

10 Strategies to Boost Translation Efficiency



Contents

03	Introduction
05	The four key areas of efficiency
08	Automation
17	Linguistic assets and source content
24	Translation mix and tools
32	Program analysis
36	Conclusion

Translation fuels customer enablement, sales growth, retention of existing customers, and brand awareness. High-quality translations represent empathy at every touchpoint on the customer journey. They say to anyone who uses your product that they matter to you.

Still, macroeconomic uncertainty has created a challenging business environment. Budgets are coming under increased scrutiny, and companies are prioritizing efficiency. Translation may be critical to global business continuity, but it is not immune: department heads are being asked to find ways to stretch their translation budget to achieve their business goals.

As a result, it is important to find the right balance between cost, speed, and quality when managing language translation. Take inventory: what's working well, and where can you further optimize your process? The recommendations in this guide are actionable strategies and tactics that globally-minded companies can use to do more with less.

Here's what you'll learn in this guide:

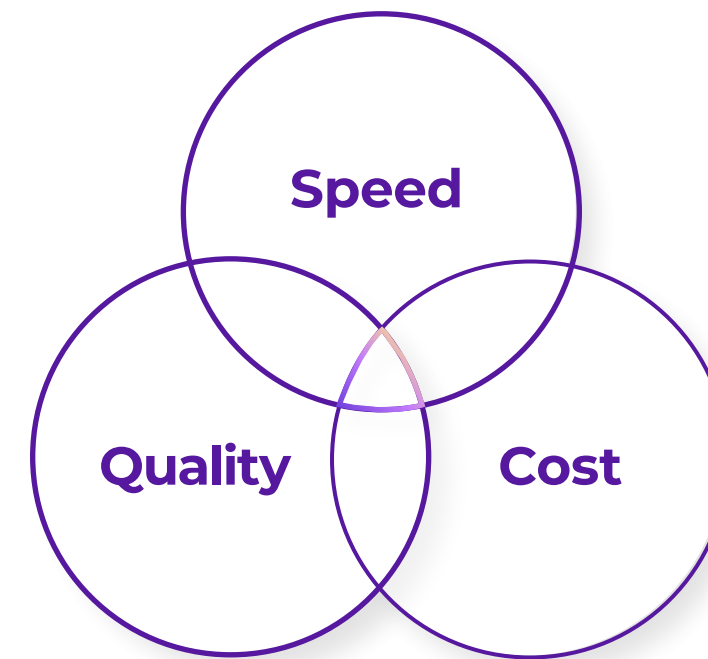
Automation

Linguistic Assets and Source Content

Translation Mix and Tools

Program Analysis

Four areas where you can actually make a difference on translation efficiency



Actionable strategies you can use to improve translation speed, quality and cost



Fortune
500

Real examples of companies using these techniques to save time and money

The four key areas of efficiency

From project management to workflow optimization, there's a comfortable amount of wiggle room to make processes more efficient while maintaining quality.

For those looking for a place to start, here are four — but by no means the only — areas where implementing the right solution can bring notable translation efficiency gains.

Get more efficient in these areas:

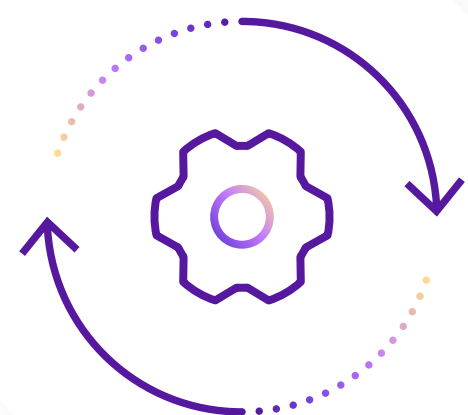
1. Automation

2. Linguistic assets and source content

3. Translation mix and tools

4. Program analysis

The four key areas of efficiency



AREA #1

Automation

A human touch is necessary at specific points in the process. For everything else, there's automation. The tweaks — unifying your tech stack with integrations, routing content through dynamic workflows, and leveraging automated post-editing — covered here will have a sweeping impact on your process.

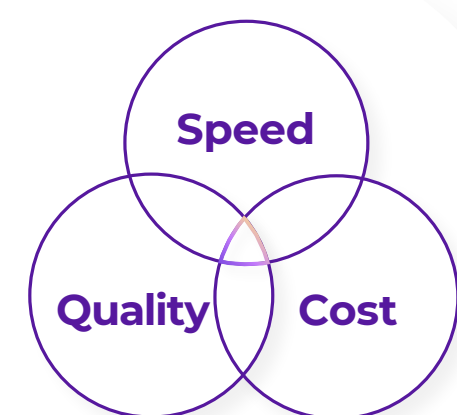


AREA #2

Linguistic assets and source content

Set your team up to communicate clearly. Make up-to-date versions of your glossary and style guide accessible. Fine-tune your translation memory settings. Then, explore ways to incorporate the latest AI technology to improve quality while reducing manual work.

The four key areas of efficiency



AREA #3

Translation mix and tools

Choose from multiple translation tools and workflows depending on content type to optimize for speed, quality, and cost. Then, ensure your linguists have everything they need to produce high-quality translations.



AREA #4

Program analysis

Real-time analytics give your team a framework for measuring translation performance. Examine workflow metrics to make data-driven decisions about the day-to-day. Then, run higher-level reports to facilitate conversations with the executive team.

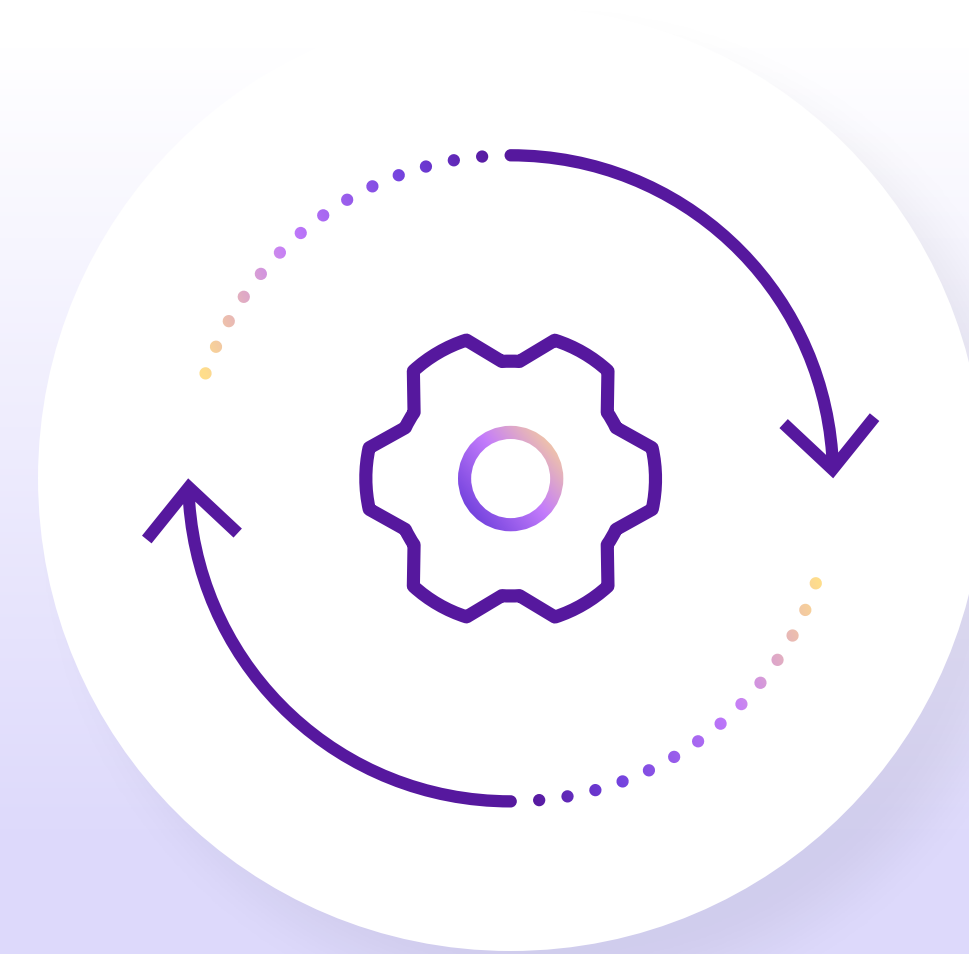
Let's dive deeper into each of the four areas.



Automation

Automation makes repetitive and time-consuming steps unnecessary. That, in turn, allows content to move smoothly from one step to the next, accelerating the translation process.

Key automation opportunities include unifying your tech stack with integrations, routing content through dynamic workflows, and leveraging automated post-editing.



Integrations

Dynamic workflows

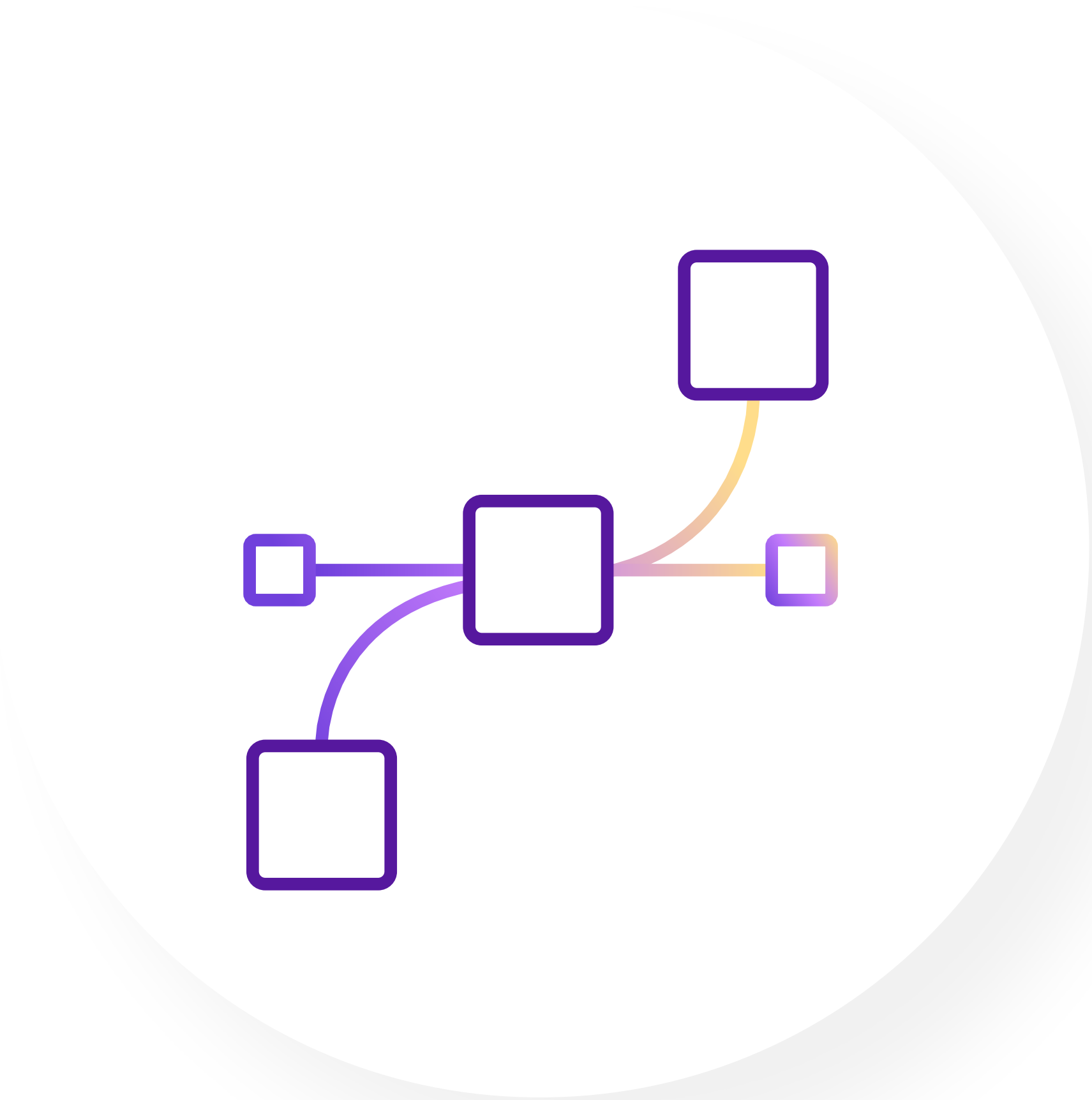
Automated post-editing

STRATEGY #1

Integrations

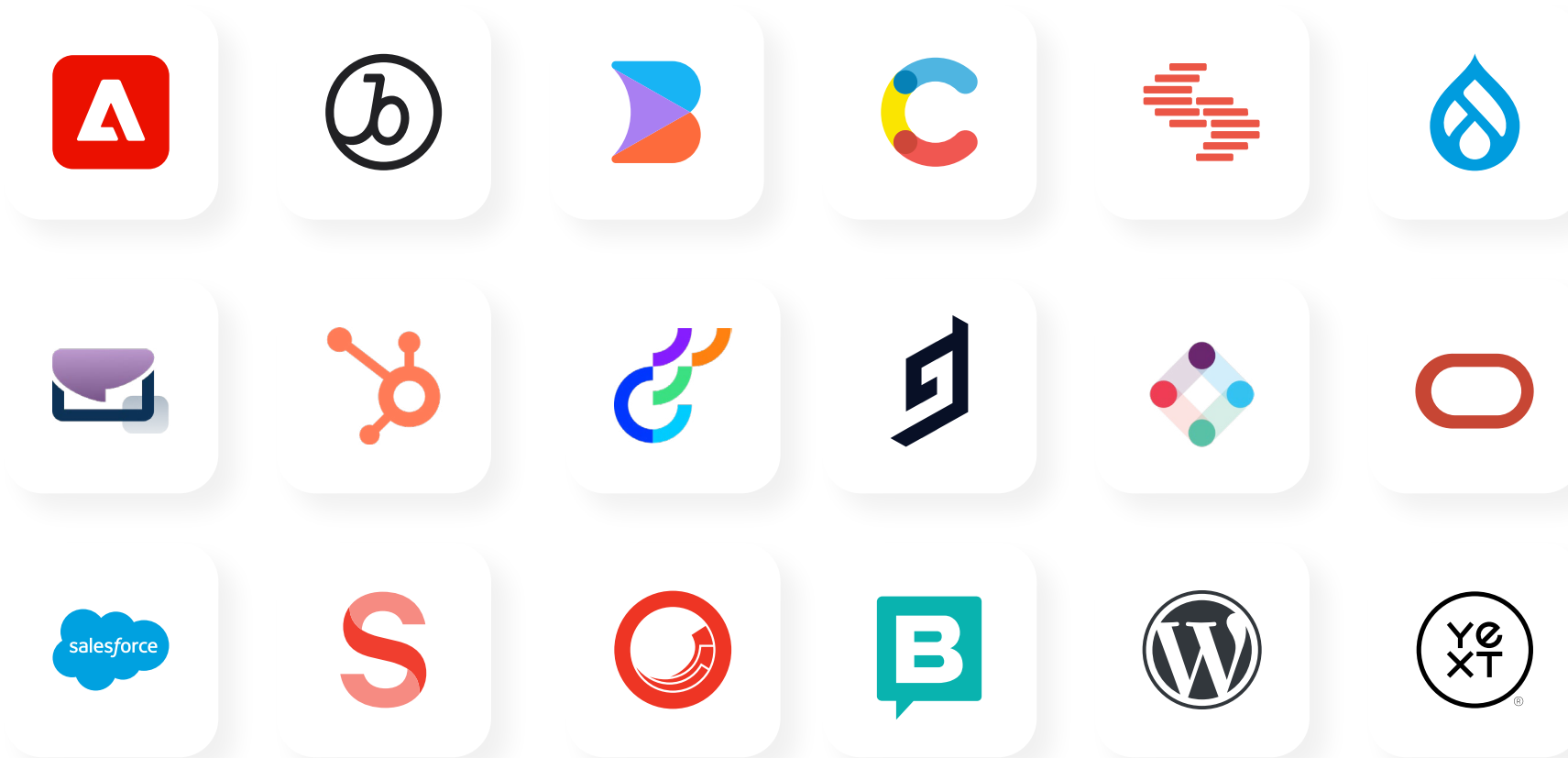
With APIs or pre-built connectors, you can send content for translation right from your content management system, customer support software, or other programs you use to manage content. Content then moves through the steps of your translation workflow. Once translated, that content is re-uploaded to the integrated system. Finally, you can configure your integrations so that any updates to the source content get automatically sent for translation.

This eliminates hours of pre- and post-translation work that would fall to you and your team. It also side-steps the issue of limited bandwidth and the possibility of manual work introducing errors. Many sophisticated translation management systems (TMSs) will offer several integration options and pre-built connectors.



Automation

35+ pre-built integrations



[View all of Smartling's integrations and connectors](#)

For example, Smartling customers can choose from over 35 pre-built integrations to many popular platforms. They also have access to a dedicated support team to help them build custom integrations for any application, including homegrown software.

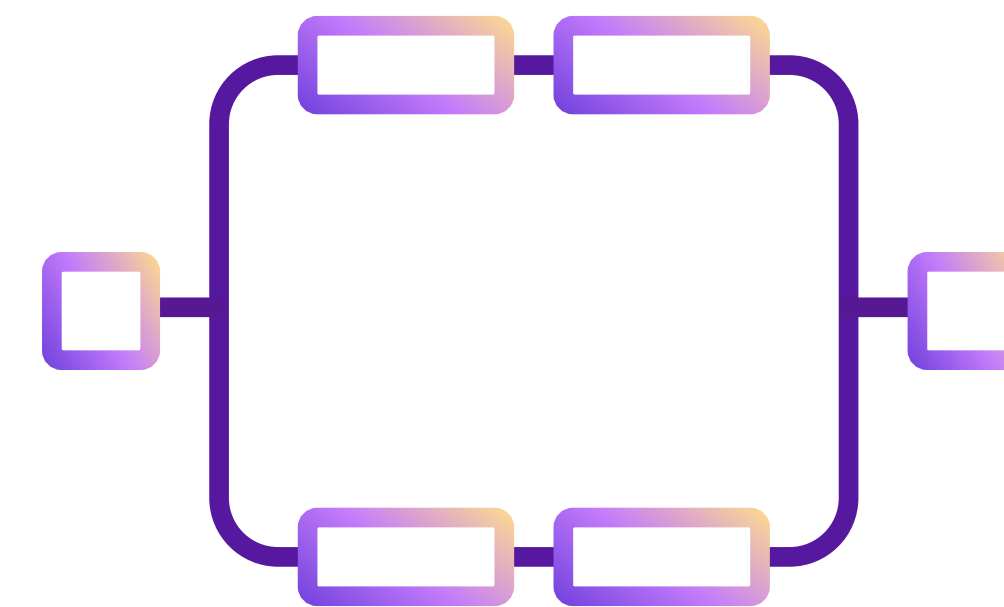
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STRATEGY #2

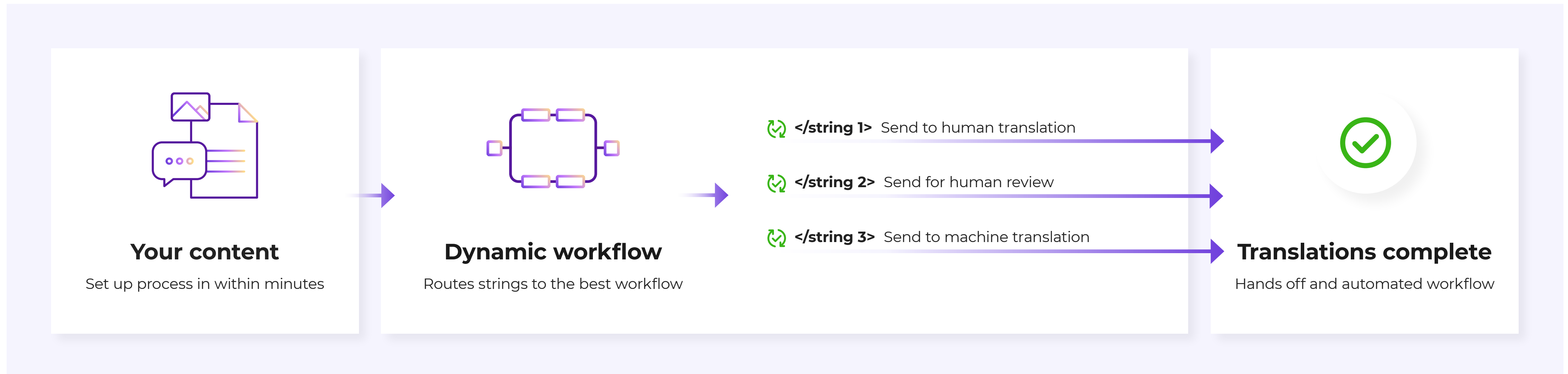
Dynamic workflows

Not all content needs to go through the same steps. Perhaps content similar to those in your translation memory can go straight to review, while other strings may need to go through human translation and editing first. Or you may want some strings machine translated before being sent to an editor. Even better, what if you could route content directly to publishing or to a reviewer based on how much edit effort is needed?

All of these are great options, but staying on top of which content requires which translation steps — and which strings need to go to which translation resource — can be overwhelming. And there is a high chance of mistakes and delays.



Example of a dynamic workflow



Now, imagine being able to send all content for translation through one workflow that routes the strings for you. This keeps content moving — without needing a human to keep track of it all. At Smartling, we call these dynamic workflows.

Customers spend a few minutes on the initial setup, then can be completely hands-off. They can send content for translation and feel confident that it will be sent to the right resource at the right time, skip unnecessary steps, and advance in a timely manner.

STRATEGY #3

Automated Post-Editing (APE)

For many languages, machine translation (MT) engines can reliably produce a good, accurate base translation, which often is all you need for low-visibility content. But sometimes, MT engines alter formatting, causing errors when strings are re-ingested into your content management platform. Plus, it may impact the quality of your translation memory.

Therefore, companies endeavoring to improve efficiency should look to incorporate automated content and format cleanup. This step addresses issues such as whitespaces, missing or extra tags, and missing or extra placeholders.

Benefits of APE

- ✓ Cleans up formatting issues such as missing or extra tags, placeholders, or whitespaces
- ✓ Preserves the quality of your translation memory
- ✓ Reduces errors and breakage in workflows
- ✓ Eliminates time wasted on manually fixing errors

Automation

At Smartling, we put our automated post-editing process to the test against the typical MT process (i.e., MT sans automated post-editing).

When content went through the typical MT workflow, we identified 17 errors (on a sample size of 1,000 strings) that someone would need to resolve manually before the translation is considered usable.

Compare that with our automated post-editing process, which resulted in zero errors in the 1,000-string sample — and absolutely no breakage in the workflow. That kind of tangible increase in efficiency can lead to significant time and cost savings.

Typical MT process compared to Smartling's automated post-editing process

Based on a sample size of 1,000 strings

Before	After
17 errors	0 errors
Manual resolution needed	No breakage in workflow
Slower	Faster
Higher cost	Lower cost

CUSTOMER FEATURE



ClassPass is one of the many Smartling customers who have embraced automation to increase efficiency.

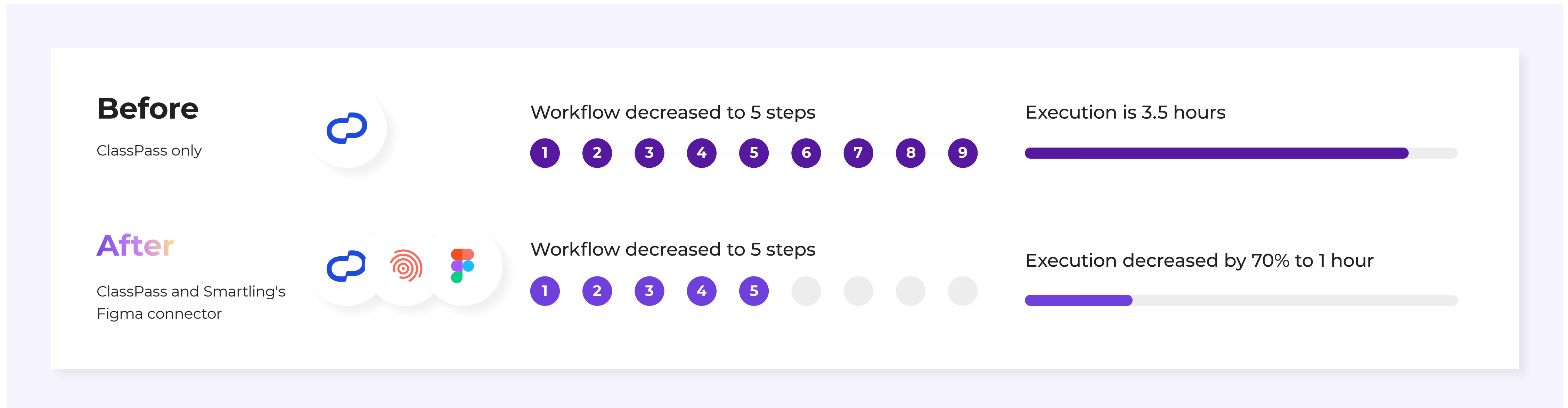
Before, localizing just one Instagram post took nine steps and 3.5 hours of administrative work, excluding the time spent on translation. That work included creating job files, adding instructions, providing visual references, copy-pasting strings into Excel, and delivering the content to the target audience.



↑ **70%**
increase in efficiency

↑ **1,000+**
hours saved

ClassPass translation process improvement

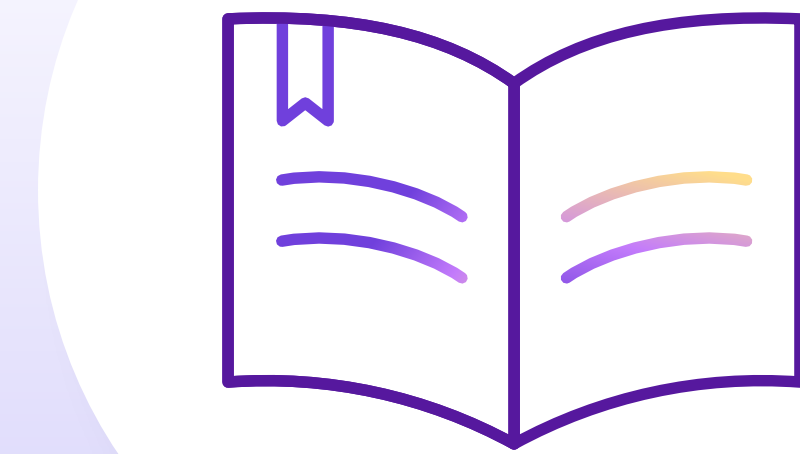


Upon implementing Smartling's Figma connector, ClassPass was able to simplify its workflow to five steps, none of which required any copying and pasting.

The company also slashed the administrative time spent per Instagram post by over 70% — to one hour.

Linguistic assets and source content

Your linguistic assets, like translation memory, style guides, and glossary, help ensure your content sounds like *you*. They also improve translation quality, lower costs, and reduce time spent on revisions. Make your linguistic assets work for you by leveraging translation memory, fuzzy match repair, optimized glossaries, and source content improvement.



Translation memory

Fuzzy match repair

Optimized glossaries

Source content improvement

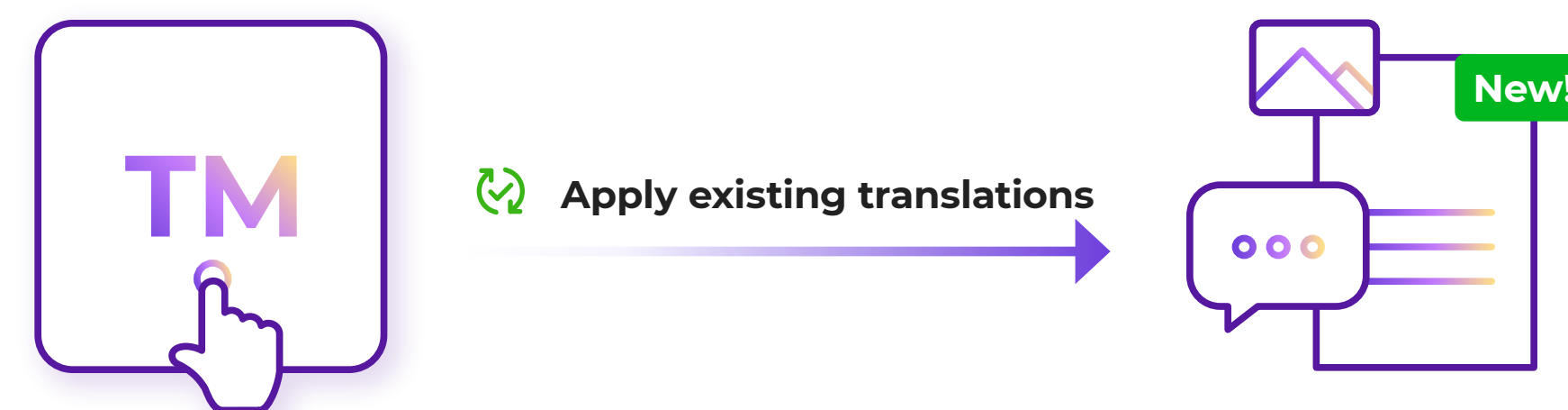
STRATEGY #4

Translation memory leverage and repair

Leveraging your translation memory refers to applying existing translations in your database to new content. The advantage is that you won't have to pay — or wait — to translate the same content over again.

Depending on your TMS, you may even be able to set up multiple leverage configurations for different content types so that you can reuse your translation memory differently across your projects.

Benefits of translation memory

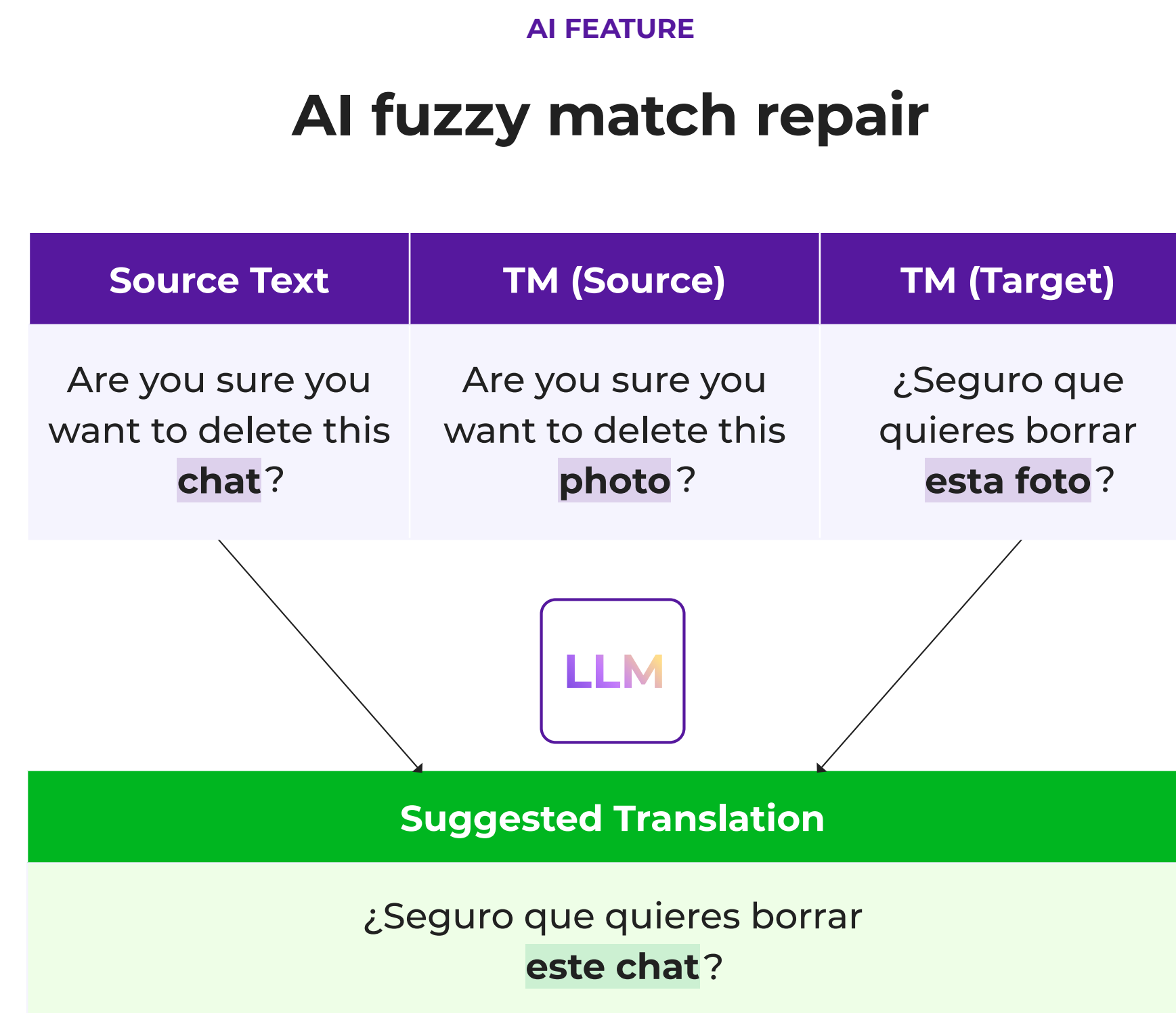


- ✓ Reuse already translated strings
- ✓ Build up as you translate
- ✓ Set up multiple configurations per content type

Linguistic assets and source content

AI-augmented features like fuzzy match repair can help you glean even more leverage from your translation memory. Low fuzzy matches — strings with a 55% fuzzy match score, for example — can be repaired with AI. That string with a 55% fuzzy match score may then score as high as 90%.

Incorporating such features improves quality while also lessening the load for your translators and increasing your TM leverage. That, in turn, accelerates your time to market.



STRATEGY #5

Enhanced glossaries

Many TMSs enable you to make your glossary available to translators while they are working. Therefore, creating a glossary — and updating it as your company grows — will help them apply your preferred terms across all translated content. It will also save time that would otherwise be spent researching which terms are most suitable. If you already have a glossary, there are a few ways you can optimize its use for even more efficiency gains.

The first is to optimize glossary terms for use in machine translation. Plural forms, inconsistencies or terms over a certain word count can confuse machine translation engines. By using only MT-optimized glossary terms in machine translation you mitigate risk and

Two ways to enhance your glossaries

#1

Optimize glossary terms to de-risk use in machine translation

#2

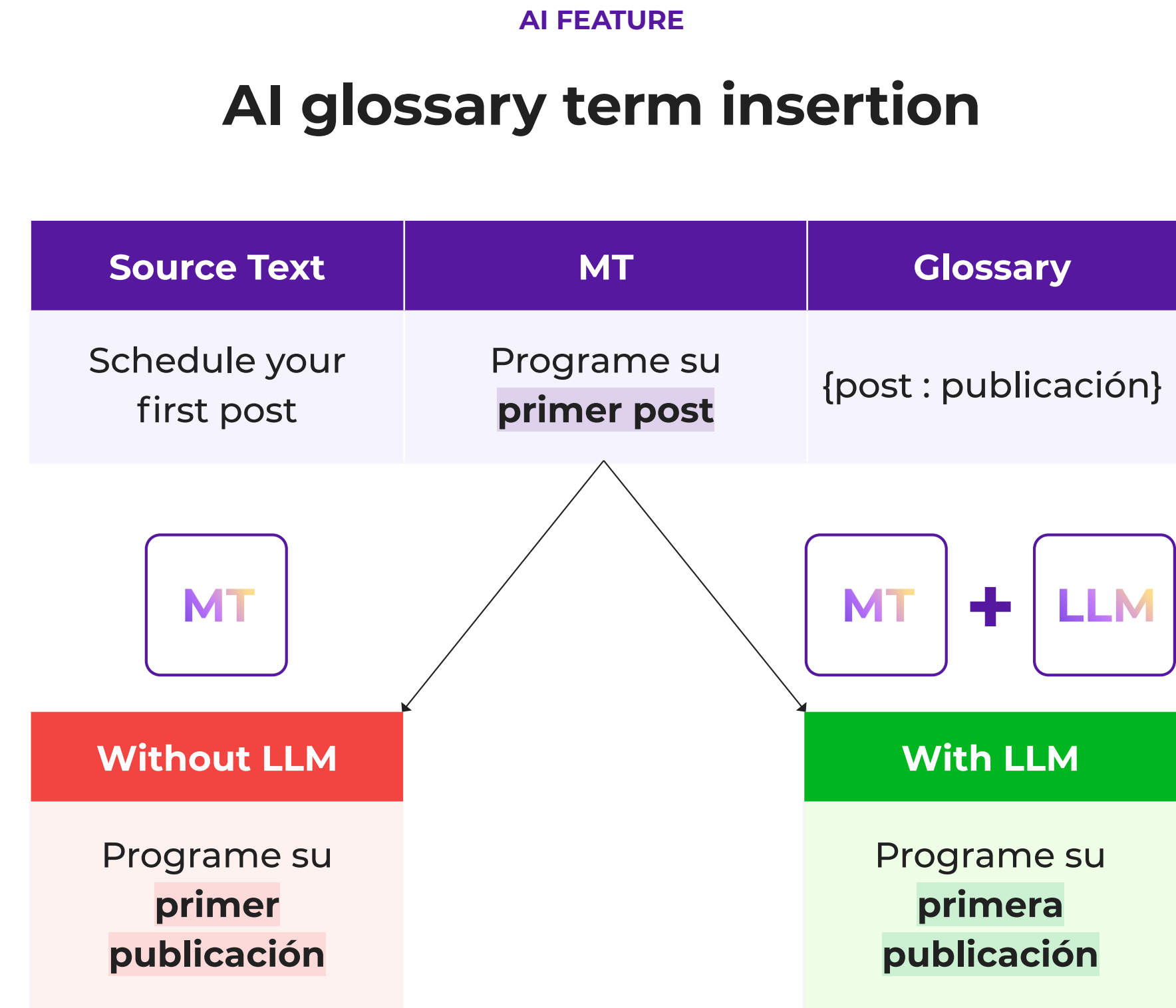
Use AI-enhanced term insertion to minimize grammatical and morphological errors

Linguistic assets and source content

in machine translation you mitigate risk and maximize the quality of the outputs. Check with your TMS to see if they offer MT-optimize glossary options.

The second way to maximize the value and impact of your glossary is through AI-enhanced insertion. With enhanced glossary term insertion, AI checks your text for glossary terms and translations are inserted automatically into the target text. However, unlike in traditional glossary term insertion, the surrounding text is smoothed out, and any required grammatical changes (such as adjusting for a different gendered noun) are made.

This process eliminates a step for your translators and mitigates the need for human oversight.



Linguistic assets and source content

PRODUCT FEATURE

AI Translation Toolkit

Reduce costs and accelerate time to market. Smartling's AI Translation Toolkit a suite of AI translation features designed to improve linguist performance without sacrificing quality. When paired with human validation, our Toolkit consistently produces human-quality translations that cost up to 50% less and are ready in half the time.

Here's a peek inside:

10 Strategies to Boost Translation Efficiency



AI Translation

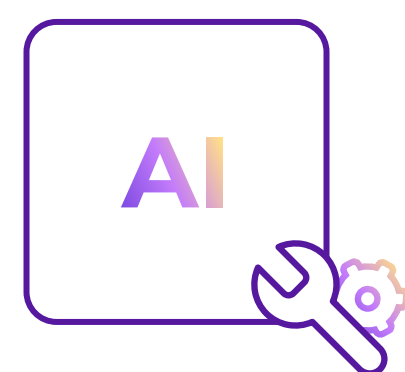


Toolkit



A suite of AI translation features that dramatically improve the performance of your translators.

What's included in Smartling's AI Translation Toolkit



AI fuzzy match repair

Fuzzy match repair boosts translation memory matches and increases leverage.



AI glossary term insertion

Optimized glossary terms are inserted, ensuring contextual coherence. Content and formatting cleanup of whitespaces tags and placeholders.



Machine translation

Translate content via AutoSelect, a trained engine, or a specified MT provider of your choice.

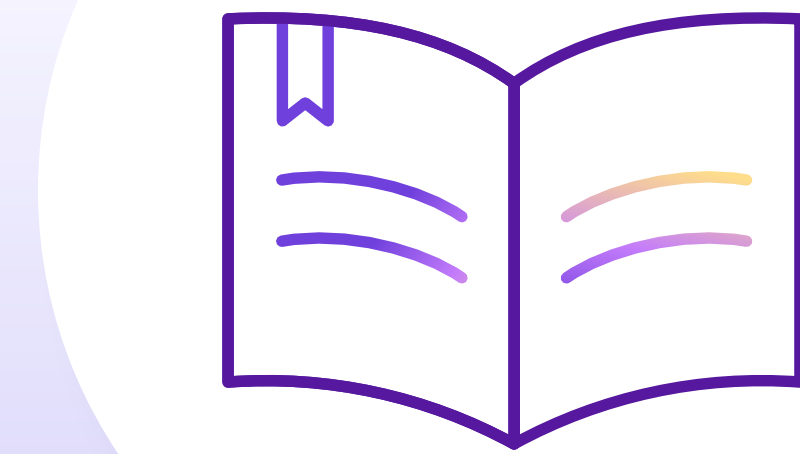


Edit effort estimation

The level of effort for translators is assessed. Then, strings are routed according to customer specifications.

Translation mix and tools

Achieving efficiency in translation requires using all the tools at your disposal strategically. That includes optimizing your translation mix and ensuring your linguists have access to the right tools.



Translation mix

Translator tools

Reviewer tools

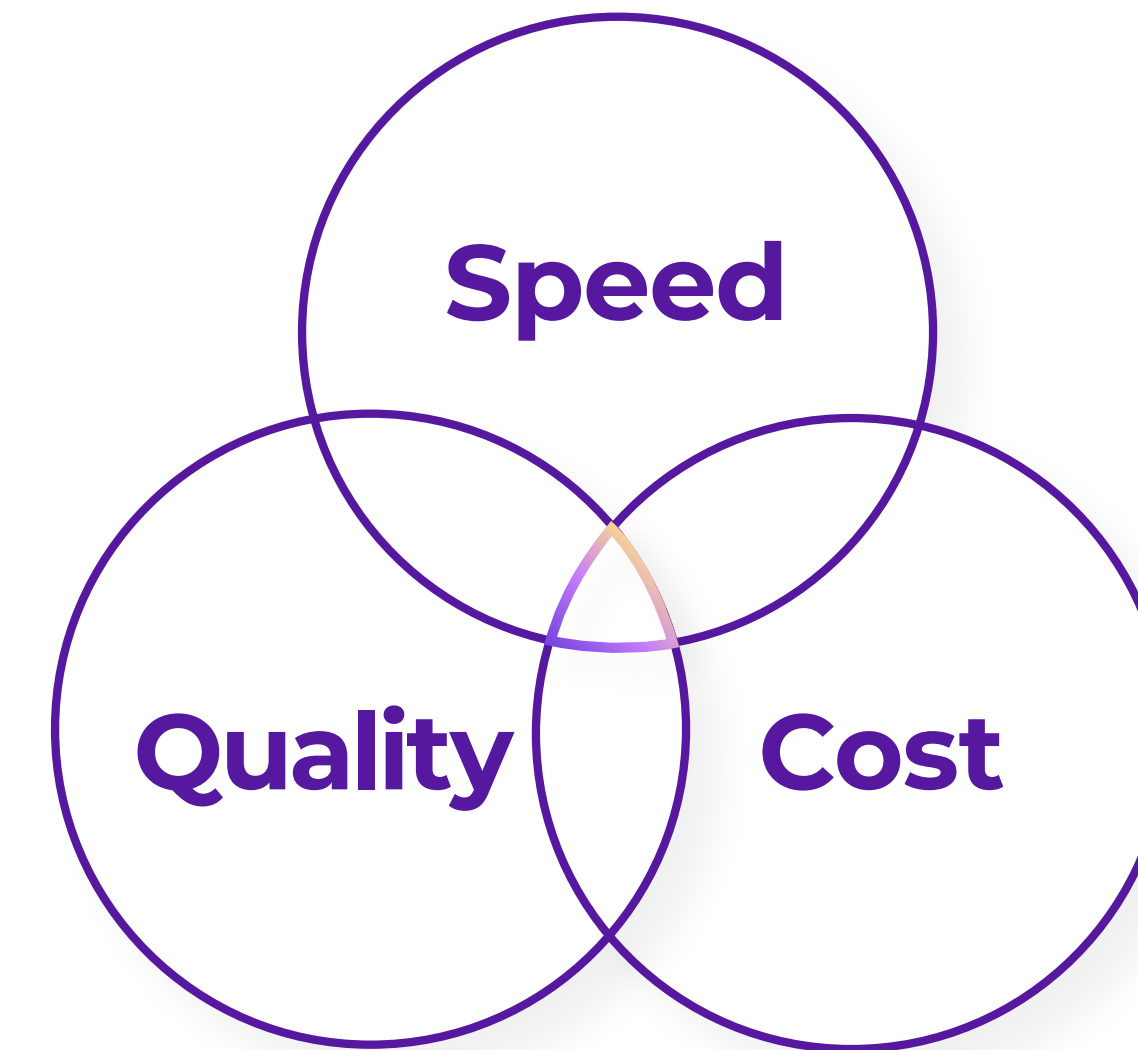
STRATEGY #6

Translation mix

Many translation projects have different requirements. The key to achieving efficiency here is to go project by project, carefully considering which translation solutions and steps are best for each.

At Smartling, we refer to this as optimizing your translation mix. For content types where quality is of the utmost importance (e.g., marketing content with high visibility), you may consider using a human-only or AI-powered human translation workflow.

Other content types where general understanding is sufficient and speed is paramount (e.g., support tickets or help content) are often better suited to go through MT or AI Translation.

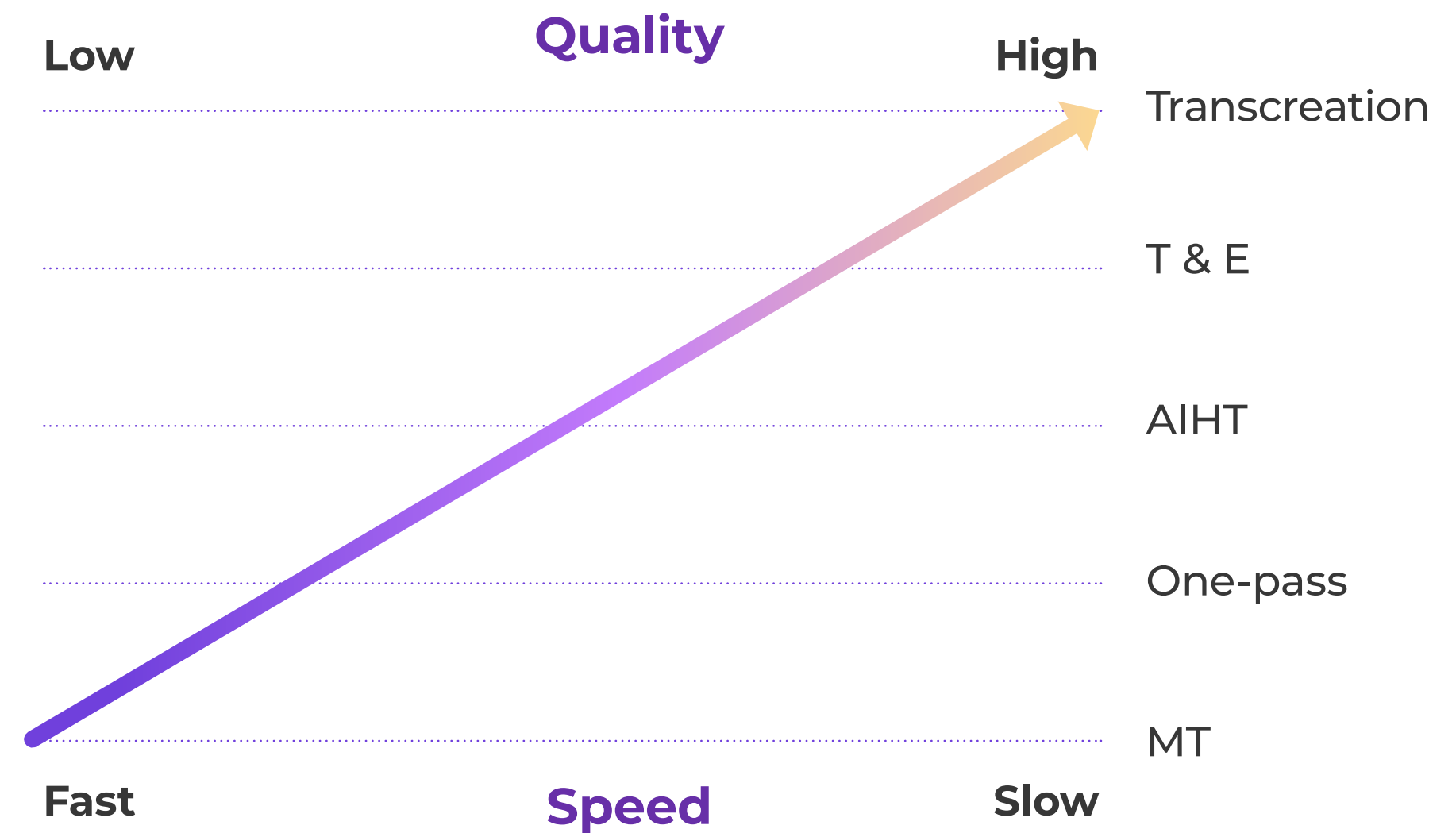


Translation mix and tools

Moreover, it's important to evaluate your translation mix regularly — not only as budgets and business objectives change but also as technology evolves.

At Smartling, for example, more customers are exploring ways to utilize AI-powered human translation (AIHT) outputs to build custom MT engines. That allows them to get higher-quality MT outputs and reduce their reliance on workflows with human intervention.

Impact of improving your translation mix



STRATEGY #7

Translator tools: Effort estimation and visual context

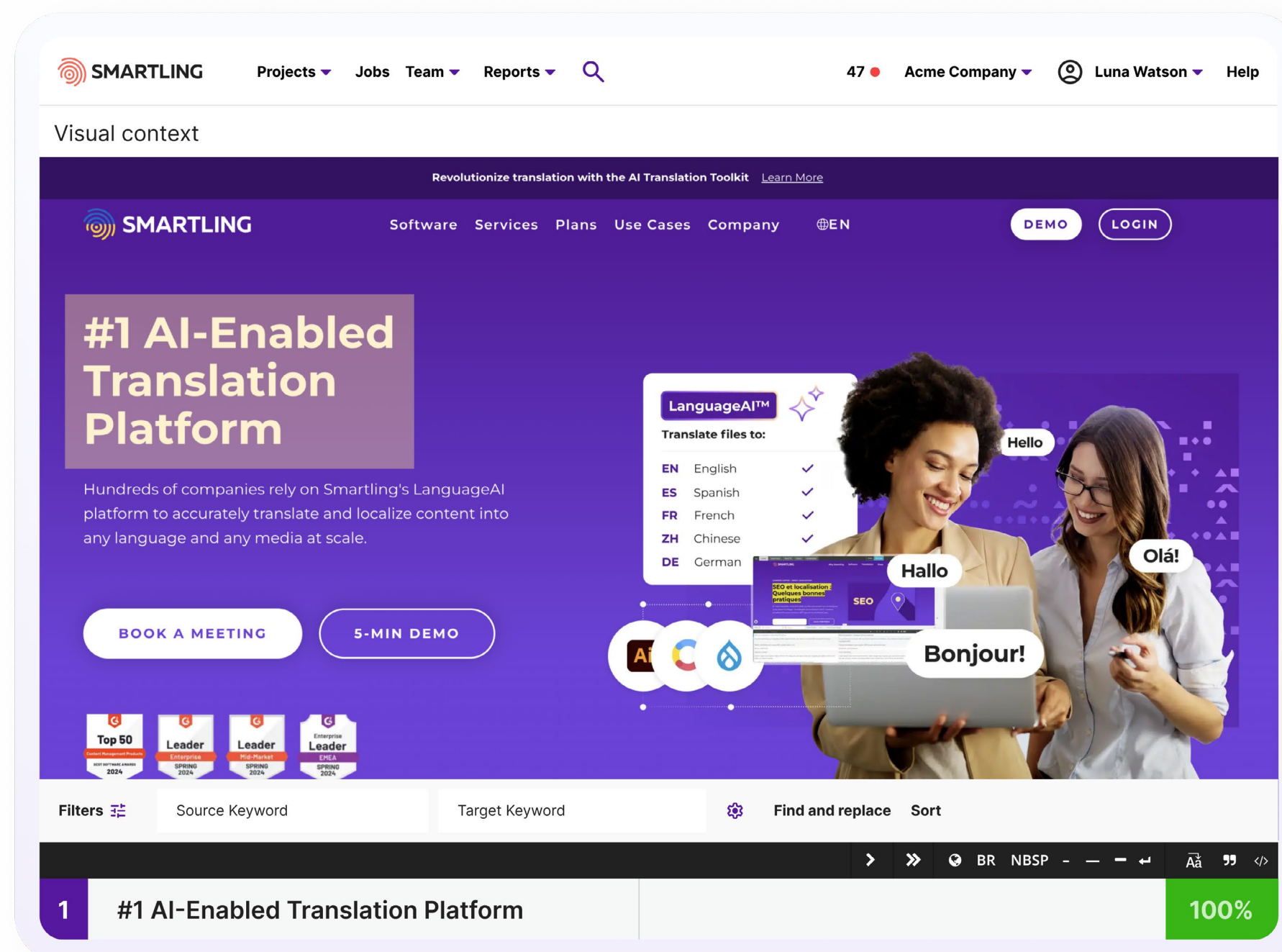
Understanding how much effort a translation will take before work begins is invaluable — for you and your translators. It can help you allocate resources, group translations by expected effort level, and forecast whether your target turnaround time is feasible. It can also help your translators by identifying which strings will need more attention from them.

If your translators are currently working with isolated text in spreadsheet cells, another easy way to increase efficiency is to provide visual context.

Predict the effort required from your translators



Translation mix and tools



When visual context is available, translators don't have to guess or make assumptions about intended meanings or formatting requirements. With many of the answers to their questions right in front of them, there's less of a need to wait for clarification.

These tweaks don't only mean increased efficiency for your translators, either. The positive effects will reverberate throughout the rest of the workflow. You will receive higher-quality translations the first time around — and cut down on delays and rework.

STRATEGY #8

Reviewer tools: LQA and in-platform communication

Reviewers often work in a different environment than the translators. They may do their reviews offline or using separate software that may or may not have visual context, which hinders their ability to do their job well.

Moreover, they may only look at a small sample of the many strings your translators have worked on. And they may have little (if any) communication with the translators. That means feedback is slow in coming or nonexistent. Translators will continue to make the same mistakes — and reviewers will continue to correct them — delaying the process and frustrating everyone involved.

Scalable translation for the whole organization

Les Grands

Espaces

Translator

Marketer

Localization manager



Luna Watson

4 minutes ago

Please edit the text to say “Los Grands Espacios” instead!

↩ Reply

“ Ideally, translators and reviewers would work within the same environment and have visual context. ”

Therefore, companies interested in increasing efficiency would do well to integrate linguistic review with the rest of the workflow. Ideally, translators and reviewers would work within the same environment and have visual context. Communication between them should be encouraged: in-platform communication features within your TMS are invaluable for creating a regular feedback loop.

Finally, for those who need to be very hands-on with quality, consider using tools that encourage an even more systematic approach. These may include a customizable error typology tool based on an established quality framework, access to experienced independent reviewers, and easy-to-read reports that provide real-time insights into translation quality.

CUSTOMER FEATURE

Fortune500 technology company

A major enterprise with an annual translation volume of 20 million-plus words partnered with Smartling to tweak its translation mix.

The company's localization team decreased reliance on the traditional human-only translation and editing workflow. Instead, the team started to use Smartling's AI-powered Human Translation solution.

Now, 70% of their content goes through this workflow — getting translated 50% faster and reaching consistent MQM scores of 99+.

Fortune 500 technology company

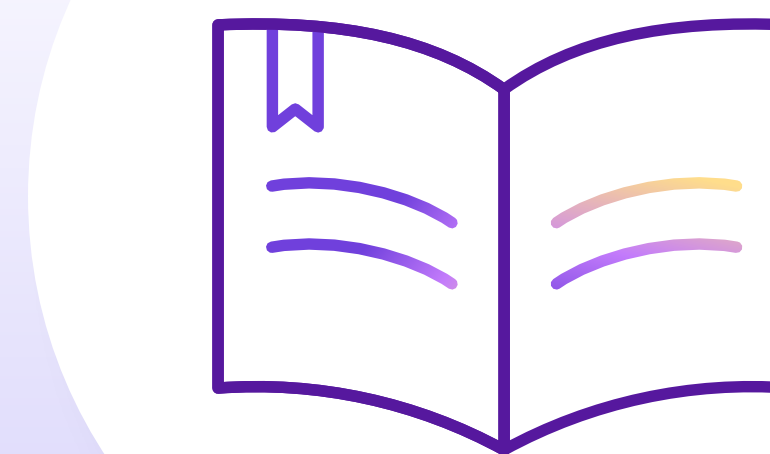
↑ **\$3.4m+**
saved in the first year

↑ **99+**
MQM quality score

Program analysis

Data analytics makes informed decision-making possible. Periodic workflow evaluations can help you identify what is and isn't working on a day-to-day basis.

Additionally, higher-level data about the entire translation process can facilitate discussions between you and your executive team about ROI and optimal resource allocation.



Workflow evaluation

Executive communication

Workflow evaluation

Reports that provide visibility into your translation workflow are indispensable. Pre-translation cost estimates, for example, can give you an idea as to what you'll pay before you begin translation, allowing for greater clarity in planning and resource management.

In addition, content velocity and content change reports can provide insight into the average time a word or a string spends in each workflow step and how many changes are being made. If you see that content is regularly sitting in the review or validation step for several days without any edits, for example, it might make sense to remove the extra step.

Other data points to look at include translation memory leverage, translation activity, and the number and types of questions your translators are asking, among others. These will provide you with a bird's-eye view of your translation process and enable you to make informed decisions about how best to boost efficiency.

STRATEGY #10

Executive communication

This last element is not a strategy to improve efficiency of your translation process but a way to make communication about the impact of your localization program more effective. The key to this is having performance information all in one place and ensuring the data is digestible to outside stakeholders. A robust solution that you can use for all your translation needs can help. Unifying your strategy provides your organization with one single source of data. You and other stakeholders will then be able to surface actionable insights across all your projects and languages.

That will make evaluating your translation ROI straightforward. It will also make discussions around business objectives, budgets, and resource allocation transparent.



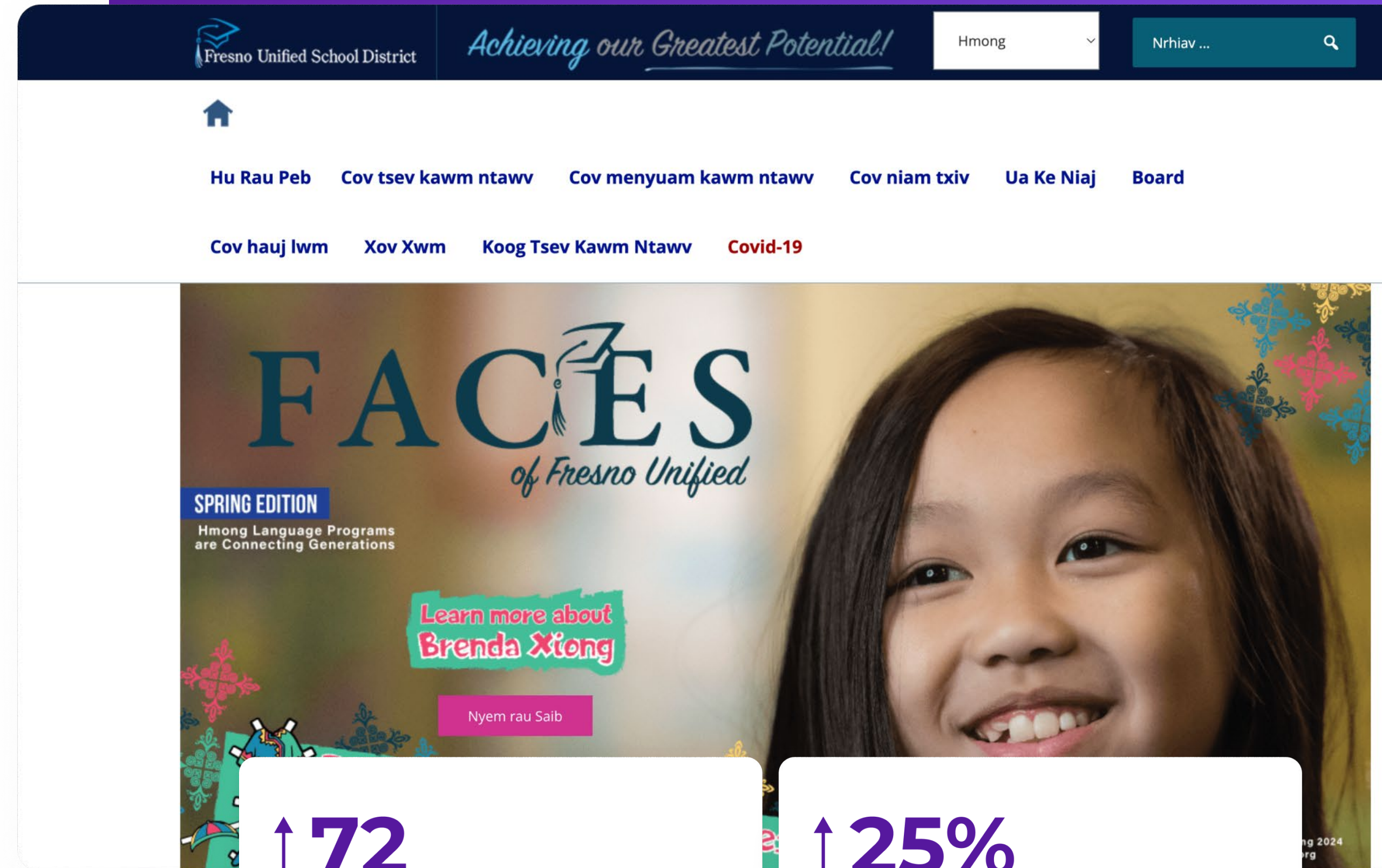
Program analysis

CUSTOMER FEATURE: FRESNO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



The Fresno Unified School District partnered with Smartling to improve consistency, reduce costs, and get translated materials into families' hands within 72 hours. They accomplished that and more by centralizing work within Smartling's TMS.

On top of that, Smartling's reporting features gave the Translation and Interpretation Services team much-needed visibility. The team could track translation volumes and peak times. That enabled them to manage workloads and avoid unnecessary delays. Equally important, they had the information they needed to communicate with the district's board members and trustees about translation activity and budget needs.



↑ **72**
hour turnaround goal met

↑ **25%**
words translated in one year

Conclusion

It is possible to reach more of the world with your existing budget. And it doesn't have to come at the expense of quality.

Making small changes in a few critical areas — embracing automation, enhancing your linguistic assets and source content, optimizing your translation mix and tools, and getting your hands on real-time data — can make a huge, immediate difference.

You don't have to go it alone

Partnering with an experienced translation provider like Smartling will give you access to translation optimization technology and a wealth of expertise. Contact us today to learn how we can help you do more with less.

Learn more at [smartling.com](https://www.smartling.com)

About Smartling

Smartling's LanguageAI™ platform is revolutionizing the translation and localization of the world's digital content. Named as the top translation management system by CSA Research and by users on G2, Smartling harnesses AI and machine learning to enable the automation of workflows, integrates seamlessly with existing tech stacks and measures and improves translation quality at enterprise scale for a fraction of the cost of traditional translation.

Smartling is the platform of choice for hundreds of B2B and B2C brands, including IHG Hotels & Resorts, State Farm, British Airways, and Lyft. Smartling is headquartered in New York with an office in Dublin.



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