WEBSITE AND OMNICHANNEL LOCALIZATION TIPS FOR DESIGN & TECHNICAL TEAMS

If your company plans to localize its website to serve customers in global markets, this checklist can help your IT and development teams prepare for the project.

✓ LEVERAGE RESPONSIVE LAYOUT

Due to a phenomenon called word growth (aka word expansion), translated content **can take up to 45% more page space** than its origin content. These extra characters can disrupt page design.

- Use **responsive page design** to mitigate the risk of misaligned text and images
- Responsive design is also great to accommodate users in mobile-first global markets.

✓ CHOOSE A DOMAIN STRUCTURE

Your localized website will require a domain structure. The best option should align with your company's business goals:

- **ccTLDs**
  - ccTLDs are **very effective** at telling Google which country or market you are engaging and serving.
  - Acquiring several domains can become a **large ongoing investment**, requiring ample resources and plenty of potential in a market.
- **Subdomains and Subdirectories**
  - Subdirectories are a better option over subdomains, since Google considers subdomains less authoritative than primary domains.
  - To take full advantage of your **domain's authority**, use subdomains instead.

✓ CHOOSE WEB HOSTING

Look for a reliable, secure web hosting solution. Consider these options:

- Look for great **uptime and loading speeds** for global customers.
- Leverage an **in-country web hosting provider** for superior performance.
- **CDNs** also provide excellent uptimes and performance.

In some markets—such China or Russia—you may be required by law to use a local hosting provider.

✓ USE UTF-8 CHARACTER ENCODING

Using Unicode-based UTF-8 character encoding on your origin website:

- **Supports** characters for all languages
- **Eliminates** the need for servers to identify the character coding for each page
- **Reduces** the complexity of creating and maintaining multilingual websites

✓ OPTIMIZE CSS CODE FOR ONGOING OPERATION

Create page templates that **seamlessly and easily** accommodate multimedia files and content growth by defining CSS styles locally rather than globally.

Also, use relative **design elements** (such as *float left* or *align center*) instead of absolutes (such as *350px wide, indent 50px*).

✓ DECLARE HTML LANGUAGE ATTRIBUTE

Leveraging the *HTML language attribute* on your origin website:

- **Identifies** the language of your website content
- **Helps** search engines display the appropriate version of your website in search results
- **Ensures** the correct character set is displayed on a page encoded in Unicode
- Also **assists** speech synthesizers to produce accurate results

✓ OPTIMIZE STRUCTURED DATA/METADATA

Your website's structured data and metadata contain a wealth of SEO keywords that search engines use to rank your site in search results. Ensure that...

- Page titles
- Page descriptions
- Alt tags for images and videos
- Social meta tags
- Meta keywords

...are properly implemented on your origin site, to maximize SEO benefits when the content has been localized.

✓ DEFINE YOUR SCOPE OF WORK

Identifying all URL structures and patterns on your origin site can help your project's decision-makers determine which parts of the website should be translated, and which ones can be excluded.

✓ CREATE A GLOBAL SITEMAP

Global sitemaps use *hreflang tagging* and *geo-targeting* to tell Google that an optimal user experience exists for customers who speak a certain language, or live in a particular country.

✓ IMPLEMENT A LANGUAGE DETECTION TOOL

Global customers **leave your website** in frustration if they can't find content in their preferred languages.

Implement a solution that automatically welcomes global visitors in their preferred languages and directs them to the best localized experience, based on language settings, location and other data.

REMEMBER: **Website translation might seem complicated—but it doesn't have to be.** Completing this checklist before your localization project begins will streamline the process for you and your team.