from your existing customers can help, as can in-depth research into the region to determine which languages make the most sense based on your business goals.

## YOUR INDUSTRY

2

The business practices of your industry sector can help you determine which languages are most important, too. For example, the manufacturing sector in South Korea may prefer to use English or Korean to conduct business, while the travel and hospitality sector in Latin America may prefer Spanish overall. Knowing how your industry typically operates in these countries is helpful when you're prioritizing your content translation.



## RULES AND REGULATIONS

3

Government regulations in local markets also often dictate the translation requirements for businesses. In Canada, which is officially bilingual, the requirements for French and/or English usage vary according to the province. Depending on where you're doing business, it might be critical to have both French and English websites. In Spain, the city of Valencia has two official languages: Spanish and Valencian, a dialect of Catalan.

If you already have an in-country sales team in place or have engaged with some local partners, you should ask them for recommendations about languages preferred by customers and prospects.

## RESOURCES FOR LANGUAGE SELECTION

To learn more about your new market and its language preferences, consider tapping into these sources:

- Social media platforms such as LinkedIn
- Competitors' websites
- Expertise from within your company and professional networks
- Government economic development organizations and institutes
- Industry associations and trade publications focused on the country/region
- Analyst reports on your industry sector and target market

# SCOPING YOUR TRANSLATION PROJECT

When you start your website translation project, you may assume that translating the entire site is the only way to get it done. But that's not always the case.

## TAKE A MOMENT TO THINK THROUGH:

- Costs of translation and your budget (translating more words usually means higher costs)
- The needs and preferences of your audience, based on the content they use most
- Whether serving the new market is a trial venture or a full-on commitment



On one hand, translating your entire site reassures local customers and prospects that you are offering them the same level of quality, comprehensiveness and detail that you provide visitors to your flagship site. It also ensures brand consistency from one site to another.

On the other hand, some parts of your website may not be of interest to the local market.

For example, if your organization is a subsidiary, you may not need to translate the history, locations or corporate news of the parent company.

Similarly, if you are offering a subset of products to the new market, translating information on your entire product portfolio—including products that won't be available to your new customers—could be confusing. Local customers may be looking only for success stories, use cases and product specifications that involve their country or region.

If your company is just testing the waters for international expansion, it may be smarter to translate only key information and site functionality until it's clear that the new market will deliver on your business goals. Then over time, you can add translated content in phases to meet the increasing demands and needs of your new and growing audiences.

## THINKING ABOUT A MICROSITE?

Instead of tackling the translation of an entire website, some companies consider launching modestly-sized microsites to support new international markets.

But microsites often deliver an incomplete, inferior experience for customers due to their limited content and capabilities. That can tarnish a brand that's otherwise working hard to establish its reputation in a new market.

# DECIDING WHAT CONTENT TO CUSTOMIZE FOR LOCAL MARKETS

One of the benefits of multilingual websites is the opportunity to tailor content to local audiences. Although creating customized information—rather than simply translating existing content—requires a bit more investment, it's worth the effort. Your customers and prospects will appreciate learning about news, events, issues and solutions that are local and personalized, and relate directly to their needs.

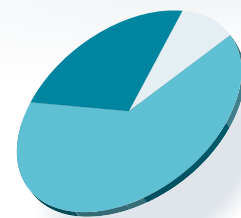
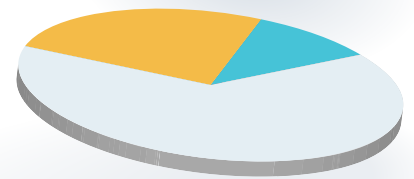
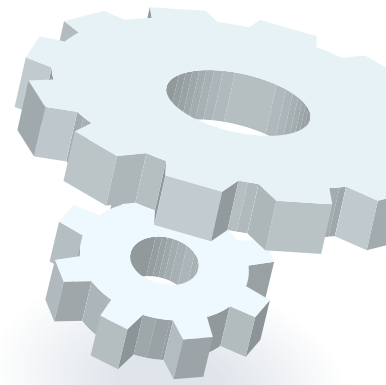


However, you don't have to customize all of your website content. Too much tailoring can dilute corporate messaging, branding and positioning.

**A GOOD RULE OF THUMB IS:**

- **80%** standardized, corporate content
- **20%** local content

By keeping some consistency with your flagship site and brand, but offering some local or regional content that's tailored to your international visitors, you can create a personalized experience that maintains the consistency and integrity of your flagship customer experience.



## CATEGORIES OF CUSTOMIZED WEB CONTENT

- News releases and press coverage about your local office or operations
- Local conferences, training courses, seminars and other events
- Job opportunities
- Profiles of in-country team members
- Partnerships with local resellers and distributors
- Blogs on national or regional trends and issues

# EVALUATING YOUR RESOURCES

As you strategize about your multilingual website, you'll want to have a good handle on the resources you have (or don't have) to commit to the project. Rich and diverse resources give you the option to keep some or all aspects of your translation project in house, while limited staff and budget mean you'll want and need to look for outside help.

The two variables that typically affect resource requirements are:

- The frequency of content changes needed for the site, and
- The existence—or lack—of a clear, documented website management process that teams follow for updates and ongoing development

If your web content is highly dynamic, you'll need more people (and budget) to keep it up to date. And if you don't have a process in place for organizing and managing ongoing changes to the site, you'll need to create one.

Even existing processes can be time-consuming and ever-evolving, and may require assistance from many different departments within your organization.

When you're evaluating resources, take a close look at:

## 1. YOUR CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CMS).

Is the CMS tool set up to manage multilingual website content? Or will you need to integrate it with a third-party translation solution? Integration using standard CMS connectors typically requires IT customization work, so think about whether you have development talent on staff.

## 2. YOUR MARKETING TEAM.

A large marketing organization may have sufficient bandwidth to take on a website localization project. Keep in mind that these employees will have to manage ongoing operations. These additional demands can be heavy. If you have a lean team, you may have to supplement your resources and hire additional workers or partners to help.

And as tempting as it is, don't assume your in-country marketing teams can take on translating and managing multilingual sites. They've got

important responsibilities already, and they're not professional translators. Great partners can help you evaluate the capacity of your regional marketing teams and get you the support you—and they—need.

## 3. YOUR TECHNOLOGY TEAM.

Certain aspects of website localization are quite technical, involving the identification, extraction and translation of elements such as:

- ✓ Metadata and structured data
- ✓ Images with embedded text
- ✓ Videos
- ✓ Mobile applications
- ✓ Dynamically loaded third-party functionality such as customer review systems
- ✓ Dynamic PDFs such as customer account statements
- ✓ Code in JavaScript applications

Bear in mind that most CMS tools—even products designed for multilingual website management—can't detect and manage translation of these elements. That means you need some savvy IT people to assist.

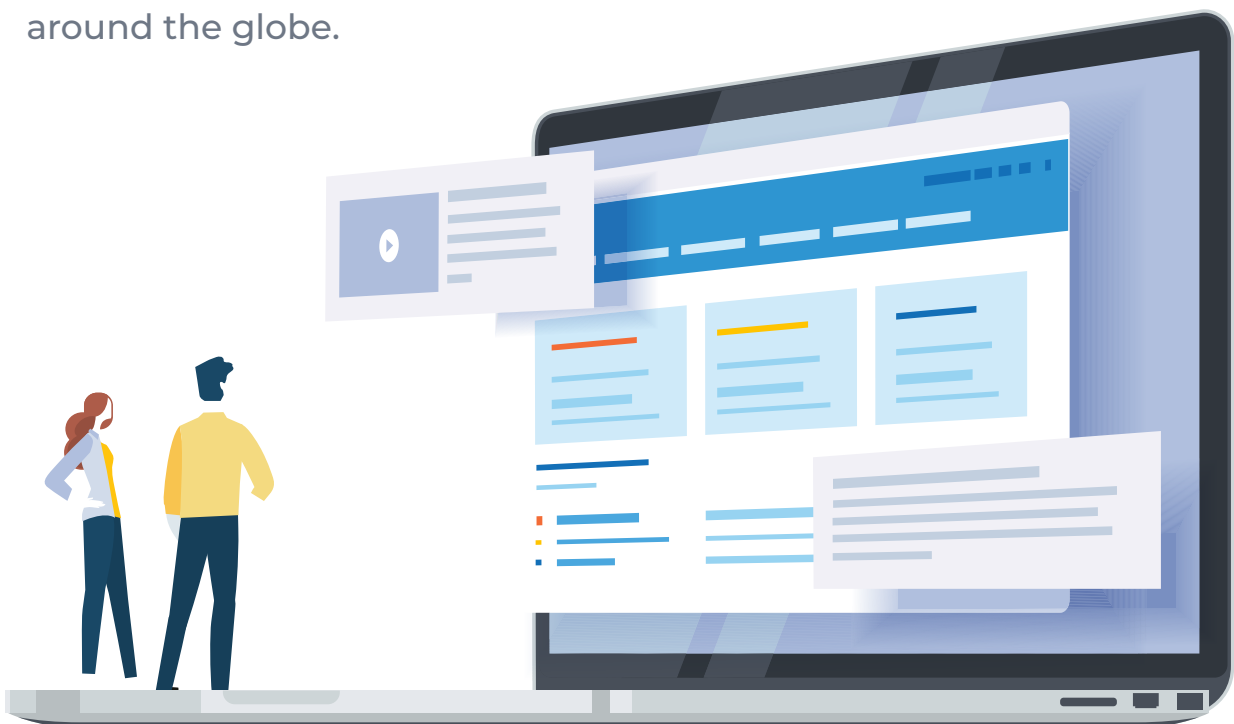
# THE TURN-KEY PROXY ADVANTAGE

During this strategy phase, it's a good idea to research the latest technology-based tools for website translation and operation ... especially if you have lean resources, limited knowledge and heavy demands on your time and organization.

Advanced technologies—such as turn-key proxy translation solutions—can take the burden off of you and help:

- ✓ Minimize labor-intensive processes
- ✓ Avoid manual effort and oversight of translation
- ✓ Seamlessly integrate translation tech with your CMS
- ✓ Streamline workflows for your website project

Leveraging a great technology solution that makes the most of automation and human expertise can help you deliver a multilingual site that meets the highest expectations of your local customers—and accelerates your success around the globe.





# ABOUT MOTIONPOINT

MotionPoint solves the operational complexity and cost of website localization. Unlike all other approaches, our technology and turn-key solution are built specifically for this purpose.

We translate, deploy, and operate multilingual websites, optimizing the customer experience across all channels.

**motionpoint**

**MotionPoint Corporation**

[info@motionpoint.com](mailto:info@motionpoint.com)

[www.motionpoint.com](http://www.motionpoint.com)