

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: Symantec
Best Practices Profile



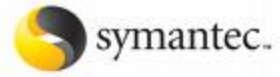
THE GILBANE GROUP

Symantec

Company Description

Symantec is a global leader in providing security, storage and systems management solutions to help businesses and consumers secure and manage their information.

Headquartered in Cupertino, Calif., Symantec has operations in more than 40 countries.



Marking its 25th anniversary in 2007, Symantec published an extensive corporate history, drawing interesting parallels between its own evolution and the Internet-driven information explosion. As the web has transformed from consumer networks to enterprise infrastructures, so too has Symantec, demonstrated by a steady focus on individual and business requirements for online safety. The company's customer-driven philosophy extends to freely accessible thought leadership on topics such as security, storage, performance, compliance, and IT risk management, providing knowledge value in addition to products and solutions.

One of Symantec's five stated "engines of growth" is to grow faster than the market in the world's fast-growing economies, including geographies such as Eastern Europe, Russia, India, China, Brazil, and Latin America. Intrinsicly tied to the company's mission to "manage the world's information," this objective requires consistent innovation in global information management strategies – for their customers and for themselves.

Focus on Product Content

Symantec's commitment to multilingual product content is hardly new. In fact, operational processes for localization and translation have been in place for over 15 years driven by consumer demand, particularly from Japan, France, and Germany. A founding member of TAUS (Translation Automation User Society), the company has been steadfastly involved in sharing and promoting innovations in translation technologies since 2004. Dr Fred Hollowood, Symantec's Director, Global Language Services, serves on the current TAUS Advisory Board.

Much of this collaborative work is led by Stephen Brennan, Symantec's Vice President, Shared Engineering Services, whose longtime objective to integrate language technologies within the enterprise is well-known. Brennan runs a global team that manages language production for Symantec's deep reservoir of multilingual product content. Meeting worldwide customer expectations requires language outputs that range from a base set of requirements (including Japanese, Simplified Chinese, French, German, Italian and Spanish) to up to 27 languages.

Proactive availability of security information extends far beyond traditional customer service operations. In an environment where the velocity of cyber threats can be measured in milliseconds and the response required in minutes, content creation, localization/translation and dynamic repurposing takes on a whole new meaning.

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There's no latitude for collaboration or communication gaps between documentation and technical support, no time for redundant and inefficient processes, and little consumer or business patience for delays and errors. As Brennan's team noted in 2005, "Volumes are growing and costs are too high. We need to respond more quickly to customers' needs. Sometimes we must turn-around localized technical articles within an hour."¹

Challenges

Symantec's international customers must be able to understand and apply preventative and crisis-based information in their native language, period. From this perspective, the company does not have the luxury of choice when it comes to providing multilingual product and support content. Sustaining its leadership position in responsiveness and accuracy depends on it. Successful emerging market expansion through the "engines of growth" mission hinges on it.

Brennan describes one of his primary objectives as the ability to achieve "worldwide content reuse through innovative process and technology." His distinct vision for globalization strategy however, does not mean that Symantec does not face organizational challenges. Like many organizations, strategy execution is often tactical, departmentally driven through initiatives from distinct product groups and the company's customer experience team.

On the other hand, Symantec clearly has an end-to-end concept of the Global Content Value Chain (GCVC). Rather than identifying specific processes for isolated improvement and technology investments, Brennan notes that the company strives to maintain and refine an "infrastructure perspective." Doing so is consistently a challenge in itself, but it is also necessary for the Global Languages Services team to meet corporate objectives to cut costs and demonstrate annual savings.

Isolating the right "productivity boosters" for efficiency can be difficult, particularly when it requires iterative process re-engineering and training programs that instill and promote user adoption. This challenge is especially significant for what Brennan describes as "the next frontier:" to service the multilingual communications needs of customer service operations by improving the speed and accuracy of responses.

Symantec has been active in assessing and proving the successful use of machine translation in a customer support environment. This long-term investment continues to yield more and more accuracy as the company's translation memory knowledge base grows. However, conquering one challenge often exposes an existing underlying challenge. In this case, the availability of multilingual information is layered over the problem of the *relevance* of the information to a specific problem in a specific region.

¹ TAUS Newsletter, May 2005.
http://www.translationautomation.com/newsletter/TAUS_Newsletter_03.pdf

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As Brennan notes, “extracting relevance on a dynamic basis is essential for providing the right information at the right time and in the right language.”

The Solution

Symantec’s infrastructure perspective on GCVC components has helped the company identify a number of principles that lay the foundation for Brennan’s vision of worldwide content reuse. Demonstrating a combination of process and technology “pillars,” this approach underscores the benefits of multiple best practices:

- **Better source content yields more accurate translations.** Pillars include XML-driven controlled authoring, authoring assistance through electronic style guides, and accessible translation memory during content creation.
- **Strategize collaboratively.** Pillars include guidelines and processes for regional sales groups to develop business cases for multilingual communications initiatives. For example, groups assess strategy with Global Language Services who then helps make the case to the appropriate corporate product group. Historical experience and revenue projections are factored into decision-making.
- **Formalized source control is critical.** Based on Brennan’s “fix the source or pay for post-editing” mantra, pillars include centralized web content management (WCM), component content management (CCM), and terminology management solutions, each integrated with translation memory.
- **Automation boosts globalization capacities.** Pillars include the integration of Systran’s machine translation technologies with translation memory management. As Brennan noted, “Automated translation software is a powerful innovation when integrated into a streamlined translation workflow.”
- **Measurement is a success factor.** Focus points include pre and post-process efficiency, levels of content reuse, post-editing effort in translation, quality of machine-translated output and customer satisfaction.

Best Practice Highlights

- ✓ Operational champion
- ✓ Executive endorsement
- ✓ Multilingual communications as a means to meet customer expectations
- ✓ Quality at the source perspective
- ✓ Strategic use of automated translation technology

Results

Symantec’s achievements are incremental and ongoing, which is another key takeaway from this profile. The company is able to drive toward long-term goals by investing strategically and setting expectations for immediate and future results. For example, a 1 ½ year investment in the company’s terminology database has resulted in a more consistent writing style in source and supported better MT output across a range of languages. Brennan notes that the company now has a proactive rather than reactive

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approach to global content consistency and the accuracy that can be applied to multiple multilingual communications initiatives. In addition:

- A strategic approach to outsourcing actual translations has resulted in the identification and use of a few specialized vendors for post-editing services and fewer internal linguists who now support our MT technology.
- A 3 ½ year plan to refine the traditional technical documentation process through the use of XML, CCM, and controlled authoring included considerable education and training components. As a result, the company reports an 85% user adoption of new authoring tools and processes, up from less than 50% for the previous year.
- The use of machine translation addresses scalability and cost control. For certain languages, multilingual communications throughput for documentation sets has grown by 60% year on year.
- Translation memory reuse has been measured at between 68 and 82% depending on the project.

Gilbane Group Perspective

Symantec is focused and steady in its roadmap for multilingual communications that strengthen customer relationships. Although this profile focuses on product content as Gilbane has defined it, Symantec is a company driving toward cross-application utilization of product content's role in dynamic problem solving, namely customer service operations. The company's infrastructure view of global content value, an impressive and visionary operational champion, and investment in the innovative application of technology such as machine translation surely positions them for continued success.