

Building for a New Age in Global Customer Experience

Learnings from the Global Experience Leaders Podcast

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Introduction

We are in the midst of a generational change brought on by COVID. People across the world are spending more of their time online, part of a global shift to a digital-first world across our personal and professional lives. People's lives have changed dramatically, and many find themselves working from home or in workspaces very different to those to which they've become accustomed.

This fundamentally changed how customers interact with your company. In the old world, you could rely on offline interactions or person-to-person communication to power the CX, whether that was at a retail store, trade show, client meeting, or anywhere else.

Today, you have to deliver a personalized, digital-first experience to all your customers to stay in the game. A McKinsey study found that the average percentage of customer interactions that happen digitally has grown nearly 300% over the last three years, and

more e-commerce transactions occurred in the first four months of 2020 than in the previous ten years combined.

If you listen to some of the leaders of the most iconic companies of our generation, you hear a single clear message - competing on customer experience is the only way to win in the digital era.

Because of that businesses are prioritizing more and more the digital-first customer experience.

On the B2B side, Frank Sloodman, CEO of Snowflake, says that when you get higher up in large organizations, executives care about two things: business outcomes and the customer experience. On the B2C side, Sonia Syngal, CEO of GAP, says that "customers want to spend their money on brands and products they trust, not waste money on bad customer experiences."

More than anything, all of these trends mean that global customer experience today is more important than ever. But many companies think of customer experience in a narrow way. They assume that a customer support interaction, a chatbot, or a welcome email is enough. Those are individual pieces of the puzzle.

Customer experience is a journey that includes everything your customer sees from when they first learn about your company to buying your product to becoming your biggest fan. The way in which customers engage with companies and content online has transformed, and companies need to change the way they operate in order to build truly global customer experiences.

So what does this mean for companies as they prepare for this new age of global customer experience?



“Customers want to spend their money on brands and products they trust, not waste money on bad customer experiences.”

Sonia Syngal
CEO of GAP



“When you get high up in large institutions, all they want to know is how you improve their customer experience and business outcomes.”

Frank Sloodman
CEO of Snowflake

In our first season of the Global Experience Leaders Podcast, we spoke with five leaders that have been and are currently at the forefront of this new wave of thinking, using localization and language to connect with users all over the world.

In this eBook, we'll discuss advice and insights from those leaders on a number of topics, including:

- ✓ The value of technology
- ✓ Building the right process
- ✓ Importance of global customer experience
- ✓ What comes next for localization and global customer experience

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The Value of Technology

Technology has become increasingly important to building, deploying, and managing a high quality global customer experience. While language technology has dramatically improved, it still requires skilled linguists with deep expertise involved to produce the best results. On top of that, integrations and connectors to a range of content systems save time, streamline the process of localization, and ensure no content is missed.

Jochen Hummel, founder and former CEO of TRADOS, believes that while AI is improving, there's still room for human linguists to play a large role in the translation process.



“Every company has its own language, and it’s not about being ‘correct’ or ‘wrong’ - it’s about what you want to say and how to say it. A general purpose translation product can never do that. Someone needs to teach the AI the specific terminology, knowledge, and style of the company.”

Jochen Hummel

Founder and Former CEO of TRADOS

This is especially true as more transactions and interactions are moving online. Content is becoming easier to access, and companies are trying to create multilingual experiences specific to the company voice and intended audience.

Former long-time VP of Localization at PTC Karen Combe also spoke about the importance and value of technology over the years.

“There was a time when localization was focused on translators and translation and project management because there was so much manual work. But as technology has improved and has been adopted, there’s much less manual work. This move towards automation means that localization departments need integrated tools. Moving forward, there’s going to be more emphasis on automation.”

Ultimately, technology is a big differentiator for successful localization programs - those that use cutting edge, integration-focused technologies are more likely to see smoother, automated workflows that improve efficiency and productivity.

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Getting a Strategic Seat at the Table

Building a highly-functioning localization program requires bringing together the right people from across the business. One important focus for many global customer experience leaders is stakeholder management.

Nicole Broe, current Director of Localization at Roku and former Localization Manager at Snap, believes that it's crucial to manage internal relationships as partnerships.

"You have to frame your organization as a partnership and say, 'We're partners in helping to deliver to a global audience. If you don't partner with us, you're going to limit your scope in terms of who you can hit when you're pushing this product out to the world'."

For Nicole, having a voice makes a big difference in her team's ability to accomplish both its tactical and strategic goals. Building a global customer experience takes time and

effort, so building positive relationships with other internal teams to align goals and work together is vital. Without these relationships, localization teams can easily be viewed as a non-strategic cost center.

In her episode of the Global Experience Leaders Podcast, Karen Combe spoke at length about the importance of becoming less of a sideline operation and more of a mission-critical business necessity.



"If you can present yourself and your organization as an ally rather than one that's demanding something of other people, you'll get a lot further."

Karen Combe

Former VP of Localization at PTC

“Localization placed at the end of the process won’t work to build a global product.”



Nicole Broe
Director of Localization at Roku

How do you get more strategically involved?

First and foremost, find a way to be involved and get a seat at the strategic table to share localization’s direct impact. For Anna Schlegel, Vice President of Product, International and Globalization at Procore, it’s important to ensure that localization is not viewed as a “service”. If it is, the team will be powerless.

In Anna’s experience, it’s important to align localization goals with the company strategy and have a good sense of business in order to prove localization value. Ask the right questions: What countries are we entering? Where are we struggling? What do we think is causing those issues?

“You need to become a business person, and get away from the mindset that you’re running a translation team,” Anna said.

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Importance of Global Customer Experience

Global customer experience is here to stay, and will continue to have a profound impact on the way companies think about engaging with their customers. In our recent State of Localization 2021 Report, 91% of respondents believed that localization had an impact on the customer experience.

Once you're able to set goals and establish localization as a priority, you can start tackling global customer experience. Jochen Hummel, founder of TRADOS and current CEO of Coreon, believes that the future is multilingual, and that companies need to be prepared.



“With internet growth, if everyone is supposed to be involved in a content-sharing world, it has to be multilingual. If you, as a company, can only analyze English content, you can only understand a percentage of your customers.”

Jochen Hummel

Founder and Former CEO of TRADOS

“The problem is that most companies don’t realize that their consumers also create content - they’re talking back to the companies on social media, through support requests, chats, and more.”

Ultimately, companies need to start building customer experiences that are fully global and accessible by users in multiple languages and locales - not just their own. For some companies, in order to tackle that task, it comes down to rethinking the core experience strategy. For example, at Blizzard Entertainment, Director of Global Localization Thiago Schreiner set a mission statement for his localization department: “Make things feel Blizzard in every language”.

In the gaming industry, it’s especially important to ensure that all players across the world have the same experience and follow the same story, regardless of the language or locale. However, on a broader level, the same principle applies to global customer experience overall: companies need to adapt their native language experience for all audiences so that all customers can connect and engage.

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Looking Ahead for Localization

The world has entered into a new era of global experience, one that is rapidly changing and will continue to grow internationally. There has been a fundamental shift in how customers expect to interact with companies. In the old world, companies could rely on offline interactions to power the customer experience. Today, companies must deliver a digital-first experience to stay in the game.

Winning companies are digital-first and deliver great experiences to their customers - across every step of the customer journey. The best companies provide this great experience for all customers globally, across all touchpoints.



“Language is a critical component of a personalized customer experience. That is Global Customer Experience - making a great customer journey from end to end available in any global market.”

Spence Green

Co-founder and CEO of Lilt

For your global customers, language is the most important component of that great experience - and is often the missing component of the customer journey. No matter what language your customers speak, they expect to be able to engage with you easily, at any time, and any touchpoint.

That's where Global Customer Experience comes in. No matter what language your customers speak, they expect to be able to engage with you easily, at any time, and any touchpoint. Global Customer Experience is the process of creating and deploying multilingual experiences across every step of the global customer journey.

