The 5 Key Strategies for Software
and Web-based Service Providers

Localization 101:

transifex

CONTENTS:

1. Facilitate Cross-Functional Collaboration
2. Refine Dev Processes
3. Ensure System Integration
4. Automate Workflows
5. Measure What You Can

Don't let this happen to you.

Localizing your business can be a powerful strategy for driving success, but it can also be a daunting challenge that requires solving communication and development challenges in parallel.

Over the past 12 years, while working with top providers to meet these challenges, we've noticed companies often underestimate the business implications of localization.

Whether you're new to it or refining your approach, we've created this set of key best practices to ensure the success of your localization efforts.

1.

Facilitate Cross-Functional Collaboration

Localization is an inherently cross-departmental process that requires timely collaboration, especially when there are tight deadlines to meet.

Facilitate Interdepartmental Teamwork

Decide based on your translation needs whether a Language Service Provider (LSP) is required. Then, clearly assign responsibilities and roles among stakeholders.

Promote a collaborative culture for more enriched outcomes and leverage technology that allows the assignment, monitoring, and measurement of localization tasks, like a Translation Management System (TMS). This will ensure visibility and transparency for all involved.

Establish and stick to a regular cross-functional project meeting cadence to foster a sense of shared ownership and accountability.

Bring Designers, Engineers, Product, and Project Managers into localization discussions from the outset to ensure localization is considered a fundamental aspect of product design and development.

Engage Leadership Early

Engage leadership of the contributing and stakeholder departments to ensure full support and inputs. A common mistake we see is initiative owners failing to engage with leadership across the contributing and stakeholder departments at the outset. Being proactive in aligning on objectives and implications drastically increases your odds of getting adequate funding and longer-term organizational adoption.

Ensure everyone's on the same page from the start. Schedule one-on-one meetings with each related team leader to explain the changes, benefits, and expected impact. Ensure stakeholders are kept updated and reminded of projected value.

REMEMBER:

An all-hands-on-deck approach to localization ensures quality and demonstrates organizational commitment to global audiences.

For more information on the role of cross-functional collaboration, see To Win Over Localization Skeptics, Follow the Money, Leverage Technology

2.

Refine Dev Processes

Effective localization hinges on strategic effort allocation, embracing automation, and easing the developer's burden.

Prioritize Your Efforts

Depending on the scale or your localization approach, you may need to start with a crawl,-walk-run approach. Identify the areas of your application or other digital content, like campaigns or marketing material that would make the most business impact and assess the feasibility of internationalizing them.

Adopt an automated and sustainable localization approach for better scalability and efficiency. Manual translation processes that rely on spreadsheets or files can be very labor-intensive and prone to errors.

Keep in mind that i18n code scanning and bug detection tools are useful but can throw confusing false positives in some cases, so use them with care.

Automate Source Content Delivery

With the right TMS, you can leverage the continuous fetching of translations over the air (OTA) to your application, eliminating the need to restart your server or deploy code to see the newest translations. Alternatively, you can set up automated ways to publish your translations through the API or CLI, depending on your preferred level of control over translation delivery.

Explore the integrations a TMS can offer with popular dev tools. Seamless integrations can enable automatic communication between your development environment and the TMS to facilitate continuous localization.

Enable translations to be available while your application is running, whether on a staging environment for QA purposes or on your production, where users interact with the application.

REMEMBER:

Consistent processes guarantee quality, help streamline operations and foster a cohesive brand image globally.

Simplify Dev Workload

Set up auto-synch between your code repository and the TMS, so that new strings are uploaded and translated strings are downloaded automatically.

Utilize webhooks or configuration settings provided by the TMS to notify developers and translators of changes.

Make developers' job easier using a TMS compatible with prevalent developer frameworks like React and Angular. There should be a robust set of SDKs and code parsers ready to go, which should give your devs the flexibility to make on-the-fly adjustments at the command-line level for quick changes and updates.

For more tips, see our Localization Guide for Agile Teams and visit our page on Software i18n

3.

Ensure System Integration

The localization tech stack typically includes some combination of systems of engagement, translation, and development, which should share both content and data as appropriate. The incorporation of a new tool, like a content management system, code repository, or localization solution, can become a hurdle if it doesn't gel with the other pieces.

Choose Compatible Solutions

Off-the-shelf connectors from your TMS will minimize integration challenges, streamline workflows, and simplify content transfers.

Select a TMS that allows central storage and management of all translation assets, including translation memories, glossaries, and project files.

Ensure it has robust API support for customized integrations specific to the organizational needs.

Align Development Workflows

Ensure a seamless flow of content from the app to translators and LLM (Large Language Model) tools and back again. Leveraging modern TMS technology like Transifex can act as a link between teams and environments like GitHub or Figma. Dramatically reducing the lag time of manual and spreadsheet-based approaches.

With the right integrations, you can start engaging translators early on, even before development starts.

Include localization steps in your CI/CD pipeline to ensure that translations are always up-to-date and tested before deployment.

Use automated testing frameworks to verify that translations appear correctly in the UI and that no strings are missing or broken.

You can also test your application on staging environments to ensure translations not only fit with the design but are also accurate.

Utilize i18n Libraries and Frameworks

Utilize libraries like react-i18next or vue-i18n for frontend and frameworks like Django with its built-in i18n backend support to ensure your codebase is ready for localization.

> **REMEMBER:**
>
> A compatible localization tool will streamline operations and adapt to future tech shifts.

For more guidance on localization system integration, see The Balancing Act: How to Ensure Interoperability in Complex Localization Workflows

4.
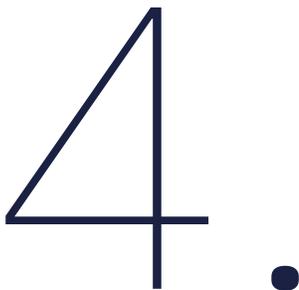
Automate Workflows

Using spreadsheets to track and manage localization is a recipe for inefficiency and errors. Yet it's still disturbingly common at many companies. High staff turnover and routine tasks can become bottlenecks in the process. Adopting the right TMS for your needs can have a great impact on operational efficiency by eliminating repetitive and laborious tasks and keeping everyone moving in the right direction.

Implement Robust Automation Tools

Adopt a TMS with auto-task assignment features and enhanced analytics to eliminate the time spent on manual work, monitoring, and follow-ups.

Reduce redundancy with the Translation Memory and Glossary features. These act as libraries, storing recurring translations and industry-specific terms, ensuring both consistency in brand language and compliance with industry standards.

Utilize TMS features or third-party tools that provide automated linguistic and formatting checks.

Leverage Machine Translation (MT) engines to fast-track processes, save on translation costs, and focus on human reviews.

Adopt 'Continuous Localization'

Set up automated triggers to initiate translations as soon as new content is pushed and to pull translations once these are ready.

Utilize advanced SDKs or APIs to integrate the translation process directly into your development workflow, allowing for real-time translation updates as your content evolves.

Review and deploy translations in sync with content updates, ensuring both are in alignment.

Strive For Repeatability - *Strong processes are the backbone of effective localization.*

Standardized localization guidelines and workflows can establish easily repeatable processes to eliminate guesswork and accelerate project timelines while ensuring a unified brand voice.

Regularly review and refine processes in collaboration with dev leads. Align with industry best practices and adjust to feedback and evolving organizational needs.

> "The most positive thing about Transifex is that we don't have to worry about it. It just works. The workflows are fully automated and the translations happen continuously with our translation partner. It doesn't require heavy maintenance effort on our part."
>
> Merada Richter,
> Engineering Operations Manager

For more guidance on use of Translation Memory, see "Unlocking Your Full Potential: Best Practices to Maximize Your Translation Memory"

Leverage AI Effectively

Industry leaders leveraging tools like Transifex, OpenAI, and Amazon Translate in concert are dramatically speeding up release cycles and reducing the need for human translation. For example, one Transifex customer shared that when combining Translation Memory with applications of LLMs, they achieved stunning translation performance compared to human translators, sometimes as high as 95% accuracy.

REMEMBER:

AI use can result in massive efficiencies, yet it still can't do it all. Every company needs to find the threshold where AI's ability ends and where humans need to step in.

For more guidance on the use of Translation Memory, see "Unlocking Your Full Potential: Best Practices to Maximize Your Translation Memory"

For more guidance on Localization and AI, visit Transifex AI. To learn more about the impact of automation, read how Juntos witnessed a 40% decrease in their localization costs through use of automations

5.

Measure What You Can

To justify investments in localization and avoid project de-prioritization, it's critical to measure its returns and communicate the impact.

Define ROI Parameters

ROI in localization isn't just about immediate sales. Factor in top-line impacts like market penetration, revenue lift, brand perception, customer loyalty, and market longevity.

REMEMBER:

Consistently measuring and analyzing the localization impact provides a roadmap for ongoing success and ensures maximum return on investment.

Measure Efficiency Outcomes

Benchmark any current localization effort to establish a baseline for comparison.

Monitor for any project delays and their reasons.

Evaluate the "time to market" for each localized product to set a planning foundation for expanding the effort to other areas.

Assess the average turnaround time for localization tasks.

For further reading on Measurement, check out our Localization ROI Calculator.

Transifex is trusted by industry leaders for top-tier localization solutions. Are you ready to join them?

For more information or to book a demo, contact the Transifex Team.