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El Marketing, Das Marketing, Le Marketing

By A. Raymond Randall, Jr.

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While reviewing site stats, I noticed 18 foreign countries as domain origins. This prompts my curiosity. Should I hone my marketing efforts to serve these visitors effectively in their native tongue? My college age daughter studies French, German, and Spanish simultaneously. The Word "marketing" is an "American" word she informs me; distinguished in Spanish, German, and French with slight nuance. Although my daughter learns conversations in Spanish, German, and French, much more talk is in Chinese.

Despite this fact, Kenji Kitao, a professor of English at Doshisha University in Japan, points out, "English is the major language of news and information...business and government...maritime communication and international air traffic control...." English headlines and text appear on more than half of the newspapers published in the world. Three thousand magazines publish in English for Indian readers, according to Kitao. If so many read so much English, what reason would a webmaster have for providing multiple language translations for web sites?

Well, web marketing seeks global participation by its nature. Every villager, whether dressed in a Brooks Brothers suite or shorts and sandals may click a favorite URI, and each villager speaks a unique language. Marshall McLuhan, a communication visionary, says "Our new environment compels commitment and participation." That new environment includes the Internet.

So, what questions does this idea present? Perhaps just one: should a webmaster consider multiple languages for a website? If no, stop reading here, but first consider the fact that Yahoo provides local (or village) site translations for 24 countries and ethnic groups. Further, Yahoo provides state specific sites for every state in the U.S. Local marketing matters. Just take a look at Yahoo's home page. In fact, a study by IDC informs us that only 45% of online surfers speak English, yet 85% of Web pages appear in English.

Most webmasters work solo, or with a very small staff, and our budgets are smaller yet. We don't have a Yahoo staff of international writers. So, what do we do if this concept matters? Here are 7 rudimentary steps you may consider.

1. Check with your site design company. Many web designers provide provide foreign language support. Here is an example of one designers commitment, "Our templates support the following languages: English, Danish, Dutch, Faroese, French, German, Icelandic, Irish, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish. We are planning to translate our site in several languages in the future as well. We have already started doing translation into Spanish."
2. Really small budget? See if a language department of a college anywhere in the world would consider using your site as a class project. Inquire about college foreign language interns. Find a student with a passion for language and a commitment to accuracy with a professor looking over their shoulder.
3. Don't use on line translators. As one writer points out, the Swedes will laugh while the French excoriate you for your aloof effort. On line translators work for a phrase or a word, but not a sentence or paragraph. Nuance is the essence of meaning, and all words have various shades of meaning. You don't want to be standing under a palm tree when you should be under an oak. However, if you must, the University of Maryland recommends two sites: Systran and Transparent Language
4. Be very aware of graphics that please in one culture and offend in another. If fact, less is best when it comes to graphics; it's all about content. Local and effective communication matters the most, not fancy graphics. Additionally, most people around the world access the Internet using dial up.
5. If your site offers multiple language pages, be prepared to respond to inquiries in that language.
6. Research and manage all currency exchange and local tax issues when marketing offshore.
7. Be certain that your product or service provides a relevant resource to your prospective foreign customer or client.

English may not remain the leading language of commerce, but even if it does, we have an obligation to consider the importance of global marketing in a local way. In the long term, success may mean el marketing, das marketing, and le marketing, and the results may be grande, Großartig, or grandioso! Just something to think about.

Ray Randall serves clients as a registered investment advisor with his firm, Ethos Advisory Services, Essex, Massachusetts

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services industry, writes a weekly newsletter for Ethos Advisory Services, and coordinates the developments at Echievements . Ray holds a Masters Degree from Gordon–Conwell Theological Seminary, Hamilton, MA. You may email him or call (877–895–3756).

Dust Off Your Marketing Plan

By Robert Wardrick

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Do you have a written marketing plan?

Are you following your plan?

Your written marketing plan serves as a road map to reach your target market.

Many entrepreneurs who spend time and energy developing a marketing plan, will soon abandon it if the plan don't produce immediate sales.

Marketing can be Time–Sensitive, 1) It takes Time for you to learn your market niche. 2) It can take even more Time for consumers to get your marketing–sales–message.

Elena Fawkner (<http://www.ahbbo.com/niche.html>) wrote an article "What's Your Niche" that is MUST reading for anyone markeking products and services ON or OFFline.

Whether your marketing plan is 1 page or 100 pages, refine it and update it. but don't leave your marketing–base without it.

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