



Global Marketing

PLAYBOOK



Introduction

There are few things more rewarding than seeing your company grow beyond borders. But let's face it -- **global marketing isn't for the faint of heart**. It's complicated, with many moving parts.

International consulting firms can help along your global marketing efforts, but are out of reach for most budgets. Learning by trial and error is always an option -- but it's too risky and time-consuming.

What can you do instead? Look no further. We've gathered some of the best global marketing advice into a single place.

Whether you're new to global marketing or a veteran who wants some pro tips, the Global Marketing Playbook will set you up for success.

In this guide, you'll learn how to:

- Develop a global marketing strategy
- Create a plan of action
- Assemble your global team
- Build scalable processes
- Prepare for localization
- Choose technologies wisely
- Balance local and global needs
- Lead your company to global success

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Strategy



Chapter 1: Strategy

Align global initiatives with business priorities.

Define success.

For any major undertaking, it's always important to begin with a clear sense of purpose. So, before you do anything else, go straight to the **WHY**. Ask yourself, why are you developing a global marketing strategy to begin with? Is the company just testing the waters in other countries? Is there a specific revenue target? Are there some countries that matter more than others? Is the goal to diversify the revenue to mitigate risk? Before you do anything else, you need a very clear sense of why global marketing has become an important priority for your company.

Flag aligned and competing priorities.

Every business has to do many things at once. But what are the **TOP** burning issues that are truly on the CEO's radar at the moment? What issues are really most critical for the company? Before you make a big commitment to global marketing, you need to ensure that it will be worth your time. Which is the hot and burning issue for your executive team or board at the moment? Also, what are the issues that no one cares about? Make sure you tackle only the most important priorities, and avoid the ones that are not on anyone's radar.

Here are some common examples:

Customer retention

Many companies start getting serious about global marketing in order to quickly boost retention or reduce their customer churn. When this focus becomes a priority, you should pay more attention to globalizing your customer marketing, advocacy marketing programs, and your user interface.

Growth

If growth is your company's primary concern, you'll need to focus more on the top and eventually the middle of the funnel, ensuring that you're orchestrating campaigns with a global mindset, as well as adding plenty of local campaigns with original content into your mix as well, and possibly localizing content into other languages.

Market share

Is your company focused on taking away existing market share from competitors? If that's the case, you might find yourself gravitating more toward bottom-of-funnel content and campaigns, competitive differentiation (including relevant market research on global competitors), and sales enablement.

Profitability

If your company's main objective is to boost profits, you'll likely be taking a closer look at the average revenue per customer for specific geographies, to see if you can double down activities in your most profitable markets. This may require working more cross-functionally with your operations and finance teams.

Diversification

Often, businesses reduce risk by diversifying revenue streams, much in the same way investors want a diverse portfolio. To do this, they often think about diversifying by adding products or acquiring businesses. Sometimes, acquiring a small competitor is a fast way to increase global reach. Or, you might identify niche international markets that with zero competition and ripe opportunity.

Once you have identified the primary corporate focus area, write up a strategic mission statement or a sentence that encapsulates, in general, what you hope to accomplish and how it aligns with the overall company objective. Keep the statement high-level for now, until you learn more and can refine it.

For example:

- Boost client retention by delighting our customers in international markets.
- Drive increased revenue by generating demand in emerging markets.
- Increase global market share by growing our international customer base.

In short, nearly any corporate goal can be supported with a global marketing strategy. Flag the current priorities now, because they can and will change over time. Likewise, your plans will evolve alongside the corporate goals. Use global marketing as a strategic lever to accelerate momentum toward your company's overall goals.

Identify and engage your executive champions.

Who, at the exec level, is most likely to champion the global marketing cause? Make a list of your top executive influencers, and then find a way to build relationships with them. It's influencer outreach at its finest, at a micro level within your company.

Look for top leaders in your organization who meet any of the following criteria:

- Were born in another country
- Have parents or spouses from another country
- Worked in another country
- Lived in another country
- Speak another language
- Travel frequently for business or pleasure
- Worked at a global company
- Currently do international work
- Manage employees in other countries

If you don't have relationships with these folks already, review their social media profiles

and make a note of anyone who seems to have international experience or interest. Or, ask around to people who work on their teams. Usually, you'll discover that your executive team is already more international than you may realize, and you'll hopefully have more support than you expected.

Now, take your list and find ways to connect with these individuals. Will they accept a meeting with you, or is there someone else on their team who might be willing to? Are there projects they are working on where you can lend a hand? What are their top priorities, and how can you be of help to them? Find good excuses to meet with them, and figure out how you can support them in meeting their goals through global marketing initiatives, and how you can collectively support the company's objectives.

Map out your cross-functional stakeholders.

While finding an executive champion is important, it's equally important to figure out who else in your company is affected by global marketing success, or lack thereof. Your first order of business will be to make a list of all of the marketing stakeholders that have any dealings with international marketing. This is likely to include:

- Regional and local marketers
- Campaigns / demand generation
- Sales enablement
- Public relations
- Channel marketing
- Customer marketing
- Product marketing
- Creative team
- Marketing operations
- Public relations
- Social media

- Market research
- Localization

And, here are some common places to look for stakeholders outside of marketing:

- Sales - focus on in-country and regional managers
- Services and support - identify those who support international customers
- Product team - look for product managers dealing with internationalization
- Finance and legal - often they too are dealing with international concerns
- Human resources - especially if you have offices in other countries
- IT/engineering - for support with technical aspects of localization

Make a list of all of the people who are “touched” by international marketing. You’ll be surprised at how many people in your company actually have a vested interest in global marketing success. Take time to meet with them, learn about their challenges and pain points, and how you might be able to better support them from a global perspective.

Seek to understand naysayers and roadblocks.

As you meet with people, you’ll hopefully hear negative viewpoints about going global and the troubles of dealing with international customers. While this might sound like the opposite of what you’re looking for when you hope to rally support, it’s actually extremely helpful when people share their inevitable concerns about going global with honesty and transparency. Lean into their pains to learn more. It will help you build a better plan, one that ensures that you mitigate risks and take into account what are likely some very real issues.

If you find someone who is very negative and vocal about international marketing or just doing business globally in general, go out of your way to spend time with them and get to the root of the issues. Were there bad experiences that you should know about from the past that might taint people’s perceptions going forward? Have certain things been

tried in the past only to fail? Document these issues as potential roadblocks that you'll need to work around. If nothing else, just by listening, you'll reassure people that you're receptive to their feedback and that you take their concerns seriously.

Also, remember that for many companies, going global can be a scary proposition, especially if they don't have much experience with international business. It's normal for people to feel underprepared. Business can be complicated, even in just a single country. Reassure them that such views and feelings are actually quite common, and that many companies experience global growing pains on their road to success.



Planning



Chapter 2: Planning

Now that you've come up with your strategy, it's time to outline your plan.

To start, focus on creating the shell of your plan based on what you have learned thus far in the process. You can add detail as the picture becomes clearer.

Crunch those numbers.

Data is a global marketer's best friend. You'll need it when it comes to creating a plan with clear results in mind that are measurable and achievable. Here are some basic numbers you'll most likely want to look at, each broken down at the country, sub-region, and regional level:

- Amount of revenue
- Number of customers
- Average deal size (or average selling price)
- Average sales cycle length
- Average retention rate (or churn rate)
- Number of opportunities (open sales opps)
- Number of marketing-qualified leads
- Number of leads / contacts
- Number of visits / traffic

Next, look at the conversion rates between these various elements focusing on what is deemed most important for the goals of your company. Go back to the "why" of your strategy. Are there some countries with a higher average selling price? Others that tend to close at a faster or higher rate? Do you see growth in top-of-funnel indicators, such as traffic and contacts, in certain parts of the world? Pull out the metrics that you know

will matter most for your team. Avoid information overload -- focus on just the things that people will find valuable.

In fact, before you invest too much time in crunching the numbers, run your ideas by your other counterparts, especially from sales, and ask them -- what data would be most useful to you? Don't be afraid to get feedback even early on in the process. People generally like having a say early on, and knowing that their input will be helpful in shaping the outcome. Pay attention to it at the planning stage.

Use overall marketing goals to fuel international goals.

Now, you're armed with both corporate goals and international marketing metrics. See how these two items align with your overall team's marketing goals. Perhaps some of your findings will line up nicely with other, broader goals for the marketing team at large. On the other hand, maybe you'll find potential areas of conflict. For example, perhaps a global blog subscriber goal conflicts with regional blog subscriber goals that are critical to local audience development.

Keep an eye out for any marketing goals that you can bolster with international marketing efforts. For example, is the team working toward boosting leads from organic search? Perhaps this is something you can help to drive with global support. Figure out what the core metrics are for marketing, if you don't already know them, and look for opportunities to ensure that your international marketing goals are supporting those too.

If your marketing team is already aligned nicely with your corporate goals, and you feel that this step is redundant, take it down one level. Look around at the other teams within your marketing department, to see how you might be able to align your goals with sub-team goals, especially any that are of critical importance for the company or seem to be on the radar of executives.

Create your long-term objectives.

Now that you've done all the necessary pre-work and have found your executive champion(s), taken a close look at all of your stakeholders and their needs and concerns, determined which objectives are top priorities for your company, and identified how these line up with your overall marketing goals, it's time to translate all this information into specific, quantifiable objectives.

For example, let's say that the strategic mission statement you identified previously was the following:

| *Drive increased revenue by generating demand in emerging markets.*

Now, give that goal some color by turning it into a more specific objective:

| *Drive increased revenue by generating 25% more demand in our top three emerging markets (Brazil, France, Germany) over the next 12 months.*

Similarly, perhaps you have a client retention goal, such as the following:

| *Boost client retention by delighting our customers in international markets.*

Give it some clarity by adding a timeline and a specific metric that you can track:

| *Boost client retention by 10% over the next two quarters by delighting our customers with customer marketing campaigns in our top five international markets.*

The definition of "long-term" may vary significantly from company to company, but as a general rule of thumb, you should plan at least two quarters out, if not a year. In

general, the bigger the company, the further out you'll want to plan. You'll want to avoid longer-range planning since priorities at most companies so frequently change.

Break into smaller SMART goals.

Now, you're ready to divide up the longer-term objectives into smaller goals that line up with the way your company measures progress. It might be quarterly or monthly. For example, let's say you set the following objective:

Drive increased revenue by generating 25% more demand in our top three emerging markets (Brazil, France, Germany) over the next 12 months.

Break this into smaller goals, such as:

	Current # of MQLs per Month	End of Q1 Target	End of Q2 Target	End of Q3 Target	End of Q4 Target
Brazil	20	22	25	28	30
France	30	32	35	38	40
Germany	50	52	53	54	55
TOTAL	100	106	113	120	125

Fill out your starting point and end point first, and then fill in the milestones by quarter or month that you'll need to hit in order to get there. Use what you know about the existing markets in order to set realistic goals. For example, in this case, we set a goal of 50% growth in Brazil, since the starting number was smaller and growth can be assumed to be higher. However, we set a lower target in Germany, perhaps due to existing company plans to hire fewer salespeople for that market.

Why should you set your goals by country, as opposed to by region? It makes them even more specific, and when you choose a country-led strategy, you're improving your level of focus and prioritization. If you make the mistake of lumping countries into a bigger regional category, you'll often dilute the impact of your overall marketing efforts

by failing to narrow your focus. If you're already seeing a large amount of volume from a sizeable number of countries, it's OK to assign a goal for a bucket of countries that you label "other," so long as you remember to examine the data on a country level prior to setting a group goal.

Lastly, when you bunch countries together as opposed to separating them out, it's easy to overlook country-specific trends and opportunities to invest more in high-yield regions. Remember to put the "nation" in international and design your marketing activities with a country-first mentality.



People



Chapter 3: People

Now that you have concrete goals and a skeleton plan, it's time to engage the people who can help you execute.

Assemble your team.

Who is your team exactly? What internal employees do you have on the team who focus on international marketing, in each region? If you don't have dedicated employees for this today, take stock of the current team to see if there is anyone who jumps out as having the curiosity to lead initiatives in other countries. Ideally, this person will be a growth marketer who is either from that region or located in that region.

If you're lucky, you might also have a marketer who speaks the language in which they'll be marketing, but this is not always the norm. When in doubt, always choose a fantastic marketer over one who is just mediocre but happens to speak the language. It's easy to train a marketer to work with a freelancer (or several) to overcome the language barrier. It isn't nearly as easy to train a bilingual to become a great marketer, especially when it comes to growth marketing and entering a new market.

Whatever you do, resist the temptation to get your non-marketing staff overly involved in translation and other language-related activities. The reason? Opportunity cost. Chances are, you have salespeople in the local market who are selling to people in their language, and sometimes this actually occurs prior to marketing getting involved. If that is the case, don't think you can "leverage" these salespeople for their language skills, because every hour they spend reviewing a translation is an hour they aren't selling, which can actually slow down your marketing efforts. In the long run, ironically, this will lower the return on your investment in programs and translation.

However, one thing you should do? Keep an eye out for people with a hunger for global marketing. They might not currently work on your team, but they might show great promise for evolving and growing into a new role as your international efforts scale.

Lastly, look around the company for localization team members. Who in your company currently helps manage projects to convert content into other languages? Make sure to meet with this person or people, because they often will be very important allies for you later on, to support the marketing team's localization needs.

Engage your partners.

If you don't have marketers who speak the language, how can you possibly execute global and regional marketing campaigns? Enlist help from third parties. Remember, it's quite common these days for marketers to market in languages they don't actually speak themselves, relying on local marketing agencies, partners, contractors, and translation agencies.

Here are four groups of partners you'll want to consider getting involved:

Contractors

If your marketing team is small, or you're just ramping up a single market, this is likely where you'll begin. If you don't have anyone to create content or get campaigns created, you may very well need to rely on a carefully selected contractor to help. You can pay them for a batch of hours each week or month, and evolve the relationship from there. The great thing about contractors is that they offer scalability, which is especially important if you're ramping up in several markets at once.

Marketing agencies

Many marketers rely heavily on agencies to supplement their work and outsource certain tasks. If you're one of these companies, look for local agencies to support your work in different countries. Again, think "country-first" as opposed to trying to

find agencies that can cover a broad region -- usually, they specialize just in their country of headquarters and are struggling themselves to grow their own presence overseas. When possible, choose agencies specialized in each market, even if it means managing more than one.

Resellers and referral partners

If you're lucky enough to have a network of partners, you may be able to get them involved in your global expansion plans by having them help in a variety of ways. Consider co-marketing activities, as well as getting them involved in helping to create original and perhaps even locally adapted content in your target languages. Talk to partners to ensure that the benefits to them are clear and that the activities will be mutually rewarding.

Translation providers

You'll most likely be creating content as part of your strategy for entering new markets, and for this, you will want to work with one or more translation providers at some point. Do you already have any that other areas of the company are using? Depending on the diversity of your needs, you may work with freelance translators, small boutique agencies, or large multi-language vendors. Generally, the larger your company, the more likely you are to require the services of an agency, because you're likely to have more diverse needs for desktop publishing and design work, voice-over work, subtitling, website localization, video adaptation, and internationalization testing services on top of just text translation.

Rally the extended team.

Beyond just your direct employees and partners, think about who else on the marketing team is involved in international efforts. Using the list you created previously when identifying stakeholders to identify all of the different people who are direct contributors who can help you execute on your plan in various ways, along with what roles you think they can help with and whether it currently is covered in their job description and interests.

Once you have identified this network, start meeting with them to lay out the bones of your plan and get their feedback. Start with direct reports on the marketing team, then proceed on to other marketing team members, then internal non-marketing stakeholders, especially sales, and incorporate their input too. Next, consider your partners.

Lastly, get views from your third party vendors. Getting this feedback doesn't have to be time-consuming or overly formal -- you can invite people to lunch or have quick conversations over coffee. Just make sure that they feel included and have the chance to participate, so they also start to take ownership of the plan.

Create an internal communications plan.

While an internal communications plan might sound like overkill, where global marketing is concerned, communication is absolutely critical to ensure that all stakeholders are aligned and functioning well on both local and global fronts. Your plan can be very simple, but it's important to flag the audiences you need to reach internally as well as the options you have for getting the word out about plans and progress toward goals.

Here are some important communication vehicles you'll want to make sure exist:

A place to give local successes global visibility

How do local teams share their results and get visibility? Make sure they have an easy way to convey their successes -- and their needs -- to global stakeholders. Consider giving the local teams multiple ways to share this information. For example, here at HubSpot, every local marketing team has a dedicated space on the company Wiki where they can share highlights, progress toward goals, and other information with other teams. In addition, many regional teams also produce a monthly newsletter sharing their highlights too.

A place to highlight progress toward regional goals

Look at your corporate reporting options to see where this kind of information can be showcased. For example, here at HubSpot, we send out daily lead generation dashboards to all members of global sales and marketing teams featuring regional goals and progress toward goals, to ensure transparency and accountability.

A place to highlight global sales and marketing alignment

Perhaps you have a monthly meeting between sales and marketing to ensure alignment. Make sure to include time to let regional efforts shine within the global context, and be sure to show off local partnerships and collaboration between sales and marketing.

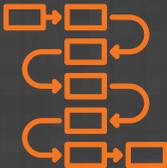
A place to discuss local and global campaigns

As your marketing teams grow globally, you'll likely need to hold campaign team meetings every so often as well, to discuss campaigns that can be "globalized" and used across multiple regions. Regional marketing teams might also take inspiration from the work that other local teams are engaged in.

What does the internal communications plan consist of?
Here is an example:

Vehicle	Audience	Frequency
Regional marketing team space on company wiki page	Global stakeholders	As often as needed; recommended monthly
Dedicated section in company-wide newsletter	All company employees	Monthly

Vehicle	Audience	Frequency
Regional marketing newsletter	Regional marketing, sales, services, and support team members	Monthly
Sales and marketing alignment meeting (one slide in deck per region)	All sales and marketing team members	Monthly
Lead generation daily report	All sales and marketing team members	Daily
Company all-hands meeting (one slide for international)	All company employees	Quarterly



Process



Chapter 4: Process

Now, it's time to set up the processes that will ensure both consistency and scalability as your company continues along on its global growth trajectory.

Given that the universe of potential processes to cover here is enormous, we'll focus primarily on processes for Inbound marketing, especially content creation.

Find out where your content lives.

Hopefully, the content your company relies on -- for attracting new visitors to your website and converting them into leads and then to customers -- is located in a centralized place, using standard file naming conventions, and easily accessible to all. Sound like a dream? It is, especially if you have a high-performing marketing team that has mastered content creation, because they are more likely to prioritize speed of publishing over making sure that every item has been saved in the right place and named in a standard way.

The good news is, your very first step is relatively easy -- document all the places that your content lives. Conduct a content audit.

Answer the following questions:

- What types of content do we currently create?
- Who currently authors content?
- What end formats do we publish content in?
- What programs do we use to create content in?
- Where do we store the finished product?

- Where do we store the source files (if created in another program)?
- How do we currently translate content?
- Where do the target language files live?
- What systems and programs are “captive” -- not easy for others to get access to?
- Who has access to these programs?
- How easy is it to share content with our vendors and third parties?

Write up the processes used to create it.

Before you can globalize any of your content processes or adapt them for different markets, you need to first document the process by which you’re creating content today. Using the list you developed above, choose the most common types of content you create repeatedly -- for example, blog posts, ebooks, videos, and case studies.

Now, ask for volunteers to write up the steps involved in creating, publishing, and disseminating this content. If you have multiple regional teams, ask each team to document it separately -- you may be surprised to learn that each team does things slightly differently.

Identify differences and common ground.

Once you have mapped out the processes used throughout your marketing team, it’s time to compare and contrast in order to identify areas of overlap as well as differences. Have a meeting for each type of content to encourage team members to share what they’re doing differently and what they have in common. As opposed to pushing people to embrace a standard process, first invite them to discuss the pros and cons of different methods. Ask them for their feedback -- if it’s necessary or desirable to have common ground, it’s likely that someone on the team will flag it.

After you have done this exercise for one type of content, do it again until you have a clear set of processes mapped out along with regional variations that are agreed upon

by all teams. During this process, you're likely to encounter many questions about how content is created, stored, and published. All of this is healthy discussion that will help align the regional teams and will get them to collaborate more closely going forward. Aligning regions is a job that is never finished, but discussing shared processes and evolving them together helps it along.

Starting with content is helpful, as those processes are relatively easy to document, but the pay-offs for teams leveraging each other's content can be massive. Once you have mastered this, you will be ready to move on to other areas of marketing, such as demand generation or lead nurturing.

Set up a regular cadence for improvement.

Once you've done an exhaustive process audit, you may be tempted to never think about it again. In reality, you'll need to tackle your process improvement one day, one project at a time. And, when you're "done" improving, make sure to revisit your processes on a regular basis. This might be every six months, every year, or every time you are ramping up a new market.

Also, encourage your regional teams to self-audit and drive improvement from within their own teams. Help them develop relationships across regions, so that the desire to improve and innovate will stem more naturally from their interconnected mindset, as opposed to one that is driven from "corporate" and feels forced. The best improvement plan for regional teams is one that is collaborative and self-initiated.

GLOBAL MARKETING PLAYBOOK



Localization



Chapter 5: Localization

If the word “localization” gives you goosebumps, you’re definitely not alone.

Many marketers dislike dealing with markets where they don’t speak the language, and some go out of their way to avoid them entirely. Move past the “foreign fear factor” that can block your growth in other countries. While it’s good to take precautions to protect your brand and ensure that you make the best impression in another language or culture, localization doesn’t have to be intimidating.

Prioritize your markets.

One common mistake with localization is thinking too broadly and grouping together too many countries at once. As a marketer, you already know that it isn’t very effective to target large masses of very different populations and demographics with the same tactics and content.

Likewise, if you lump too many countries together at once, or if you fail to think about them as countries, you can actually make it harder to create international marketing momentum. While there are definitely some exceptions where you’ll want to think about language-related buckets, make sure you’re paying attention to countries early on.

Thinking about markets at the country level also forces you to prioritize, which will help improve your focus, leading to greater results. Should you think about which languages will get you the best ROI? Absolutely, but if your strategy is language-led, once you’ve settled on a language, next think about which specific countries you’ll prioritize within a group of countries that speak that language. Don’t try to focus on all of them simultaneously and equally.

Why else should you build your model around countries? At some point you'll likely want to monetize your traffic, visitors, and leads. When it comes time to turn these into customers, there are legal and financial concerns, and those vary significantly from one country to the next. It's easier for other areas of your business to tackle these markets step by step.

Lastly, knowing which countries you're prioritizing makes localization decisions easier. If you are planning to go "into French," you'll need to choose which kind of French, for which audience.. Switzerland? Canada? Africa? Thinking about these things up front makes everything -- budgeting, staffing, resource allocation -- a lot easier later on.

Choose vendors with care.

The most important decisions you'll make with regard to localization are the vendors you choose to work with. This can't be overstated. A great vendor can make or break your brand overseas. In fact, a great translator -- or the lack of one -- can make all the difference between the success or failure of a given campaign. So, how do you choose the best vendors?

Here are the basics of what you need to know about how translation happens behind the scenes. Most companies work with a translation agency. The agency in turn farms out the work to freelancers who live all over the world -- not just translators, but editors, reviewers, designers, lead linguists, and others. They also employ project managers who wrangle all the moving parts of a translation project -- and there are indeed many moving parts. Most companies don't have the time or staff available to take on the project management burden themselves.

But because agencies work with freelancers, you won't usually get the same translators every time you have a project, which means that quality can be at risk. What happens frequently is that translators become familiar with your brand, gaining knowledge over time, and then become busy with other projects and unassigned from yours. This means that new translators get assigned, and unless diligent knowledge transfer takes place, you can end up with inferior quality.

Here are some tips to ensure that you get excellent translation quality on an ongoing basis:

Inquire about their process.

If a vendor doesn't proactively ask you for copies of your style guide and any past translation work you've done, it's a bad sign. Good vendors will want to leverage any material you can provide. A vendor that focuses on quality will attend your first meeting armed with a solid knowledge of your brand, a good sense of what languages you translate into, as well as ideas about which translators they would assign to your projects.

Ask other companies which vendors they use.

Referrals are a great way to find good localization vendors, so if you have global marketing contacts in other companies, see if they are happy with their vendors, and if so, find out who they use. However, be forewarned that most companies are not happy with their translation vendors, because quality is so often a struggle.

Find vendors who have experience with similar content.

It's critical that the translators who will be working on your content have subject matter expertise in it. Most translators specialize in only a few content areas, and what is considered "high quality" varies from one area to another. For example, in pharmaceutical translation where doctors are the audience, translators cannot be very flexible and must stick closely to the source. For marketing content, translators need to have more creativity and adaptation skills.

Make sure project managers are in the right time zones.

While project managers can be based anywhere in the world, the ideal is to have someone you can reach during business hours. Better yet, find a vendor that has staff in each of the time zones where you have regional marketing teams. Communication is critical to ensuring high quality translations.

Don't assume that bigger is better.

The largest translation vendors are not always the best, because the supply chain can be longer. Smaller and medium-sized vendors often deliver the best quality, because they tend to have better relationships with their freelance talent. You want to be close to your translators, to the point that they feel like an extension of your marketing team. In an ideal relationship, your regional marketers should view your translators as collaborators and linguistic advisors, as well as cultural advisors in many cases, especially if they don't speak the language themselves.

Consider having multiple vendors.

While there are advantages to centralizing with a single agency, most companies have a handful of translation vendors, simply because not every vendor specializes in the same type of content or the same language set. While you might wish to have just one vendor, it's also not a good idea in terms of risk mitigation. You'll want to have some back-up vendors in case of volume surges or urgent needs.

Insist on transparency.

If your agency won't provide you with the translators' names, don't work with them. They should be willing to give you direct access to the translators. One of the biggest barriers to translation quality is that when translators have questions, they are blocked from asking them as they have zero ability to communicate with the end client. Tell your vendors you won't work under such a model, and that you encourage the translators to ask questions and clarify meaning whenever possible.

Arm them with information.

For translators, don't worry about overloading them with information about your company, your products, your target audience, your style, your brand voice, and even your strategy. The more content, context, and background information you can provide to them, the better. Think of them as writers who want to know the subject matter, immersing themselves in a topic and researching it before they dive into the writing.

Translators do this across two languages, so the more familiar they can become with your content, the better.

Here are some items you can provide to translators to make their life easier.

In your source (authoring) language:

- **STYLE GUIDE** -- they'll work to emulate it in other languages where possible
- **BRAND VOICE DESCRIPTION** -- including colors, images, and visuals, as these help them to replicate similar characteristics with your verbal style in each language
- **GLOSSARIES AND DEFINITIONS** -- make sure to clarify acronyms specific to your company as well as any terms that are unique or that you use in specific ways
- **COMPANY INFORMATION** -- give translators background information on your company's mission, history, and structure
- **PRODUCT INFORMATION** -- share any information you have available about the company's products and services, so that translators can have context
- **GOALS** -- if you have specific goals for a given market, share these with the translators so they can help you achieve them

And, don't forget to share any multilingual resources, such as:

- **LANGUAGE-SPECIFIC GLOSSARIES** -- if you already have customers in a given language, find out if any lists of translated terms already exist
- **TRANSLATOR-PROVIDED GLOSSARIES** -- if you work with a translation agency today, ask if they have any glossaries (usually in TBX format) they have been using
- **STYLE GUIDES** -- if you already have style guides in another language, share them
- **TRANSLATION MEMORY FILES** -- these are databases of past translations,

and can be incredibly useful for future translations (usually in TMX format)

- **LANGUAGE-SPECIFIC WEBSITES** -- don't forget to point vendors to any existing translated content you have available, especially web-based content

It's pretty simple, but so many marketers overlook this simple truth. The more information you provide to the translators to help them, the better your translation quality will be.

Give it time, in every sense.

Often, people expect translation quality to magically happen with the very first project. It takes time for any new translation team to become familiar with your content. Here are some things you should do:

Spend time with your vendors and translators.

Most importantly, make the time to develop relationships with your translation vendors. Spend time on the phone with them, or meet them in person if you can. Invite them to your offices. Do video conference calls between translators and regional marketers. Make sure that you're investing the time required to ensure quality, especially at the beginning of the relationship. Later on, you'll need to invest far less time, but early on, it's worth making yourself, and your team, as accessible as possible.

Don't rush the translation process.

As marketers, we're all in a hurry. But when you force vendors to meet a strict deadline, they can't possibly conduct all the necessary steps in a proper quality review process. Whenever possible, ask your vendors what is possible in terms of delivery timeframes while making your expectations clear. If you have a drop-dead date, make that clear, but don't be inflexible or overly demanding. Start by asking them what is reasonable, and if you find the timelines to not work for you, tell them so. If they don't have the right resources in place, look for a different vendor.

GLOBAL MARKETING PLAYBOOK

Establish the relationship you need

Expand your reach and influence

Build your brand identity



Technology



Chapter 6: Technology

Now that you've mapped out at least some of the core processes being used by your team, it's time to take a fresh look at your marketing technologies -- this time with a global eye.

Do a global technology audit.

Which technologies does your marketing team use on a regular basis, and how well are they able to support your global marketing needs? Make a list of each tool and technology that your team uses, and ask the following questions:

- How many languages does the technology support?
- Are local time and date formats supported?
- Are local currencies supported?
- Does the tool allow me to segment by language, country, or time zone?
- Can regional teams easily clone corporate blog posts and campaigns?
- Does this technology integrate easily with other parts of my global marketing technology stack?

Chances are you'll find that some pieces of your technology stack do not actually support all of your global needs, but you will also likely discover features that you did not know exist.

Fill in training and process gaps.

It's likely that your existing marketing automation tools and technologies offer global and local features that you did not even know existed, especially if you use SaaS products that constantly release new features. Ask your technology vendors which features lend themselves to global marketing, and ask them to train your staff in these specific areas.

Also, is it possible that the technology you're using is leaving your team with some process gaps? Take a critical look at the content-focused processes you've outlined with your team, and ask yourself if there are any technologies that can help bridge the gap. Look for integrated solutions that will help you more closely intertwine your processes as opposed to having to jump from system to system to follow a single process.

Identify any missing tools.

Are there any features or tools that your global marketing team is missing? Ask them! Get their feedback and find out where their tools are letting them down. You might find that different regions have different concerns. Write up your team's collective wish list. Perhaps these features are already available from a current vendor in the form of an add-on package or bundle. Or, perhaps you need to look at the possibility of finding a more fully-featured, integrated solution.

Also, are there any teams that don't have access to critical parts of your tech stack? Make sure you get them access to the same tools whenever possible, so that they can leverage each other's work and ideally standardize on the same systems.

Budget early for technology needs.

Now that you know where the gaps are in your technologies and tools from a global marketing perspective, make sure to get quotes and price ranges from technology vendors to fill in those gaps so that you can build them into your budget for the following year.

GLOBAL MARKETING PLAYBOOK

sizeable number of countries
with a large population
all or most of which



Management



Chapter 7: Management

When it comes to managing a global marketing organization with multiple regional teams, there's a lot to know. Managing teams across multiple countries can be a very challenging undertaking -- significantly more difficult than managing a team that all works under the same roof.

You'll be dealing not only with remote teams and geographic distance, but with a variety of cultural differences, markets at different levels of readiness for your product or service, and usually, multiple time zones. We won't cover each and every aspect of managing a global marketing team, but let's go over some important tenants.

Empower local teams.

The most important thing you can do to accelerate the success of your regional marketing efforts is to **EMPOWER YOUR LOCAL MARKETING TEAMS**. They are the heart and soul of your brand in local markets. Give them breathing room and plenty of latitude to prioritize the issues that matter most for their markets. They need to make decisions based on their local knowledge, which will always be superior to yours. Get comfortable with it.

Far too many companies make the mistake of leading with "global" concerns, which are usually just the concerns of the region they are headquartered in. Instead, listen closely to your local marketing teams, and roll their views into the global strategy. They know their markets best. Global success happens one country at a time.

Global and local requirements sometimes compete with each other. When you have to choose between global and local needs, **GIVE PRIORITY TO LOCAL CONCERNS WHENEVER POSSIBLE**, so long as you -- and your regional teams -- don't lose sight of the larger corporate goals you should be collectively tackling and discussing frequently across all regions.

Share successes liberally.

We already reviewed the communication vehicles that you'll need to put in place, but beyond that, look for opportunities to promote and share the successes of your regional marketing teams, especially for any that are based remotely, outside of your corporate headquarters. These teams often feel marginalized and disconnected from their counterparts. Go out of your way to build bridges between teams, not just between global and regional teams, but between regional teams too.

When possible, create globally decentralized teams, even if just for small projects, to encourage cross-pollination and collaboration across geographies. This promotes a healthy environment in which the teams work together and successes are shared across multiple regions, to prevent one team from feeling diminished or that they are in some sort of competition with another region.

Walk the global walk.

As the global marketing leader at your company, it's extremely important for you to be respectful of all of the different regional teams to set a good example for all of the other marketing teams and others in your company.

Here are some simple ways to turn words into action:

- Visit your local offices frequently
- Develop one-on-one relationships with as many regional team members as you can
- Go out of your way to schedule meetings that work in time zones of remote offices
- Use videoconferencing to see your global team members face-to-face when possible
- Make sure that if one office gets a special reward, that local offices don't feel left out
- Encourage remote team members to travel to HQ frequently
- Encourage top leadership at your company to travel to remote offices frequently
- Create an award for the marketing team member who goes out of their way to build global bridges, or use an existing awards program to highlight this type of work

In general, you'll need to promote a globally-minded outlook within your entire marketing department. That takes time and commitment, but it's essential for aligning your teams and ensuring they're working effectively.

One of the best-kept secrets to supporting your global marketing teams? Ask them what they need. Listen to their ideas. Assume they know the answers. Let them lead and get out of the way. Remove their roadblocks. Be a steward to help them become the empowered regional leaders who can take your company to achieve amazing success in each market.

Keep raising global visibility.

You'll need to work hard to fly not just the global flag, but the flags of all of your various regions. While working toward global objectives for your company, within the marketing department, your end goal is to integrate regional teams with other teams and make sure they are fully supported. Not just in marketing, but throughout the entire company.

Work with your sales teams to ensure solid alignment exists in each region. Collaborate with your services team to ensure that they feel supported with customer marketing. Reach out to the product team to see how you can support them as well. Continue building relationships across the company and encourage them to engage the global "lever," highlighting how it can help your company reach its goals.

GLOBAL MARKETING PLAYBOOK



Mastery



Chapter 8: Mastery

You've got the basics of global marketing now. How do you take it to the next level?

Lead your company to global marketing success.

If you're tracking well toward your global goals, managing regional teams successfully, and seeing your international business thrive, you're ready to think more aspirationally. As your program matures, lead the company to adopt a mindset of "every customer matters," independent of geography. In fact, once you see global marketing success at every area of your marketing funnel, make sure that you roll in advocacy marketing in order to close the loop, and turn those customers into fans and promoters.

Watch out for one big red flag -- people who start to talk about one region as if it's somehow privileged. It's one thing to prioritize growth in a given market, but it's important to be very sensitive to any internal biases that might spring up at your company. If you start hearing things like, "that market isn't that great," or "people in that country don't renew at the same rate," be sure to explore those issues, but make sure no one is sending a message that one regional team matters more than another. All of them matter for global success.

Help the rest of the business globalize.

Another mastery step, once you have the marketing house in order, is to support teams in other areas of the company that are trying to go global. Sometimes this will happen naturally as you bring in more global leads that become customers. But in other cases, some departments lag behind -- often just because they lack globally-minded resources, or specific goals around international. As you take your marketing global, share your lessons learned with others in your company. The best practices you're creating may prove essential for other departments.

Remember too that marketing often leads companies into new markets, since leads come before sales do. As a result, your insight into global growth will often be important. You and your team are pioneers. Help others in your company benefit from your experience.

Create your next generation of global marketing leaders.

The best way to ensure global growth at your company is to keep your regional marketing teams motivated and growing. Give them ambitious challenges, but not without the proper support in place. Cultivate leaders who become true experts in their local markets. Find opportunities for them to demonstrate thought leadership, achieve media citations, and otherwise help them develop their careers. You might be afraid of them outgrowing your company, but if you let them become leaders, they'll often do the opposite, and be some of the biggest drivers of your company's growth. You'll also build loyalty with employees, which is contagious. When you don't sit in the same office as your team, their morale and commitment is priceless.

In addition to creating local leaders at the regional level, pass on the global baton, and get young team members excited about the company's international growth. Keep an eye out, always, for talented "next-generation" global marketers. Look for people who naturally gravitate toward other countries via travel, background, or simply by expressing an interest. Set up master classes and lunch and learn sessions, create an internal Wiki page, or find other forms to share your knowledge with others in your company to ensure that you're constantly creating the globally-minded marketers you know your company will need in the future.

Share what you learn with the world.

Give back to your broader community. The ability to lead global growth is both a gift and an honor for any marketer. Be generous by sharing the lessons you've learned (even some of the embarrassing ones) through industry events, webinars, blogging, guest articles, and mentoring programs. Don't be afraid that competitors will copy you -- share liberally and let them follow you. Be a thought leader as you take your

marketing efforts global, and watch as the markets follow the mindshare you build for your company.