



Special Report: 10 Key Elements of **THE WORD**

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THINKING OF GOING GLOBAL?

Consider these 10 key elements of the word when going global:

1. **The written word:** documentation and software
 - visible-invisible
 - hard-soft
2. **The unwritten word:** graphics
3. **The spoken word:** multimedia
4. **The virtual word:** Web, Cloud
5. **The stored word:** glossary and TMS
6. **Behind the word:** engineering
7. **The marketing word:**
8. **The legal word:** international hurdles
9. **The forgotten word:**
10. **The final word:** desktop publishing

➤ THE WRITTEN WORD:

REMEMBER THE 5 Cs: clear, concise, consistent, culturally correct.

DOCUMENTATION: *always visible in hard and soft copy.*

The visible written word: your first step into the reader's mind. No matter how brilliant your product, if your documentation is confusing and lacks a clear message and concise instructions, your product might fail. The written word includes both documentation and software.

Documentation includes visible hard and soft copy. Software includes the visible UI (User interface), hover text, buttons, dropdown boxes, etc. and the invisible soft copy (coding).

Clear: Write clearly. Convoluted confusing sentences throw hurdles in the mind of your reader. When your reader must stop and try to decipher what you have written, you lose your reader: you lose a customer.

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🌐¹ Convoluted, confusing sentences could result in a mistranslation. To ensure your audience receives your message correctly, write simply and clearly. Avoid puns, jokes, metaphors, humor: they don't work in other cultures [they often do not work in ours]. Leave all slang and jargon in the lunch room; catchy phrases in one language could lead to confusion—or much worse—in another, e.g., “ducks in a row”, “New York minute”, “in the loop”.

Concise: Eliminate excess words and complex sentences. Use the “KIS” factor: keep it simple.

🌐 Being concise brings down translation costs. Translation is based per unit: the number of words written in your language times cost per word.²

Consistent: When writing user manuals, instructions should be consistent: use the same words for the same actions. If possible, re-use these sentences throughout all content to be translated: documentation, online help, software, the Web. This is not a literary masterpiece; it's a roadmap to success for your product.

🌐 When writing a user manual or using many sentences that are exactly the same or very similar, there is a % reduction in price per word. For sentences that are exactly the same—100% matches—the cost is greatly reduced. For sentences that are similar, but not exactly the same—fuzzy matches—there is some reduction in cost. Details of the cost for 100% and fuzzy matches are agreed upon at the beginning of the project. For more information, contact me at: [📧 copybykristi@gmail.com](mailto:copybykristi@gmail.com) 📧 Also, keep your folder structure the same in all formats: changes = extra costs. [If you don't know what I mean, your technical writer does.]

Culturally correct:

¹ The icon of the world indicates information about converting your product into another language: Internationalization [I18n], Localization [L10n] and Translation.

² When using translation memory software™, per-unit costs are reduced based on repetition of phrases/sentences. Please refer to 🌐 under **Consistent**

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🌐 Writing for the global market dictates a certain level of cultural awareness—cultural intelligence. Cultural intelligence, a relatively recent accepted science, focuses on understanding differing cultural values of people throughout the world and adapting to these differences for greater understanding and working relationships. To write in a culturally correct manner means to understand the culture of your target market and tailor your message accordingly. If your target market is similar to that of English-speaking North America, your message would not differ greatly, although there are cultural differences in spelling (e.g., color vs. colour) terms/terminology (e.g., football, boot, bonnet), awards (color of first-place ribbons) and standard images (mailbox [blue] vs. postbox [red]), etc.

However, writing for a culturally diverse target market (whether in North America or beyond the oceans) means that your message must be sensitive to their culture. Do not target your message to individualism and competitiveness if the culture of your target market is focused on the good of the community and cooperativeness. KNOW your target market. If you do not know the six (6) identifying characteristics of your target market and how best to write to that market, contact me [✉ copybykristi@gmail.com ✉](mailto:copybykristi@gmail.com) or [✉ askculturalintelligence@gmail.com ✉](mailto:askculturalintelligence@gmail.com).

The more culturally sensitive your message, the greater your chance of success in your target culture.

SOFTWARE: visible and invisible, it is the soft word

Are you the owner or manager? Please pass this on to your engineers. Please note: ASCII-based US engineers tend not to think from a global perspective. Until recently, US products stayed in the US feeding the hungry US market. But now, money is elsewhere: it's time for a change.

🌐 The time to think about taking your product global begins right at the start of designing the product—not as an afterthought to be

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tagged on when the English version is done. The following are absolute imperatives for a working non-English product:

- No hard coding, no concatenated strings, no character limitations
- Remember the saying, “A stitch in time saves nine.” Fully test and internationalize your product before sending it for localization. Costs for post-release bug fixes increases radically when done in several languages.
 - How much do you save? The common rule of thumb: for each stage of software development, the cost to fix a bug is exponential. If a bug costs \$1 to fix during the specification phase, apply the general rule:
\$10 in design phase
\$100 in working code
\$1,000 in released software
- Remember: bugs in code do not stand alone! The longer you wait to fix a bug, the greater the risk. There might be dependencies on the bug; dependencies increase risks in changing the code. Waiting increases costs.
- Have a documented I18N test plan. Require your coders to go through the I18N test plan before they check their code into the main source.
- Avoid unnecessary last-minute changes. Nice to have or necessary? Weigh cost of inclusion: remember any change includes software, help and documentation.

➤ THE UNWRITTEN WORD: GRAPHICS

WORDLESS: Ensure the image stands on its own. Adapt the phrase—a picture is worth a thousand words → wordless images are worth thousands saved.

🌍 Global graphics: ensure graphics are not offensive to targeted country. Avoid:

- Human body elements and body language

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- Smiling faces or open mouth smile showing teeth seems to be most acceptable only in the U.S.
- Hand gestures are so very cultural—avoid
- Exposed feet are taboo in several locales; exposing the bottom of the feet is considered a serious insult
- Images of animals, in general
- Women and animals—taboo in Arabic culture
- Physical environments, maps
- Ethnic, racial, political, religious and physical environments: no crosses or crescents, no flags or maps
- Gender-specific elements
- Sexual and violent elements
- Numbers—check which numbers are unlucky in your targeted countries.

🌐 **Think ONION:** Word in graphics a must? Save all layers of editable source files for secure accessibility. Saving only the final image means costly recreation for localization. Use a web-safe color pallet to avoid costly color retro-fitting

➤ THE SPOKEN WORD: **MULTIMEDIA**

AUDIOS, VIDEOS, WEBINARS, TELESEMINARS: all these forms of multimedia are now an integral part of marketing products. Steps to convert your audios to another language include transcription and translation (localization). Regarding videos: extremely popular and ubiquitous in today's marketplace, producing videos is so much easier than before. We need only a smartphone, tablet or handheld recorder. Posting to a website—only two clicks away. Readers expect this form of info media when researching products. At times, videos tend to be lengthy—too lengthy.

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But what if you want more than an amateur video to bring your product into the global ring? When going global, less is more. For those who want their videos to be understood in other languages:

🌐 Keep the following in mind when producing videos for the global market:

- When making training videos, choose the first option in each:
 - short vs. long training
 - subtitles vs. VO (voice over)
 - VO vs. re-filming
 - broadcast to the web vs. rendering to DVD
- Avoid rapid speech: clarity is key.
- Avoid long gaps or spaces in speech: cutting minutes saves thousands in your multilingual quest.
- Provide clear direction: avoid costly re-recording and post-editing.
- Remember: it's your message, not the man: focus on voice quality, not fancy studio furnishings or name-brand voices.

➤ THE VIRTUAL WORD: THE WEB

When you have a business website, you are already a “global” company because your website is visible for “all the world” to see—all those with WiFi that hasn't been blocked. Because your business website is visible to all cultures, it takes but a few wise decisions to present your website in a different language. You could use the same URL with choices for different languages which would redirect the reader to that localized website.

🌐 When you are ready to have other languages on your website, ensure that the language choice is written in that language, not yours. For example, español (not Spanish), русский, not Russian, norsk not Norwegian.

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Caution! Do not use flags as indicators of language. Several countries are in dispute about flags and ownership of certain lands. Be wise: keep global politics out of your business.

➤ THE MARKETING WORD: CRITICALLY IMPORTANT LANGUAGE

Marketing language is in a world of its own. A person with a great facility with the language and a fine sense of balance and timing is required in source language. So, too, the target languages.

✎ It is crucial to ensure the person translating and localizing your product marketing into another language specializes in translating marketing material. You wouldn't get a technical writer to write your marketing campaign (or vice versa), so why would you settle for less when going global. The best way to overcome this challenge is to request three translation examples of a sample of your marketing material. Take these three samples and send them to a SME (subject matter expert)—or two— in the target country. The translator best in tune with that country's cultural rhythm is chosen.

[Do not ask your aunt's cousin's uncle's next door neighbor to do it for you. Just don't.]

➤ THE STORED WORD: GLOSSARY AND TERMINOLOGY MANAGEMENT and CLOUD COMPUTING

Multilingual glossaries: fundamental for achieving high-quality localization.

- Includes translations of terms specific to the product, company and industry, as well as acronyms, abbreviations, and a “do-not-translate” list.

TMS: Terminology Management System—a database that stores source sentences (segments) and the translated equivalents—is your major gateway to savings.

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- Benefit from ICE matches
- Manage client review change
- Reduce PM costs
- Automate standard steps: TM update, file analysis, file prep

Cloud computing, a shared database “in the cloud”, has increased efficiencies in this area.

➤ **BEHIND THE WORD: ENGINEERING**

Engineering costs range from \$50-\$300 per hour. Preparation before localization reduces localization costs. These costs center on two areas:

- Language translation
 - Preparation of source materials for localization
 - Extraction of text for translation
 - Leveraging of 100% matches
- Technical environment
 - Placing translated text to desired environment
 - Functionality testing of target language

➤ **THE LEGAL WORD: INTERNATIONAL LEGAL AWARENESS REQUIRED**

Legal requirements differ for each country based on your product. A virtual product differs greatly from an imported product. It is on your shoulders to find out the facts.

➤ **THE FORGOTTEN WORD: THE “LAST-MINUTE-CHANGE” FACTOR, PROJECT UPDATES AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT COSTS**

Beware of project creep! If possible, try to avoid any updates. If updates are necessary, allow for them in the original plan and deliver them in one bundle.

🌐 It's easy for us to change a sentence—or paragraph—in our source copy. But if you want to include that in your targeted language(s), the

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cost of translation will go up. Schedule one (1) pre-final update across the board. This one-time update will keep your update costs to a minimum while including all your changes to your global product.

➤ **THE FINAL WORD: DESKTOP PUBLISHING**

DTP AND PRINTING: Choose the right layout application to support all your target languages and fonts. Find out all your options BEFORE your start.

Less and less we are printing literature to accompany the product. We include it in the downloaded product or on the CD/DVD. That does not dismiss the necessity for well-presented final documentation.

🌐 Remember: translated documentation usually is 20-30% larger than source documentation. Decide at the beginning of your project whether you want a page-by-page match (fonts would have to be smaller in the target language) or keep the same font size and have more pages.

SPARE a TREE: Don't print thick manuals: Web publish or CD/DVD press instead.

CONCLUSION: These Ten Key Elements of The Word help you to recognize the crucial areas when considering taking your product global. The Word is layered. Address each layer. Each is important for a smooth transition to a truly global business.

If you have any questions, concerns or help in taking the first—or the first of many steps—contact me: [✉ copybykristi@gmail.com ✉](mailto:copybykristi@gmail.com)

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