



# Your Straightforward Guide to Global Content Marketing

Breaking Down the Steps So You Can Reach Your  
New Audiences With Personalized, Useful Content



# Introduction

If you're reading this guide then you are probably a content marketer who has seen content marketing bring people closer to your brand in your home market, and you are looking at how you can apply your content strategy to other markets where customers speak a different language or have a different culture. You may have questions like:

- How much should my content strategy differ for my new markets?
- What does a global content strategy look like?
- Is there such a thing as truly global content?
- How do you adapt your content for another market?

We'll answer these questions in this guide. Importantly, we'll also show why you can't just take your home-market content, translate it, promote it in your new ('local') market, and call it global content.

Get your global content strategy right and you will:

- create relevant content for your customers in new global markets,
- build trust-centered relationships with those customers,
- drive brand awareness and authority in the new market,
- see better marketing performance, and
- exceed outreach and sales objectives for that market.

This guide will give you a clear picture about how best to plan and manage your content across different markets. It's about adopting an effective content marketing strategy: identifying what your target buyer really needs, deciding when and where localization of content makes sense, and figuring out the best way to approach it.

# Why Should I Read This Guide?

**This book is for you if:**

- you understand the value of content in reaching new markets but don't know how to get started outside of your home market.
- you are tasked with planning and delivering content to support sales in a new market.
- you have promoted some content in your new markets but the metrics show poor engagement, or
- no one in that new target market knows about your brand yet.

Whether you're new to global content marketing, or whether you have deployed some content in your new market already, this guide has ideas to help you identify the right approach, put in place the roles and processes that you need to succeed, and ensure that your global content program sparks engagement and drives growth across your different markets.



## In this guide you'll learn:

- What is global content marketing?
- Why do I need a global content marketing strategy?
- The elements of a global content strategy
- The difference between global content and content for one specific market
- To adapt or not to adapt
- Understanding your new market: buyer personas and cultural insights
- Various approaches: translation v. localization v. in-country copywriting
- Roles and skills needed
- How to measure the effectiveness
- Parting thoughts

### Is your brand going to work in another market?

Don't assume your brand will resonate in another market! There are loads of terrible brand mistakes like the one about how "Got Milk?" translated to "Are you lactating?" In addition, the idea of a Latina mother running out of milk is offensive, not funny.

The "Got Milk?" campaign was not marketed to mothers and grandmothers, the milk buyers in Latino households. They (a San Francisco ad agency) got it completely wrong.

Market research and testing are required before you decide whether to enter a new market in the first place. Once you do decide to sell in a new market, you have to get your messaging right for that market or you will (at best) not fully reach your new market or (at worst) alienate the market and have to pull out completely.

Your best bet is to retain an agency that can do the research and make recommendations as to your tagline, messaging, and even brand colors and logo. This is a first step before working on your global content strategy.



## What is Global Content Marketing?

Global content marketing extends and adapts your home-market content strategy for all your target markets. To effectively connect with buyers in a new market, you need to speak to audiences in their own language, with respect to their own culture and preferences, with reference to local happenings, and about the issues relevant to them. At the same time, you have to maintain a common and consistent brand that's instantly recognizable wherever in the world you are. Culturally-centered messaging + recognizable brand = brand success in a new market. This is easy enough to articulate and understand, but hard to execute.

For example, if your content is full of stories and data specific to your home market, you might be alienating local audiences and undermining your ability to build relationships there. Or the colors and images in your blog post might put off a reader in another market. Yet if you change your logo, colors, or tagline for a new market, you may seem like 2 different brands. Quite a balance. So how do you take your brand to new markets in ways that will reach them specifically yet preserve your brand at the same time? With a global content marketing strategy.

### Did you know:

- Using a dog in a marketing campaign would be offensive to Muslims, who think dogs are unclean and impure.
- Hand signals don't mean the same thing in all cultures. The peace sign in the US is an insult to Australia.
- Colors don't mean the same thing in all cultures. Red can be problematic: in the East, it means happiness, good fortune, and prosperity; in the Middle East, it means danger, caution, and even evil.
- Japanese websites often have flashy banners, lots of text, multiple columns, many small images, and an overall cluttered, crowded look – vastly different from the clean aesthetic North Americans are used to.



# Why Do I Need a Global Content Marketing Strategy?

Content marketing generates three times more leads and costs more than 60% less than traditional marketing. Also, the average ROI for B2B content marketing is around 3:1. This means that for every dollar spent on content marketing, businesses are seeing a return of three dollars.

## Content marketing:

- engages and grows your audience base,
- educates potential customers,
- improves search traffic,
- increases conversions,
- sets your products apart from your competitors, and
- converts that audience to customers.



You want to realize those benefits in new territories. But you know that you can't take the same approach because the markets and buyers are so different. A global content marketing strategy will achieve this for your global markets too.



# The Elements of a Global Content Marketing Strategy

Strategic planning with your team is required before you can expect to truly reach your target market and grow your business through those relationships you've built via your content. But what does a global content marketing strategy look like? Your marketing strategy for each locale should include:

- **Goals** for your content: Is it brand awareness? Website traffic? Increased leads?
- Your **voice and tone**: Is it the same or different? Some locales prefer a more formal manner of address than is typical for North America.
- Who **your buyer** is: What are their cultural realities and preferences? What motivates them?
- What **topics** you should create content about: What's hot right now in that market? What's of concern in their business?
- The **types** (formats) of content you'll create: Does your target demographic in that culture prefer blog posts over videos? Long form content?
- How you'll **distribute and promote** the content: Where does the customer search for and get their information? Which social channels?
- How you'll **execute** the content creation and publication: What is your process for getting it all done, how do you track progress, and who are the key people on your team?
- Your **SEO strategy**: What local users search for is different than in your home market and you need to understand those keywords and how to use them.
- How you'll **measure** content performance: Is it site visits, social engagement, increased sales? On and on. There are many ways to measure content effectiveness.

You don't need to have all this understood and documented before you create local content—when it comes to content marketing, getting started is more important than doing it perfectly. But you do need to be thinking about content marketing holistically and working on the grand plan.

You don't need to have all this understood and documented before you create local content—when it comes to content marketing, getting started is more important than doing it perfectly. But you do need to be thinking about content marketing holistically and working on the grand plan.

## When to get started

There are several signs that it's time to globalize your content strategy. Questions that will lead you to the answer include:

- Are you starting to gain buyers or users in a particular country?
- Are you forecasting sales in a new locale?
- Where is your website traffic coming from?
- Are people asking for customer support in a new language?
- Are you gaining a lot of social media followers from a market outside your home market?

The data will trigger a decision point







## Understanding Your New Market: Buyer Personas and Data Insights Per Market

There is a lot to know about your target market before you can even begin to communicate, establish brand relationships, and sell your product in a new market. There's some work to be done to understand the cultural landscape in the new market and to master your knowledge of the consumer.

What is it you need to know when you are creating content for a new market?

- What they believe, feel, prefer, and value
- Their buying preferences, processes, and behaviors
- Where do they get their information, and how do they prefer to consume content
- Their language and linguistic preferences
- Their lifestyle, traditions, and norms
- Their needs, issues, and interests
- And more

Just like in your home market, you need a buyer persona. This is a profile of your target buyer based on market research and data, including:

- Demographics (name, age, location, marriage status, income, education, etc), and
- Psychographics (their beliefs, how they buy, preferences, values, fears, etc.).

Having a deep understanding of your buyer is the only way to make sure your marketing strategies are aligned with what they really want and need. This lets you tailor your brand experiences for them.

# Finding Cultural Information

Many companies offer available cultural 'guides' which are assessments or reports by country that cover cultural norms, customs, preferences, how to market to that culture, and how to do business there. Check out:

- [Collage Group](#)
- [World Business Culture](#)
- [Commisceo Global](#)
- [Elon University](#)
- [Country Navigator](#)

Or you can turn to custom research which offers deeper intelligence and may be required to navigate the sensitivities of a specific product or market but can be expensive and time-consuming. Yet, having all that data does not mean having the insights you need in order to apply that to your business. Knowing the data is one thing, activating it is quite another. Sometimes there's simply too much information, and you need a professional agency to tell you what really matters and how to apply it to your business. Be careful of oversimplified insights due to time pressures. Really, the best way to understand your buyer is to speak to them: directly via phone calls, by email, by asking on social media, or by creating a survey or poll. Your sales and account teams also can provide insight since they are close to customers.

## What is cultural intelligence?

Cultural intelligence is also known as "cultural quotient" or "CQ". It is a theory within management and organizational psychology that it is essential for an effective business to understand the impact of an individual's cultural background on their behavior. Cultural intelligence is crucial in order to best engage with people from another culture in various settings (business, personal, etc.).

# The Difference Between Global and Local Content

Your global content strategy doesn't have to be a choice between sharing the same content across all markets and producing wholly different content for each. But first, let's dispel the myth of truly global content.

A piece of truly global content would have to cover an issue that people experience everywhere and deal with it in a way that's relevant everywhere.

It would explore an idea that appeals to people no matter which region or market they are in; there would be a common understanding of the core message and the underlying customer insight behind it. But that's a high bar and not many pieces will actually pass the test.

The ideal global piece of content would have to be entirely generic, with universal graphics, illustrations, and pictures, so it's ready to go in every market without adaptation. But is this really an exciting piece of content?

Arguably no. Something appealing to everyone is specific to no one. So the goal is not really to produce content that is acceptable everywhere; the goal is to create and distribute content that is appropriate and effective wherever it goes.

It's about a hyper-local, customized experience for each of your target markets. This may mean just translating, but not likely: it probably means adapting or rewriting your home market content or starting from scratch to make it relevant locally (we'll get to approaches later).

It is about matching the content to the market, and that can mean changing everything from the text and message to the images, colors, page layouts, content formats, themes, topics, jokes, idioms, and so on.

## Why localize?

- 90% of online shoppers choose to use content in their native language if it's available
- 40% of online shoppers will never buy from websites in other languages
- 73% want product reviews in their mother tongue.
- 65% prefer content in their language—even if it's of poor quality.

## To Adapt or Not to Adapt

One of the key questions to ask as part of your content planning process is when and how to adapt (or localize) content for local cultures. This is a big call. It's vital that the content your audiences receives is genuinely aligned with your business objectives, yet it's impossible to produce localized versions of global content for every market in which you operate. Adapting content just for the sake of it wastes money and resources. However, ROI considerations will push the priorities for your localization program. Naturally, it makes sense to serve bigger, more profitable markets. Use data-driven insight to inform when localization makes sense. When you don't have data available, it's well worth testing translated versions to see how they perform before rolling out all your content across a market. For example, you could localize a blog post or two and then track engagement.

Questions to ask before choosing pieces to localize:

- What is the size of your audience in each market?
- Will the money spent be worthwhile in terms of reach and the number of leads you hope to generate?
- Will localization make content more relevant or just different?
- How many locally generated or localized pieces of content would your audience have an appetite for?

Plan your strategy and resources around the value that localization will deliver for each market. Generally, a global business would prioritize the following for its new markets:

- hero content (the key messaging for the year that your company wants to distribute worldwide)
- your website
- any content critical to sales processes (a product brief)
- the content used in all your campaigns
- customer support content

Gather all the pieces you want to consider, have a Language Services Provider (LSP) provide pricing for localization/adaptation, and then make decisions based on what you need, how much it's being used, and how much it costs.



# Various approaches: Translation versus Transcreation versus In-country Copywriting

We've already talked about making judgments about whether to go ahead and adapt global content assets. And that's the first step. But, what level of adaptation is justified? Different types of content tend to have different requirements. In some cases, you can go with a simple translation. But in other cases, you have to go deeper. Here are your choices:

## Translation

Translation is the activity of changing words from one language to another. It is often thought of as a one-to-one exchange from one language to another, a literal swap of words from one language to the next. It works best for technical texts, user guides, FAQs, online help, and other straightforward, generic content. Note that machine translation (MT) is one approach you could choose, but AI often misses the nuances of understanding, emotions, and precision that a human translator can provide. If you use any form of automated translation, a human (post-editor) is needed to refine and improve the results.

## Transcreation

Transcreation takes it a step further and changes the meaning from one culture to another. It is a creative adaptation process from one language (culture) to the next (culture) where the cultural knowledge of your linguist comes into play. For example, a phrase in one language such as 'take it with a grain of salt' or 'quit cold turkey' might not have an equivalent in another language. Also, Americans use a lot of baseball phrases like 'touch base', and other cultures may not care about baseball or understand the references. Transcreation work is rooted in a thorough understanding of local customer needs, interests, and preferences.

Creative materials, like taglines, slogans, ads, and heavily branded web pages, must be transcreated. Also, SEO keywords must be transcreated: they are different from market to market and so require a special touch.



## In-country copywriting

You should consider native or in-country copywriting when the content needs to be completely local, or if the transcreation process is more work than just starting over and creating something very specific to your target market in the first place. This is when a local resource creates a deliverable from scratch, maybe using the home market piece as a reference or inspiration.



## Roles and Skills Needed

Most startups and small businesses have small but mighty content teams. Adding headcount is often difficult, and since you haven't proven results yet, it may be hard to get a budget. You can contact any of the below resources; more and more professionals are working on a contract basis these days. As you build your team to extend your content marketing to new locales, consider these roles:

### Content strategist

This is the person who understands how content maps to buyer personas, what formats to use, how to define topics, and how to execute a content calendar.

### Copywriter

This person is a pro with words. He/she knows how to craft content that resonates with a target audience and remains faithful to your brand. For global markets, this person should be in-country or someone bicultural living in your home market.

### Editor

This is your word nerd who can make the mechanics of your copy perfect.

### Designer or desktop publishing specialist

This person can perform desktop publishing on your collateral. He/she also understands how to work with translated content.

### Translator

This person is the bilingual linguist who can transform your content from one language to another

### Transcreator

This person is the creative linguistic resource who recreates your home culture content for the target market.

You may need a partnership with a Language Services Provider (LSP) when you have the volume or the number of languages to warrant getting more help.

# How to Measure Effectiveness

Measuring ROI is always tricky, particularly when it comes to content marketing. Some returns are intangible and difficult to put a figure on, like brand awareness and loyalty. Here are some steps to figure out the effectiveness of your content marketing efforts: Before starting your global content marketing efforts, you should define your goals and KPIs. Are you trying to generate leads, increase website traffic, improve search engine rankings, or boost social media engagement? From there, your choices can include measuring things like:

## Website traffic

Measuring the increase in website traffic after publishing content can indicate how effective the content is in attracting visitors to your website. It can also show you how well your SEO is working. Measure things like bounce rates, unique users, average session time, and the number of pages visited per session.

## Social media engagement

Monitoring social media engagement, such as likes, shares, and comments, can provide insight into the success of your content on social media platforms.

## Lead Generation

Measuring the number of leads generated from content can help determine the effectiveness of your content in attracting potential customers. (If someone downloads a content piece and gives you their email to do so, that's a lead).

## Conversion Rates

Analyzing who 'converts' such as email sign-ups, product purchases, or event registrations, can provide insight into the effectiveness of your content in driving sales.

## Brand Awareness

Tracking the increase in brand awareness, such as mentions or searches related to your brand, can indicate how effective your content is in creating brand recognition and recall.

## Acquisition

Understanding how users arrive at your website or which subpage 'converts' can help show you which channels are most effective. Channels can include organic search, referral, direct traffic, or social.

## Keyword rankings

Monitoring the rankings of your target keywords in search engine results pages (SERPs) can indicate how well your SEO efforts are working. Tools such as Google Search Console, SEMrush, or Ahrefs can help you track your keyword rankings over time.





## Next Steps For Your Global Content Strategy

Now you understand what a global content strategy is, why you need one, and how to get started in creating your specific content plan for your new market. But if you need help creating a global content strategy, defining local buyer personas, deciding your adaptation approach, or linking up with an LSP for localization, we're here to help. You can connect with us at [info@globiacontent.com](mailto:info@globiacontent.com)

Globia Content Marketing is a full-service global content marketing agency helping small B2B businesses that have an eye on global markets with content strategy, editorial planning, content development, and translation planning. We also put on workshops to help companies define buyer personas and map content to those buyers.

[www.globiacontent.com](http://www.globiacontent.com)