



Step-by-step guide to effectively localize training content



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Introduction

Enterprise companies today often operate in multiple countries across the world. If not, many will work and interact with companies in other locations for both economic and technical reasons. As a result, companies are having to learn how to operate with a more diverse workforce. Typically, corporate offices are responsible for formulating standardized processes, policies, procedures, and more to share with employees in the different countries. This is where Learning and Development (L&D) teams often come across the biggest struggles. Many teams have taken to e-learning to meet their training requirements, but the larger challenge arises when trying to get through to and access a workforce that has a different language and culture from that of the larger corporate office. Often, a centrally created e-learning course fails to bring the expected return on investment to those in other locations. To cope with this, **localization** is an obvious solution to effectively permeate knowledge to these learners.



The learning principles that apply to young learners are equally relevant to an adult learner. People are more engaged, learn faster, and with a higher rate of knowledge retention when content is provided in their preferred languages and follows similar cultural practices and expectations. Organizations choose to localize their e-learning to address the specific expectations of their employees. By localizing e-learning programs, you can effectively neutralize linguistic and cultural barriers that are often present with traditional e-learning approaches. Localization also makes it possible to create consistency so that all employees, regardless of their respective language or culture, receive the same message and instructional content. When your e-learning training courses promote a sense of diversity and inclusion, everyone gets empowered in the desired direction. This, in turn, has a positive impact on the return on investment of the course.

To summarize, localization requires content to be created to resonate with the target audience. As a result, it enhances engagement and knowledge acquisition allowing for better retention and application of learning to real-life scenarios.

With a better understanding of the importance of localization, let us dive into what it means and how to start localizing learning content effectively.

Chapter 1

What does e-learning localization imply?

It is important to make the distinction between translation and localization. E-learning localization is a more comprehensive adaptation of learning content to the local cultural context to truly engage the target audience in specific location. Translation, on the other hand, is merely focused on changing only the language rather than the structure.

Language and culture are intertwined. Every language has a unique cultural identity and value system embedded in it. Hence, to promote learning, it is beneficial to localize e-learning content by not only translating it, but also embedding cultural elements into it. While grammar and structure are important for translations, cultural elements incorporated in the training can improve the usability and retention of the e-learning content. The availability of localized e-learning training content to a linguistic and culturally diverse workforce should be the objective of all L&D leaders with a futuristic vision.

Additionally, localization involves adapting regulations, legislations, or compliance requirements of specific regions to make it truly accurate.

Difference between Translation & Localisation

Language Oriented	Translation	Localization	Culture Oriented
Changes the Syntax			Region Specific
Neutral to cultural Differences			Consider Cultural Needs
Suitable for Technical Subjects			Suitable for all subjects

E-Learning Localization - Evelyn Learning Systems

Chapter 2

Key Advantages of Localization

There are several advantages to localizing e-learning content. This is not only in the short-term but also in the long-term. Below, we have outlined a few of these benefits that further support the importance of localizing e-learning content:

1. Only one “master course” needs to be created to get started

When thinking about localization, it is important to note that there only needs to be one standardized course created to get started. This can be known as the “master course” that can then be adapted and localized. This course, however, should follow some standard procedures that we will discuss later in the e-book.

2. Relatable content allows for better retention

Content made available in the local language and embedded with appropriate cultural cues is more likely to resonate with the target audience. It enhances engagement and knowledge acquisition which, in turn, allows for better retention and application of the knowledge.

3. Cost-effective

As there is only one master course that is created centrally, the cost in creating content is incurred only once instead of working with external parties to create a course for each location individually. Of course, this is dependent on the method of localization you choose to use. We will dive into these later in the e-book.

4. Uniform messaging in the content

Localization ensures consistent messaging across teams worldwide. International best practices can be implemented along with local regulations and procedures, but the overall messaging can remain the same.

Chapter 3

Best practices to localize e-learning content

To effectively implement localization in your organization, it is important to consider a few factors to provide the best learning experiences and stay within budget. Below we have outlined a few of these best practices:

Planning for localization

Localizing training should not be an afterthought. It needs to be considered when the overall strategy for course creation is being developed. Planning for a “master course” should be taken care of first, then localization should follow shortly after. While planning, it is also important to consider the local compliance regulations and rules as they can differ depending on the location. Lastly, be mindful of the target audience and their learning needs to ensure the best learning experiences.

Globalization

It is the design and development of an e-learning product that enables seamless localization for target audiences that vary in culture, religion, or language. Globalization, in this case, refers to the design of the course such that content can be displayed and used by learners across the globe in multiple languages and cultures. To achieve globalization, developers must allow for the ability to display special characters used in many other language alphabets. It is also important to consider the style of standard information such as dates, addresses, units of measurement, and more. For example, some countries use the date format “day/month/year,” while others use “month/day/year.”

Transcreation in relation to translation

Simply translating content into a new language may not always convey the same message. Some languages may use a different tonality or wording for a certain message. If the culture of the target audience is very different from that of content development, it is wise to choose transcreation over translation. This is a combination of both translation and localization. A correctly trans-created message evokes similar emotions and carries the same implications in the target language as it does in the original language.

Keeping these three points in mind when defining the overall planning strategy, there are still a few other elements to keep in check when starting to create the content:

1. Content

The tone of the narrative, examples, case studies, underlying values, idioms, colloquial expressions, connotations, and other nuances of the content should be customized for the target audience and their social structure. For example, a scenario showing a customer care executive greeting a customer in France will be significantly different from how a customer care executive would greet a customer in Japan. The objective of the meeting, however, would essentially remain the same. It is then clear that a mere translation of text in English to French or Japanese would not suffice and will not elicit the desired response in the learners in these different countries.

2. Graphical User Interface (GUI)

The GUI should consider the wordiness of the specific language in which the content is being translated, as some languages take up more space than others. The placement of navigation buttons and the icons in the layout should be considered.

3. Multimedia

It is important to also adapt media elements such as images, videos, subtitles, and accents to the target audience. A video created for a French audience might not resonate as much with an American audience.

4. Create a style guide

The creation of a style guide is an essential step to standardize everything related to your brand identity and design standards.

5. Identify important text elements

In the initial stages, identify any important acronyms or specific terms that cannot be translated into other languages.

6. Create focus groups

Focus group testing is recommended at various stages of localization to ensure the localized e-learning courses are culturally appropriate.

7.

Finalize the master course first

Do not start localization until the master course content has been reviewed and finalized. There should not be any additional editing taking place while localization is in progress.

8.

Create checklists

Create a checklist on how the master course content is designed to minimize the number of reviews needed. Thus, saving both time and money.

9.

Consider technicalities

All source files must be easily editable. Subtitles should be overlaid in the video and not burned. There should also be enough white space in the content to allow for expansion in the target language.

Chapter 4

How to select the most effective and budget-friendly method for localization

Once the master course content is almost finalized, it is important to develop a framework for your localization strategy. The chosen method needs to deliver on cost efficiency, timeliness, degree of control, and pre-decided parameters of localization. It should provide the best value within your budget and timeframe to maximize your return on investment. The choice is highly dependent on striking the right balance between cost, available timeframe, quality, and scalability.



There are several ways to localize learning content. Often, it is a matter of deciding whether content will be produced externally or internally. Below, we have outlined a few of the methods and discussed the pros and cons of each:

Outsourcing

Many agencies with varied capabilities offer their services for localizing your e-learning content. These usually have a team of either multiple language experts as regular employees or freelancers to help with localizing content. Companies opting for outsourcing typically have a larger budget or do not have any in-house talent to commit to this project in a meaningful and dedicated manner. On the positive side, the company can achieve larger, smoother localization and scaling up through outsourcing if done effectively. This, however, comes with a compromise on control over the process. There will often be extensive exchange along with multiple rounds of reviews and updates.

Additionally, to some vendors, the scope of the work is only to translate all text. They may not consider the other factors that were highlighted as important points to keep in mind earlier in the e-book such as cultural cues or tonality. Without taking these into account, it can further prolong the process of localization and put the project in jeopardy.

More importantly, linguist specialists may neither have the domain knowledge of the business nor the awareness of the cultural and social context of the target country. Hence, they may not be able to localize the content in the true sense. As a result, the organization would be required to send the localized content to the target country for review. This could easily result in additional costs and missed timelines.

Outsourcing learning content can take a few different forms as well. We have outlined such models below:



a. Working with external freelancers

This is a method of outsourcing that works well when the project is not too big and only one language is involved. This strategy can be effective in a case where there is not a significant cultural difference involved. It will also help if it is simple and straightforward content that does not require input from others. This mode, however, is difficult to scale and largely depends on guidance from the project manager.



b. Language Service Provider (LSP)

LSPs are also an option to consider if you are looking to outsource localization. The advantage of LSPs is that it is easily scalable and can handle multilingual requirements. This option, however, can be both costly and time-consuming while also giving you very little control over the process. It requires multiple rounds of reviews to ensure that messaging is consistent and not misinterpreted. For example, in a localization effort for a sales pitch, Schweppes mistranslated "tonic water" as "toilet water" and wondered why sales went down.

Another hurdle of this method is the agencies often will not change the examples, case studies, or align the regulations or compliance requirements of the target countries. As a result, this requires more research to be done by the internal content team along with the target country team. This can create challenges with localization when working with legal, compliance-related or technical training content.

A final limitation is that, when working with agencies, you are probably not going to have direct contact with your translators. You will instead be working with an account manager who mediates between your team manager and the translation team. This can further prolong the process and lead to miscommunication.



c. In-house editors with outsourcing

A final method of outsourcing localization is through in-house editors working closely with external agencies. This method is often quite costly and time-consuming. As an advantage, the dedicated internal review team maintains an oversight of the whole

process and can quickly inform the outsourcing team about the technical, compliance, and legislative requirements. The in-house editors contribute effectively by changing examples, case studies, and aligning the legislative and compliance requirements with the help of the target country's content team. These in-house editors can be directly working from the target country or provide their input to the centralized content creation team for implementation.

In-house Localization Strategy

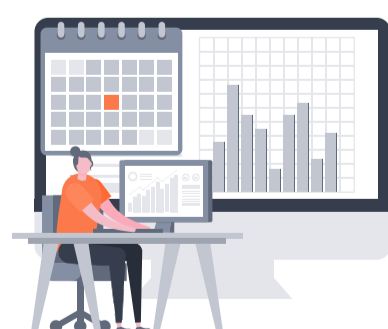
Localizing learning content completely in-house is a strong alternative to outsourcing. This strategy finds favor with companies who like to have full control of the content while keeping the costs of localization low. The best people to go to in the business for localization are the in-house subject-matter experts (SMEs). They have complete domain knowledge of the business processes to take advantage of and are well versed in the most common challenges. This method allows for complete transparency over the process. Furthermore, it allows for both collaboration and support within the organization that allows for better results. Additionally, this strategy scores high on cost-effectiveness and agility. On the contrary, sometimes there are few SMEs in the central team who are likely to be multilingual or have authentic localization knowledge. In such cases, the time and resource burden can quickly pile up if not managed well. As a result, the 'Go Global' dream of the organization can fall out of pace.

Below, we have outlined a few options for in-house localization efforts. It is important to consider both the allocated budget and the complexity level of localization required by your organization when thinking about these options.



a. Machine Translation and Speech Recognition

This is a good option if you are working with a limited budget. The quality of online automated translations has improved recently, and it is constantly evolving. Services like Google Translate and Microsoft Translator, driven by Artificial Intelligence and neural networks for machine translation along with text to speech technology, are fast approaching the quality levels of human expertise. The trade-off will be in adapting to the cultural cues. The translations coming from these services may be too literal, so critical review will be required. Only organizations working with very simple, straight-forward, and culturally neutral content should consider this option.



b. Authoring tools/LMS/CMS

There are several full-featured and budget-friendly e-learning platforms available on the market. These provide some of the functions currently performed by engineers to re-assemble localized pieces of content into a full-functioning module. These features include capabilities of sub-title insertion, synchronization of new audio, and

even some accessibility functions for collaboration and co-authoring. The challenge, however, appears in terms of the special training required to use the software effectively and efficiently. Usually, it is a complex and time-consuming process undertaken by dedicated instructional designers. Since the instructional designers are not SMEs, localizing specific content may require the intervention of SMEs from the target country. The time required for human interventions to review, incorporate feedback, and fix substantial errors can greatly increase. These additional steps add layers in the process of localization, increasing the turn-around time substantially. Adopting this option means organizations need to consider a long development road ahead. So, while purchasing the authoring tool may be a one-time investment, it is important to consider the additional cost incurred on the training involved and the long development time.

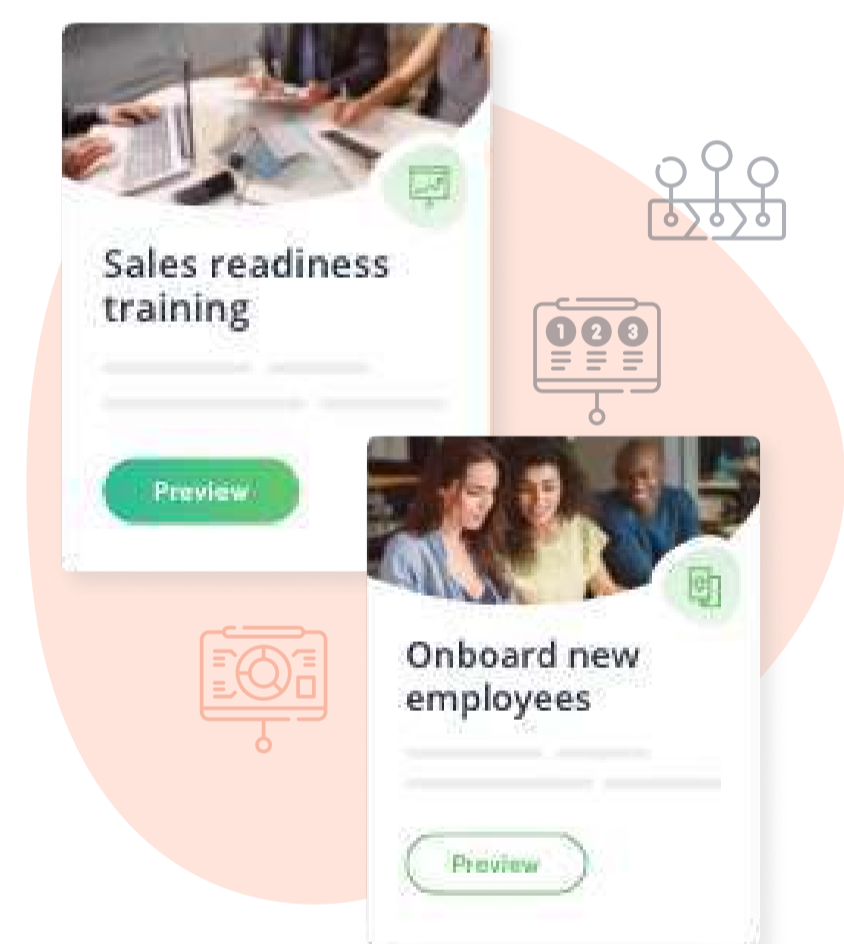
Now, the question remains, with so many options available with their own sets of pros and cons, is there a way to minimize the cons and maximize the pros? Furthermore, is there a way to keep the costs and turnaround time low, but the quality and efficiency of localization substantially high? There is indeed a way, and we discuss this below:

Chapter 5

Using an authoring solution to localize training: how does it work?

As discussed earlier, large companies today are operating all over the world. With various locations, each regional team must be trained with localized learning content specific to their language and culture. Quite often, the L&D team at the head office makes the content and then localizes it specifically for a particular region before sharing it with the respective regional team for implementation and execution. During this process, however, there are multiple rounds of file exchange taking place between various partners, regional teams, and other key stakeholders. This back and forth is inefficient and results in unnecessary hours being lost. Curious what the best solution is to these challenges?

The most effective way to localize learning content in-house is to have an authoring tool that can easily facilitate real-time collaboration and co-authoring efforts but does not require extensive training. With the use of a powerful and user-friendly authoring tool, L&D can seamlessly involve the regional teams to help create localized content. It is important to ensure that this regional team comprises of employees or local L&D who are the real experts in their own regions. They are the best to not only know the local challenges but also ways of handling them. By empowering these local employees to generate the content, it is often well-received. In addition, it is easier to maintain and can be created in a faster manner.

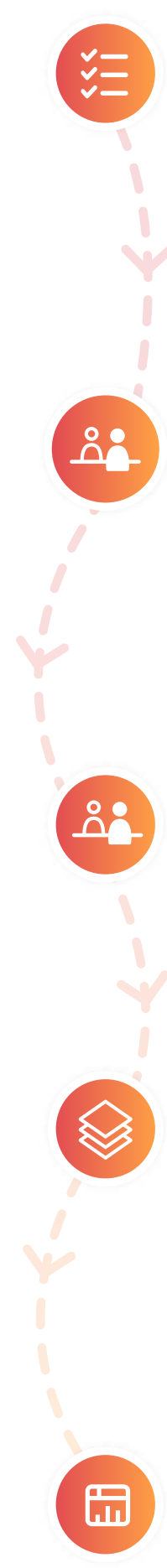


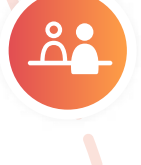




Easygenerator is one such efficient and user-friendly authoring tool that offers easy-to-use co-authoring and collaboration features. It has become a leader in the space of localization of e-learning courses due to its intuitive design and collaboration features.

Additionally, it has a rich variety of pre-made templates, so creating the master course does not have to be done from scratch.

Once a master course is created, there are a few simple steps to follow that will allow for high-quality localized content to be available to regional teams in no time.

Below we have mentioned these steps:

- 
-  It is important to keep track of which courses need to be localized. It can easily be done in Easygenerator by creating a duplicate of the master course in one click and add a tag for “localization”. Other members of your team will be able to quickly identify which course to use and localize.
 -  To share the work with the right people in the specific regions, you will need to involve multiple editors and make sure they can only access what you need them to change. In our tool, this is what we call co-authoring management. Easygenerator makes it easy to assign one or more authors to a course manually, or by uploading a .csv file.
 -  Co-authors can further duplicate the course to make it specific to their location. This way, authors can have access to both the master course and their own copy. This will allow for easy reference and ensure that nothing gets lost in the localization process.
 -  Each region-specific course can then be localized by the respective author. As mentioned, it is important that nothing gets lost in the localization process. To make this easier, Easygenerator allows authors to make a copy of the block of text that needs translating. This ensures that the original text can be viewed while translating and interpreting.
 -  Not only the specific content of the course needs to be localized, but also the buttons and interface of the course. Easygenerator’s interface has been translated to over 30 languages, making this process as easy as possible. After the course is translated, authors can switch to the interface language of their choice.

In case you require an outside agency to do the translation, Easygenerator has built-in functionality to export the copy of your master course content as an XLIFF file. After it is translated by the agency, it can as easily be imported back into the course. A copy of this translated file can then be assigned to co-authors, as mentioned in the previous section, for the purpose of proofreading. Reviewers can easily comment to add their feedback. All of this takes place within Easygenerator, online and in real-time.

In the present times of Microlearning, specific content in multiple languages can be made available with quick turnaround times. Easygenerator’s intuitive design stems from our home-grown concept of Employee-generated learning. By empowering employees in the business with specific knowledge for the target audience, there is more efficiency, effectiveness, and quality in the process of localization. Our goal is to empowering employees to create more content, placing ease-of-use at the core of our product.

Our solution has been thought to fit and enhance your existing learning ecosystem, thus making it equally as easy to export the desired employee-generated content in various formats (Word document, XLIFF, and Text file), localize it by collaborating and co-authoring with in-country SMEs, then upload the files back into an e-learning course with minimal effort. Throughout this process, the original master course will remain unaltered and can still be available in the original language.

Chapter 6

Insights: The cases of Danone and Sodexo

As experts in the field of L&D, we do not give advice lightly. Sodexo and Danone, two renowned international organizations have been faced with these exact challenges. After multiple attempts at outsourcing, they found success by localizing their learning content using Easygenerator. Here is a summary of their distinct journeys:



In fast-paced, competitive industries like food service and facilities management, training employees is a challenge. It's even more of a challenge for a company the size of Sodexo. The workforce at Sodexo consists of people from over 130 different nationalities. Marion Moulin, L&D Program Coordinator for Global Learning and Development at Sodexo, found her team struggling to keep up with the high volume of regional training requests.

Challenge

Regional requests can be highly specific. With a diverse workforce as well, local culture and language differences needed to be considered. Often, the sheer volume of requests left the team at a loss, and translation of materials was an expensive, time-consuming process. To meet regional training needs, Marion and her team tried fulfilling requests at the global level. But, given the large number of training requests and the limited capacity of the global L&D team at Sodexo, Marion and her colleagues were unable to fulfill essential tasks like course maintenance and preparing "just-in-time" training materials. The team knew they had a company filled with SMEs who had specific knowledge but needed an efficient way to share it with a larger audience.

Solution

In search of an authoring solution that would enable employees to easily and quickly create their own localized training materials at the regional level, Sodexo turned to Easygenerator. By putting course creation in the hands of SMEs, courses could be immediately ready to use without the lengthy translation and localization processes or working with external agencies. And with standardized templates, consistent and quality courses could be created at the local level without having to go through a central department. Marion recognized Easygenerator as a simple solution for creating fast, on-demand localized training materials. Employees had a simple tool at their disposal for authoring and publishing e-learning, enabling those with the expertise to share their knowledge with colleagues.

Outcome

Since adopting Easygenerator, the global L&D team at Sodexo no longer needs to decline requests for local training materials. Now, employees can use Easygenerator to create just-in-time, localized learning content. Regional teams at Sodexo have been able to build learning modules 22 times faster than using instructional designers or external agencies and 42 times cheaper. With such savings, Marion and her team have saved both time and money to add value elsewhere in the company.



Danone is a large multinational company with employees in 55 countries. Given the diversity of languages, cultures, and products, there are a variety of different learning needs across these various locations. Frédéric Hebert, Head of Digital Learning at Danone, is responsible for ensuring that all employees get the proper training. Frédéric must provide tools to employees that allow them to develop both personally and professionally. To fulfill all learning needs and provide the proper training, he had to find an innovative way to generate learning content.

Challenge

Frédéric knew that in order to meet all learning needs at the right speed, a change was necessary. Traditionally, Danone used a variety of methods to provide training to their employees. Like many companies, they used external vendors to develop their content. They quickly came to see, however, that this was both expensive and slow. For some learning needs, Danone also empowered their L&D experts. But with a small team, it became difficult to keep up with the demand. Frédéric recognized that the best way to meet all learning needs was to create a culture where employees could share their knowledge and create localized e-learning content themselves. But with the complex authoring tools Danone already had in place, this would not be possible. So, Frédéric searched for a zero learning-curve authoring solution that allowed any employee to create region-specific e-learning content independently.

Solution

Frédéric discovered Easygenerator and decided to test the tool during an initial 6-month pilot. He wanted to be sure employees could become the creators of their own learning content. Frédéric quickly saw success over the 6-month period with almost 100 authors using the tool to create e-learning. Employees found that they could quickly create learning content on the fly without having to work with L&D, instructional designers, or third-party vendors. Content could also be maintained and updated more efficiently by allowing the employees to own the process. Best of all, the quality did not suffer. To ensure they had confidence in creating content independently, authors were given onboarding and training sessions with tips and best practices to set them up for success.

Outcome

After implementing Easygenerator, Danone has over 500 authors in more than 30 countries. One of the biggest goals and results Frédéric has achieved is building a knowledge sharing culture. Now, local teams can produce and maintain their own localized content entirely independently and employees can leverage each other's knowledge. By bringing the content creation in-house, e-learning resources can also be produced and updated at a fraction of the cost.

Conclusion

As we discussed in the previous sections, localization is essential for organizations with operations worldwide. It created a learning culture where training material is more accessible and relatable to employees of different languages and cultures. As a result, both retention and application of knowledge can increase which then reduces the need for follow-up training or on-the-job coaching. For L&D managers, this is essential for achieving engagement in corporate training.

This, however, cannot be achieved without a simplified and efficient process. This process must ensure that localization can happen on a larger scale and that the content produced is of good quality. This quality, it is important to note, is not only dependent on the style of the course but also the content. As discussed, there are several avenues to take to produce learning content. While some options may produce objectively quality courses, they may not be relatable to the target audience. This is where Easygenerator comes in to ensure both quality and relatability. With subject-matter experts and unlimited reviewers responsible for both the creation and approval of the content, there is no need to worry about the quality of the courses. Even better, it engages employees, which is often a larger goal of L&D teams.

Localization goes beyond this engagement and quality. Not only are internal employees involved and empowered when using Easygenerator, but this process also saves costs. By keeping each step of localization in the business and taking advantage of the local experts, budget can be saved and allocated towards global L&D initiatives as opposed to outsourcing localization to external parties.

So, when developing your localization strategy (we say when, since it is essential to the success of any international organization), it is important to consider the process through which both content can be made relatable, and budget will be maximized. As outlined in this e-book, some options stand out among the rest.