Case Study 2
Translation Project Management | 2022 | Callum Walker

The LSP

You work for a boutique transcreation LSP specialising in marketing translations. You have only one office, based in Geneva (Switzerland), where the LSP’s chief executive, team of five project managers, and three technical support staff with expertise in DTP and IT, more generally, are also based. While only a small LSP, over the last ten years you have built up a strong reputation of providing excellent client-focused translation and consultancy services to meet the specialist needs of diverse corporate clients around the world.

The Client

Your client is a multinational alcoholic beverage company operating in forty countries globally. Your contact at the company is their Head of Marketing, who coordinates a team of in-house graphic designers and digital and print marketing specialists.

The Brief

The client has developed a new line of Christmas-inspired beers, with bottles and can designs using a predominantly red and green colour palette. Before the beers go on sale, the client would like to advertise its new products on large city-centre billboards around the world, and has designed five Christmas-themed designs and images each advertising one or more of the new drinks, accompanied by a slogan inspired by a well-known Christmas carol or song:

“All I want for Christmas is beer.”
“Ding dong merrily on rye.”
“It’s the most wonderful time, for a beer.”
“Brewdolph, the red nosed reinbeer.”
“We wish you a hoppy Christmas and a Happy New beer!”

They would like these billboards to be transcreated into twenty languages (predominantly European languages, but a small number of non-European languages).

Question: The client has asked for the LSP’s advice on localisation for parts of the Middle East and North Africa with a view to potential exports to the region in future. What would your expert advice be? What questions might you ask the client in turn (if any)?

There are only 36 words in total in the original source texts, but since the texts involves wordplay on Christmas carols and songs, these need to be adapted to the locale, together with appropriate adjustments to the colour palette, images, etc.

Given the creative nature of the task, the client would like – for each language – three different translators to produce their own translation/adaptation of the source texts and a brief explanation of their choices and how their translation satisfies the brief. A back-translation into English of all three translations needs to be carried out by a different translator for each language and accompanied by an explanation of any problematic elements or relevant notes on the decisions and effectiveness of the translations.

In-project Developments (1)

After the three initial translations (and back-translations) have been produced, the client will carry out an initial review of the translations to determine whether the project can progress to the next stage.
Once the translations have passed the client’s initial approval, the client will select its favourite translation of each of the five billboards for each language. The client would then like to entrust the LSP with the localisation of the visual content, with particular attention to colours, images, typefaces, and any other relevant points for consideration. This will include consultation between the LSP and/or chosen vendors and the client’s in-house marketing team to design several alternative designs of each billboard.

The original English-language design was prepared in InDesign. The chosen translations for each language will need to be inserted into the original template prior to editing other content within the design, so that between three and five versions of each billboard will be produced for testing on the target audiences.

After these versions have been produced, the client would like the LSP to arrange focus groups and/or other forms of audience reception studies to help in identifying the final design for each billboard in each language. To clarify, in each of the twenty languages, there will be between three and five versions of each of the five original billboard designs (i.e. between fifteen and twenty-five billboards to be tested per language).

**In-project Developments (2)**

Following the audience reception studies, the client has now identified the near-final billboard designs and wording for each of the five billboards in each of the twenty languages. You now need to carry out any final quality checks on the designs and content based on your in-house expertise and network of vendors and to supply five final digital packages per language (in InDesign format) to the client for printing and distribution.

**(Optional:) Risks**

What would be your response in the event of one or more of the risks below?

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<td><strong>Development</strong></td>
<td>The client is unhappy with the quality of all the translations produced in five of the target languages and would like this to be rectified as soon as possible to avoid disrupting the schedule.</td>
<td>The client’s in-house marketing team has devised two more designs with corresponding slogans which need to follow the same initial process. This needs to be completed as soon as possible so that the client can select its preferred choice.</td>
<td>The first stage of the project progresses without any complications and can move on to the next stage.</td>
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<td><strong>Risk</strong></td>
<td>When conducting research online, one of your colleagues spots confidential marketing materials belonging to the client posted on a translator forum.</td>
<td>The focus groups reveal significant cultural insensitivities in translations into one of the target languages.</td>
<td>The InDesign file for one design of billboard is corrupted and cannot be used across any of the target languages.</td>
<td>The client identifies mistakes in three specific billboard designs in one target language. The billboards have already been sent to the printers to print.</td>
<td>The client, who seems to be unaware of cultural sensitivities surrounding alcohol in predominantly Muslim countries, has asked the LSP to proceed with the localisation of the content into Arabic.</td>
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