

WEGLOT

The Ecommerce Translation Playbook



Cross-border ecommerce is booming

— you don't need a guide to know that. But being successful in this competitive environment requires efficient strategies and practical tools.

We have more resources than ever before to succeed with ecommerce translation. However, only knowing which tool is right for your business, workflow and team can help you achieve your expansion objectives.

Therefore, in this ebook we start by presenting a clear picture of the evolution of website translation from traditional methods to modern approaches, then we offer practical suggestions and a step-by-step

plan to help you implement an effective strategy that's customized for your unique business needs. This framework that's aimed for continuous success will help you maintain a multilingual store effortlessly.

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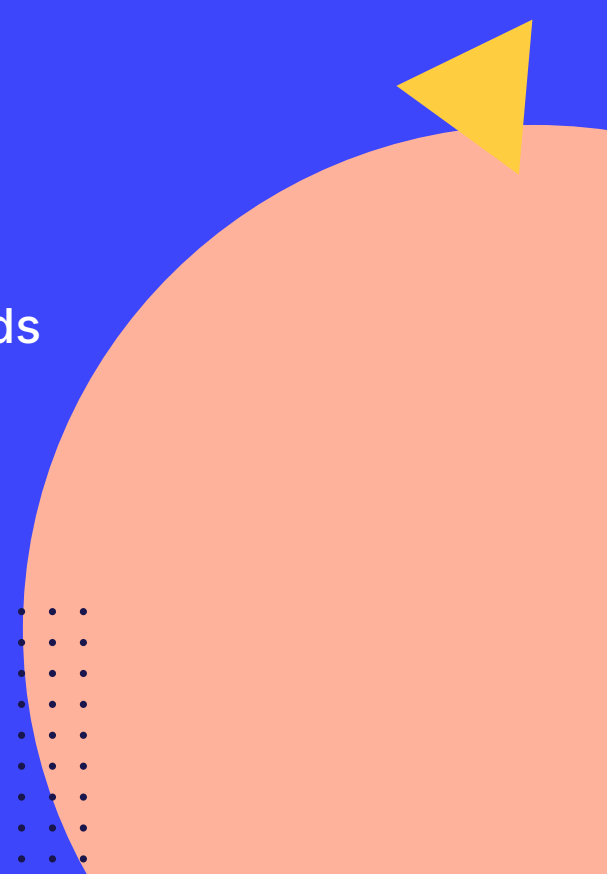
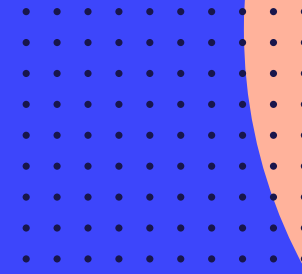
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CHAPTER 1

The traditional website translation methods

Why the old ways don't always meet the modern needs





When you think about making your website available in multiple languages, the most straightforward solution that comes to mind might be to simply manage it inside your CMS by duplicating the original site.

Although it sounds like a sensible idea in theory, **translating inside the CMS and managing multiple websites comes with many challenges and time-consuming micro-tasks in reality.**

Understanding why the traditional methods are outdated in today's tech-savvy ecommerce landscape can bring a new perspective to the way you look at improved modern solutions.

So let's see why this method doesn't have a place in the business world anymore.

Heavy maintenance

Ecommerce websites are among the most complex to maintain considering the ever-changing product listing pages and periodic updates. Therefore, any process that requires the creation of additional elements or pages — let alone websites — from scratch is a waste of time that ecommerce and marketing teams can't afford.

What's especially important to understand here is that building separate websites only to offer language options is way more complex than simply duplicating content. **From intricate technical processes to continuous updates, managing multiple websites isn't tailored for agile ecommerce workflows.** So practically, owning separate websites to provide language options becomes as time-consuming as managing multiple ecommerce stores.

It's important to note that website translation is an ongoing process that supports your ever-growing ecommerce business and product listings throughout their lifespan. This perpetual quality requires website translation solutions to be **agile, efficient, and affordable.**

“ However, traditional website translation methods require more resources to make up for their incapacibilities. For example, tools that are not optimized for ecommerce teams - no access to translators, no team collaboration, expensive to translate high volumes - cost businesses extra time, money, and workforce.

Unreliable administration

Another important consideration is the management of translations. Traditional methods are quite basic when it comes to this aspect and mainly provide **management within the CMS**. This method is problematic for ecommerce merchants for a number of reasons.

First of all, having to create additional pages for translated content within your CMS puts **a heavyweight on your website** and can impact its performance. This inevitably leads to slowdowns and long page load times which kills the main purpose of website translation: providing a seamless user experience.

This method is also quite impractical as it **doesn't provide a clear workspace** where you can focus on your translations, compare content in different languages side by side and optimize your localization efforts. The manual work of constantly going back and forth between pages and copy/pasting, even for minor updates, makes website translation an arduous task.

Last but not least, managing translations within your website administration has a **high potential to cause privacy issues if you decide to invite translators to edit directly to avoid sending them content through email**. Each time you want to work with translators, developers, or simply anyone that can contribute to your translation project, you'll have to share your website admin with them.

This means they will have complete access to your store and with every person added, the security of your website and sensitive customer information could be compromised.

Inefficient workflow (aka email back and forths)

The website translation workflow can quickly turn into an ordeal if it needs to be handled through manual processes (exporting new content, having it translated, and importing it back).

For each update, the translation needs to be sent over via email and be imported back into the project. This type of manual workflow can become too laborious for busy ecommerce professionals. Especially when there are many products and last-minute modifications.

It becomes especially difficult to maintain when one person who was not hired to manage only translations gets assigned this task and ends up spending way too much time on repetitive tasks and some of the content on the website still remains untranslated because new content is added quite often.

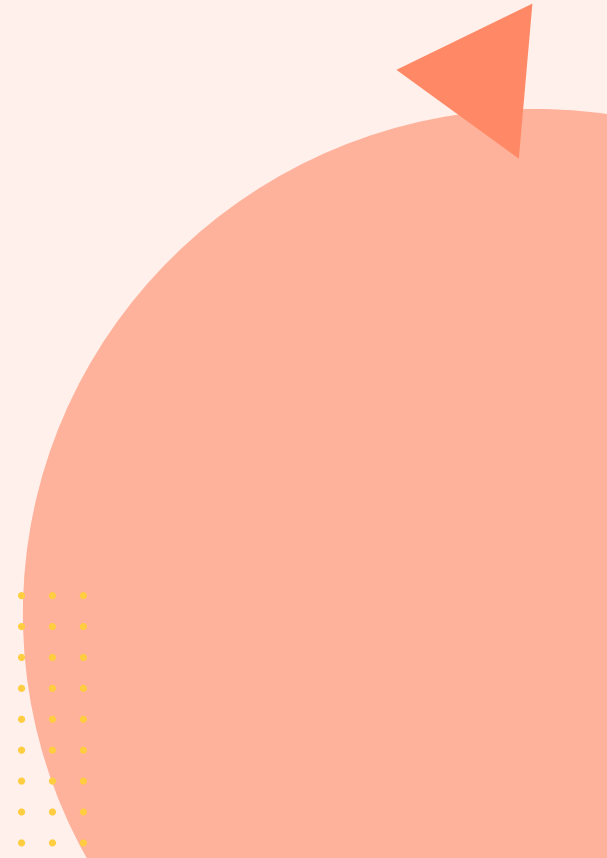
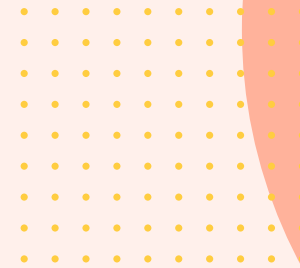
When done the old way, keeping up the same level of quality across all translated versions of a website is also difficult because it'll take a lot of money, time, and significant internal energy.

Therefore, the efficiency of an optimized website translation workflow can't be overstated — particularly for ecommerce stores that have vast volumes of content and frequent product launches.

CHAPTER 2

The website translation software

How technology helped create
the ideal ecommerce translation solution





The modern ecommerce translation solution allows ecommerce professionals to manage their translated content efficiently by reducing the friction of manual tasks. Now that you understand the need for a better tool, let's see how the website translation software meets the expectations of ecommerce owners.

Hybrid solution for translation efficiency

One of the most powerful features of the website translation solution is the seamless combination of human and machine translation.

Although machine translation can often be looked down upon due to its old reputation, **it's a highly valuable tool that saves resources and increases productivity.**

“ It's true that on its own machine translation can't be trusted to always provide error-free results. However, this doesn't mean that it should be eliminated from the website translation process altogether. It's actually one of the most efficient allies in the ecommerce translation workflow.

When it's managed the right way, it can help cut big costs on having to translate content from scratch and offer a fast solution for urgent needs. Perhaps keeping in mind that some professional translators also use machine translation for a quick first layer to start with can give this technology the merit it deserves.

By consulting the expertise of a professional translator only when it's needed, **the problem of having to wait for long periods and paying extra for simple and repetitive translations is resolved.**

And the best part is that a satisfactory level of quality can be achieved with fewer resources compared to the professional translation from scratch approach for certain types of content.

Fully-automated management

In addition to the production of translations, the use of technology in the management of your multilingual website creates a valuable solution that saves time and money. The automatic quality of features like **content detection**, **displaying of translated pages and automatic updates** put website translation on autopilot from start to finish.

These are especially important features for ecommerce businesses that cannot always give priority to website translation assignments amidst their busy schedules. Therefore smart features that can work autonomously are a big asset to any team that would like to focus on their core business operations while always having the support of website translation.

Another example of a feature that provides a noteworthy enhancement is the **Glossary**. This tool allows you to create **translation rules that automate the translation process** by always translating certain words in a specific way or never translating certain product titles or branded names. This way your translation workflow speeds up and improves in accuracy.

Determining a set of translation rules also helps to maintain consistency and allows you to talk to your customers in the same brand voice in multiple languages without any additional effort required during the translation process.

Optimized collaboration

Another way that technology helps make website translation easily manageable is the improvement of collaboration. Despite all the technological innovations, **the human element** is still pivotal to any website translation project.

A high-performing multilingual website is usually the creation of people with varying skills such as translation, development, localization, marketing, and design working together. If this collaboration is managed poorly, a simple task can take days trying to communicate with multiple people back and forth.

Website translation software facilitates this process by allowing members to work together on a dedicated dashboard designed to cater to recurring website translation tasks and communication needs.

For example, instead of manually reaching out to different translators each time you update the content of your website, waiting for them to deliver, and then uploading the translated content back to your website, you can simply order professional translations or add your own translation team and have it automatically updated on your website when the translators are done — all while being able to check their progress without having to ask!

THE PROCESS OF ORDERING PROFESSIONAL TRANSLATIONS DONE WITH

TRADITIONAL TRANSLATION METHODS



Manually exporting content
from the website



Finding professional translators to work
with and agreeing on conditions



Sending files to the translators



Back and forth discussions about
progress and deadlines



Receiving files back from the translators



Manually importing content
to the website

WEBSITE TRANSLATION SOFTWARE

◆ OPTION 1

Select content and order
professional translations
directly on your dashboard.

Your translations will be published
automatically once they are ready in
24-48 hours.

◆ OPTION 2

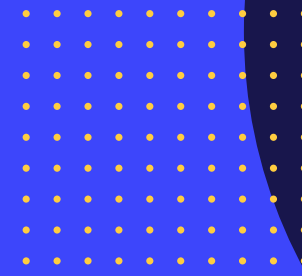
Add your own translation
team and assign translations.

You can, of course, always export and
import translations automatically with
website translation software if you
prefer this route.

CHAPTER 3

Continuous localization

The effortless hack to sustainable success





When it comes to website translation, an important factor is its ongoing quality. Usually, careful consideration is given at the start of a project, however, as the website keeps evolving, the recurring translation responsibilities become a bottleneck due to the lack of continuous systems.

This leads to half-translated websites and disrupted user experiences which jeopardize international growth. The website translation journey that once began with high hopes, turns into a failed attempt as businesses go back to their old ways.

This is the second biggest mistake: Thinking that going global is an option that ecommerce businesses can opt out of. However, in today's borderless online world companies that don't invest the means to adapt to the international ecommerce landscape are destined to be left behind — as competitors won't miss on chances to thrive cross-border.

So one way or another, businesses eventually need to learn to make globalization a part of their core business and implement a continuous localization system.

What is continuous localization

In a nutshell, continuous localization can be defined as making the process of localization an automated and seamless component of your business.


“ Instead of viewing localization tasks as periodic burdens, continuous localization sets up an automated process.

This way when you go about your daily operations, website translation becomes a self-sufficient solution that supports your business. Consequently, the workflow consists of more frequent but more modest tasks rather than fewer but heavier projects. This presents the perfect methodology for nimble ecommerce businesses that frequently update content and release new products.

How to adopt continuous localization

It's important to comprehend that continuous localization is more of a mentality than a mere tool. So integrating this concept into your business requires radical alterations to your established ways. To truly embrace this practice, three key steps must be taken.





1. MAKE EACH TEAM MEMBER A PART OF THE CONTINUOUS LOCALIZATION SYSTEM

As mentioned before, the downfall starts when the core business and website translation mission are treated as two separate things. Therefore continuous localization shouldn't be seen as the responsibility of only certain members of the team. By truly grasping the principles of this system, everyone can consider its implications in the work they do.

This will facilitate the overall workflow as every aspect of the business will comply with the localization strategy. Of course, this doesn't imply that each member needs to take care of a specific localization task but they should contribute to the overall objective by respecting its continuous quality.

2. CHOOSE THE RIGHT WEBSITE TRANSLATION SOLUTION

The main element that turns the wheel here is the website translation solution that's equipped with automatic features. These features should employ the most sophisticated technologies to streamline the continuous localization workflows.

In practice, the checklist on the right should be considered when picking the right website translation software.

3. TRACK THE IMPACT OF CONTINUOUS LOCALIZATION

Although some impacts of website translation are [immediately apparent](#), not all benefits are as visible in the short term. Not being aware of the positive outcome of your efforts can lead to neglecting necessary tasks over time and omitting opportunities (not adding new languages, not dedicating enough time for best practices).

Therefore, it's important to keep track of the returns of your continuous localization strategy. This will also allow you to analyze your efforts and allocate resources in an optimal way.



WEBSITE TRANSLATION SOLUTION CHECKLIST

You can check off items on this interactive list

Easy integration

Automatic content detection

All-in-one workspace

User-friendly interface

Automatic translation

Access to professional translation services

Option to add your own translation team

Visual editor

Glossary

Export/Import

Multilingual SEO

Automatic displaying of translated content

Team management & collaboration features

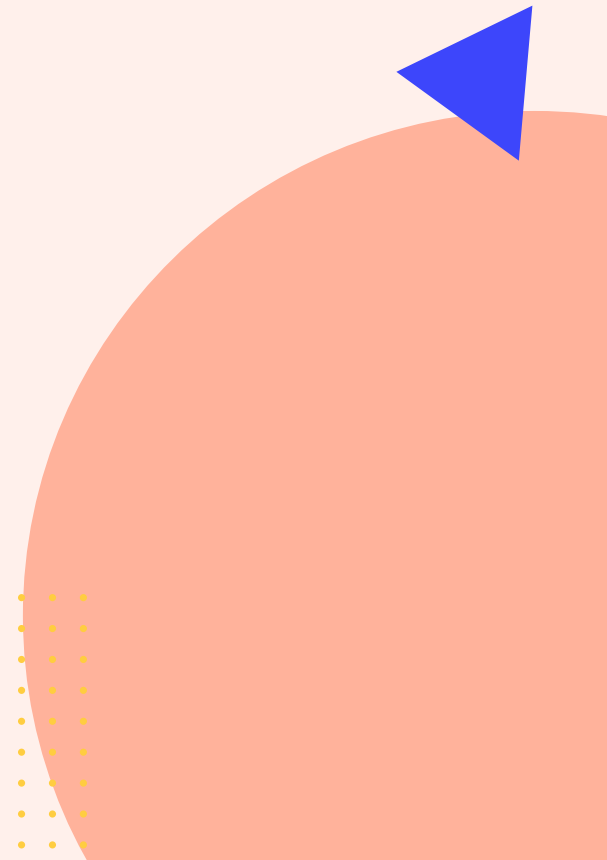
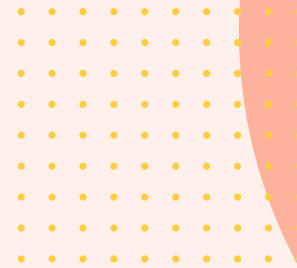
Project management features

Performance analysis

CHAPTER 4

Putting continuous localization into practice

The ultimate model to achieve optimized results



Defining structures is the most important practice when it comes to settling your continuous localization workflow. From company size to industry, many elements can affect how this process should be managed.

Therefore certain systems should be defined based on the specific needs and limitations of each team. **So there is no one-size-fits-all solution.** The “ultimate model” might look different for different teams at different times and its performance should be judged by its functionality.

In this chapter, we introduce the key points that should be defined in any website translation workflow. By characterizing these according to your business, you can achieve the ultimate model that will work seamlessly with your business.

Determining the website translation framework that works for you

In essence, the efficiency of the website translation software comes from automation. Hence your workflow should also follow a set of procedural rules to work efficiently with this system.

Integrating [Weglot](#) into your website and launching your translation project is a straightforward starting point. But there are many different ways you can handle your translation project from there.

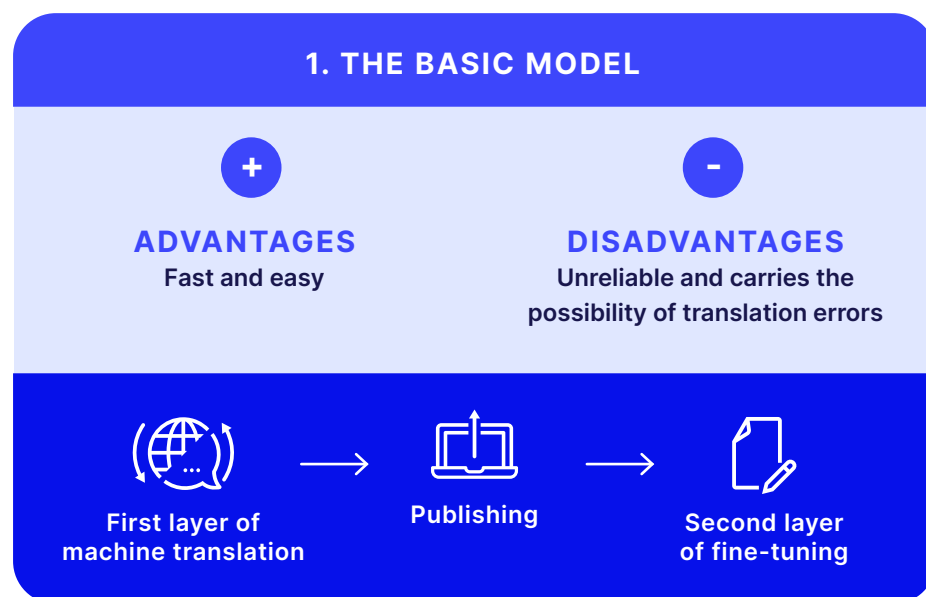
For example, let's say that you added some new content to your website — what steps are you going to follow to ensure that the translation of this new content is prepared and displayed on your website in the easiest and fastest way possible?

When you're evaluating different models, keep in mind the importance of the following factors:

- ◆ **CONTENT** Does this model work well with the content type at hand? (Consult next chapter)
- ◆ **STRATEGY** Does this model serve your overall business strategy?
- ◆ **TEAM** Do you have competent team member/s to complete the tasks?
- ◆ **QUALITY** What level of translation quality do you expect?
- ◆ **TIME** Can you afford to spend the required time?
- ◆ **COST** Is this model going to be within your budget?
- ◆ **SUSTAINABILITY** Is this model sustainable for your business in the long run?



Once you determine your needs and limitations, you can assess different models. Let's take a look at them in detail and understand what kind of solutions they can offer in different scenarios.



We suggest that the starting point should be the same for every model: **a first layer of machine translation**. Then depending on the content you can end your translation workflow here and have these machine translations automatically displayed on your website.

This may be an effective model at times when businesses are pressed and the content is straightforward, so machine translation is most likely to deliver accurate results. Although this model should only be consulted for urgent needs, it can still get the job done for the time being.

However, the second step of fine-tuning your translations to avoid grave mistakes and misunderstandings is recommended. Although in the urgent model this second step can't be realized right after the first step, it should be scheduled for the earliest convenience to maximize accuracy.

The comprehensiveness of this second step can also change based on the content type at hand. For example, some translations can be reviewed quickly by any teammate while some require the expertise of a professional. Let's see the second model that has a more solid foundation that emphasizes the step of post-machine translation editing.



For recurring tasks like adding new products or offering promotions, it's helpful to determine a routine model. Depending on your industry, website updating regularity, and team structure, you have the following options to fine-tune your first layer of machine translations:

- ◆ Review by a website translation project member/team
- ◆ Review by an external professional translator

The review process in itself can consist of quality control alone or it can be enhanced to involve certain [localization](#) practices and a [Multilingual brand style audit](#).

All of these tasks can be the responsibility of one person, or they can be distributed among different team members based on their expertise and availability.

Even though this model ensures accuracy and consistency for your website translation project, it's always possible to take things a step further by adding the element of localization and transcreation to the mix!

2. THE ROUTINE MODEL



ADVANTAGES
Accurate and reliable



DISADVANTAGES
Limited and rigid



First layer of machine translation



Second layer of fine-tuning



Publishing

3. THE ADVANCED MODEL



ADVANTAGES
High-quality translations and optimal performance



DISADVANTAGES
Time consuming and requires expertise



First layer of machine translation



Second layer of fine-tuning



Third layer of localization



Publishing

For businesses that want to make the most of their website translation project, the advanced model doesn't just provide a functional multilingual store but a fully localized experience that can efficiently convert customers from all over the world.

Although this model might not always be convenient for small businesses, it's worth adopting when it comes to strategically valuable content such as the most viewed pages or important information such as delivery and return conditions, for example.

In addition to the first two steps (first layer of machine translation + a second layer of fine-tuning), the advanced model requires the third step of localization that doesn't just consider translation quality but reshapes the translated content strategically to resonate with the target audience.

This careful process looks at the content from various viewpoints such as **cultural preferences, legal restrictions, economical conditions, religious sensitivities, visual aesthetics, online habits, and so on.**

Therefore it requires research on the target audience and local insight to enhance the translated content as even completely accurate translations might not serve the purpose here. This is where an effective tool called **transcreation** comes into play and reinforces the localization capabilities.

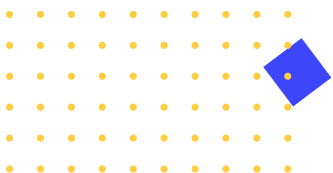
Instead of just trying to adapt the source content into the target language, **transcreation** demands the creation of content from scratch with the target audience in mind. What's more is that this step doesn't just take into account the translation of the text, but also the adaptation of other crucial elements such as media, multilingual SEO, website usability, customer experience, etc.

Prioritizing content for translation models

When it comes to website translation, not all content should be treated equally. You might think that the third model is the ideal way to handle all translation tasks but as we said before, **the ideal way is the way that works best for your business needs, capabilities, and limitations.**

Realistically, most businesses can't afford to devote the necessary resources to localize every type of content. Nevertheless, you can still provide your international prospects with the best multilingual experience.

The key practice before choosing the right website translation model should be to **prioritize content.**



“ Prioritizing content doesn’t necessarily mean that one type of content is more important than the other. It simply means that some types of content respond better to less sophisticated translation methods than more sensitive types of content.

Therefore the content evaluation process allows you to dedicate the right amount of time and resources to each type of content and it lays a more systematic groundwork for your website translation project.

On the right, we provide a content prioritization table to set an example for ecommerce businesses.

CONTENT PRIORITIZATION TABLE FOR ECOMMERCE

PRIORITY	CONTENT		MODEL
	High	Homepage Delivery information Checkout page	
Medium	Product listing pages Product detail pages Promotional messages	Order tracking pages Account pages Search filters	2
Low	Thank you page Shopping cart	Store locator Support	1 or 2

However, you can tweak certain categories based on their importance to your brand and create your own table using our template.

To determine the priority level of a content type, consider the following factors:

VISIBILITY

How many of your visitors view/consult this content?

SENSITIVITY

Can machine translation deliver accurate results for this content?

OBLIGATIONS

Are you legally obligated to translate this content?

TOLERANCE

Can you leave this content in the source language?

Creating a multilingual brand style guide

As you start adding new language options to your website and branch into new markets, **one thing that can get lost in translation is your brand voice**. Even though your content may need to be adjusted for localization, your core brand personality needs to remain consistent across all languages.

Therefore, it's integral to come up with a multilingual brand style guide to preserve the essence of your brand. This guide should set precise directions to follow but it should also provide alternatives for flexibility.

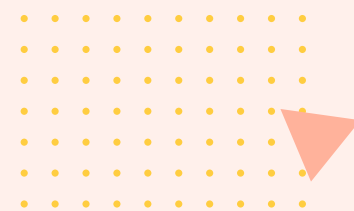
Creating a multilingual brand style guide is beneficial for various reasons:

- ◆ It helps preserve the brand personality and consistency across markets
- ◆ It provides guidance for different people working on the website translation project
- ◆ It helps businesses benefit from their SEO and content marketing strategies in all languages
- ◆ It gives the brand an international identity and recognition
- ◆ It sets a reference for expected standards

The multilingual brand style guide should consider certain elements to be functional in a website translation project:

CORE BRAND ELEMENTS

The localization of the key components of your brand identity such as your **brand name, tagline, brand mission, core values, product names, CTAs, terminology, and keywords** should always be the first consideration when creating a multilingual style guide.



LANGUAGE VARIANTS AND SPELLING

Specifying the language variant you'll use for each language is essential. For example, when you communicate in English, are you going to use American English or British English? This will lead to **significant changes in spelling and vocabulary** and it's an important decision for translation.



GRAMMAR, PUNCTUATION, AND FORMATS

Although they don't provide much flexibility, the use of **grammar rules, punctuation marks, and formats** are also among the factors you should set for your multilingual brand style.



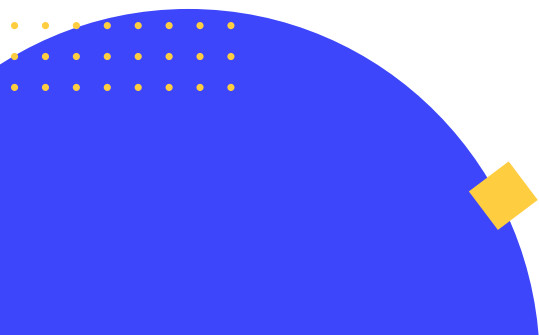
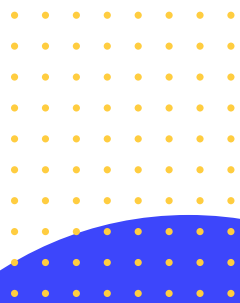
BRAND VOICE AND IDENTITY

Your brand style impacts the way you communicate with your audience. Therefore, choice of **tone, formality, nuances, idioms, slang, and genders** should be defined in detail for best localization practices.



VISUAL COMPONENTS

In addition to the language and text content, preferences for visual components such as your **logo, font, typography, color palette, imagery & illustration style, and list elements** are important to determine.



Once you set rules to follow for these elements, you should also **provide alternatives and examples** for times when your preferences can't be met. For example, if your choice of font is not available in a specific language, what font alternatives can be used? Or if an idiom doesn't have a direct translation in another language, should it be replaced with an equivalent or should it be removed?

Finally, a useful preparation is **defining incorrect practices**. What type of tones should be avoided at all costs? Which words should never be translated?

“ It's impossible to oversee every conflict beforehand but the don'ts of your multilingual brand style guideline can at least ensure the absence of certain structures and unwanted associations.

The glossary feature we mentioned before is extremely useful when it comes to applying your style guidelines to your translated content automatically. Just set translation rules for your preferences and restrictions to create a system of autonomous style perseverance.

Building the dream website translation team

As we said before, the human element will always be imperative to website translation. The right website translation software can support your team members with a shared workspace and collaboration features.

However, don't be put off if you don't have the resources to gather a team for your project yet. Only one person with the right skillset can also handle website translation tasks depending on the size of the ecommerce store. But for larger and busier projects, it's advisable to build a team to benefit both from individual expertise and collaboration.

From choosing the right people to creating a productive workflow, the following practices will help you assemble a team that can effectively handle the management of your website translation project.





IDENTIFY THE SKILLS AND EXPERTISE THAT ARE REQUIRED

Website translation requires more than just translation skills. It's true that the knowledge of the target language is crucial but if you want to get the best out of website translation, it shouldn't just end there.

Additionally, familiarity with the cultural landscape of the target markets, team management and organization skills, international marketing knowledge, localization expertise, copywriting and transcreation experiences are among the valuable qualities.

DETERMINE TEAM ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As is the case with every successful team, a good website translation team also needs a clear structure and definition of team responsibilities. After determining the required skills, you can assign people to the following roles to form your team composition.

PROJECT MANAGER

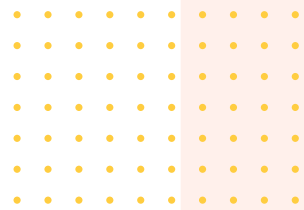
First of all, your team needs a leader that oversees the whole process and connects your website translation project to your core business. The project manager is responsible for carrying the project from start to finish, guiding the team members, managing internal stakeholders, and delivering on time and within budget.

MARKETERS AND CONTENT CREATORS

Your marketing team members are the ones creating the content and strategy of your website. Therefore it only makes sense for them to be a part of the website translation process. Their insights are valuable to set the direction and tone of the translated pages.

LOCALIZATION MANAGER

Localization managers set the difference between a translated website and a complete multilingual experience. Their knowledge of the localization best practices can help create the translated pages that perform best for your target audience.



TRANSLATORS

Translators are the key players here but they don't necessarily have to be professionals. Depending on the project, a bilingual colleague with no experience can also deliver great results with the help of website translation software.

However, especially for projects that require the use of models 2 and 3 or specialty in certain industry terminology, it might be preferable to consult a professional translator for the best results.

In addition to language skills, the person responsible for the translations should have great attention to detail, knowledge of grammar and punctuation rules and they should be able to closely follow the multilingual brand style guide.

DESIGNERS AND UX WRITERS

As website translation doesn't just consist of text adaptation, designers and UX writers play an important role to localize the visual aspect and the usability of your website. Our [list of multilingual design tips](#) can be a helpful reference for designers in your team.

DEVELOPERS

If you're not using a no-code website translation software, you'll inevitably be reliant on developers to handle the displaying of your translated pages, updates, and custom settings.

PROVIDE AN ONBOARDING PROCESS, TOOLS, AND RESOURCES

To make sure that everyone is on the same page, share your website translation project mission and goals with every member of your team.

Your multilingual brand style guide comes in handy here and presents a set of important rules that everyone can follow.

To ensure that every member can focus on their work, choose a website translation solution that provides all the necessary features and automated processes. You can also always consult our resources page to educate your team on fundamental website translation and localization subjects.

Key takeaways & recommendations

An overview of conclusions and next steps

- ◆ The traditional translation methods are abandoned due to their incapability of answering modern ecommerce needs.
- ◆ The right website translation software is a fundamental tool that can automate and streamline the website translation process from start to finish.
- ◆ One of the biggest mistakes ecommerce businesses make is thinking that website translation is a one-off task.
- ◆ Continuous localization offers a sustainable solution by making website translation an integral part of the core business.
- ◆ Each member of a team should understand and adopt continuous localization as a mentality rather than just using it when needed like a tool.
- ◆ By applying different website translation methods for different cases based on priority, you can allocate your resources in the most efficient way while delivering satisfactory results.
- ◆ A multilingual brand style guide is an important source that defines the characteristics of a brand's international identity and it provides a practical reference for the website translation project.
- ◆ The human element is imperative to the website translation workflow and clear role definitions that meet the project needs should be put in place to create the dream team.

WHAT'S NEXT?

By reading this ebook, you formed a clear understanding of website translation for ecommerce and the steps that should be taken to achieve success. Now it's your turn to define the winning strategy for your business and put everything you learned from this guide into practice.

If you want to get a head start in your multilingual journey, **you can start your 10-day free Weglot trial now!**

Who are we?

Weglot is a **no-code website translation solution** that allows you to **launch a multilingual ecommerce store instantly**.

We both **translate and display the content of your website** removing the pain of having to manage multiple websites for multiple markets.

Manage the translation of your ecommerce website translation project in days not months with a first layer of machine translation for speed and automation, then use our post-editing features to control the quality of your translations.

Easily collaborate with teammates, order professional translators from the Dashboard or add your own translator. Learn more about Weglot's features and capabilities from [our website](#).

Ready to improve your
ecommerce international
efficiency?

Get started with the Weglot translation
solution right away.

or contact us at sales@weglot.com

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