

QUALITY AT SOURCE

Our mission is to provide high quality innovative language solutions to our customers while being the best employer and most respected business partner in the localization industry.



THE SOURCE OF QUALITY – QUALITY AT SOURCE

Over the last two decades, the globalization phenomenon has sparked an increasing need for translation and localization services across the globe. More and more companies are seeking these services in order to enter new markets and communicate to their international consumers in their language. With cultural and linguistic differences between various languages, the need for consistent and high-quality translations is becoming more prevalent than ever.

To cater for the growing demand for quality translations, Argos Multilingual intertwined a lean manufacturing concept known as Quality at Source (QaS) with the traditional translation process.

This whitepaper will explore the concept of Quality at Source and describe its role in increasing the quality of Argos' linguistic services as well as streamlining and optimizing our translation process. We will further explain how quality is controlled by the key stakeholders involved in the process and how they significantly impact efficiency, consistency and the quality of the final product. This whitepaper will further demonstrate the benefits that are gained by the client and Language Service Provider (LSP) by implementing this lean manufacturing concept into the traditional translation process.

QUALITY AT SOURCE: THE CONCEPT

Derived from a lean manufacturing concept, Quality at Source emphasizes that it is not just the Quality Assurance department that is responsible for the level of quality rather each and every stakeholder involved in the process. Every stakeholder is required to check their work for errors and implement corrections before it can be moved to the next stage. Quality checks are performed at every stage of the process which results in higher quality output and on-time delivery.

At Argos, we have adapted this concept into the traditional translation process. The traditional process involves three steps; translation, editing and proofreading (TEP). This method proved to be inefficient as it involves more stakeholders and a manual approach to assessing the quality of translations. Here, translators are not made accountable for the quality produced as editors and proofreaders are made responsible for fixing linguistic errors at the tail end of the process. In most cases, translators are not made aware of these errors and thus cannot learn from their mistakes for future translations. More so, there is no accountability for the quality back at the source.

Having incorporated Quality at Source into our process, we have alleviated these issues by passing the responsibility onto stakeholders and equipping them with automated QA tools, which has increased the quality of the final product and significantly reduced the probability of re-work prior to delivery. Quality at Source appears right at the start of our translation process during the inspection of source files.

With Quality at Source, we control the conditions that influence quality at the source more effectively and efficiently. Our approach is to *“get it right the first time”*.

QUALITY BEGINS AT THE SOURCE

In the manufacturing industry, the greatest influence on the quality of a final product is the quality of the raw materials. With translations, this is no different. The source files which the client hands over to their Language Service Provider are a key factor influencing the quality of the final deliverables. There are several steps you can take to influence the quality of your source files and in turn final translations.

SOURCE FILES

Clients can influence the quality of their source files by using methods such as controlled English when authoring their content. Controlled English emphasizes the use of consistent terminology and establishes a consistent style of writing, ensuring sentences are constructed in a clear and concise manner.

With well written and high quality source files, the time spent by a Languages Lead on source review is minimized. Language Leads are now able to focus on Query Management, speeding up and increasing the efficiency of the process.

Regardless of whether a client has been able to implement Controlled English authoring, a Language Lead always performs source review prior to the translation step. By reviewing the source files, the Language Lead can detect any product defects which can impact on the quality of the translation. After source review, the Language Lead runs through a series of automated checks to determine which elements require Query Management. The Query Management system is customized to each client and stores all past queries and their corresponding solutions. These queries can include how to handle measurement units, product names, text captions within images, incomplete sentences and more. During this stage of the process, the Language Lead also detects any issues with the source text, such as errors in geographical or product names and also identifies which parts of the source files should be left untranslated.

DESKTOP PUBLISHING

Quality is not only relevant to text but also the formatting of files. Where DTP work is required, we advise our clients to follow Argos' DTP best practices. The DTP expert checks segmentation, text flow, if graphics are correctly anchored, if the font selected is supported by all the target languages and more. By providing better formatted files, through using set and approved templates, clients can gain the greatest efficiencies and reduce costs significantly, as no additional DTP work will be required in later stages of the process.

In some cases, after the analysis of the source files, our DTP experts propose customized solutions regarding file formats and potential formatting issues, which can result in a greater amount of work required by DTP after translation.

Quality at Source is about ensuring that the source files are optimized for translation, the best format has been selected and that the design of the file is suitable for the different target languages.

MANAGING QUALITY THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT

PROJECT MANAGERS

Project Managers who see the project through, from start to finish are not only required to ensure the smooth process and delivery of the project but are also key stakeholders who influence the quality of the deliverables.

The Project Manager is responsible for selecting the resources for translation. Each resource collaborating and working with Argos first undergoes a thorough recruitment and qualification process by the Resource Department. By undergoing such a process, Project Managers know that the resources they utilize for any project are always Argos Certified Translators who are the best fit for the specific project and subject-area.

Resources working with Argos are continually assessed and monitored through our online Evaluation Module, an internal system developed to store feedback and automatically measure the quality of each resource in real-time. New translators and those new to a particular client are assessed by trusted reviewers via this online portal. Translators are rated based on pre-defined error-types and severity weights modeled on LQA and J2450 quality assurance standards. The results are processed automatically and converted into quality ratings, providing real-time data on the quality and performance of each resource.

Project Managers are also responsible for running pre-delivery QA checks. These automated checks are completed to ensure that the package of translated files for the client are in the right languages, right format, are not corrupted, missing or have untranslated elements.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Language Leads assist with monitoring the quality of translations by performing random sampling of a translators work. Samples allow the Language Lead to estimate the amount of foreseeable errors in the project and thus predict the reliability of the translation and the amount of time needed for corrections during review. Once the translator is made aware of their errors and elements which have not been handled as instructed, the probability of them reoccurring in later parts of the translation is significantly reduced.

Glossary creation is automated with data mining tools to extract the segments and terminology and create a pre-approved glossary as part of the tool kit given to translators. Once having invested in a glossary, it will be applied to not only the current project but also future projects, whereby increasing consistency across projects.

The Language Lead supports translators by providing them with instructions and relevant reference materials. In these instructions, the Language Lead pin-points the problematic elements from source review and provides the appropriate solutions. It is also noted how certain elements within the source files should be handled and which sections should be left untranslated, such as text within graphics, or segments which are client-specific. By creating clear and concise instructions, the amount of queries from translators is reduced, resulting in a more efficient process.

TAKING OWNERSHIP OF QUALITY

Embracing the evolution of technology, Argos has integrated various technological solutions into the translation process and equipped their translators with tools to improve the quality of translations. Besides undergoing regular quality checks by Project Managers through the Evaluation Module, translators are also made responsible for the quality of work they produce. This is a unique trait which is not enforced in this industry.

Translators are required to conduct QA checks prior to submitting the files for review. Argos provides access to such tools and requires each translator to submit an error-free report from the automatic QA checks along with the translated files. These tools are customizable and allow translators to adapt the settings for every client and language. Translators are able to check their translations against rules, expressions and instructions draw up by the Language Lead as well as run instant consistency checks. The translator is then able to fix these errors before passing the documents to reviewers. Quality at Source for translators is ultimately about getting it right the first time round, where simple errors can be detected by automatic QA checker tools.

Rather than adding more stakeholders into the process to conduct final checks, the translator is able to perform this step automatically with these tools and implement corrections instantly, streamlining the translation process.

SUMMARY

The Quality at Source concept has revolutionized Argos' translation process and brought forth greater efficiencies which have transcended to better quality output and greater savings for our clients.

With every stakeholder managing the quality of their output, the translation process has become significantly more efficient. The probability of passing errors is minimized and as a result the time spent reviewing and correcting these errors at later stages is concurrently reduced. Furthermore, the amount of people involved in the process is decreased, which for the client transcends to more competitive pricing.

The Quality at Source methodology enables Language Leads and DTP experts to provide our clients with feedback on how best to optimize their source files for translation. DTP provides our clients with advice on how best to format files for specific languages which can cause formatting issues in the document after translation and Language Leads can detect inconsistencies and errors which can be a hindrance for translators. By alleviating these elements, the amount of work can be reduced and thus the costs and time associated with making these changes later on in the process.

Efficiency has also been achieved with every stakeholder performing their own quality assurance checks with automated QA tools. These tools have automated the process, enabling each stakeholder to focus on what they do best, with instant feedback on the quality of their work. By also automating the Query Management process, Language Leads can more efficiently alleviate source file queries at the start of the translation process, without delaying the translation itself.

Quality at Source has also impacted positively on the client's workflow, by reducing the time needed by a client's in-country reviewer to validate the translations.

Overall, having incorporated this lean manufacturing methodology into our translation process, we have streamlined our process and enhanced the quality of the deliverables. We have eliminated preventable errors by identifying them earlier on in the process and controlling quality at each stage. What this means for our clients is that we proactively deal with linguistic and desktop publishing issues before commencing a project to reduce time to market, ensuring our clients can deliver their products and services on time, every time. With Quality at Source, we produce quality translation through our efficient translation process which in turn saves our clients time and money.

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