STEPS FOR GLOBALIZING YOUR eLEARNING PROGRAM

Taking the right approach can save you time, money and deliver better results

INTRODUCTION

Doing More with Less — and Doing it Better and Faster, Too

Expanding into new countries and cultures helps your company become more competitive and relevant in a growing world economy. But it also presents new challenges for training an increasingly multicultural workforce.

As a professional with a role in developing training and eLearning materials, you may find yourself asking…

- What should we be doing to make our training more accessible to global workers?
- How long will it take?
- What will it cost?

This guide has been created to help you design and execute an eLearning globalization strategy that will help you make a great first impression with users around the world, roll out multiple programs quickly, and save money along the way. Let's get started.

SETTING EXPECTATIONS: WHEN GLOBAL REQUIREMENTS MEET UNIVERSAL REALITIES

For every project you undertake, there is an ideal outcome. But when you start planning the project, it quickly becomes obvious that expectations will have to be modified based on a universal reality called "the triple constraints of time, money and quality."

CONSTRAINT	IDEAL STATE	REALITY
Time	"We need it yesterday"	It generally takes 3-6 months to produce global versions of eLearning content
Money	"The sky's the limit"	There was barely enough budget to produce the English version
Quality	"Subtly nuanced, culturally – sensitive content in all the languages we do business in"	There simply isn't enough money or time to produce content in all variations to please everyone

By creating a globalization strategy before you get started on your next training project, you can lessen the effects of these constraints to deliver timely content that hits the mark without breaking the budget.

FOUR STEPS TO GLOBALIZING CONTENT

Much like everything else in life, a little proactive planning goes a long way toward giving you an optimum result. When you start your training development process by creating a globalization strategy first, it pays off in multiple ways:

- **You get better results, faster and at lower cost**

- **Translating the content for additional markets is also easier, faster and cheaper**

- **Update cycles are much more efficient**

So, before you dig into producing the training, take a few steps back and start your process with planning for its ultimate globalization.

In the next few pages, we'll look at strategies and tips for:

1 **Deciding what content to create and how much to adapt it**

2 **Planning ahead for globalization**

3 **Creating global-ready content**

4 **Going global with your training program**

STEP
ONE

The first step to creating a globalization plan is to develop a framework for deciding the types of content you need to adapt and what level of adaptation is appropriate based on your project goals.

Know the business drivers and performance outcomes you are working toward. Begin by defining your success criteria. Identify your business objectives – like driving revenue, reducing costs, increasing productivity and improving customer satisfaction – and then determine how globalized eLearning content will help you accomplish the goals.

Determine what kind of content will be effective for your audience. Different types of content require different levels of customization. Keep in mind that "feature rich" often means high complexity and cost, while simpler

programs can be just as effective, but take less time and money to globalize.

Assess cultural drivers that affect how people respond. Not all training formats are appropriate for all countries and cultures. Engage input from cultural natives to determine the modifications you need to make before you begin development.

Now that you have a general idea of the type of training program you want to adapt, you need to weigh it against your time, cost, and quality constraints. But, how do you determine the approach that will yield the highest quality, for the lowest cost, in the shortest amount of time?

Part of the answer lies in the level of cultural accessibility you need to achieve.

DEFINE SUCCESS CRITERIA > DECIDE ON CONTENT TYPES > GET CULTURAL INPUT > CHOOSE ADAPTATION APPROACH

Deciding How Much to Adapt

What level of cultural accessibility do you need?

A large part of the budget and timeline considerations for your project are tied up in the level of translation quality you want to achieve. In general, these fall into four categories.

1. **Global-ready content** — a solid baseline for all training content

    Content created to be "global ready" is culturally neutral, avoiding jargon, jokes, colloquialisms, culturally sensitive images and anything that might confuse a translator or non-English speaker. Global-ready should be your baseline for all training materials

2. **Translation** — basic but effective

    You may also hear this called "straight translation" because it involves turning over a piece of global-ready content to be translated directly into another language. This results in material that is more effective for non-native English speakers, since most people learn best in their own language.

3. **Customizing** — the sweet spot of accessibility and affordability

Customizing is a hybrid approach that starts with global-ready content in a modular design. The base content is translated into target languages, while specific sections are built, replaced or customized based on the linguistic and cultural requirements you've identified. This modular approach produces content that is highly nuanced and culturally relevant, and gives the development team the flexibility to identify and work around roadblocks without having to create separate training programs for every language and culture.

4. **Origination** — the gold standard for high stakes projects

    In origination, cultural natives design and build the content from scratch. This approach delivers the highest level of quality, but is also the most time-consuming and costly. It is appropriate for projects where outcomes are critical and the subject matter is highly nuanced.

    Identifying the level of adaptation you need to meet your project goals is key to the success of your globalization program.

TWO

Plan Ahead for Globalization

Now that you know what type of content you're going to create and how much you're going to adapt it, you're almost ready to start planning your training program. But first, it's helpful to familiarize yourself with the market requirements of your training. This will allow you to build a global-ready program and avoid stumbling blocks later in the process.

Instructional strategies: Learning styles and standards are the most difficult elements to translate across cultures. Be sure you understand the cultural and legal factors surrounding the learning environment in your target cultures.

Content: Make sure the content elements will be appropriate and relevant for all audiences, also accounting for cultural and legal differences between countries.

Languages: Your target language may have different character sets and text orientation than English.

This will affect your design, layout and even program length. It will also affect subtitling or dubbing if you are planning on using video.

Technology: Make sure the technologies you are planning to use are compatible with regional IT capabilities, like available bandwidth and end-user devices.

Assessment and feedback strategies: Cultural and legal differences apply here, too. Your globalization partner and the HR department of your in-country office can be a great resource for identifying possible issues.

Once you understand how these factors will impact your project, you should identify the global team that will help you develop and execute your training program

Building a Truly Global Core Team

When it comes to creating global content that truly resonates with local audiences, you need to rely on allies within your target countries to inform and guide the process.

Identifying and building this team early is a key element of success. A typical global team lifecycle includes the following steps:

1. **Identify country-based champions**
2. **Be realistic and specific about responsibilities and expectations**
3. **Develop a disciplined communication plan and timeline**
4. **Hold your local champions accountable**
5. **Shower your champions with awards and recognition for their efforts**

If you are working with an outside globalization partner, make sure they have an established local project team — not just a sales office or translator — to support your project from beginning to end.

Selecting a Globalization Partner

Typical Learning & Localization Process

TRAINING PARTNERS			TRANSLATION PARTNERS
STRATEGY	**PLANNING**	**DEVELOPMENT**	**TRANSLATION**
Develop the training and strategy objectives.	Plan content, delivery and assessment.	Develop course materials in English. Once completed, share final files with translation company.	Multilingual development starts.

BUDGET INCREASES	MODIFICATIONS	CRITICAL ERRORS
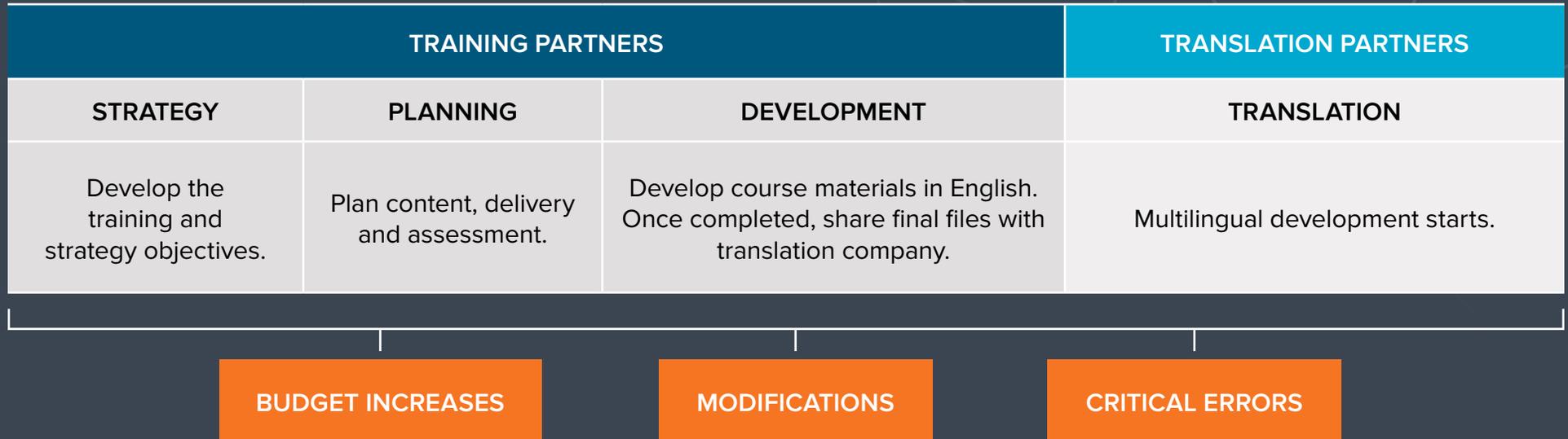
Make Your Learning Vendor A Partner from the Start

| TRAINING PARTNERS			TRANSLATION PARTNERS
STRATEGY	**PLANNING**	**DEVELOPMENT**	**TRANSLATION**
Develop the training and strategy objectives.	Plan content, delivery and assessment.	Develop course materials in English. Once completed, share final files with translation company.	Multilingual development starts.

THREE

Create Global-Ready Content

Now that you've done all your background research and put together your globalization team, it's time to start actually producing your base version of global-ready content.

As we saw earlier, creating global-ready content simply means creating content that can be translated easily into other languages and cultures. This ultimately reduces translation complexity, costs and timelines, enhances results for non-native speakers, and improves the overall usability of your content.
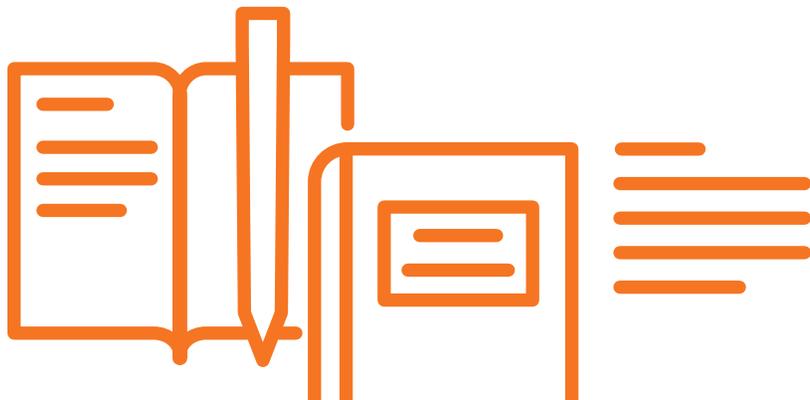
Creating global-ready content starts with:

- **Ensuring that your writing is simple and straightforward.**

- **Eliminating culturally-specific references.**

- **Using culturally neutral and flexible design elements so you can accommodate different character sets and text orientations.**

- **Making special considerations for audio and video production.**

Let's take a look at some of these elements in greater detail.

Language

When your content team begins writing with globalization in mind, the result is clear, concise, and grammatically correct source material that cuts translation costs and timelines and improves the quality of the finished product.

Specifically, writers should:

- **Write short, simple sentences in an active voice**
- **Avoid noun strings with multiple modifiers**
- **Avoid abbreviations and acronyms**
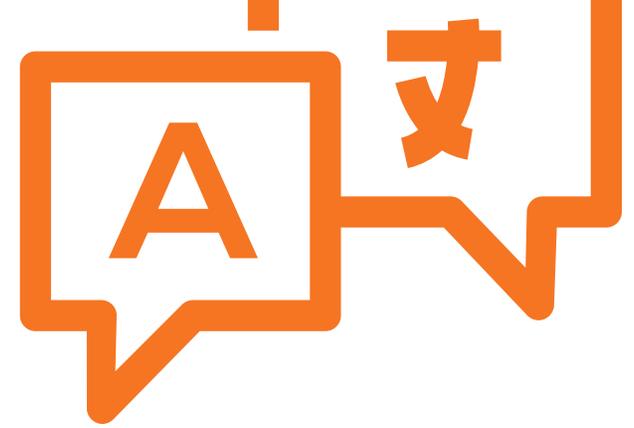
- **Avoid idiomatic or colloquial language, jokes and puns that may completely stump translators and confuse non-native speakers**
- **Use a glossary and style guide to improve consistency and avoid confusion of terms**

It is important to keep in mind that global-ready language is neither "boring" nor "dumbed-down." Using these techniques will help you create controlled and regulated content that not only makes it easier and less costly to translate into other languages, but also improves the usability of your training for English speakers as well.

Global-Ready Language

Avoid abbreviations and acronyms, especially client-specific vs. industry-specific terms:

NA:

Not applicable?　　　Numerical aperture?　　　Not available?　　　Sodium?

Avoid idioms, sports analogies and plays on words:

Hit the mark　　　Cover all the bases　　　On the same page

Style guides and corporate glossaries drive consistency and enable faster, cheaper and more accurate translations.

Cultural Considerations

Cultural references are such a natural part of the way we communicate that they can slip into training content unnoticed — that is, until the globalization process begins.

Avoiding culturally-specific references such as sports analogies may be obvious, but more subtle cultural differences, such as meanings ascribed to colors and symbols, regulatory and legal issues, certification standards, and legal and financial considerations are much harder to guard against and require in-country expertise.

Having your training culturally assessed for your target markets by your in-country SME or globalization partner is an important step that can increase credibility and acceptance of the finished product, as well as help you avoid potential rework.

Avoiding Culture Clash

The various connotations of red in other cultures

RED = WARNING!

COUNTRY	RED SYMBOLIZES
Japan	Anger, Danger
Egypt	Death
African countries	Blasphemy, Death
India	Procreation, Life
China	Happiness

Avoid culturally-specific references

The size of a football	What do you call this?		
Which football are you referring to?	Screen	Monitor	Display

Graphics

When most people think of translation, they think of words. But graphics need to be carefully considered as well — both how to create them to streamline the translation process, and how to avoid offending or confusing your target audience with inappropriate or insensitive images.

Using graphics to streamline your project

Since a picture is worth a thousand words, showing vs. explaining reduces word counts and, therefore, the time and expense of your project. However, if you incorporate words into your graphics, you will want to create the files in such a way that it is easy to recreate the graphics with captions in the target language.

Selecting culturally-sensitive images

At the same time, it is important to understand the significance of the symbols, pictures and colors you use in your materials. For example, images of hands, feet and other body parts can be offensive, as well as images that show animals in human roles.

Make sure that the graphics for your source materials are easy to work with and culturally neutral. This will save you a great deal of expense in reworking the graphics for your global versions.

Global-Ready Graphics

General graphics tips:

Use globally accepted symbols

Choose colors carefully

Avoid using body parts in graphics

Successful screen captures

Make sure the software you are taking screenshots from is available in all languages

Document the IT set-up for screen capture for your globalization team

Check the cost of licenses for language versions

Layered graphics vs. flat graphics

Make text editable using layered graphics

Avoid text in graphics; instead create numbered callouts and legends

Ensure fonts support all languages

Allow for text expansion

Expansion and Space Constraints

In some languages, translated text can be as much as 30 to 35 percent longer than the source text.

If you don't plan ahead for this shift, it could result in a total reworking of the layout.

Consider expansion when planning course size and structure as well as when writing copy and creating graphics. Design templates should be designed with text expansion in mind.

Example of space expansion and constraints

FRENCH	U.S. ENGLISH
À props de Pristine	About Pristine
Séminaires Pristine	Pristine Seminars
Centres de Formation	Training Centers
Performance	Performance
Offres Spéciales	Special Offers
Communiques de Presse Dans Les Medias	In the Media
Témoignages	Testimonials
Liens Financiers	Financial Links
Librairie	Books

Audio and Video Production

If your eLearning materials are going to include audio and video, you have multiple options for globalizing the content.

Based on your protocol for determining the best translation strategy, which we looked at earlier, you may wish to opt for anything from straight subtitles to varying levels of voice-overs, dubbing and/or lip syncing.

A few tips to ensure the best outcome:

- **Limit the number of human characters to reduce costs**

- **Write scripts to the same global-ready standard as other documents**

- **Let the production team know you plan to globalize; they can use globalization-friendly production methods that simplify adding subtitles, syncing audio to on-screen text and maintaining the consistency of spoken to on-screen text**

- **Use native speakers for voiceover talent. Talent can be either professional or non-professional as long as they are native speakers.**

- **Produce scripts and provide sample voice tracks for in-country review.**

Options for Globalizing your eLearning

SUBTITLES

Leverage our professional translation services for your video subtitling needs and receive a captioned MP4 in your selected language.

VOICEOVER

Our experts transcribe your video and convert it into a fluid and authentic voiceover. Videos are returned in MP4 format with muted source audio.

THE WORKS

Experience a service that goes way beyond basic translation. Transform your video to suit any global market with onscreen text translation in addition to professional voiceover talent. Videos are returned in MP4 format with muted source audio.

Finding the Right Technology Tools to Support Globalizing Content

As we've seen, there is a lot to keep in mind when creating global-ready text, graphics and video. Using the right technology tools can make the process much easier. Some features to look for include the ability to:

1.
Easily update look and feel

2.
Separate content from presentation

3.
Support multiple character sets

4.
Import/export files for localized versions

5.
Adjust the page layout for text expansion

6.
Use wikis and online collaboration tools to communicate with in-country SMEs

STEP

FOUR

Go Global with your Training Program

At this point, you will have a culturally-neutral, global-ready eLearning program, and a team or partner lined up to help you globalize it for the various languages you are targeting.

Before you hand it off to your team, set them up for success by:

Creating a "Global Training Checklist" that includes:

- Team roles and responsibilities
- Expectations and assessment factors
- Administrative and billing guidelines

Preparing and passing along comprehensive "translation toolkits" such as:

- Instructions
- Style guides
- Glossaries
- Translation memory databases
- Reference materials

Using an industry standard translation environment

Documenting and maintaining your virtual world structure

Selecting Tools to Support Global Content Development

1

Translation Memory

Effective use of a translation memory database is the most cost-effective way to ensure consistent translations. Look for a sophisticated, cloud-based translation memory engine that delivers high-quality, consistent translations, while reducing redundancy and enhancing efficiency.

2

Translation Management Systems

A translation project's success is a function of the management platform you have in place. Look for a partner that uses an online translation management portal with plenty of productivity-enriching features to help you deliver global content more cost-effectively, while getting real-time project visibility and ongoing enterprise reporting with minimal administrative and IT burden.

3

Automated/Machine Translation

When you're translating large volumes of content in a short timeframe, on an even shorter budget, automated translation (also called machine translation) offers a low-cost alternative to human translation. For the best cost/quality ratio, look for a partner with the resources to develop a custom translation environment that can include machine translation in combination with other translation methods for an outcome that meets your requirements and budget.

Conclusion

Planning ahead for globalization is critical to ensuring you get the highest quality outcome in the shortest timeframe, while keeping costs under control. When you need training materials that will make a meaningful impact on your global workforce, success means starting every project by creating global-ready content as well as selecting partners and tools that can help you automate and streamline the global training development process.

Contact us today to learn more or to speak with a global training expert.

Lionbridge is the only training company in the world that can offer training design, development and localization services all under one roof. This highly efficient focus translates into streamlined costs and the delivery of impactful learning content worldwide. We have the capabilities to help you globalize existing content or we can design and develop content from start to finish.

State-of-the-art global training and development solutions from Lionbridge both enlighten and empower your audiences to use, sell and support your company's products and services.

Since 2006, Lionbridge has been named a Top 20 Training Outsourcing Company by TrainingIndustry.com

About Lionbridge

Lionbridge enables more than 800 world-leading brands to increase market share, speed product adoption and effectively engage customer in local markets worldwide. We provide technical documentation, labor time, warranty and service information development and validation, training development, engineering services, translation, and application testing solutions that ensure global brand consistency, local relevancy and technical usability across all touch points of the customer lifecycle.

Based in Waltham, Mass., Lionbridge maintains solution centers in 28 countries.

LEARN MORE AT LIONBRIDGE.COM/TRAINING

Lionbridge