

The Impact of Translation on Online Buying Behavior

Country by Country Analysis for 10 International Markets



HOW TRANSLATION INFLUENCES ONLINE BUYING BEHAVIOR



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Language and online buying behavior

It should come as no surprise that the research in this eBook confirms that translating your website results in:

- More international visits to your website
- More time spent on your website by international visitors
- More sales, even at higher prices
- More repeat sales

But to many companies, the most interesting information in this eBook will be the breakdown of these statistics by country. These figures, from the independent research firm the Common Sense Advisory, make it possible for companies to decide exactly which markets to translate for, and what will be the benefit.

Who is this eBook for?

This eBook is exclusively available to help Lexcelera customers decide on the best multilingual strategy to reach their objectives. It is designed for marketing, communications, digital strategy and brand managers, and for decision makers at all levels who define their companies' international online strategies.



Introduction

When deciding on which languages to prioritize for your website or your eCommerce store, it can help to understand the national characteristics of your target markets.

- How likely is it that a German prospect will visit your site if it's not available in the language of Goethe?
- Is a Chinese speaker more or less likely to click on links that are in French or English?
- What are the chances that a Japanese prospect will buy from your company if he or she sees only Latin scripts on your website?
- Does a Spanish internaut need to see Castilian, Catalan, Galician or Basque to give your company his or her undying loyalty?

In this eBook you will find the answers to these and other questions for the top online languages.

This information about the online buying behavior of consumers in 10 countries has never before been available at such an in-depth level. We are making it available exclusively to help Lexcelera's customers decide on the best multilingual strategy for their target markets.



Is English really the web lingua franca?

Confidence in another language is a key factor that influences how comfortable internauts will be when visiting a website that is not in their mother tongue.

English is often chosen as a lingua franca by websites targeting an international audience. Yet the comfort level with English varies widely on a country by country basis.

Who reports the most confidence in their ability to read English when deciding to buy products or services online? Egyptians. 47% of Egyptians say they are confident in English, followed by just 27% of Chinese consumers. Among the Europeans, 20% of Spaniards, 19% of Germans, and 16% of the French are comfortable with English content. At the bottom of the list are Brazilians (15%), Russians (8%) and the Japanese (7%).

The conclusion? English is effective for reaching just a small percentage of your target markets.

Read on in the following pages to see, per country, how language impacts website visits, sales, return visits, customer loyalty and more.



How language impacts...

Website visits

When you launch a website, the most important thing is to get the people you are targeting to visit it. So how does language impact whether people will click through to your site or not? If your site is just in English, for example, many people simply will not visit it.

61% of Japanese internauts report that they rarely, or never, visit sites that are not in their language. 54% of French and Germans say the same thing. About a third of people from Russia, Spain, Brazil and China also tend not to visit websites that are not in their language.

As for how much time people will spend on a foreign language website, from a quarter to half of all internauts report that they spend more time on sites in their own language than on sites in a foreign tongue.

Lexcelera's take-away:

Internauts from Japan, France and Germany are the least likely to visit websites when they are not localized in their languages.



How language impacts...

Online purchasing

Internauts may be willing, or at least somewhat willing, to visit a website that is not in their mother tongue. But if the website is in English, and they speak another language, will they make a purchase there?

Here the research is clear: the great majority of people will not buy from websites where purchasing information is not in their mother tongue. This is true for 78% of Japanese, 71% of French and Germans, and between 50-60% of Turks, Russians, Brazilians, Indonesians, Spaniards and Chinese.

What about product support? Around half of international consumers will not buy a product if the user instructions aren't in their language.

Lexcelera's take-away:

When international sales is the goal, 50 to 80% of people from all countries covered in this eBook will not buy from a website where information is not in their native tongues.



How language impacts...

Competitive edge

What is the impact of language when a customer is deciding between one product or service and another? Not surprisingly, language plays a large part in this equation. When customers have to decide between competing offers, having information in the right language can make the sale. In fact, language tips the scales for 87% of the Japanese, 82% of Indonesians and 80% of the French. This is also true for over 70% of Brazilians, Germans, Spaniards, Chinese, and Turks.

Having a multilingual website helps even if your brand is little known, and/or you are competing against a large global brand. Language can give you the edge for a third or more of people from Turkey, Germany, Japan, France, Russia, Brazil and Spain.

When you provide information in their mother tongue, some consumers will even pay more for your product or service. This is especially true for the Japanese, Brazilians, Germans, Russians and even the French.

Lexcelera's take-away:
When comparing two equivalent products, language makes the difference for 70 to 87% of international visitors.



How language impacts...

Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty is the Holy Grail of international marketing. What could be better than a customer who comes back to your website time and time again?

Speaking to someone in their native tongue builds loyalty. Making after sales information available in their language ensures that they will buy your brand again. Regarding after-sales care in their language, around three-quarters of people would vote for this with their wallets. 60% to 80% of Turks, Spaniards, French, Japanese, Indonesians, Brazilians, Egyptians, Germans and Russians are more likely to buy from you again if you support them in their language.

Lexcelera's take-away:
Language is a key tool for encouraging repeat visits and repeat purchases.

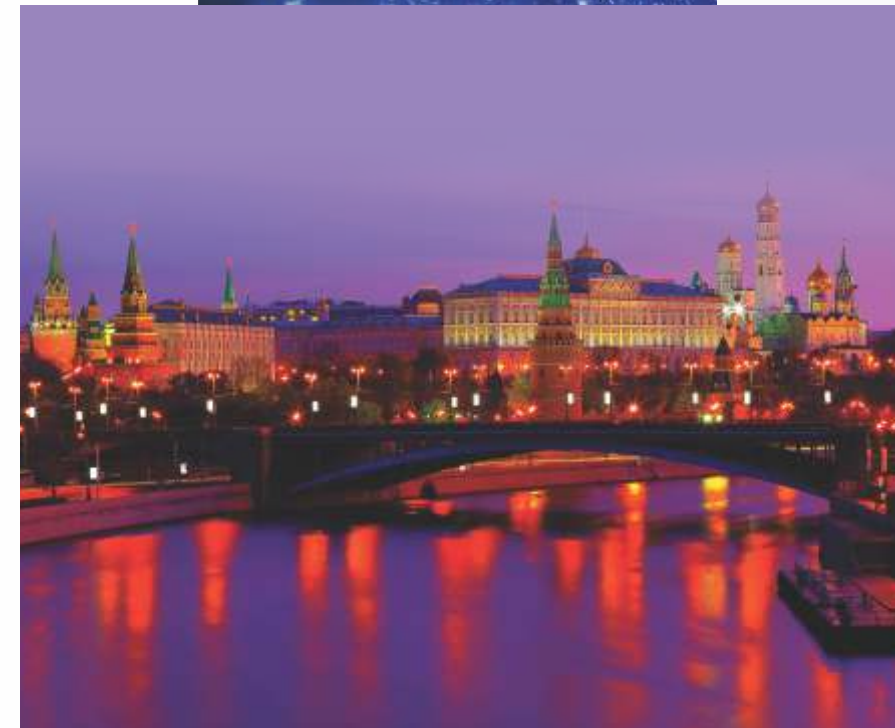


Automatic translation

What do consumers do when they visit a website in a language they are not comfortable with? They resort to online translation services such as Google or Bing. In fact, over three-quarters of consumers from Brazil, Turkey, Russia, Indonesia, China, Egypt and Spain use machine translation, followed by 65% of the Japanese, 61% of the French, and 52% of Germans.

What if the machine translation delivers poor quality? For most people, it still beats “no translation”. Research by Microsoft and others have shown that the majority of people express a preference for generic machine translation over no translation in their language. This is true for 72% of Spaniards and over 50% of Russians, French, Japanese, Germans and Egyptians.

Lexcelera's take-away:
Most international visitors prefer machine translation to no translation, even if the quality is poor.



Which website pages should be translated?

OK, you're convinced that you need to translate your website, but maybe you're wondering if you need to translate it all. Is it possible that some parts of the website are more important than others?

If you can't translate your entire website for whatever reason, there are a few areas where users show a strong preference for content in their language. **Product information**, as we've seen above, is on the top of the list of web pages that customers would like to find in their mother tongue, followed by **after-sales support**. A majority of internauts would also appreciate **navigation, menus** and **buttons** in their language.

As for **user reviews**, this category deserves a special mention. The importance of user reviews to purchasing decisions is growing by the day. Whether it's about a product, a service, or a destination such as a hotel or restaurant, more and more people are relying on opinions from others. Having reviews in their language is critical for 65% to 80% of all internauts.

Lexcelera's take-away:

The most important content to translate includes product information, after-sales support, navigation and user reviews.



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Conclusion

Consumer preferences regarding language vary by country, but overall, we've seen that people need content in their own language in order to be comfortable making buying decisions online.

When your website content is translated into the languages of your customers and prospects, this gives you a competitive edge, with results such as more visits, more sales, more repeat sales, greater willingness to pay higher prices and increased customer loyalty.

Localizing your website not only boosts international sales, but it also translates into higher profitability because it leverages investments already made in research, design, production, marketing and branding.

Translation powers global success. According to the Common Sense Advisory, by translating your website into just 14 languages, you can reach the nations that account for 90% of the world's online buying power.



About Lexcelera

Since 1986 Lexcelera has been powering the international communications of some of the world's best companies. Today Lexcelera has offices in 5 cities on 4 continents – in Paris, London, Vancouver, Singapore and Buenos Aires – offering customers a 24-hour service.

Today, translating corporate websites and eCommerce stores for companies wanting to boost their international success forms a major part of Lexcelera's activities.

Lexcelera's services include:



Translation, localization, interpreting

- Document translation • Sworn translation
- Software localization • Interpreting



Multimedia

- Sub-titles • Voice-over • Dubbing



DTP, Graphics

- Page layout (DTP) • Graphics • Transcription



Web

- Website translation • Multilingual SEO
- SEM • Content creation



Digital services

- eCommerce sites • eLearning
- Social media • eReputation

