

# Using Localization Strategies to Drive Performance: An Interview with the Founder of Locaria

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**A**s more companies make their products and services available in multiple markets across the world, translation and localization are becoming even more critical for marketers. But localization is very different than translation. While translation is the process of converting words into another language, localization requires adapting content not only to local language use, but also to cultural norms and values in specific regions or markets.

Advancements in artificial intelligence (AI), including machine translation, make it easier for brands to translate their messaging, but most successful localization still requires a human touch. We spoke with Hannes Ben, founder of Locaria, a linguistics and website localization agency, about his take on the challenges marketers face with localization and how they can better integrate and measure their localization efforts as part of a larger marketing strategy.

**What's the biggest problem with how marketers localize and translate their content?**

In the last 10 years, when companies prepare English files for localization, they'd either ask a friend or pick a translation agency. But if you ask a translation agency, "Can you localize this content in way that would give me several variations and work with those different styles to improve the CTR [clickthrough rate] and bring my quality scores up?" the translators in a traditional pool would say, "I don't know what you're talking about."

Translators understand grammar and style, but they don't know those metrics. You can't ask them, "Please look at those two versions of ad copy, look at the CTR performance, extrapolate from that why that one had the higher CTR than the other one, and then take that learning and incorporate it into your future creation of ad copy."

In traditional marketing, that seems logical, right? Of course you'd want to see which performs better, and for that, it's important to try to strip subjectivity from the language creation process.

### **How does subjectivity in the language creation process hinder localization efforts?**

The biggest problem in the traditional language industry is that a client will ask me, "Hannes, I don't like that. Can you revise that?" And I ask, "What do you not like?" "This is too much, or this is not enough." Then I would say, "That doesn't really mean anything. I don't know how to change that." People have specific opinions about language and wording and what they think it means for their brand. But there's no scientific proof why one piece of copy is better than another, as long as the grammar is correct.

We're trying to strip away the subjectivity and say, "You like this ad copy more, but my performance data indicates that this other ad copy written in this particular way has a 10% higher CTR." I am objectively explaining, based on scientific proof, why one style, structure and terminology is better than another. That helps me dissolve a lot of issues and saves time. I don't end up fighting with the client, and I ultimately drive up the performance score.

### **What advice do you have for marketers who need to localize their content?**

No. 1: Ask yourself whom you're creating the content for. “What type of brand am I, and who is my audience?” You need to get a good understanding of your objectives and write a clear brief. Then, if you have digital content, you must get your marketing and localization teams together effectively.

The localization team needs to understand which key metrics will help the company achieve its objectives. Is it share-of-voice on search, is it ROI, is it impression volume or is it awareness? Based on that, ensure that the agency or the localization company—ideally a performance-based company—creates a plan for you that [is appropriate] for the content type.

Your objectives will help to determine if you will use machine translation, human translation, localization, transcreation, origination or copywriting. These are complex questions because you need to make sure that your teams communicate and establish a testing framework to define objectives.

But the most important advice I'd give to marketers is not to end up in a subjective discussion about what the best style is, where opinions fly back and forth. Put the customer first in your localization process. Make sure to do a test. If the CTR or search volume is higher on particular terms, that means that that's what the audience currently cares about the most. It doesn't matter what your in-house head of localization or content says. This helps you remove subjectivity from the process.

To learn more about how marketers can utilize machine learning and AI in their localization and translation efforts, eMarketer PRO subscribers can read the recent report:

**Report** by Victoria Petrock Jun 03, 2019

## Found in Translation

### FOUND IN TRANSLATION

How AI Is Helping Marketers  
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