

Translating in a Digital-First World

How a Global Strategy Continues to be a Competitive Advantage



The beginning of 2020 has introduced a major shift in how both businesses and consumers operate. With the coronavirus (COVID-19) impacting the world at an increasingly fast pace, businesses and consumers of all industries are feeling the effect. We are all experiencing the same impact, with potential for the effects of this global pandemic to extend further into the year, and even past the outbreak itself.

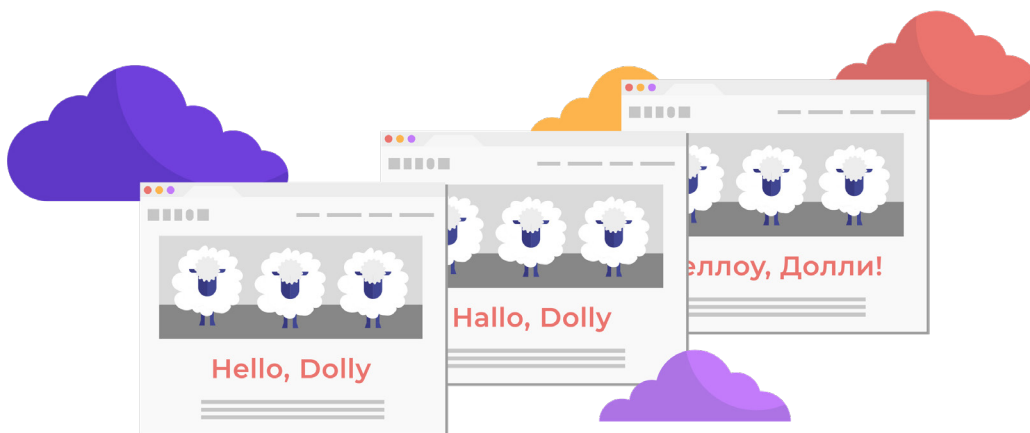
The global supply chain is at risk. With a shortage of workers, a halt to production, and a limit on trade, it has become near impossible for brands to continue their production cycle.

The demand for these services is also changing rapidly. The market has shrunk, and consumer habits may shift rapidly as restrictions on travel, social activities, sports and other areas of life put into place.

Some companies will be unable to maintain revenue or see positive growth as the world's economy shifts into place. Yet we also see an amazing opportunity for companies to solidify their position as the market leader, and drive long term success.

If there's anything that this global pandemic has demonstrated with absolute clarity, it is how connected our world has become. In a time when the world feels as if it is closing off, we must be mindful of how strategically important it is to connect with businesses, customers and clients around the world. Brands that can deliver a unique experience to worldwide users, regardless of their location or native language, can tap into the rapidly changing demands of both consumers and businesses as we adapt to the global situation.

According to a report published online by Bloomberg Economics, “the economic fallout could include recessions in the U.S., euro-area and Japan, the slowest growth on record in China, and a total of \$2.7 trillion in lost output—equivalent to the entire GDP of the U.K.”



During this time when demand is down and supplies are scarce, businesses should work to become a global-ready business.

The State of The Global Economy

The current situation we have found ourselves in has proven one thing for certain: most businesses and industries will feel the impact of a global pandemic of this scale. And we're hit by a double-edged sword, in that both the supply and demand of the global economy have seen a major impact.

Factories around the world are understaffed, unable to supply manufacturers with the parts and processes they need to maintain their global demand. Borders are closed, preventing supplies from making their way around the world. Consumers are hesitant to spend, and businesses are unable to maintain their services.

The economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic could total up to \$2.7 trillion in lost output. To put that into perspective, that would be equivalent to the entire GDP of the U.K. going missing.

The Supply Side Impact

COVID-19 has impacted supply around the world, both in the physical sense of materials needed to create products, as well as in the supply of labor itself.

With quarantines and lockdowns in effect, and workers falling ill, businesses have been struggling to maintain their output. We have already heard that Apple may have to delay the release of the latest iPhone due to a shortage of supply with China being heavily impacted.

Disruption in China is both an indicator of how the effects will play out in other countries, and disruption on the world economy itself. As the center of supply for so many different industries, China is a major focal point for global commerce: when the Chinese workforce is impacted, so too is the rest of the world. Electronics, cars, travel, machinery, and equipment, in particular, will experience a massive shortage.



Additionally, with borders closed down and tariffs placed on goods, there has been an increased strain on the trade of materials used to manufacture their products.

Since brands are unable to maintain their production output and are unable to service customers, there has been an increase in business costs to deliver the same services or products, with a decrease in overall output, impacting and ultimately reducing economic activity across the world.

The Demand Side Impact

When there is uncertainty around the situation and fear growing every minute, consumers are less likely to spend.

This could be attributed to a loss of income for consumers that are unable to work, whether due to their illness or quarantine, a simple fear of falling ill through exposure, or heightened uncertainty about what the future holds.

When the news is saturated with fears of the virus spreading, and entire nations being shaken by the pandemic, consumers will be hesitant to spend and potentially increase their risk for either health or financial fallout.

And this spending can be seen across industries, from the stagnating growth of retail, down to the complete halt of air travel.

When the demand for services and spending on goods has plummeted, so do the jobs and opportunities available, only furthering negatively impacting the cycle.

Simply put, an event on the scale of COVID-19 introduces a chilling effect into the economy, halting the spending of consumers until they feel more confident in both their situation and the situation around the world.



A Global, Digital Experience Is Now a Necessity

It is now no longer a simple competitive advantage to offer a digital experience or service in some way, but rather a standard of business. Brands without a digital presence will struggle to compete on a national level, let alone a global level.

This situation in 2020 has only further proven how critical a global digital strategy is to business continuity. At a time when consumers demand higher quality services with less friction, digital is an easy way to essentially meet them where they already are, no matter where they are or what device they prefer. Now is the time for brands to establish a global presence and prioritize the localization of their products, services, solutions and offerings to reach every last person on Earth.

Reach Every Last Person on Earth, at Home

With less of the population leaving their homes during the COVID-19 crisis, brands will need to evaluate their current processes and offerings to stay afloat during this time. This effect ripples across massive industries, from travel and hospitality to in-person entertainment and retail.

In the US, spending on travel, tourism and in-person entertainment accounts for roughly 7% of the GDP. Gad Levanon, Vice President of Labor Markets for The Conference Board estimated that if there was a 10% drop in spending on these specific industries in just three months, this would lower the US GDP by 0.7% overall.

Travel, tourism and in-person entertainment alone accounts for roughly 7% of the US GDP

Restaurants, concert venues and musical artists, movie theatres and even production companies, sporting events and teams, casinos, hotels, airlines, and retail stores are just a few of the businesses that will be impacted by this economic freeze as a whole.

When we look at retail we gain a clear understanding of how dramatic the impacts can be. Consulting and research firm Customer Growth Partners estimated that if COVID-19 can be contained by April, retail sales in the U.S. will grow 4.1%. However, if the virus continues to spread until June, that growth could be halved down to only 2.2%

Consumers all across the world will be turning to digital experiences and shopping for their entertainment during a time when social distancing has become a necessity. Entertainment with personal boundaries does not necessarily mean entertainment with regional boundaries.

Digital platforms and solutions, in particular, will see a huge boost as people turn to services like Disney+ and Netflix for entertainment at home. Mobile spending, and mobile games in particular, already account for a large portion of consumer spending, and will only continue to increase as we search for ways to stay occupied when stuck at home.

As consumers increase their spending on digital products, so, too, will the enterprise. As SaaS products have quickly become the standard for B2B services and solutions, many companies will be ramping up their investment as employees work from home. Products that foster effective collaboration, like Zoom and Slack, are not only incredibly useful tools, but effectively a requisite for business today.

Online retailers and eCommerce brands are expected to see a large boost, as well, as people shop online instead of driving to the local mall. With a digital service, brands can serve users in their own homes and offer the entertainment or value that they are missing out on in person. In the case of retail, your product can still be physical, but by selling directly to the consumer online, your brand can embrace a digital strategy for eCommerce growth.

This opens a unique opportunity for brands to shift their focus to respond to new demands from both consumers and businesses.

Localization Is Your Key to Growth

When we look at the potential of global selling, it becomes clear that brands must leverage localization as their clear competitive advantage.

ASOS, a British based online fashion and cosmetics retailer has achieved 149% growth over the last 5 years. This is without a single retail brick-and-mortar location, and strictly through eCommerce sales. One way they've rapidly grown is by supporting multiple languages - more on this later.

A digital strategy and global footprint is important, but it will not stand as the sole competitive advantage in your market. More and more digital solutions and experiences are appearing every day.



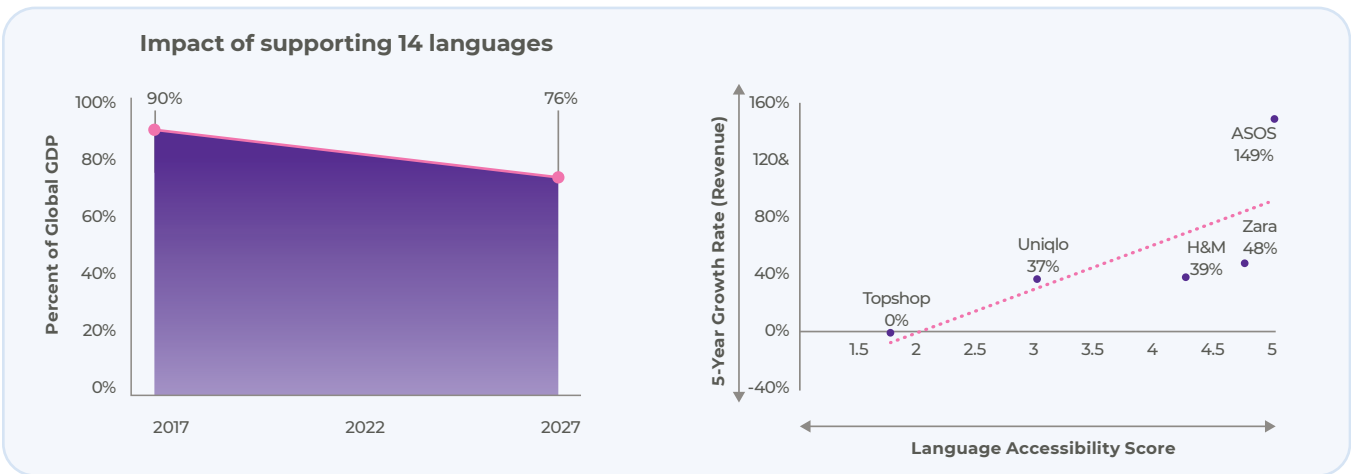
With so many companies set out to solve the same problem differently, and as features throughout these products become more ubiquitous, your brand will need a new way to gain a competitive advantage.

Translation has become a clear competitive advantage. Translation is now essential if your brand is looking to successfully enter and grow in new markets in this global economy. To reach every last person on Earth, you must provide a compelling experience designed and personalized for those users, no matter what language they speak.

And in a time when demand has slowed down to a crawl, brands can leverage this opportunity to introduce new processes and solutions to bolster their competitive advantage.

Translation Unlocks New Markets

Translation is your brand's key to unlocking new revenue opportunities. By delivering your experiences, content, and services to customers in their native language, businesses can tap into emerging markets.



According to a 2018 report published by CSA Research, in 2017 it took 14 languages to reach 90% of the world's GDP, and 52 languages to reach 99% of the world's GDP. But, in 2027 those same 14 languages will only cover 76% of the world's online population. And we are now at a time where language accessibility is a necessity for businesses to stand out among the competition and achieve their maximum potential for growth.

ASOS managed to achieve that 149% growth in five years, solely as an eCommerce platform, due to their investment in language accessibility. ASOS hosts its website in seven different languages for key markets around the world, supports 10 different payment methods, accepts 19 currencies, and provides unique offers for 12 different regions.

By extending its platform across the world, into new markets, ASOS has surpassed the growth of traditional brick and mortar retailers.

TOPSHOP

We can contrast this with Topshop, another British based fashion retailer, that has experienced zero growth over the last five years.

Their approach is less eCommerce oriented. In contrast to ASOS, Topshop translated their website into only two languages: French and German.

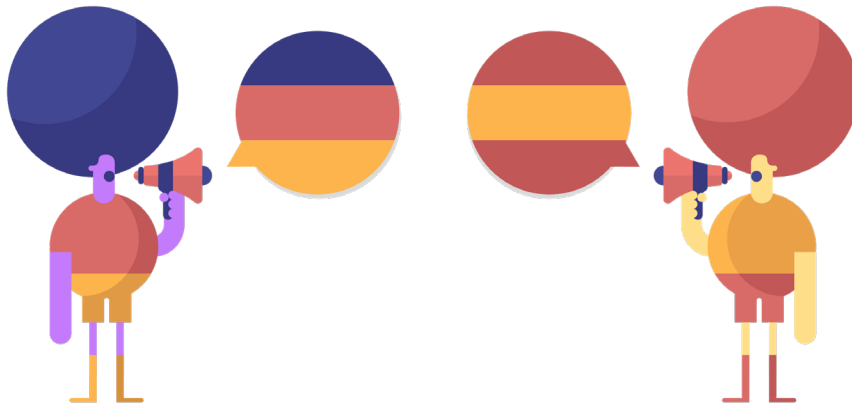
There is a clear, and positive, correlation between language accessibility and business growth, and brands with the highest level of localization have seen the highest growth.

Incorporating localization within their digital strategy and have the opportunity to make that investment at this time when the world's economy has essentially come to a halt.

Adapt Your Solutions, Adapt Your Offerings

Being global ready extends beyond the right language choice for a new market and dives deeper into several key elements of your solution: the right price, the right product offering, and the right content and the right processes to bring it all together.

To truly stand out among the competition, your brand needs to identify and incorporate these considerations to offer an experience that feels native to users across the globe.



Smartling translators are native speakers that bring meaning and breath life into content. They become cultural ambassadors for your brand, offering deep insight into the users and clients your business will be serving.

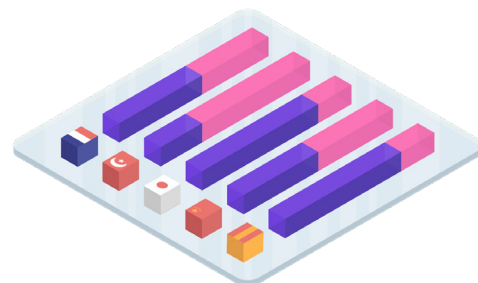
Collaborating with translators and linguistics, as well as conducting necessary market research, will enable your brand to alter and tailor products, offerings, solutions and services to the unique demands of each new region.

Invest in a Global Strategy with a Translation Management System

Translation is a center of revenue, and it's important to invest in the right technology and expertise to ensure a smooth introduction, deliver the highest quality results, and maximize this area for potential growth to deliver the highest ROI possible.

A Translation Management System (TMS) provides the necessary functionality and efficiency to deliver amazing brand experiences and content in any language.

Smartling enables you to automate, manage, and professionally translate content at the speed of life. What's more, is that Smartling continuously indexes hundreds of data points for insight to simplify the process. The more you do, the more it learns; and, this, in turn, reduces your cost over time.



1. Simplicity

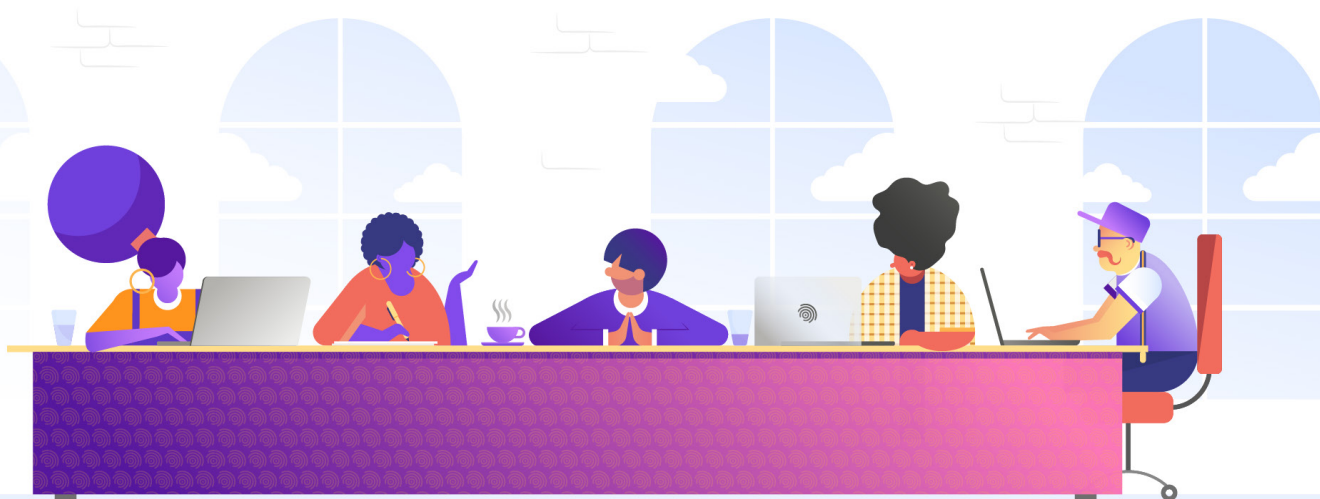
Smartling's extensive integrations enable you to seamlessly connect to your CMS, code repository, and marketing automation tools to reduce the burden of localization efforts on your team.

Content moves easily from the source to published through the platform for an optimized translation process. Save time and money and maximize your resources available while simultaneously improving quality and efficiency.

2. Visibility

One single source of truth makes it easy to track the progress of all your translation projects. Gain a bird's-eye view of the status of each project down to the individual job and even string level to always know who's working on what. Smartling users can also view any issues that have been raised by translators or editors to understand where there might be a roadblock.

Additionally, the platform can provide project cost projections based on Translation Memory usage, enabling your brand to better budget for or around translation even before you begin a project.



3. Speed

Powerful automation throughout the platform enables your team to develop agile translation workflows for an efficient process. Content is automatically pulled from the source, parsed down into strings, compared against existing translations for time and cost savings, assigned into jobs for translators to work on, translated, reviewed and edited, and pushed back to the source for publishing all done automatically.

The process of translation itself can be handled by a machine translation engine -- and Smartling will choose the best one for your job -- or professionally translated by a human translator for the highest quality results.

Professional translators work in the CAT tool within Smartling which provides the features they need to translate quickly and accurately. Linguistic assets are always available instantly, including style guides and glossaries to assist in both word and style decisions, as well as Translation Memory for time and cost savings. Translation Memory enables translators to reuse their previously translated strings. Any time that string reappears in the content, the translator can automatically apply the correct translation from the TM. Translators save time, and your brand saves money by only translating the same string once.

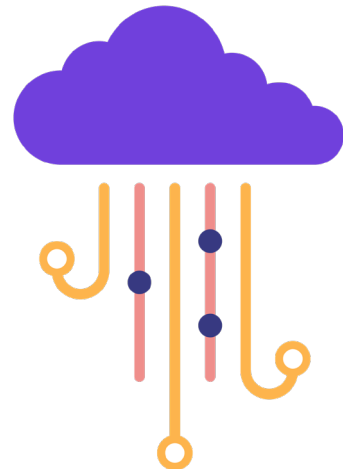
4. Quality

Smartling makes it easy to ensure that all projects meet brand quality standards. Automatic quality checks ensure that every translation is free of spelling and grammar errors before submission. These can be set up as a simple notification to warn translators of their errors, or even used to block content with errors for advancing through the translation workflow. Catch any mistakes before they even make it to the publishing step.

To really ramp up translation quality, Smartling provides translators with complete visual context in a What You See is What You Get editor. The CAT tool generates a live preview of the exact content they're working on to display how their translations appear in the final version in real-time. Translators can then make the right decisions around translation in regards to contextual elements that might influence the translation, and design constraints.

Smartling has also developed Quality Confidence Score, which enables organizations to recognize and address quality issues for all translations in real-time automatically. Smartling provides a summary of the seven key drivers that influenced the calculation of QCS for the job, including Translation Memory Leverage, issues raised, workflow steps, visual context leverage, string length, quality check errors, workflow steps, and glossary terms.

By centralizing and automating the tasks surrounding professional translation, Smartling enables brands to maximize the output of time, energy, and spending on translation and localization to deliver culturally relevant brand experiences that facilitate global growth.



Onboard in 30 days or Less

The best part is that introducing Smartling into your existing digital strategy will not require a massive time investment. When the markets are slow and demand is down, now is the right time to make the push into a global strategy as organizations have the resources and time available to invest in a new solution.

Our onboarding team will help you realize value quickly. With Smartling, a dedicated Customer Success Manager and Account Manager are focused on achieving your business objectives. You share your goals, and our team will help design a solution.

Our Professional Services team manages the integration process, ensuring the technical architecture enables you to connect your content platforms with Smartling. Their focus is to reduce your developer's involvement with localization as much as possible.

But as with any investment, we recommend businesses take the time to outline their goals and build a proper strategy for a successful implementation. Before even introducing a TMS into your tech stack, Smartling recommends a quick period of scoping:

Month 1: Outline Your Business Objectives and Acquire Buy-in

Before any solutions or technologies are seriously considered, your business will need to take the time to outline goals for the initiative and to gain internal stakeholder buy-in. If you want to be a global company, you need to be a global company at every level. It will take stakeholders from the technology teams, marketing team, product team, and even a dedicated localization team to develop a world ready solution.

Month 2: Scope Out Technologies and Partners

With clear goals outlined and company-wide support, your team can begin the process of scoping potential solutions and partners. You will want to look into both TMS platforms as well as Language Service Providers your brand will work with. It's important to find an LSP that can deliver on the promise of quality, help manage your localization process, and enables close collaboration with the translators themselves, as well as expertise and experience in your industry.

Month 3: Evaluate and Test

Once your brand compiles a list of contenders for solutions, technology and language services, the next step will be to drill down into the finer details. Seek out as many demonstrations of different platforms as possible, and engage LSPs in discussions around industry expertise, project experience, costs, hidden fees, quality management, and turn-around time. You will want to engage in a translation test to ensure that the translators can deliver up to your expectations.

Month 4: Onboarding and Implementation

It will be important to select a solution that can easily integrate into your existing tech stack. During your scoping period, you should ensure that the vendor you choose to work with supports integrations or connectors your business will need for a seamless implementation. Smartling makes it easy to integrate with all your existing content databases from marketing automation software to product information management systems and of course content management systems. Additionally, Smartling offers the easiest and fastest way to translate your website with our Global Delivery Network without the need for any developer input on your end.

Now is the Time to Get Global Ready

The beginning of 2020 has offered time for reflection and consideration. As the world's economy slows down and businesses adapt to the decrease in both supply and demand, we have a unique opportunity to look inward at our existing processes and solutions.

Now is the time for brands to take the plunge and invest in a global digital strategy. By providing a digital experience to users all around the world your business will not only drive growth in the periods of stability but will also maintain growth in periods of disruption, much like the current situation we find ourselves in.



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