

# HOW TO LOCALIZE YOUR MARKETING CAMPAIGN

**ad-adapt**

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## Adapt languages.

When localizing a campaign, you need to translate your materials. Although a large proportion of the world's population understands English, we would still advise you to translate your texts into local languages. By translating your campaign materials into local languages, you minimize the risk of customers misunderstanding your campaign or feeling alienated by words in a language that is foreign to them. By translating your materials, you also show the customers that you are willing to spend time adapting your materials to *their* needs rather than just sending out some generic campaign. Finally, customers are more likely to be affected by materials in their own language – this is probably because their mother tongue is a language in which they feel safe and at home and in which they can let their guards down.

*If you talk to a man in a language he understands,  
that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his  
language, it goes to his heart.*

Nelson Mandela

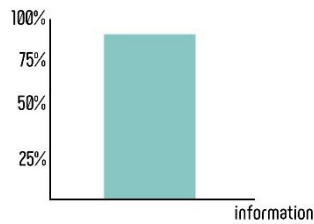
Source: Learning English – Doing Gooder Things Thread 332/31.

We suggest that you do not use a language translation tool. If you want to reap the benefits of translating your materials, you need a real person with a thorough understanding of the local culture, its social norms, its idioms, and its manner of speeches. A good translator will choose those exact words that are necessary to establish the connotations, feelings, and thoughts of your original materials. Having a translator – who knows the vernacular and regional subtleties of a language – will also ensure that you do not end up using odd, outdated expressions. Finally, a competent translator will also make sure that your campaign displays the right tone of voice and the right level of formality or informality. For instance, while Danes are generally considered very informal creatures – who will address each other using Christian names only – many Germans are much more formal and would expect you to use their surname.

## Adapt visuals.

Just like the words of your campaign need translation to secure optimal communication to customers, so do your images. If the visuals of your campaign are not recognizable and relatable to customers, they will not identify with the narrative that you are trying to tell them. However, if you use local-looking models and places, your potential customers will be much more likely to understand how relevant and necessary your product is to them and their lives. That being said you might also consider a more universal or neutral approach – using images of e.g., trains, a bowl of rice, a football etc. – but you should bear in mind that this will probably not have the same effect as a campaign tailored to fit the local culture.

**90% of all information sent to the brain is visual.**



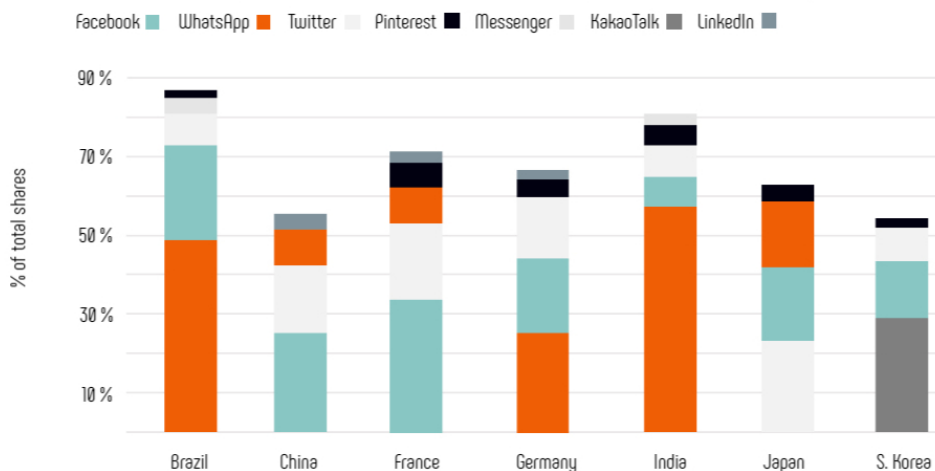
Source: M. Chhabra and J. K. K. for Social Media Marketing, Bangalore, 2018.

On a final note, we recommend that you conduct a thorough research before sending out your localized campaign. Different cultures have different norms regarding fashion, body language, symbolic content of colors, beauty standards, etc. And if you do not pay attention to these, your campaign might end up sending off a confusing or even provocative message.

### Use the right social media.

In addition to the points above, we recommend that you develop a unique website and unique social medias site for each of your local markets. And in this context, it might be worth reflecting on *which* platforms you are using in your locally adapted marketing campaigns. The platforms that are commonly used in *your* country might not be popular in other cultures. For instance, while Twitter is wildly popular in Sweden, in Denmark it is mainly a tool used by politicians and journalists. Therefore, it would not make much sense to launch a Twitter campaign in Denmark, and you would be much better off focusing on a different platform. Choosing the right platform, is a process that depends on the aim, the target audience, and the message of your campaign. Consider the age, location, interests, etc. of your target audience and do some research into which social media this group is most likely to use. If you have a number of target audiences, you might want to use several social media to reach all of your desired audiences.

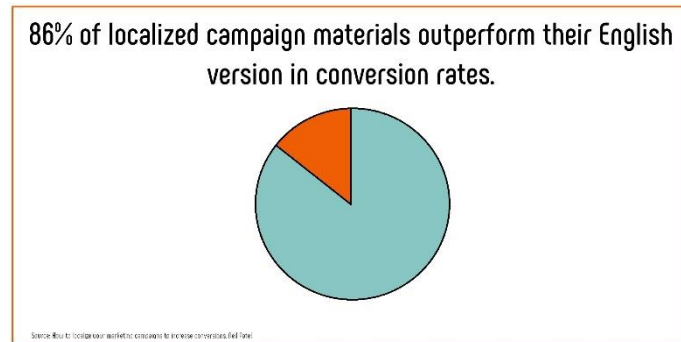
## Most popular social media platforms by country



This graph is based on a report by AddThis and show data from April 29 to May 29 2012. Source: Most popular social media platforms around the world. AddThis 2013.

## Beware of cultural context.

To summarize the above points, you could say that your product will only really succeed if your branding is on point. And your local branding is only going to be on point if you make an effort to adapt your materials to your local markets. Thus, we suggest that you do not choose the easy, quick option of developing a generalized marketing strategy, but rather that you make an individual, customized strategy for each of your local markets.



Moreover, since branding a product requires a sound knowledge of the potential buyers of the product, your company will be dependent on the cultural expertise of its local offices. When your local colleagues are trying to adapt your materials to their culture, they will need to consider such factors as religion, taste preferences, consumption habits, demographics, and pricing. For instance, the local price of your product should not merely be a case of converting currencies: rather, the price should be dependent on the buying potentiality (i.e., the average income) of your target audience.

## Brand consistency.

Although cultural adaptation is key to localization, it is crucial to note that *so is* brand consistency. Brand consistency means ensuring that your brand can be recognized by customers across all media, platforms, and countries. Thus, your campaign's logo, aesthetics and tone of voice should all have an overall recognizability to them, *regardless* of any local adaptations.

One of the main benefits of brand consistency is that it increases your brand's authority massively. If your brand's image and message change depending on the medium or market, it will seem like your brand does not even know its own identity. Consistency, on the other hand, will make customers feel that they know what your brand stands for *regardless* of context. This will increase your brand's sense of authority and allow your customers to trust your brand. Another advantage of brand consistency is that it can act as a tool to gain control over your customers' perception of your brand and what it stands for. If your audience is met by the same design and message whenever they are exposed to your brand, they will eventually begin to believe that your brand *is* what your marketing campaign says it is.

**Brands that are consistently presented are  
3 to 4 times more likely to experience  
brand visibility.**

**3 - 4**

Source: BBDO Branding Strategy Facts, August 2018.

However, maintaining brand consistency while also allowing for local adaptations, might come with some difficulties. When local modifiers are adapting your company's materials, they often have an idea of how they want to adapt the materials which is not completely in sync with your vision. This can easily result in endless communication between HQ marketers and their local modifiers. This is something to be aware of! Otherwise, you either end up spending way too much time on communicating with local modifiers, or you risk being misrepresented on local markets.

On a more general level, such issues often occur either because employees do not know their company's vision or mission – and thus have no goal to guide their work – or because executives are not fully up to date regarding their employees' current work efforts. For this reason, it is worth finding some kind of online tool that will enable a simpler and less time-consuming communication between HQ marketers and local offices. Such a tool will help you improve your internal communication as well as speed up the process of launching a new product to international markets. What's not to love?