

Research Report

# Multilingual Communications as a Business Imperative:

Why Organizations Need to  
Optimize the Global Content  
Value Chain

August 6, 2008

The Gilbane Group

Extract: Océ  
Best Practices Profile



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**THE GILBANE GROUP**

## Océ

### Company Description



Headquartered in The Netherlands, Océ enables its customers to manage their documents efficiently and effectively by offering innovative print and document management products and services for professional environments. Océ's global presence is demonstrated by a worldwide distribution network active in 90 countries, fully-owned operating companies in some 30 countries, € 3.1 billion in revenues, and nearly 24,000 employees.

The company's 130-year heritage is impressive. According to company history Océ established itself as the leading supplier of engineering document reproduction and printing systems in the mid-1990s, with a 20 percent worldwide share and a 25 percent European share. In June 2008, Océ Business Services was ranked the No.1 document process outsourcing (DPO) vendor for the second straight year and named to the prestigious "50 Best Managed Global Outsourcing Vendors" list by the 2008 Black Book of Outsourcing annual user survey.

### Focus on Brand Content

Océ enjoys a reputation founded on productivity and reliability, ease of use and a favorable total cost of ownership. Managing its global brand identity is critical to corporate operations and in particular, to ensuring consistent communications across a vast distribution network. The company utilizes a formal, multi-disciplinary team of internal marketing and communication professionals to create branding policies and identify brand identity issues. Based on the mission to further develop the Océ brand, the International Brand Team manages the Océ Brand Identity Program.

"Multilingual communications are a critical part of Océ's strategy for continuing global success," notes E-Business Development Manager Michel van der Wal. His perspective includes the strong belief that consumers in most European countries buy high technology products more readily when information is available in native languages. As such, brand content is developed with "multilingual in mind."

Supported by an Océ corporate mandate for product content availability in 21 languages, van der Wal aims to align global and product brand content with this mission. Business drivers for doing so include faster time to market, meeting country-specific regulatory requirements, and supporting the growing demand for a simultaneous shipment strategy.

### Challenges

Océ's business-to-business commerce model and its network of communities is a critical part of the company's ability to maintain and expand global presence. In this model, the dynamics of ensuring brand consistency for multilingual marketing communications includes multiple layers of customer expectations from partners and consumers.

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As is the “holy grail” for most multinational organizations, Océ’s overriding challenge is to balance the corporate governance required for brand consistency with the regional autonomy necessary for brand relevancy. Doing so takes a series of phased efforts; reaching the balance doesn’t happen overnight. Leveraging process and technology standards from the company’s finely-tuned, product content value chain was a reliable “first step” in constructing a plan to decrease time to market for the brand content lifecycle. Product documentation’s use of simplified English with authoring assistance technologies, a centralized base of XML content, and LSP-based translation memory management aligns deliverables based on Simship objectives and country-specific regulatory requirements.

As we’ve discussed in this report, web-driven geographical marketing is equally complex, but has its own set of challenges. Océ’s regional marketing teams were used to a great deal of independence and financial autonomy during the creation and management brand content in their customers’ language of choice. On the one hand, results included loyal regional customers that valued a personalized approach for services and a localized approach for communications.

On the other hand, the decentralized model enabled inefficiencies over time, severely impacted time to market. Siloed campaign development processes were norm, preventing content reuse and increasing the likelihood of inaccuracies. Responsibility for reviewing localized materials was not a formal part of anyone’s job, overtaxing resources and delaying content availability. Inaccuracies across localized product terminology increased, jeopardizing content and brand quality.

Knowing that collaborative corporate and regional brainstorming was the only way to drive a customer-centric solution, van der Wal approached an internal assessment phase as a shared venture. The objective? Finding the right balance of a global *and* regional approach to multilingual brand communications. Regional team members acknowledged the need for global consistency and accuracy, but felt strongly that localization at the regional level was a core part of their expertise.

### **The Solution**

van der Wal’s intention to create all brand content “with multilingual in mind” required changing various aspects of people, process, and technology. In many respects, the “people aspect” of managing organizational change proved the most challenging.

An objective assessment proved to be a valuable tool in van der Wal’s approach to the inevitable resistance operational champions often face. Using examples from current Océ web sites, van der Wal arranged a local awareness meeting facilitated by Gerry McGovern, a

#### **Best Practices Highlights**

- ✓ Cross-geography internal education
- ✓ Balance of centralized and distributed operations
- ✓ Integration of content and translation management

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well-known industry expert and author.<sup>1</sup> In addition to providing advice on the value of web communications, McGovern candidly pointed out brand risks within a sample set of the company's worldwide marketing content. Interactions with Océ's International Brand Team were also indispensable. During one pivotal meeting, collaborative realization that humans would always be required for localization/translation efforts and current translators remained integral to brand management "made the difference" in shared understanding and acceptance.

The Océ team is currently implementing a centralized, shared base of brand content managed by SDL Tridion's R5 WCM solution as a focal point for ongoing process and technology changes. A tight integration between content and translation management will enable central control of content and workflow. A pilot project based on a selection of marketing materials is underway. Regions will be able to opt in or out of the resulting centralized technology process. However, the feasibility of reducing baseline web content translation processes from 6 weeks to an estimated 5 days is enticing to regions aiming to increase sales and decrease time to market.

### **Results**

Océ corporate communications now determines which languages brand materials are published in as well as the level of content required for baseline translation. Regions retain the ability to adapt and customize brand information to address local customer expectations. The company regularly measures content reuse, brand recognition, and the instances of language inaccuracies or errors. According to van der Wal, one of the greatest impacts will be shorter time to market for regional marketing campaigns. In turn, this will surely accelerate Océ access to global revenues in established and emerging markets.

### **Gilbane Group Perspective**

Océ has successfully implemented the core infrastructure for a Global Content Value Chain (GCVC) and is well-positioned to reap its benefits. By tightly integrating content and translation management technologies and workflows, the company has also laid the foundation needed to ensure the flow of information across the chain.

Facing a struggle relevant to all multinational organizations with valuable investments in global presence, Océ has designed a shared and reasonable balance of centralized and distributed operations for its brand content GCVC. The company clearly understands that permeating its "Beyond the Ordinary" global brand is essential for continuous worldwide expansion and targeted vertical growth. At the same time, it is empowering employees to consistently infuse brand principles and achieve regional competitive advantage without sacrificing local customer

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<sup>1</sup> McGovern, Gerry. *Killer Web Content: Make the Sale, Deliver the Service, Build the Brand*. A&C Black. September, 2007.