

MULTILINGUAL MARKETING ADAPTATION

Going Beyond Translation

Key strategies to connect with culturally diverse audiences.

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Introduction

Your customers are diverse. They speak different languages, come from different cultures, and have a wide variety of preferences. It is imperative to adapt your marketing strategy accordingly, but translation is not enough. The key to truly connecting with your customers lies in marketing adaptation.

54% of people don't feel culturally represented in online ads. (Source: Facebook)

What is marketing adaptation?

It is a process of adapting your marketing content to the cultural, social, and linguistic preferences of each of your target audiences. It is about understanding that each culture has its own unique set of values, norms, stories and traditions, and tailoring your message accordingly. Marketers need to stay away from a one-size-fits-all mindset. Each cultural group needs to be approached differently.

Cultural nuances can be subtle and navigating them with finesse is essential.

What works seamlessly in one culture could turn into a colossal flop in another.

This white paper helps marketers tailor their communications and effectively resonate with diverse audiences.



The Risks of Literal Translation

Sure, literal translation can get the basic information across, but it falls short when it comes to capturing nuances and can be very risky in advertising. [Humour](#) is a good example. What is funny in one language will often not be funny in translation. It could even be offensive.

Translation is the art of:

- Converting a text from one language to another
- Staying close to the source content and ensuring the target version is exact
- Resonating the original
- Respecting the tone and intent

Even the highest-quality translation is insufficient for great multilingual marketing. Proofreading and quality assurance is a great foundation, but it is only the first step.

Marketing is about psychology. It is about charisma and charm, wordplay, and subtle cultural references. It aims to connect with people intimately and generate an emotional response.

Your well-thought-out message, when aimed at an audience from a different culture, needs more than language translation. It needs to be adapted culturally, as well as linguistically.

Marketing adaptation allows you to tailor your content to the cultural context of your target audience and make it resonate on a deeper level. You create a bond with [multicultural audiences](#) by showing them that you value their unique backgrounds and perspectives.

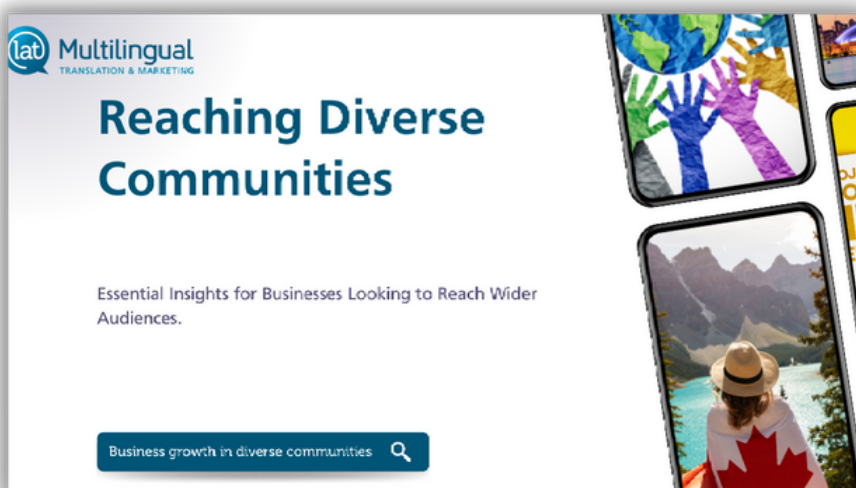
This connection leads to increased engagement, heightened brand awareness, and ultimately, higher conversions. It is a win-win situation for your brand and your customers.

Transcreation: Conveying Brand Values, Tone, and Voice

Adapting your marketing message for diverse audiences while staying true to your brand's core values requires expertise. The end product? Taglines, slogans, and campaign messages that appeal to diverse cultures while keeping the essence, tone, intent and overall strategy of your original campaign.

Skilled [transcreation professionals](#) maintain the impact of your marketing content across different languages and cultures.

Your transcreation team needs to be in the know about cultural trends, current events, and social issues that your target audience faces.



The only way to have this intimate understanding of a culture is to be part of it.

Working with a team of linguists as diverse as your target market is essential. Keeping an ear to the ground allows language professionals working in marketing to find the best way to make your content relevant and engaging. They will make sure your message is aligned with the sensitivities of your multicultural audiences.

Understanding the Culture

[Cultural nuances](#), such as food preferences, values, and humour, often shape the way people perceive and respond to advertisements. To culturally adapt marketing content requires comfort and familiarity with these cultural nuances and their larger context.

Research and Validation

During the marketing adaptation process, it is important to reflect on the values, beliefs, customs, and traditions of the target culture. Working with professionals belonging to the specific cultural group you are targeting can provide valuable insights and prevent misinterpretation. Collaboration with native speakers or cultural consultants validates your marketing content and its authenticity.

Understanding Local Laws, Customs, Sensitivities, and Traditions

Marketing adaptation requires a good understanding of local laws, customs, sensitivities, and traditions. For instance, in Quebec, there are specific [language adaptation requirements](#) outlined in [the law](#). The Office de la Langue Française (OLF) protects the use and quality of the French language. Given that this market represents over 8 million savvy customers, it is well worth the effort to engage with them in the best culturally adapted way possible. The ROI will surprise you!



Similarly, if you are [requesting translation](#) or adaptation into Spanish from your translation provider you must clarify the specific market you are targeting. Spanish varies across different regions such as Argentina, the United States, Mexico, and Venezuela, etc. - each with its own linguistic and cultural nuances.

To avoid misunderstandings, it is essential to tailor your content to each country, region, or specific community. However, you should only localize your content if it makes sense to do so. If you're uncertain about the specific region you want to target, avoid using regionalisms or references that may exclude or confuse the broader audience.

Best Practices

Here are a few tips to help you succeed in localizing your marketing campaign for a specific cultural group:

1. Share Your Marketing Plan

Share your marketing plan with your language service provider (LSP). They will need to understand your objectives, target audience(s), display ads or videos, and overall strategy. This 'big picture' approach will go a long way in helping your language team come up with the best wording and positioning.

2. Clearly Define the Target Audience

To tailor your marketing content effectively you must be clear about your target audience. Identify not only the cultural group you want to reach (e.g., Korean, Chinese, South Asian, Spanish), but also consider additional segments such as age, education, income level, and other relevant data. Based on the preferences, values, and behaviours specific to this defined market your LSP can customize your messaging to resonate with your target audience.

3. Develop a Customized Media Plan

Once adapted for the target audience your campaign needs a tailored media plan. Ask your in-market language partners to create a media buy strategy that aligns with your budget and effectively targets people on their preferred social channels and media platforms.

At LAT, our team has developed an extensive list of cultural publications and media for each target demographic, which enables us to negotiate pricing on your behalf, so that you get the best value for your budget.

Instead of spending hours researching what media relationships you should pursue, trust our team of cultural experts to handle media relationships on your behalf. Our team can secure excellent deals for your campaigns in the media sources that reach your audience.

4. Leverage In-Market Language Professionals

Accurate translation and clever adaptations are essential for effective marketing. In-market linguists will be deeply familiar with the nuances and cultural subtleties of the audience you want to engage with. Not only does your message retain its impact and authenticity, but it will also capture local trends and preferences.

If you are advised to modify your message significantly during adaptation, make sure to ask for a back translation. That way you can confidently approve (or reject) the suggestion.

In one recent example, our team was asked to translate a social media post for a client, for Victoria Day (in Canada).

Happy Victoria Day to a Quebec audience would not be well received, as it may not resonate with those who celebrate Quebecois culture and history.

Instead, we suggested Happy Patriots' Day (Bonne fête des patriotes), which is observed on the same date as Victoria Day.



Case Studies and Examples

Food delivery app Uber Eats celebrated Ramadan with digital out-of-home activations showcasing daily sundown timings in various cities. In cities like London (e.g., March 23 - 18:21) and Glasgow (e.g., March 23 - 18:43), billboards display the specific time for Iftar. The visuals featured tantalizing dishes like watermelon, fattoush, sheesh, and dates, representing popular choices among Muslim communities across the UK.



Source: MarketingBeat



On Canada's 150th anniversary, Aga Khan Foundation Canada (AKFC) showcased the country's global leadership in advancing a more peaceful, prosperous, equal, and pluralistic world for all.

An advertisement from Telus targeting Hindi-speaking audiences in Canada was popular with South Asian demographics - which account for over 1.9 million people in the two provinces of BC and Ontario.

Given how severe the competition for customers is for tech giants in Canada, Telus invests significantly in multilingual ad campaigns.



Measuring the Effectiveness

Marketers know that data is essential for making informed decisions. Data should also include insights from your 'ethnic' marketing partners. Along with tracking metrics for your mainstream content, you need to also capture data on your culturally specific posts and publications.

By incorporating this information into your reports, you'll get a complete picture of the benefits of investing in diversity marketing. You'll gain a deeper understanding of your market and will have way more leverage in engaging with your customers.

Broadening your marketing strategy to include diversity will give you a competitive edge in reaching deeper into the marketplace, which is increasingly multicultural.

Wrapping up

Marketing adaptation is a MUST.

- Educate yourself and your team about the importance of culturally adapting your marketing campaigns.
- Allocate resources and budgets to reach diverse audiences.
- Collaborate with experts in cultural adaptation and translation to ensure the highest quality in your messaging, and avoid pitfalls.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of your multicultural marketing strategy by requesting reports from your localization team.

Adapting your marketing to reach diverse audiences allows your brand to engage with more customers. It enables you to get ahead of your competitors by being present on mainstream channels like Google (ads) and YouTube with content in Hindi, Chinese, Korean, and more.

Stay ahead of the curve by reaching 71% of consumers for whom English is not their first language.

Ready to get started? [Book your free consultation.](#)

