

LIONBRIDGE

A BUYER'S GUIDE FOR LOCALIZATION SERVICES:

# 10 | STEPS TO THE PERFECT PARTNERSHIP



## YOUR ORGANIZATION IS GLOBAL



*You want to be everywhere. But your customers want you to be local. So, there's your challenge.*

**Y**ou're a **global** brand—unified, far-reaching, and consistent—and you're a **local** brand—fluent, nuanced, and familiar. How do you thrive while juggling these seemingly conflicting priorities?

### **Enter localization.**

Long gone are the days when mere translation got the job done. Pure translation can communicate the basics of one language in another—but today's brands are coming to terms with what they've suspected all along: consumers are anything *but* basic, and relationships and personalization matter more than ever. If you're depending on translation alone, you won't be successful in building relationships with customers seeking personal experiences in every corner of the world.

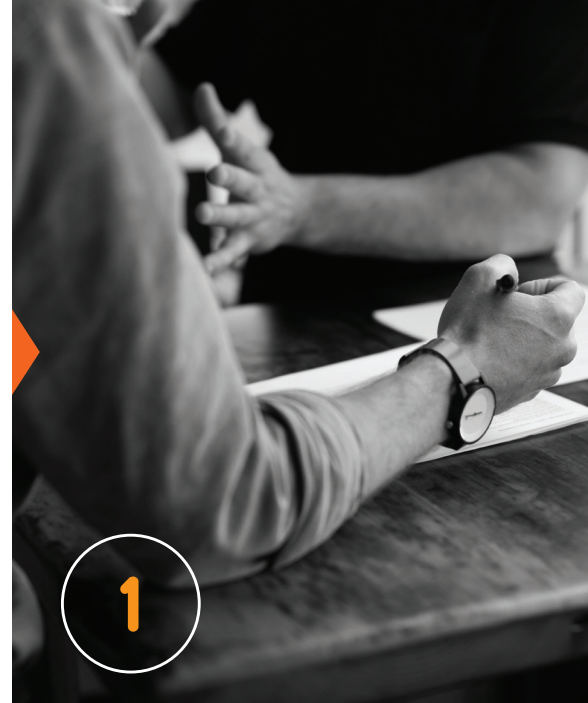
Here's why: Relationships depend on *emotion*, and triggering the emotions that result in customer loyalty varies by region, culture, and background. In short, you need to tweak your unified, consistent brand voice so it matches the local dialects and norms of each and every customer worldwide. You need localization.

**So here you are, ready to be more global—and more local—than ever before.** You've got some shopping to do. Here's your guide to knowing what to buy when it comes to localization services.

## DIG DEEP

Your localization partner is going to do a deep-dive into your business—so start by diving deep into theirs. Are they an industry-leader with 20 years of experience or a relative newcomer? Will they speak Samoan, Uzbek, or Swahili (and *all* your customers' languages)? Can they deliver on-time and on-budget—*every* time?

Ask how many languages they support. Find out whether their translator team comprises just linguists, or linguists *and* subject matter experts. Explore the backgrounds of their senior management team. Be nosy. Ask questions. Cyberstalk. **The more you know about them, the smarter your ultimate decision will be.**



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## GET THE DETAILS

At its most basic, shopping for a localization partner means understanding what services that partner provides. Go a step further.

Do they also provide special resources that meet your unique needs? Have they created dedicated technology platforms that allow them to meet those needs quickly? What kind of reporting can you expect to receive, and how will you measure their progress?

**Ask these questions before you add to cart.**

## GET THE RIGHT FIT

Make sure the localization provider is agile enough to scale up or down to meet your company's needs. Will they be able to support high-volume, quick-turn projects? Can they give you the personal care and attention you need? Make sure to clarify their allocation of in-house resources versus outsourced resources.

Ask for examples of customers of a comparable size with comparable needs. **Like Goldilocks before you, you'll want to find the provider where the fit feels just right.**



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## ASSESS QUANTITY & QUALITY

Imagine a network of thousands of in-country experts bringing your message to life in local markets. Imagine no more. Your localization partner should be able to source the linguistic and subject matter experts you need to ensure your message rings true in every target market.

Take the time to explore the global scope of your potential partner's supply chain. Understanding how they select and qualify their resources and subcontractors (and whether their use of subcontractors is transparent) can help you determine if they're a good match.

Do they have the capacity to handle your language needs? Peak seasons? Holidays? Last-minute emergencies? **Make sure to ask.**

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## GET REAL ABOUT ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Finding a localization provider that optimizes for speed, scale, and quality can be tough. Here's a secret: AI can help your potential partner keep up with your need for speed while keeping costs reasonable. It's critical that your localization partner is using (and even creating) technologies that improve speed, accuracy, and processes. (And no, that doesn't mean that they've replaced all their humans with robots.)

Are they committed to using a single machine translation software, or do they have a best-of-breed approach that allows them to tailor their process to each client's needs? Are they innovating within the translation process to maximize human translators' time while guaranteeing quality and speed? **Ask how they're using translation technologies and AI in addition to their native speakers and linguistic experts.**



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## MANAGE THEIR MANAGEMENT

Simply put, the better your localization partner's management, the easier your life will be. Start by determining if they have a dedicated vendor management team that will handle daily communication and workload.

Also verify that the management team collects project-related feedback and performance data for their subcontractors, **which will give you a good indication of whether your potential partner is focused on constant improvement—or just getting the project over with.**



## UNDERSTAND THE EVERYDAY

If you are targeting customers in multiple markets, we have news for you—you'll be spending a lot of quality time with your localization team. Before you choose a partner, understand how you will interact with them on a daily basis. How do they hand off projects and deliverables? What linguistic and technical checks do they do on the source material before the translation begins? Do they engage subject matter experts? Who will be your daily point person?

**Understanding your partner's day-to-day will give you a better sense of how well they'll mesh with—and hopefully enhance—your company's established processes.**

## ESTABLISH YOUR TERMS

Language is always evolving. Can your localization partner keep up? It's critical that you find a provider that can provide terminology creation and maintenance services. Translation style guides and terminology glossaries give localization experts critical tools to ensure consistent, engaging, branded content that reaches your customers wherever they are in the world.

**Ask for specifics about the processes—and determine how they maintain multilingual terminology.**





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## ASSURE THERE'S QUALITY ASSURANCE

Mistakes erode consumer confidence. That's why it's important to find out if your localization partner offers both linguistic and technical QA—and whether that QA is independent from production. Establish what type of quality model or standards the partner uses and how they'll share the results of their assessment with you.

Quality Assurance is part art, part science—and one of the most important things your localization partner can offer. Some providers (hint, hint: yours truly) even offer independent, impartial quality assurance services that **help drive quality improvements of all your translated content.**

## DO A FINANCIAL HEALTH CHECK

Ask direct questions to determine the general health of your prospective partner's Accounts Receivable and Accounts Payable policies, procedures, and performance. These factors are key indicators of a stable supply chain—and **major contributors to a happy, long-term partnership with your company.**



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## READY TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP?

Take our advice and use this guide on us:  
Give us a call and see how we stack up to the questions above. At Lionbridge, we build deep relationships with the biggest brands in the world, so they can build deeper relationships with their customers—and we're ready to do it for you.

LEARN MORE AT  
[LIONBRIDGE.COM](https://www.lionbridge.com)

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