

A nighttime photograph of the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France, illuminated with golden lights. The tower stands prominently against a dark, cloudy sky. In the foreground, a stone bridge with multiple arches spans the Seine River. The bridge is lit with warm, yellow lights, and its reflection is visible in the water. The city lights and the tower's glow create a warm, golden hue throughout the scene.

TRANSFORMING THE RETAIL PROCESS IN THE CHANGING WORLD

WWW.LEXCELERA.COM

GETTING IT RIGHT IN THE ONLINE LUXURY MARKET

WHOM IS THIS EBOOK FOR?

- ◇ *Are you on the verge of taking your luxury brand online?*
- ◇ *Are you thinking of extending and empowering your brand's presence online?*
- ◇ *Are you responsible for managing your company's luxury brand properties in overseas markets?*
- ◇ *Do you head an established French luxury brand's marketing, sales, or international operations?*

Then, this ebook is for you. In this ebook, we discuss how French luxury brands can strengthen their presence online and dominate e-commerce as they have done in the brick-and-mortar world of fashion and luxury.

INTRODUCTION

Selling online is not new to high-end luxury brands: **in 2019, about \$37 billion worth of personal luxury goods were sold online** . However, e-commerce would not always have been the first place one would think of going to buy high fashion and luxury products. With good reason: luxury sells differently than other “products”. Because, quite simply, luxury is a brand first, a product later.

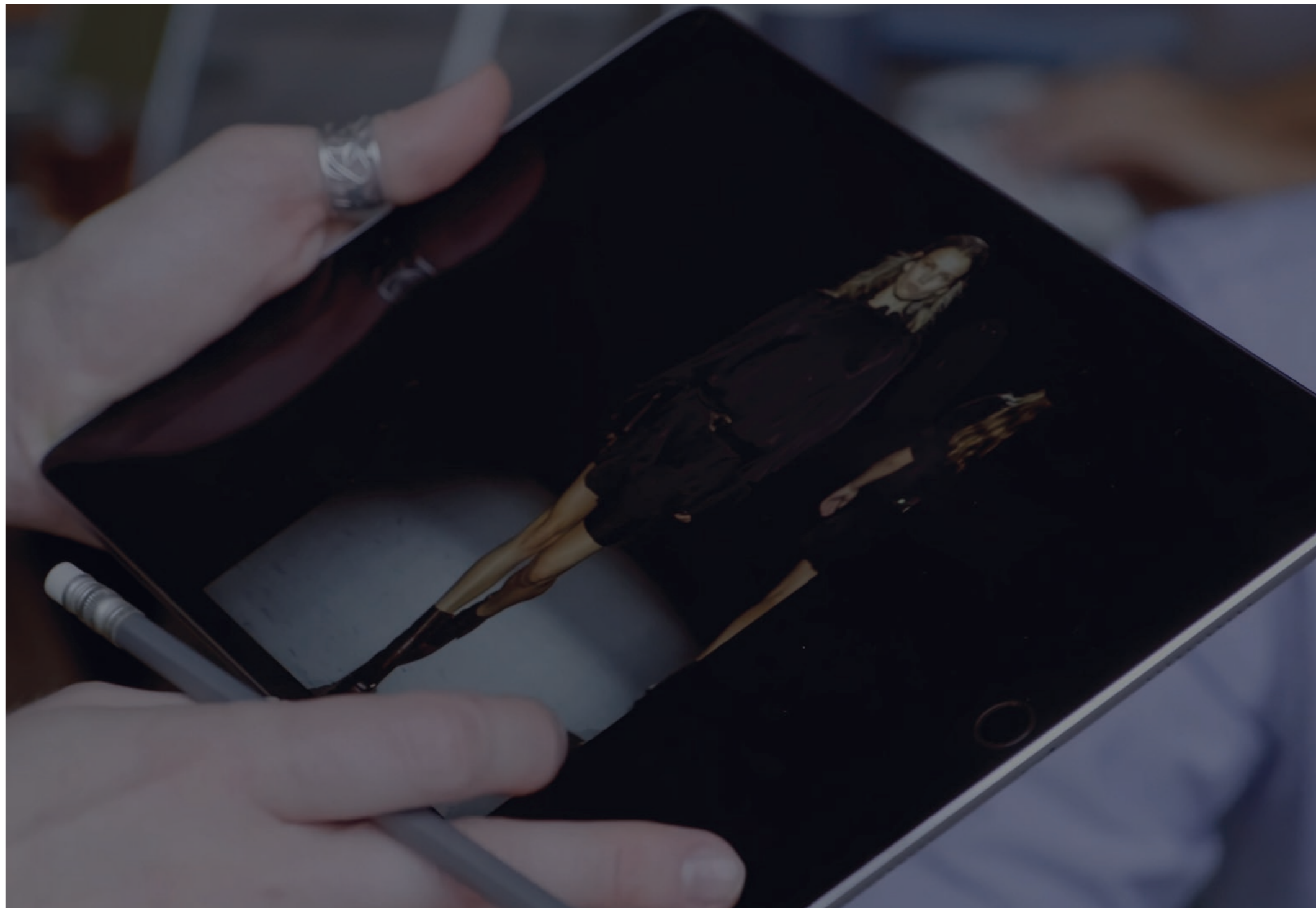
Hence, for the customer experiencing the brand was integral to the buying process. For the brand, the in-store experience went a long way in building engagement and loyalty.

However, with the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020, a huge shift has happened. Your customers would rather avoid walking into your store. **But that does not mean they want to disconnect with your brand. Quite the opposite.**

In the changed world, people are looking to do most of the things online which they were previously doing offline. They will also continue to hold on to some of the digital buying habits even after the pandemic has died down.

To get it right online, it's important to understand a few fundamentals:

- ◇ Online is not one big “global” market. You still need to localize for specific markets.
- ◇ English is not enough, especially if your prime markets consist of China, India, other Asian countries, or Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.
- ◇ Adopt best practices for translation and localization to achieve the objectives you set.
- ◇ Build the right expert team to execute localization.
- ◇ Institute the right processes to cut down time to market.
- ◇ Go beyond translation with localization.



UNDERSTANDING YOUR LUXURY MARKET...

Though Europe used to be the epicenter of their world, many French luxury companies now target of making it big in China, India, other Asian countries, Africa, and the Middle East.

China accounts for more than a third of luxury purchases globally. In the pre-pandemic days, about **70% of these sales used to happen in-store**, either during overseas travel or in China. However, it is safe to assume the numbers have inverted now. Chinese buyers of hi-fashion goods such as watches, apparel, automobiles, perfumes are increasingly young and not brand-loyal. And, while they still prefer foreign luxury brands, there are signs that negative perceptions about domestic players are beginning to fade .

India is a steady market for luxury brands, but may present unique challenges. The Indian market is nascent, which can be a boon as well as a bane. Indians buyers' view of luxury can differ significantly. For instance, even while buying luxury cars, Indians tend to be concerned about the mileage of the vehicle. Products may frequently need to be tailored to Indian conditions.

For many Saudis and Emiratis and other Arabs, lavish buyers of luxury, online plays a big part in the buying journey, even if they were to visit the store. In the changed world order, one can only imagine how much more emphasis these customers place **on digital marketing, social media, and influencers to guide their purchases.**

In Kenya, South Africa, and other countries across the African continent, the first preference was to buy luxury in-store, as elsewhere, though this purchase would be heavily influenced by their digital exposure to the brands. Since the pandemic, much of this buying has been put on hold, as is happening everywhere, but South Africa was one of the countries where a comparatively high 6% of people surveyed by GlobalWebIndex said they would prioritize luxury buying once the pandemic is over.



... AND DOMINATING IT

Your English-only website is sure to bounce off visitors from language-sensitive markets in Asia and the Gulf. 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 and between 50-60% of Chinese people . It can be safely extrapolated to be true for the Arab world, too.

Confidence in another language is a key factor that influences how comfortable internet users will be when visiting and transacting on a website that is not in their mother tongue. The comfort level with English varies widely on a country by country basis. For instance, only 47% of Egyptians say they are confident in English, followed by just 27% of Chinese consumers.

Whether they are buying a luxury product or a packet of chips, it's a universal truth that one feels the most comfortable and confident in their mother tongue. Remember, **you wouldn't force your customers to speak an alien language at your brick-and-mortar store**. Why do any different online?

Also, remember that new-age consumers of luxury products in China can be notoriously brand-agnostic. And, the competition for these buyers in China and others Asian markets and in the Arab world is too high for you to ignore the language aspect.



NO GLOBAL, IT'S ALL LOCAL

One of the first things that companies need to understand when they start selling internationally is that there is no one “global” market. It is but a concept. In reality, what we call the global market collectively refers to many local markets.

These markets may be situated in the same country as well as abroad. Hence, **you need to think global, but act local.** What does this mean in reality?

- ◇ As there is no “global” market but several local markets, **one cannot standardize**, but one can and must localize. Prepare for each new market entry with as much care and effort as you would when releasing a product in your home market.
- ◇ Build a set of localization best practices which can serve as a checklist for market entry as well as continued operation. This acts as a repository of knowledge which various departments in the company can tap into and make use of.
- ◇ In essence, don't create a blanket solution for one market: instead, prioritize the local markets you want to operate and succeed in around the world and work on customized marketing and sales strategies for each.



ROLE OF CONTENT IN THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF YOUR BRAND

While no one channel, either e-commerce or in-store, may turn out to be the exclusive choice of luxury customers, being equipped for digital helps your company tide over crises such as the coronavirus pandemic. However, even after the pandemic is over, the investments you do in digital will continue to yield returns.

Content plays a huge role in your digital transformation: in fact, it is the hero of your digital story. In the offline world, your marketing efforts would be supported by collaterals such as glossy, exclusive-looking brochures. When you move online, you need to create the same **feeling of exclusivity**. And, this comes from not mere translation of words, but with creation of content for your brand in each language which reflects your brand's image. Your content must work extra hard to represent the quality, care, style, and chic that your brand has come to represent.

You can create such **high-quality content with transcreation** or multilingual copy writing. It is several notches higher than the usual translation process as it adapts your message to the local audience rather than merely translate the words. You pay a lot of attention to copy writing for your brand in your native language. The same applies to the copy in different languages. If it's only translated, the specialty of your brand may be lost.

You can employ transcreation effectively on product description and category pages with well-researched locally-relevant keywords so that your website appears at the top of search engine results. Your prospective customers in India may not be using the same keywords as those in Saudi Arabia, though they may be looking for the same product. This can be due to many reasons: historical, cultural, or political. Multilingual search engine optimization (SEO) adds these nuances to your online advertising campaigns.



GO BEYOND TRANSLATION WITH LOCALIZATION

Localization refers to all those processes that are involved in customizing a product or service to customers in a particular region or country. Translation is a subset of this process.

Global digital marketing is not just about rendering your brand messaging in another language (translation), but also in another culture (localization). A multilingual communication agency that understands this can **adapt your message to a foreign locale**, so that you don't end up with a culturally tone-deaf campaign. For instance, if your content employs themes or jokes around TGIF (Thank God It's Friday) or Monday jokes, it will not register in countries where the weekly holiday is Friday.

You can also understand **local users' fashion and luxury buying practices** with the services of such an agency. This knowledge will help in creating targeted digital marketing campaigns for specific buyer profiles.

Different formats of digital marketing necessitate different localization processes. For instance, social media campaigns may need to be independently handled by your content agency's local linguists based on your brief, as there is no time for centralized content creation and subsequent transcreation.

For websites and e-commerce, a more time- and resource-intensive process such as transcreation would work better. Visuals as well as text may need to be re-created from scratch or tweaked, depending on how different the target market's cultural and social practices and preferences are from that of the home market of the company.

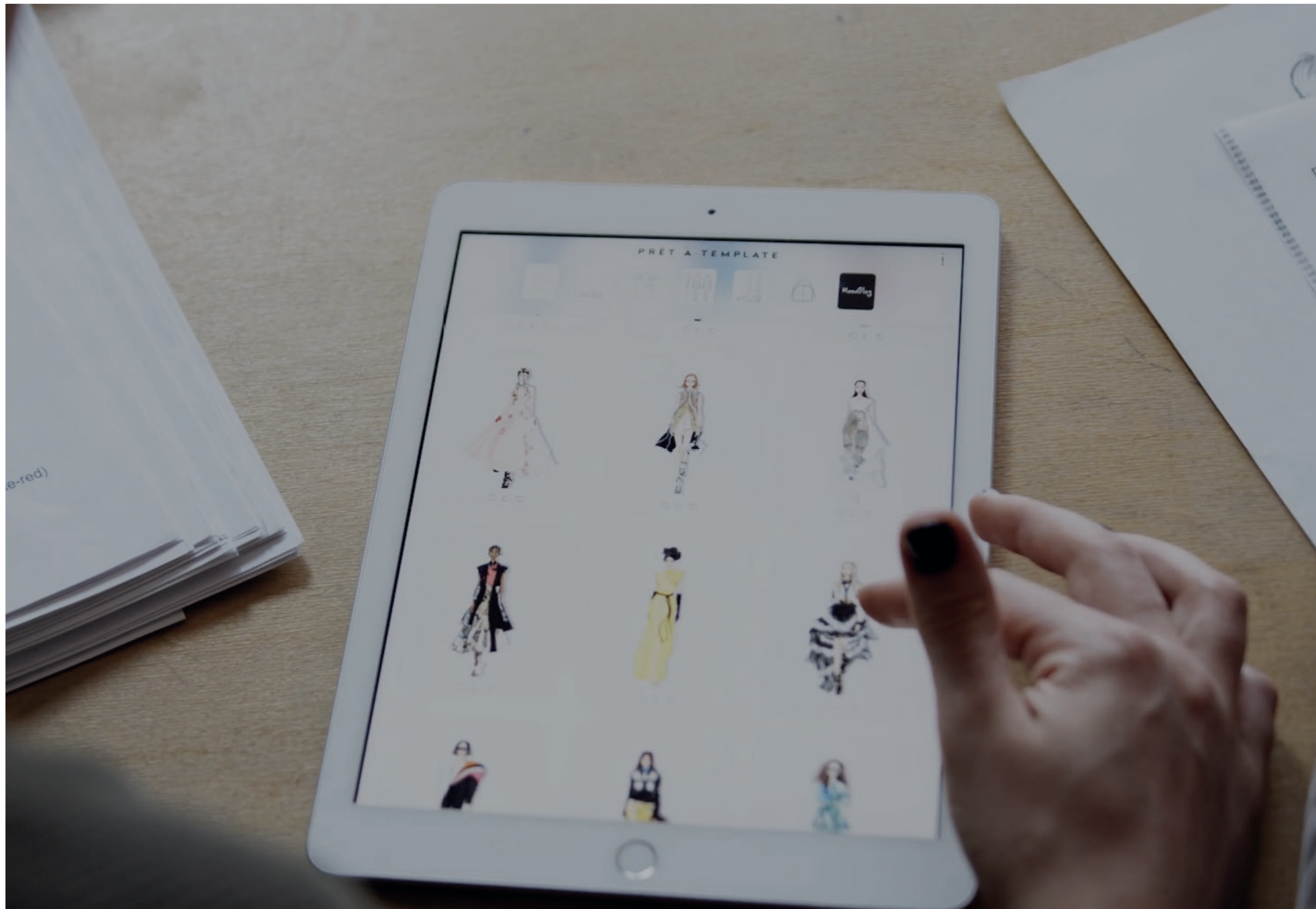


SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE...

Many high-end retail companies outsource their translation functions to a multilingual content provider. This is so because such a provider does not only supply the words, but also works to make sure the spirit of the brand remains intact in every language.

Collaboration with a content provider needs to start from **the very beginning of the localization project** rather than way downstream. This is so that you don't make costly mistakes which can be completely avoided in the first place. For instance, many languages have differing levels of formality. If your content is using the wrong level of formality for the audience you want to target, it will simply show the lack of understanding your company has about the locale.

A specialized global communication company can tailor your content for specific markets, **so that you win in brand recall**. It can also advise you on website globalization and internationalization standards so that you don't have to rewrite the code on which your website or app runs each time you launch a new language; so that your international customers are not put off by forms that break; so that they can easily find their language on your website, and so on.



...RIGHT PROCESSES

When you have a clear focus on global marketing, you will consider your multi-local content partner a part of your marketing team. Such integration enables the partner to advise on global content creation, review, and feedback processes that need to be instituted to reduce time-to-market drastically.

The content partner can help with writing for diverse audiences around the globe in a way that it speaks to them, while **keeping the brand voice consistent**. This is invaluable as your brand travels around the globe, employs targeted campaigns, but retains the brand spirit.

Next, you can use the content partner's expertise to build a consensus on the review process: what levels of error tolerance are required for different types of content? Some content types may skip a lengthy review process once you have enough confidence in your relationship with your partner. If possible, do dry runs of translation and review processes, so that you can identify problem areas and make sure the development and localization teams are on board.

Establish clear channels of communication between product, marketing, and the content agency. The structure and nomenclature of these teams may vary from company to company, but the point here is that unless these teams work together and have a healthy exchange of feedback, time to market may be adversely impacted and quality may vary.



CONCLUSION

Your brand is an icon in the world of luxury. Whether you are offline or online, your customers have come to expect a certain **quality from everything that carries your brand.** Your localized websites will represent your brand where it cannot physically be present.

Luxury e-commerce has several high priority requirements of multilingual content: it must keep pace with fast fashion; different country websites must be able to showcase the same products at the same time. The content must reflect the local vocabulary and the products must also be tailored to local preferences.

These are tough expectations to meet, but not impossible. Choose the right multi-local partner who can advise on the many intricacies of the process, which languages to prioritize, which technology to choose, how to integrate it with your content infrastructure, and many other things that form the big picture of global marketing.

At Lexcelera, a **multilingual communication boutique** headquartered in Paris and with offices across the world, we have an intimate understanding of the ethos of French luxury brands and the expected quality in global communications. We are also veterans in communicating in the leading languages of Asian as well as Middle Eastern markets. This makes it easy and advantageous to work with us.

We do not merely deliver words, but services and solutions tailored to carry your brand to premium markets around the world. Get in touch with us today.

REFERENCES

1- Business of Fashion:

<https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/education/case-study-luxury-ecommerce-online-retail>

2- China Luxury Report 2019:

<https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/china/how-young-chinese-consumers-are-reshaping-global-luxury>

3- How coronavirus is reshaping the luxury market:

<https://blog.globalwebindex.com/chart-of-the-week/coronavirus-reshaping-the-luxury-market/>

4-Can't Read, Won't Buy:

<https://csa-research.com/More/Media/Press-Releases/ArticleID/31/Survey-of-3-000-Online-Shoppers-Across-10-Countries-Finds-that-60-Rarely-or-Never-Buy-from-English-only-Websites>



Lexcelera

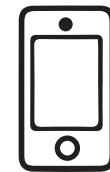
We make global easy



Headquarters
2 rue de la Roquette
75011 Paris, France



contact@lexcelera.com



+33 1 55 28 88 00

WWW.LEXCELERA.COM