Leading Global Hotel Operator Has Another First-Mover Advantage: Agile Translation

InterContinental Hotels Group focuses on developing strong direct channels and building lifetime relationships with guests.

IHG
InterContinental Hotels Group

📝 Fast Facts

- More than 5,000 hotels in nearly 100 countries
- More than 1,300 hotels in its development pipeline
- Publishing content in more than a dozen languages

GUEST TECHNOLOGY LANDSCAPE

Web Booking Platform

- Content source: Custom application
- Integration: Smartling's Global Delivery Network (HTTP proxy service)

Hotel Websites

- Content source: Adobe Experience Manager
- Integration: Smartling's connector

Mobile App

- Content source: Files in GitHub
- Integration: Smartling's connector

InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG), one of the world's leading hotel companies, is no stranger to being a first mover. Its loyalty program, IHG® Rewards Club, was the first hotel loyalty program and now boasts over 92 million members worldwide. It was the first international hotel group to enter China, in 1984, and in 2012 it launched HUALUXE™ Hotels and Resorts, the first upscale international hotel brand designed specifically for the Chinese consumer. Now, IHG has yet another first-mover advantage: agile translation using Smartling.

A Failure to Keep Pace

Brands have long recognized and adopted agile software development as important for competing globally. Similarly, the availability of local language content is recognized as critical to developing strong direct channels and building lifetime relationships with guests. However, traditional approaches to translation are not compatible with agile software development, leaving brands with a fragmented "Guest Journey" in most languages.

Like many hospitality brands, IHG has a complex landscape of guest technologies, including web and mobile booking platforms, and an advanced content management system that publishes dedicated websites with engaging content for each hotel. With more than

5,000 hotels in nearly 100 countries, and an organizational mandate to publish content in more than a dozen languages, IHG was at risk of missing deadlines for launching new languages and publishing new content in existing languages by weeks or months. IHG's developers were also spending an increasing amount of time maintaining local language content instead of further advancing the Guest Journey.

"We believe that investing in technology systems assists us in building brand preference and strengthens our loyalty program," said Chad Westfall, Vice President, Global Direct Channels for IHG. "When we critically evaluated the Guest Journey, we realized that our lack of a technology system for managing translation was hindering our growth in global markets."

A Solution for Continuous Improvement

Agile translation is a set of principles and technologies that Smartling has formed to respond to the challenges of creating and updating local language content. By embracing agile translation using Smartling's Translation Management System, brands are able to eliminate the dependency between software development and translation, enabling continuous improvement of local language content for any number of channels. Smartling met

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>
> — Chad Westfall, Vice President, Global Direct Channels, IHG

all of IHG's key requirements for improving its translation management experience:

- **Integration:** Smartling could be integrated with any content source and could deliver translations to any channel using its API, connectors to popular content management systems, over-the-air translation update service, or HTTP proxy service.

- **Automation**: Each team and market could define its own set of translation workflows, ensuring that content would always follow the desired quality improvement process without creating an undue management burden on IHG's internal resources.

- **Collaboration:** IHG's thousands of global content creators, translators, and in-market experts could collaborate on the creation of local

language content within a single system of record that provided full version control and required minimal training.

- **Visibility:** Executives and program managers could see which teams were requesting translation, how long it was taking to complete, how frequently it needed to be corrected, and how much it was costing.

IHG first deployed Smartling for a small number of languages and preferred brands, and is now rolling out the platform across the enterprise.

Better Competing Locally, Globally

By leveraging Smartling's Translation Management System, IHG has achieved an important competitive

advantage for entering new markets and for building lifetime relationships with guests. For example, IHG outperformed the industry in Greater China in 2015, opening significantly more rooms and hotels than its nearest international competitor. And IHG continues to add new languages, content, and channels – a trifecta that, before Smartling, had the potential to result in delays and unexpected costs.

"Smartling facilitates collaboration on a global scale, enabling us to quickly create the most local content possible," said Westfall. "Furthermore, developer involvement in translation has been reduced to almost zero, allowing our global technology team to continue to enhance the functionality and performance of our direct channels to make these the preferred way to book."

Ready to get started?

Smartling can help you to develop a global content strategy that will propel you into new markets, fuel global growth and increase your bottom line.

Contact us today for a demo of the Smartling Translation Management System so that your brand can be fluent everywhere.

Contact Us

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Smartling helps ambitious brands access more markets, deliver better experiences, and build stronger relationships by transforming the way their content is created and consumed around the world. Our translation software and services prioritize process automation and intelligent collaboration so that companies can quickly and cost-effectively localize their websites, apps, and documents with minimal IT involvement.

To find out how our unique approach has helped brands like British Airways, Spotify, and WeWork tell a global story, visit www.smartling.com.