

LIONBRIDGE



THE TRAVELER'S DIGITAL JOURNEY:

22

TRANSLATION AND
LOCALIZATION TIPS FOR
IMPROVING PERSONALIZATION

(AND 6 MISTAKES TO AVOID ALONG THE WAY)

A person with long dark hair, seen from behind, wearing a light-colored backpack. They are standing in a vast, open landscape under a bright sky, looking out towards the horizon. The image is in grayscale and serves as a background for the text on the right side of the page.

WHEN IT COMES TO TRAVEL, THE DIGITAL PATH TO PURCHASE HAS TAKEN A DECIDEDLY SCENIC TURN.

Armed with access to a sprawling ecosystem of brand websites, online travel agencies (OTAs), and social media platforms, today's traveler can and will spend weeks comparing photos, offers, and reviews before finally booking.¹

Is it all too much?

Recent research from **McKinsey**² shows that too many options overwhelm travel shoppers, causing brands to miss opportunities as users check out. How can brands ensure their efforts to connect and inform don't drive audiences to distraction?

For travel and hospitality brands, *personalization* has emerged as the key to attracting and retaining customers. In this competitive landscape, brands distinguish themselves by becoming more attuned to individual customers—and thus more relevant in their communication and offers.

In this eBook, we share the tips we've learned over years spent providing travel and hospitality organizations with the translation, localization, and marketing services they need to create personalized experiences for global travelers. We'll also share some mistakes you'll want to avoid, plus the critical steps you need to personalize content at scale.

TODAY'S GLOBAL DIGITAL JOURNEY



Today's digital traveler is well-connected yet easily distracted. Your audiences have 24/7 access to near-infinite amounts of information, and they act and react accordingly.

A **mobile phone survey**³ estimated **users touch their phones over 2,600 times a day**—and that's a conservative estimate. It's no surprise that attention has become the currency of the digital economy.

Micro-Moments and the Travel Journey

How do you capture and keep audience attention? The digital traveler's customer journey is composed of hundreds of **micro-moments**—that is, inflection points where flights of fancy can become actual itineraries. You want your brand to be available without being overwhelming, and to quickly transform a beach daydream into a beach getaway. How do you strike the right balance? Start by understanding the nature of today's global digital travel journey and its implications on personalization.

Your traveler's journey is heavily fragmented, not only by the disruptions of their busy day, but by device-switching and channel-hopping.

In a single day, one customer may:

- See an advertisement—whether online, on a billboard, or on a television spot—and respond impulsively

- Book a flight but decide to research hotels and car rentals later
- Log on to Facebook and ask their friends for hotel recommendations
- Download the latest travel app to their iPad
- Check out public transportation and rideshare options in their destination

The choices for researching, reviewing, and booking are numerous and extend across brands and languages. It's no wonder travelers get overwhelmed, especially when you consider that only **37% of users have a destination in mind**⁴ when they start searching. That gives you a lot of room to influence their journey with the right mix of content, channel, and timing.

Minimize Friction and Indecision

Key trends—emerging market consumers, travel start-ups, and generational preferences for experiences over possessions—indicate the online market will only expand.

The brands that offer the most holistic travel experience, in the voice and language their customers prefer, will win the micro-moments, secure the booking (and the next one, and the one after that), and succeed in today's globalized travel and hospitality industry.

PERSONALIZATION STARTS WITH LANGUAGE



*According to Common Sense Advisory's (CSA) benchmark publication **Can't Read, Won't Buy, English reaches only 36% of the world's online and offline buyers**⁵.*

A defining characteristic of travel—a relatively low-volume, high-cost endeavor for many—is its inherent language gap. Many, if not most, travelers need to rely on translated and localized content to maximize their experience and build trust and loyalty with travel brands. CSA reports that 65% of limited-English travel buyers and 87% of non-English travel buyers simply will not complete a purchase on an English-only site, even with access to online translation tools.

Reach the Next Billion

Language doesn't only matter to current audiences; it unlocks the enormous buying power of the **next billion**,⁶ the emerging audience of global smartphone-enabled consumers. Brands that can share their unique value propositions in Portuguese, Chinese, Hindi, and Tamil, among other “emerging” languages, will capture their share of this substantial wallet.

Go Beyond the Website

Successful translation and localization today go beyond offering a single website in multiple languages. Instead, optimizing content for every prospective customer means making all available content, spanning every stage of the travel buyer's journey, available in the native languages of the customers travel brands are targeting. This includes traditional and digital advertising, social media, packaging, signage, automated texts and chatbots, documentation, and more.

As a travel brand, you're fighting for scant attention in a world full of noise. Personalized messaging that reflects the language and cultural preferences of your buyers is much more likely to be seen, heard, and actioned by your audience. Industry research shows travelers prize personalized experiences; **69% of pleasure travelers**⁷ and **78% of business travelers**⁸ are more loyal to brands that personalize their experiences.

Our research shows that **50% of customers are willing to book hotel rooms at a higher price point if the website is translated and localized.**





Localize to Personalize

True *localization* is more than just translating words into local language, and a successful process includes much more than just using an online automated translation tool. Localization is the specialized process of adapting your web content, applications, and advertising for regional or local consumption. With localization, you surpass simple translation, modifying the source language and other site elements to appeal to your customer's cultural and functional preferences. In short, localization is the cornerstone of personalization.

Effective localization covers a range of visual, cultural, interpersonal, and functional elements, including:

Colors & Shapes Sizes & Styles	Images & Icons Graphics
Humor Etiquette	Rituals & Myths Societal Value
Power & Relationships Religion & Beliefs	Currency Customs & Taxes
Time & Date Formats Weights & Measurements	Address & Telephone Formats Internet/Mobile Speed Limits

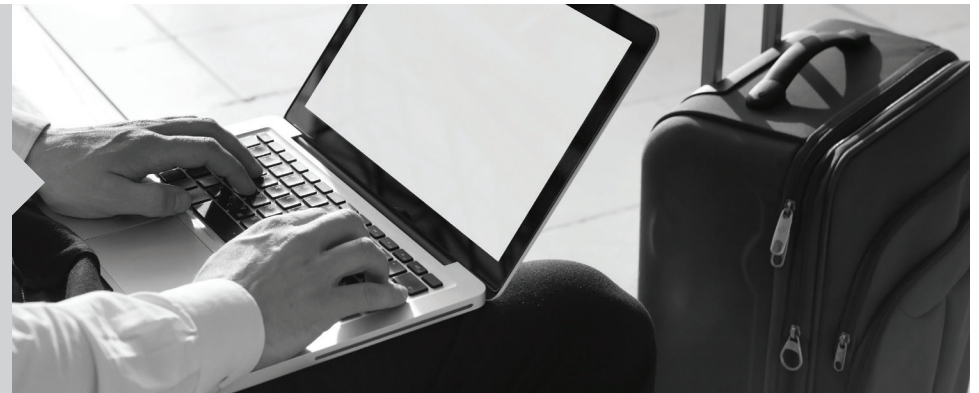


ALIGNING GLOBALIZATION, LOCALIZATION, & PERSONALIZATION



Today's companies also need to consider how personalization fits into globalization.

Simply put, if your company wants to conduct global business, you need to localize your online process—and optimize it for multilingual search engine optimization. Only then can you transform processes to support customers in their preferred language and location, opening your brand to a literal world of customer possibilities.



Connect with Voice Technology

If mastering multilingual SEO weren't a tall enough order, you must now also consider voice search as an integral part of your localization strategy. Voice technology, from search to automated assistants, presents a massive trend for the travel industry, and especially for luxury brands. Already, **81% of business travelers and 39% of overall travelers** have used voice assistants to check in for their flights, check status updates, and order in-room services via Alexa for Hospitality and Google Voice devices⁹.

Voice search is changing both consumer behavior and keyword strategy; in-market experts can help you understand the long-tail and question-based queries that power voice search and how to secure high-ranking results for your brand in every market you enter.

Adopt a Global Mindset

Creating a web and content personalization strategy should be an extension of your business plan, and your localization strategy is your plan for executing on that business requirement. As you plan your source-language content, adopt the mindset that you're also planning for your global- or target-language content needs to meet your personalization strategy. To avoid treating localization as an afterthought, a mature web and content personalization strategy should never distinguish between source and target languages.

A note on technology: Whether you choose a comprehensive digital experience platform or a custom technology stack, make sure your tools support your globalization, localization, and personalization strategies and deliver actionable data that support the customer experiences you envision. The right digital backbone—one that connects experience and operations—will enable you to use machine learning and AI to capitalize on key moments within the customer journey.

A man wearing a hat and a woman are looking at several documents spread out on a table. The man is pointing at a document. The woman is looking down at the documents. The scene is dimly lit, with a dark background. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, serif font.

When you plan personalization correctly, your strategy, plan, and workflow become relatively seamless.

Likewise, without proper planning, personalization becomes a time-consuming and costly drag on your business.



22 TIPS TO MAXIMIZE TRANSLATION AND LOCALIZATION



1

Have a Global-Ready Visual Brand

Include a variety of colors in your brand style guide that in-market resources can utilize based on their cultural appropriateness.

The symbolism of colors can vary widely from culture to culture. Understanding how colors translate and localize can play a big role in how travelers perceive your brand.

2

Ensure Campaign Consistency and Relevance

Communicate local campaign plans back to HQ for approval by all required stakeholders and ensure all local field marketers have the resources they need to successfully launch local travel campaigns. Ensure all teams have a solid understanding of the travel and hospitality industry in their given markets, as well as marketing campaign goals, audiences, and nuances. This will help all teams understand what languages they need to localize for and the resources required for success.

3

Listen to the Market

Collect feedback and advice from your local marketing teams on content relevance and quality for their respective regions and travelers.

If most of your central content developers are US-based, you may receive feedback that your content sounds too US-centric. If so, ask local teams to note a few specific actions writers can take to improve content for travelers in their markets.

4

Use Compatible Source Files

Send your language services provider (LSP) content source files in a format that is native to their system.

Files created in formats such as indd, psd, ai, xml, html, etc. should be compatible with the systems they use locally. This will help speed the process, control costs, and reduce the need to rebuild files.

5

Check for Regional Preferences

Vet feedback for preferential edits and adherence to style guides and glossaries, then communicate changes back to both your LSP and to headquarters. If any requested edits are due to branding or terminology errors, make those necessary changes.

Communicate any preferential edits to headquarters' marketing teams—they may need to update style guides for field engagement.

6

Master Multilingual Video

When creating video, remember that localized scripts and copy tend to increase in length due to text expansion, which can affect timing and voiceover synchronization.

Ask your LSP's multimedia specialist how to minimize these challenges. And if you plan to translate multimedia videos into the same language, save yourself time and money by recording the voiceovers in the same session.



7

Consider Subtitle Options

Not all media players support the dynamic subtitling option that allows users to turn subtitles on or off at will. Consider burning-in your subtitles to ensure they display, regardless of the media player your customer chooses. Subtitles are less costly and faster to produce than voiceovers and present a good option when working in numerous markets and with tight budgets.

8

Send Original Design Source Files to Your LSP

PDF files can make accessing content for translation difficult. Since they cannot be edited in some programs and lose their formatting when converted into translatable formats, their exclusive use can result in lost content. When working with your LSP, provide the original design source files to ensure the best-quality translations.

9

Design for Text Expansion

Use culturally neutral and flexible design elements to accommodate different character sets and text orientations. For example, German will expand your text by up to 30%, while Arabic will reverse your design orientation.

10

Write for Global Audiences

When creating written content, keep your writing simple and avoid cultural travel references. A *White Christmas* reference may resonate in the UK, but it won't work as well in Australia.

11

Consider Regional Media Formats and Technologies

Some countries have bandwidth restrictions or limitations and unique end-user devices, which could make your centrally-produced media un-viewable for travelers in some areas.

12

Get Social

Understand the social media nuances of the regions in which your travel audience resides. While Facebook and Twitter are global, they are not the go-to social media outlets in all regions. For example, China's most popular social media site is WeChat, with over one billion monthly users who spend over an hour per day on the app¹⁰.



13

Understand Regional Regulations

Legal implications and restrictions for travelers differ from country to country. Work with local teams to gain a clear understanding of what you can and cannot do with your marketing in a given region—and avoid costly ramifications.

14

Show What Quality Looks Like to You

Provide your translation provider with examples of previous translations that meet—or miss—your quality expectations (whether yours or a competitor's).

15

Give a Backstage Pass

To save time and costly rework, consider granting your translation provider access to your staging server and web apps. This will allow them to review content in context as well as to review and test user interface text elements directly within your travel apps.

16

Seek Partners, Not Vendors

While seemingly obvious, the longer your relationship with your LSP, the better their work becomes. Like any strategic partnership, a long-standing LSP delivers stronger work more efficiently as it becomes increasingly familiar with your business, your content and terminology, and the travel and hospitality industry.

17

Elevate Localization in Planning

Get out in front of your website localization and translation plan and include it as part of your initial strategy. Your online goals—specifically, how your website and content align to all targeted regions and locations—need to be part of your initial project plan or you may find yourself with scope creep, missed deadlines, and higher costs.

18

Choose Global-Ready Technology

Make sure you select a truly global content management system (CMS) or digital experience platform (DXP). Try a quick *pseudo-translation* of your site to test for multi-byte characters (e.g., East Asian) or bi-directional text (e.g., Arabic or Hebrew) to find out if your platform can handle international languages.

69% of pleasure travelers are more loyal to a travel brand that personalizes experiences online and offline.

- Google/Ipsos Connect

19

Adapt Your Writing for Translation

Avoid jargon, slang, clichés, idioms, culturally-specific terms, and abbreviations. These types of terminology tend to draw out the process and increase cost. When possible, use in-country teams to review source-language content before translation to test for market fit, and always use in-country reviewers post-translation to ensure linguistic equivalence.

20

Use Translation Memory (TM) Technology

TM databases become most valuable once they've grown in size to comprise thousands of corresponding text strings. The TM database automatically stores source- and target-language sentences (or text strings) while the linguist is translating, so you can reuse translated sentences later in the project or on future projects. It will prove to be one of the most valuable cost-saving tools available to you.

21

Separate Text From Images

Facilitate easier image translation by *not* embedding text into graphics. Save time and money (and enable easy updates) by using HTML to overlay text onto images. If you can't avoid embedding text into graphics, have your designer create separate text layers within InDesign, Photoshop, or Illustrator files.

22

Consider Centralization

Centralizing localization functions, processes, and management delivers cost savings and faster time-to-market—up to 15% over managing several multi-language vendors. A single point of contact for translation and localization can boost accountability and promote economies of scale.



6 MISTAKES TO AVOID ALONG THE WAY



1. A Lack of Research

A recent study shows Japanese travelers take the shortest trips, and Argentinians the longest¹¹. What a disaster if your personalized offers reversed this data. Failure to invest in qualitative research before building your travel and hospitality website can result in an experience that misses expectations and loses the micro-moment. Conduct one-on-one interviews, and test early and often. Does your website content feel relevant to travelers? Does it project an understanding of their needs? Is it personalized for them? Make sure the answer to these questions is “yes” by conducting on-target research before launch.



2. Not Delivering on Services Expected in Each Market

Not every travel and leisure property or service is suited for every global market. You need to consider distinct needs and customs when catering to certain cultures—and not doing so will turn travelers off. Be sure to do your homework (see mistake #1 above).



3. Not Having a Solid, Thoughtful Strategy

Your marketing teams need to create a personalization strategy that considers your website, other planned content and campaigns, SEO strategies, the role of translation technologies, communication coordination, and more. Ignoring these and other globalization elements could result in the need for costly rework.



4. Failing to Have a Consistent Brand Voice

Taglines, logos, and the aesthetic of localized websites all need to be consistent if you are going to successfully build a truly global, personalized traveler experience. When it comes to these and other details, it's imperative that you're both true to your brand and accessible to your global travel and hospitality audience.



5. Not Prioritizing the Mobile Experience

While it may seem obvious, global travelers use mobile devices extensively—and even more so outside of the US. Consider cross-device shoppers and the mobile-only “next billion.” Use responsive design elements that adjust the website experience for better viewing and interaction on mobile devices. Be sure to think mobile-first!



6. Not Measuring ROI

Translation and Localization Efforts done right are not inexpensive endeavors, and while they are crucial to the success of your global goals, it's important to put metrics in place to measure the return on your investment.



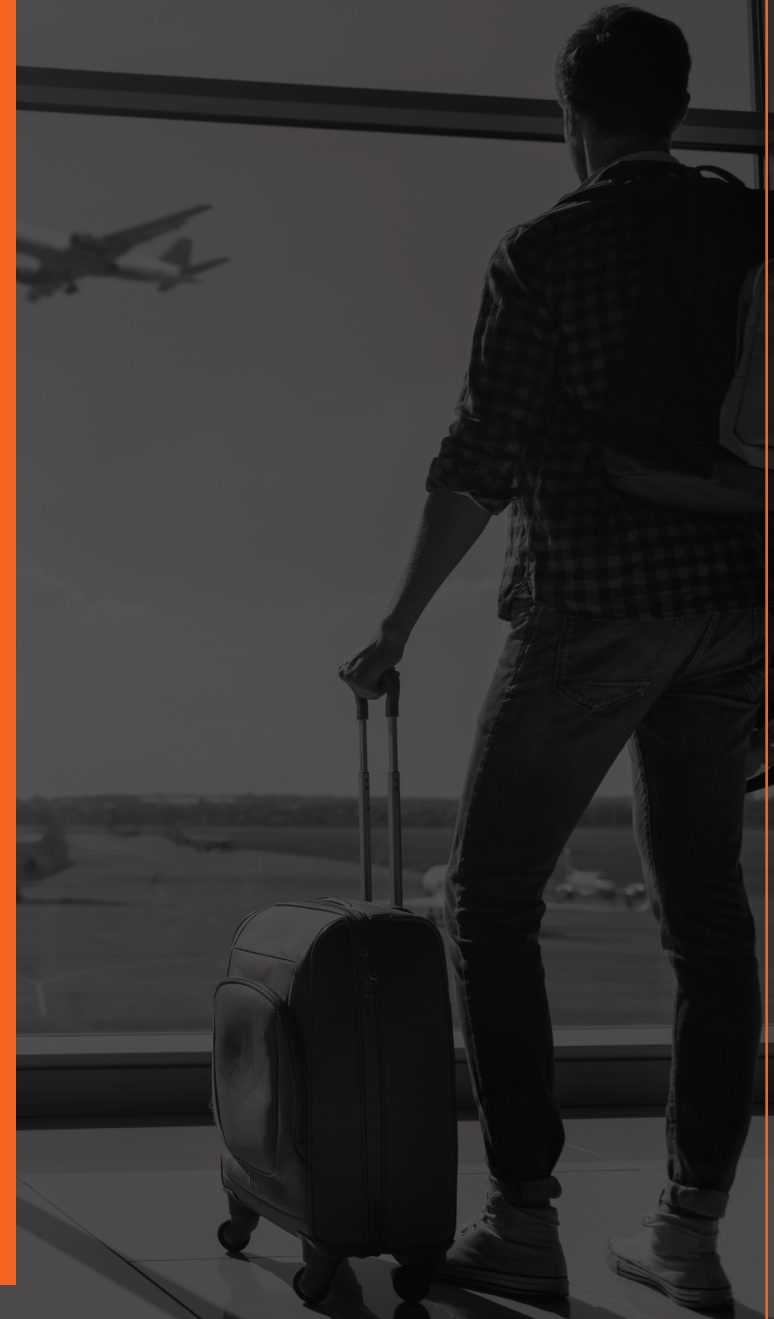
PERSONALIZE AT SCALE.



High-level steps to success typically include:

- Aligning personalization efforts with strategic business plans and goals
- Researching current website analytics and markets served (including your competition)
- Assembling your localization team from key experts and stakeholders (corporate and in-market)
- Auditing content and selecting media to be translated and localized
- Identifying and filling content gaps
- Conducting in-market reviews
- Completing translation and localization of content
- Performing additional in-market reviews
- Publishing and promotion
- Measurement and course correction

**LIONBRIDGE CAN HELP WITH THESE STEPS AND MORE.
GET STARTED ON YOUR PATH TO PERSONALIZATION:
REACH OUT TO US TODAY.**



FOOTNOTES



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