

# Localising Google AdWords for non-English speaking foreign markets

Optimisation on the World Wide Web uses search engine optimisation (SEO) of its visible content and, under the hood, an AdWords campaign on Google (or equivalent for other search engines). Vital in the local market, it requires effort in foreign markets.

"Getting foreign-market search optimisation right is a challenge of localisation, to accommodate differences between countries. It requires roping in a new breed of specialist into one's search marketing efforts, namely language services providers (LSPs), with service offerings including localisation," says Françoise Henderson, CEO of Rubric, a global LSP.



via FreeDigitalPhotos

Language is one of the most obvious differences between countries. In non-English-speaking foreign markets, one will therefore need to translate website content and AdWords. But it is not simply a matter of translating words.

"One will also need a localisation service to deal with local terms, cultural sensitivities, language standards, social realities and much more that is unique about the market you are tackling."

This is true whether translation is needed or not. One's website may already serve (English-speaking) foreign markets but succeed in the UK, Australia or US, one's braai equipment will have to be redefined variously as 'barbecue', 'BBQ', or 'outdoor grill'.

However, search marketing localisation has other, more technical complexities, notes Ian Henderson, Rubric chief technology officer and depending on the size of the project, these may be compounded many times over.

"To tackle large projects with complex workflows between writers, translators, editors, proof readers and Web content managers, LSPs need software development capabilities - to preserve formatting integrity between the client's content management system and the translation tool, and to comply with the technical parameters of the Google AdWords platform

In addition, project management capabilities will come in very handy.

## Case study

The company's AdWords localisation initiative for a multi-language tour operator into Africa comprised a significant body of terms that had to be readied for South American markets (Portuguese and Spanish) before Christmas 2013.

The scope of the project, combined with the inherent inefficiencies of the traditional linear translation process and the technical challenges of search marketing, placed extraordinary resource demands on the project, threatening project outcomes. In the end, these were resolved with considerable process innovation, automation and project management.

The client provided the search terms to be localised in Excel format, but the company wanted to review AdWords within AdEditor, Google's tool for designing AdWords. "We came up with a unique process for exporting, translating and reimporting the content files without 'breaking' formatting," explains Henderson.

This allowed the company to review translated AdWords within their proper live search context. Based on this, it could propose or invite new AdWords as needed, based on its specialist in-country linguistic skills.



## Value add

This feedback loop is not offered in the traditional translate-edit-proof continuum, a linear process in which large translation projects such as text books are simply 'cut up' and farmed out to numerous translators, 'stitched' back together, edited and proofed. This siloed and hierarchical method does not allow for multi-step feedback between and among participants, leaving commissioning editors to tear their hair out over non-contextual translations, reactive translations without strategic input, process mishaps and a myriad of other flaws of pre-automation, unmanaged large content projects.

The company streamlined the process in other ways too, for instance by bringing an engineer into the process to test that translations complied with the technical parameters of Google AdWords. This automated quality check cut-out much to-do, allowing translators to focus on exceptions (formatting problems).

As owner of the new processes, the company managed the entire AdWords translation process (it also did the original website copy translation - with SEO in mind, of course).

## Fast results

As a result, the nightmare of managing a complex content translation process, which would take an SEO agency several months, was finished in two weeks. The company slotted seamlessly and with complete transparency into the SEO process using the AdWords infrastructure. Consequently, the tour operator had enquiries on their website from the outset.

"What was a small project for the company and a near giveaway, added tremendous value. If the agency had to do it, they would have had to go to a lot of trouble to build up a non-core ad hoc capability.

"As a seasonal business, the tour operator would have missed the peak 2013/14 booking period if the AdWords had not been ready in December 2013. They saved themselves a great deal of worry," concludes Henderson.

For more information, go to <http://rubric.com/za>.

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