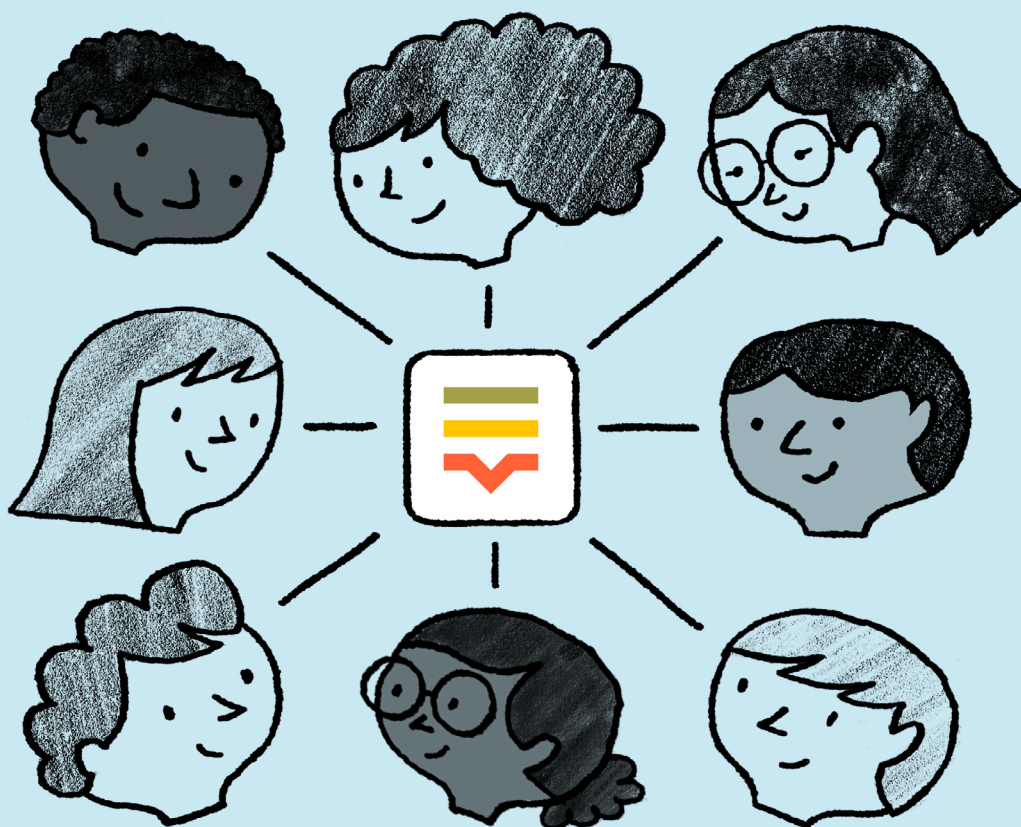


How to create a strong localization team when you need it

Read this ebook to understand who the key stakeholders in localization are and discover the challenges each role faces. Assemble the best possible localization team and set realistic expectations.



You've decided to invest in localization. A decent translator to adapt your website copy is all you need, right?

Not exactly.

There are quite a few things to consider when it comes to localization.

You may be wondering whether your product or service is even ready for localization. Maybe you feel puzzled about the best way to measure progress? Or perhaps you are not sure of how to find the right person who can and will own the process from start to finish.

Localization may seem scary at first, but it gets a lot easier when you organize the process properly and plan ahead.

In our experience, organizations that are just getting started with localization tend to rely on the tools that they already use. Spreadsheets are a common go-to solution here, even though a switch to a dedicated translation management system can result in a [75% boost in productivity](#). And that's just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the benefits of approaching localization strategically.

Whether you struggled with localization before or you're just getting started, we are here to say: there is a better way.

Besides a [translation management system \(TMS\)](#), you'll need a localization team that works like a well-oiled machine.

Each stakeholder in your localization process will play a vital role in moving your project from creation to translation, through quality assurance reviews, and, finally, to implementation. Developing this team can become a bit more tricky if you're expanding into many new languages and markets — each in need of its own subject matter expert, native translator, and quality reviewer.

Overwhelmed? Don't fret; [Lokalise](#) is here to help.

Before we dive in, we would like to thank the below industry experts for taking the time to contribute to this ebook and share exclusive insights with us (names listed in the order of their appearance):

Jessica Grimm, Head of Localization Management at LOVOO

Chris Englund, Vice President of International Operations at ActiveCampaign

Theodore Gonzalez, Senior Software Engineer at DNB

Charlotte Sferruzza, Product Design Lead at Onfido

Daniele Mazzotta, Motion Design Tech at Bending Spoons

Nadim Dimechkie, Director of Copy at TransferGo

Michael Scholze, Technical Writer at Luware

Martina Russo, Founder and Marketing Translation / UX Localization Specialist at Moving Words

Simon Kinsey, Commercial Director at TranslateMedia

Deirdre Cleere, Senior Onboarding Program Manager at RWS Moravia

Tatiana Shanler, Platform Product Manager at EBSCO Information Services

Daniil Pavliuchkov, Head of Product at TIER

Tomas Franc, Sales Solutions Architect at Lokalise

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What is the localization process?

Localization is the process of preparing a software, website, mobile application, [game](#), or other product for a new market, frequently in a new language.

While translation is an integral part of localization, the localization process involves many other components that go beyond converting a product to a different language. It also includes legal requirements, cultural nuances, formatting specificities, currency considerations, and more.

The goal of localization is to make your new customers feel as if your product was initially developed for them, in their language and culture ... an important endeavor considering that more than [70% of online shoppers](#) are more likely to purchase from a localized storefront.

As you'll see in this guide, localization is a lengthy process. It typically goes like this:

- ➔ Analyze your new market
- ➔ Catalog your source content and:
 - Extract what existing content needs to be adapted to the new market, or
 - Identify what new content needs to be developed for the new market
- ➔ Create (i.e., develop, design, and write) new content and/or translate existing content for your new market
- ➔ Proofread and review your new content

- Run tests to ensure the layout, format, words, etc. are correct and cohesive
- Publish and launch

This seems straightforward enough ... until you pull back the curtain to see who's working behind-the-scenes. Who exactly is involved in this localization process?

How the localization process is organized

The above localization workflow isn't always a one-size-fits-all approach. Depending on your product, your new market, and the complexity of the required localization, each localization process may look different.

However, there are several stakeholders that should make up *every* localization team.

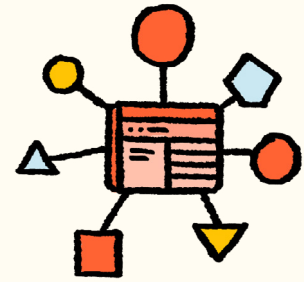
The localization process typically involves four primary groups of stakeholders:

1. Software developers and designers
2. Product, project, and localization managers
3. Copywriters, marketers, and translators
4. QA specialists and reviewers

In this guide, we'll examine each of these stakeholder roles, why they are essential, and how they shape the intricacies of the localization process. By the end, you'll know how you can craft the best workflow for your specific business case and hire the right roles for your localization project.

It's good to mention that the order of these roles doesn't necessarily dictate the order in which every localization process may flow. Moreover, some of these roles overlap and/or may not be involved depending on each localization project's details.

Localization Project Managers



Key responsibility	Skills	Main challenges
Overseeing end-to-end localization workflow and coordinating all stakeholders	<p>Familiarity with translation management systems (TMS), CAT tools, and databases</p> <p>Ability to multitask and code-switch, interfacing with project team members across the organization</p> <p>Good understanding of scope and risk management to keep projects on track</p> <p>Ability to balance translation costs and project budgets</p> <p>Sufficient knowledge for defining the quality requirements and metrics for all content types that require localization</p>	<p>Lack of structured and centralized communication</p> <p>Lack of an efficient system for analyzing progress and minimizing the revision cycle</p> <p>Tracking changes and streamlining the project (i.e. identifying keys that are ready for translation and deciding whether it should be MT or Human Translation)</p> <p>Avoiding unproductive back-and-forths and misunderstandings</p> <p>Centralizing budget planning</p> <p>Maintaining translation consistency and quality</p>

The **localization project manager** is responsible for supervising the localization process, managing the team, setting deadlines, managing the budget, and com-

municating with the client (or, if in-house, with the leadership team).

The responsibilities of the localization project manager span the entire localization process, from identifying which assets need to be localized to supervising the review and implementation steps — or outsourcing specialists who can take care of these tasks. The project manager is crucial because they are the go-to person for any questions or issues regarding the localization project.

While each of the stakeholders listed below is responsible for their specific part, the localization project manager oversees the project from start to finish. They also facilitate all communication between developers, designers, and content creators.

When your localization project is completed, your localization project manager may also be the one responsible for implementing those translations into their end-use environs.

[Jessica Grimm](#) is Head of Localization Management at [LOVOO](#). In addition to overseeing product translations for 17 markets, she's also responsible for marketing translations. "I also do the administrative work around tooling, invoicing, automation, and troubleshooting," she explained. "The biggest challenge by far is ensuring brand voice conformity, as well as keeping the continuous and thorough QA process running and helping to implement any changes quickly."

We'll hear from Jessica again in the quality assurance (QA) stakeholder section.

Software Developers



Key responsibility	Skills	Main challenges
Initiating the localization process by adding string identifiers (i.e. keys) to the product code, as well as fixing bugs and taking full care of the back-end of your digital product.	Great knowledge of different programming languages	Synchronizing translations between the TMS and code repository
	Eye for details and problem-solving skills	Downloading new translations in proper formats, and monitoring for changes
	Communication skills and ability to work in a cross-functional team	Finding duplicate translations
	Great knowledge of localization tools and integration tools such as API, CI/CD, etc. (knowing how to connect them to a chosen translation management system is a must)	Allowing translators to work on features in parallel
	Comprehensive knowledge of content management systems and different technologies (e.g. publishing and editing software)	Properly using placeholders and plural keys
		Previewing translations in the design stage
		Providing context for translators
	Open-minded, hands-on, and result-oriented	

In most cases, software developers initiate the localization process by adding string identifiers to the product code. Also called keys, key identifiers, or key names, these tags effectively signal the code to be translated into the identified language when displayed for users.

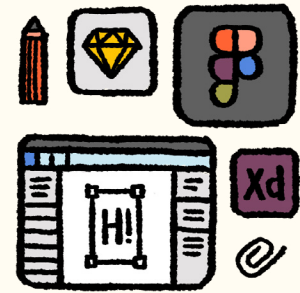
String identifiers apply to any software, be it a mobile app, website, game, IoT, or standalone software. Whenever there's a need to display some text to a user, a string identifier is employed.

Localization files contain the mapping between key identifiers and actual translations or translation values. For example, a key identifier on the login button for a website may very well be `button.login` while the translation (public-facing) values are “Login” for English and “Iniciar sesión” for Spanish.

Software developers are responsible for the back-end of your software product, mobile application, and/or website. By weaving string identifiers into the fabric of your product, your developers allow you to localize it to different languages and cultures easily — whether now or years down the line.

“90% of localization issues are solvable in the source content,” shared [Chris Englund](#), Vice President of International Operations at [ActiveCampaign](#). “The vast majority of localization issues are avoided when you use high quality source content. Providing the right context to the translators, and solid localization guidelines up front means we get awesome translations on the very first pass.”

Designers



Key responsibility	Skills	Main challenges
Ensuring your product looks and feels in a way that resonates with your multilingual customers.	<p>Comprehensive knowledge of the locale (i.e. taking both technical, cultural, and linguistic local nuances into account when designing)</p> <p>Great organizational and time-management skills</p> <p>Creative and technical skills for developing localized concepts, graphics, and layouts</p> <p>Specific knowledge of UI and UX design (if the project requires)</p> <p>Ability to clearly communicate with all team members</p> <p>Ability to adjust the design according to feedback</p>	<p>Quality issues due to localization after the design stage</p> <p>Making sure translated text fits the design and design changes</p> <p>Ensuring localization is appropriate for the target market's culture (e.g. avoiding human imagery in Islamic culture)</p> <p>Lack of context and the inability to create relevant visual experiences</p> <p>Jeopardized design quality because of an inefficient localization process (e.g. poor communication, idle time waiting, inefficient asynchronous collaboration)</p> <p>Preserving brand identity while still adapting to new markets</p>

Like your developers, your design team is key to ensuring everything looks and runs how it's intended, regardless of the language.

Designers, including user interface (UI) and user experience (UX) designers, also work at the “ground level” of localization. Before content creators and translators can develop or translate your content, designers must create the layout, pattern, and style according to what your developers have programmed. Sometimes it's vice versa, in which case developers work on implementing the finalized design.

Even though most people think of translators whenever somebody mentions localization, designers play an important role in the localization process, too. Colors, symbols, and the overall visual aesthetics and functionality of the design, must be adapted to each market separately - just like written content.

“Localization is not just about translations,” shared [Theodore Gonzalez](#), a Senior Software Engineer at [DNB](#). “The images help copywriters understand the context of translations without having to set up a meeting with the designers. Designers are the ones who visualize how the screen will look like with other languages.”

Design is a fundamental step in the localization process as your product can look and feel entirely different for different languages and cultures.

For example, Romance languages (Spanish, French, and Portuguese) [take up to 25% more space than English](#), and Arabic is read from [right to left](#); these specifications can completely alter the layout and design of a website or mobile app if considered after-the-fact.

According to Charlotte Sferruzza, Product Design Lead at [Onfido](#), “text length is a big constraint for us, as we design for mobile devices. We know that English is usually short and punchy, but in other languages, a short sentence can be transformed into two or three longer sentences. We need to make sure the layout is still readable and that users are not lost.”

Your design team may also need to adapt or add multimedia elements like audio

and video to your product, especially a visual product like a game or movie. This can make it much more complicated as you may need to record new footage, and your voiceovers may require both translation and rerecording with native-speaking talent or adding subtitles in the target language(s).

[Daniele Mazzotta](#) is a Motion Design Tech at [Bending Spoons](#). “I optimize the localization process for creatives, such as videos and images,” he shared. “My challenge is to understand both the creative needs of designers and the limits of the software.” As part of his company’s design team, Daniele’s job is to strike a good balance between the two.

Don’t overlook the importance of your designers when it comes to localization. Your customers aren’t one-size-fits-all, so neither should your product design be.

Marketing Specialists



Key responsibility	Skills	Main challenges
Identifying which content needs to be localized or developed from scratch in order to create a relatable experience for global customers.	Great market research and analytical skills	Preserving brand identity and consistency in terms of messaging across different markets and languages
	Comprehensive knowledge of the locale, including unique customer habits, preferences, values, and expectations	Tracking progress of campaigns and meeting marketing KPIs
	Strong creative and strategic skills	Efficient cross-team collaboration without idle waiting time
	Ability to formulate clear briefs and effectively communicate with the localization team	Achieving fast translation turnarounds without jeopardizing quality, in order to meet launch dates
	Organizational and time-management skills	

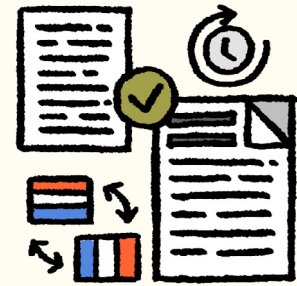
Suppose you're localizing a product to a *very* different culture than its original market. In that case, your localization project manager may hire an adaptation marketing specialist or a subject matter expert (SME) from the new market.

This person can help extract what content needs to be localized and identify what new content needs to be created for the new market. They may assess the new target audience's preferences and expectations and guide the design

and content teams to develop the most relevant and culturally-accurate content for the localized product.

If your localization team doesn't have an in-house SME for the new market, hiring an expert in the new culture is key to localizing your product as accurately as possible.

Content Team



Key responsibility	Skills	Main challenges
Preparing all the content that needs to be localized and/or participating in transcreation to ensure it's well adapted for the target market.	<p>Strong strategic and writing skills</p> <p>Team player and great communicator</p> <p>Responsive to feedback and able to work in a fast-paced environment</p> <p>Ability to create and/or transform content that's culturally adapted while still on brand</p> <p>Ability to incorporate storytelling and use copywriting to create an emotional response and trigger desired action from the target locale</p> <p>Ability to follow the set quality and style guidelines and switch between different tone of voices</p> <p>Good time-management skills</p>	<p>Making sure copy sounds good in all languages</p> <p>Getting access to translations for temporary app/web content (e.g. sales enablement content or specific content campaigns)</p> <p>Constant translations</p> <p>Issues that come with outsourcing (e.g. tiring back-and-forths, broken deadlines due to inefficiency)</p> <p>Tracking progress of campaigns</p> <p>Scaling without jeopardizing quality</p> <p>Adapting content culturally</p> <p>Reporting</p>

Your content team refers to your copywriters, content marketers, and other creators who write, strategize and manage your business content. This content includes any customer-facing material like product documentation, help desk and knowledge base content, and marketing assets like blog posts and campaign copy.

You can imagine that creating and managing this wide variety of content requires a lot of collaboration. [Nadim Dimechkie](#), Director of Copy at [TransferGo](#), has some advice on effectively working with developers, QA, and marketing teams to improve copy.

“The first step is to have an agreed standard of excellence — approved tone of voice guidelines and principles that people can adhere to and aim for,” he said. “This removes most subjective discussion from the equation and allows choices to be made according to an agreed set of rules. The second is to have clear, streamlined processes that align the different teams in the right order.” (At the end, we’ll talk about how Lokalise can help establish these processes.)

As we discussed in the introduction, two kinds of content can enter the localization workflow: 1) existing content initially written and designed for your product’s native language, and 2) net new content that’s written for the new market (typically content opportunities identified by your adaptation marketing specialist or cultural SME).

The former will require translators (whose role we’ll discuss in the next section). The latter involves your content team, notably writers well-versed in your new market’s language(s).

Most of the time, the localization process involves adapting your already-written content to the new language — which means your content writers often advocate for your products and company information. Very often, [transcreation](#) is a part of this process.

According to Michael Scholze, Technical Writer at [Luware](#), “most would think

our role is “creating” the content, but I mainly see the job more as a connector between various stakeholders, e.g., selecting tools and assisting external professionals in understanding our products to generate the best quality translation possible. I see my job as improving things at the “source,” providing meaningful feedback early in development so to avoid later potential misunderstandings.”

Translators and Language Service Providers (LSPs)



Key responsibility	Skills	Main challenges
Translators are responsible for translating core content from one language to another.	Native speaker and/or advance knowledge of language	Missing visual context for translations
As companies that offer various translation, interpretation, localization, and other language services, LSPs are seen as one-stop-shop solutions.	Culture-specific knowledge about the target market	Using too many tools, which is time-consuming and impacts work motivation
	Great writing and research skills	Lack of glossary and standards to follow (this refers to cases when subject matter expertise is very specific and the customer owns the terminology management - but unfortunately - doesn't provide clear standards)
	Attention to detail and great commitment to quality	
	Great translation judgement	Lack of consistency in source
	Good command of CAT, translation, and localization software	Ensuring fast translation turnarounds without jeopardizing quality
	Solid organizational, time-management, and communication skills	
	Comfortable with following procedures and receiving feedback	Working in silos and engaging in too many back-and-forths

Now, we arrive at the role at the heart of your localization process: translation. Translation is typically handled by contracted translators, though larger businesses may hire language service providers (LSPs) or bring translation in-house for major language groups like Spanish or Simplified Chinese.

While translation is just a portion of the localization process, it's arguably the most important one. For that reason, your translators should ideally be native speakers of your target language and subject matter experts (SMEs) in the material they translate.

Translators should also be provided with as much context around the project as possible:

“Anyone who works in the industry knows that translating is making decisions, and they always depend on context: How can we decide whether to render the content in masculine/feminine or singular/plural or what tone of voice to use if we don't have any references whatsoever?” shared [Martina Russo](#), founder and marketing translation / UX localization specialist at [Moving Words](#).



[One of the most common problems I encounter is] lack of (visual) context. This is a massive drawback that complicates things for everyone in the process. Without context during the localization phase, you end up spending more money down the line to fix potential issues that could have been avoided during the early stages.

Translators typically tackle the core content translations, which they then may route to a second translator for a quality review (we'll discuss quality assurance soon). This two-level process may be essential if you don't have in-house native

speakers of your target languages to verify the translation quality.

Translation *without* localization can read like [machine translation](#) (think Google Translate). This might be acceptable in some circumstances but is usually problematic. Machine translation doesn't consider cultural nuances, formatting differences, and other specificities that only localization can catch.

“Content itself can be in a wide variety of formats and intended for a multitude of channels which require different approaches in terms of industry sector expertise, style, tone of voice and levels of creativity,” shared Simon Kinsey, Commercial Director at [TranslateMedia](#). “Some clients even require different services for a single content item – for instance, a web page may require content that is optimized for search engines but still engaging for users with compelling and persuasive calls-to-action. This requires a mix of keyword research, translation, localization, transcreation, and search engine optimization.”

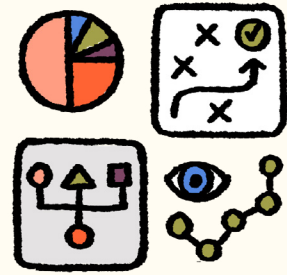
Depending on how quickly your team is expanding into the new market, translation and localization may need to happen fast, which can undoubtedly affect quality.

“Clients come to us with quality challenges, and there are many reasons why this happens.” shared [Deirdre Cleere](#), Senior Onboarding Program Manager at [RWS Moravia](#). “We have clients who have grown so quickly, and this expansion can mean lower quality, right? So, how do we balance out that speed that they require and still give them quality translation?”

“This is where we collaborate closely to understand what the client's speed and growth are. Then we put together what we call a ‘quality framework’ for them so we can examine what needs to be perfect quality, and what materials don't have to be 100%,” shared Deirdre.

Translation in the context of localization considers factors unique to the target market: ensuring cultural compatibility, eliminating confusion from poorly-translated phrases and syntax, and avoiding things like colloquialisms that don't make sense in another culture and may alienate your new customers.

Product Managers



Key responsibility	Skills	Main challenges
Educating all stakeholders in the localization process about your product while also identifying requirements, tools, technologies, and the overall strategy.	Great leadership and managerial skills	Delays caused by poor process efficiency and translations arriving late
	Ability to prioritize, establish procedures, and set a system for tracking progress	Delays caused by the multiple iterations needed in the QA after the translation files have been received from the translator
	Ability to optimally allocate resources	Converting localization files that come in different formats from different translators
	Agility, strategic, and analytics skills	Having the time to work on product development without worrying how to localize
	Very result-oriented	Ensuring the team stays motivated despite bottlenecks
	High level of social and emotional intelligence	
	Ability to do qualitative customer research and establish a strong product road map for international expansion	

Your product manager may not be specifically executing the localization workflow like developers and designers. Still, they play an essential role by educating others about your products' intricacies and ensuring all localized content is accurate.

They may also work alongside the localization project manager and be involved throughout the localization process, particularly during product development.

“The key is to be involved from the beginning and work closely with UX design and development to identify and discuss strategy and timeline, product requirements, tools and technologies, translation options and process,” shared [Tatiana Shanler](#), Platform Product Manager at [EBSCO Information Services](#).



Educating and guiding developers on the UI text creation, cultural and language differences always help to improve the source and to resolve translatability issues before actual translations start. Establishing terminology, reviewed and approved by the domain experts, and style guides are the first steps for the translation quality.

[Daniil Pavliuchkov](#), Head of Product at [TIER](#), initiates the localization process for new products or upgrades during the design step. “Once we agree and freeze our designs, we start translations into English and German. That’s usually enough to cover the look of other European languages,” he said. “And once this is done, we start development and create Lokalise keys.”

Quality Assurance Experts and Reviewers



Key responsibility	Skills	Main challenges
Establishing a rigorous review process through proofreading and testing in order to ensure the agreed translation quality.	<p>Native speaker and/or advance knowledge of language</p> <p>Very detail-oriented, with a strong problem-solving mindset</p> <p>Ability to work in accordance to quality standards</p> <p>Great multitasking and time-management skills</p> <p>Strong sense of ownership</p> <p>Receptive of feedback and comfortable with working in a team</p> <p>Strong verbal and written communication skills</p> <p>Deep knowledge of the product to identify language key changes and their impacts quickly</p>	<p>Lack of visibility and standardization in translation project management process</p> <p>Spending too much time on quality assurance due to inefficient workflows</p> <p>Addressing ambiguity about terms to ensure translation consistency</p> <p>Difficulty of spotting spelling and grammar errors without breaking deadlines</p> <p>Poor level of language comprehension of the locale</p> <p>Mastering the steep learning curve when it comes to localization tech stack</p> <p>Not having a standard for performance and usability testing</p>

Proofreading and testing can make or break your localization process. Whether you're localizing for one or ten new languages and cultures, you should always build a rigorous review process into your localization workflow.

Jessica Grimm at LOVOO runs a three-tiered review process for mobile applications. "First, we have the reviewer on the translation platform. Second, we send the app out to a crowd of testers from a variety of markets every weekend, so this review is done by native speakers but not linguists," she said. "In a third step, we also get an external LSP to do an in-app review of the localized app for us. This last step is done only once a month and for just four languages at a time in rotation."

"Sometimes, I also include feedback from in-house native speakers and the community and pass it on to the translators for future reference," she added.

Typically, after your content is translated, it's reviewed by your quality assurance (QA) team and reviewed by internal and external test groups for accuracy and usability.

Reviewers are often native speakers of your new language who check for errors, omissions, and accuracy relative to the source material. QA managers can collaborate with your product managers and content team to ensure the new language(s) accurately reflect your product and company information.

When it comes to developing the best quality review process, [Tomas Franc](#), Sales Solution Architect here at Lokalise has a few tips to share. "[A good quality review process] highly depends on target quality requirements. A general two-step workflow (translation and review) with regular independent quality spot checks works well in most cases. It's useful to engage the client's language owners and ambassadors in the quality spot checks to ensure accuracy and consistency."

QA managers are essential because they maintain expected quality levels and resolve quality-related issues. Just because your product wasn't originally

designed and developed for your new market doesn't mean it should receive any less regard from your team — QA guarantees your product is just as accurate and relevant to your new customers as it is your original market.

Lokalise brings all stakeholders under one roof

So, where does Lokalise fit into the localization process? Well, it can fuel your entire localization process — and it can be used by all stakeholders involved.

A platform like Lokalise gives your **localization project manager** a unified communication tool to send content to your **translators** and track their progress.

(For years, project managers [handled these functions with spreadsheets](#), emails, phone calls, and other tools — now, you can replace all of this with Lokalise.)

Your **content team** may also work closely with your localization project manager to organize, prepare, and import content into a translation management system (TMS) like Lokalise while the content is preserved for translators and provided by **designers**.

When set up correctly, your TMS will automatically route any changes made during agile development processes into the translation workflow for updates and changes.

Lokalise provides localization [solutions for issues specific to software and technology](#). For example, it gives your **developers** the ability to tag individual content elements within their code, reflected through changes and updates to your content and product; not to mention 40+ available integrations which include GitHub, GitLab, Webhooks, and more.

Lokalise serves as a single source of the truth, eliminating version control issues, facilitating communication across your localization workflow, and identifying and removing errors and omissions alongside your **quality assurance team**.

Pretty neat, right?

We invite you to give Lokalise a try because it's designed for *everyone* involved in the localization process, from developers and designers to project managers and translators. [Schedule a call with one of our product specialists](#) to get a free consultation on the spot. We'll be happy to share more about the value a collaborative localization platform can bring to your business. If you prefer to explore Lokalise on your own, you can [sign up for a free trial](#) (no credit card needed).



