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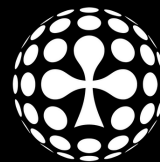
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# The Innovation Handbook for Localization Teams:

A ROADMAP TO VALUE-DRIVEN TRANSFORMATION

[creative words]



**all-in**<sup>global</sup>  
LANGUAGE SOLUTIONS YOU CAN BET ON



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# Introduction

## From Firefighting to Forward- Thinking Teams

In the localization industry, as in many others, there's the widespread belief that new technology automatically equals innovation. In fact, innovation extends far beyond simply adopting the latest tools. New technologies do indeed spark change, but true innovation lies in creating meaningful value, not just keeping up with evolving trends.

The constant pressure to follow every new wave of technological advancement risks leading to a reactive, unquestioning mindset. When this happens, companies may implement tools without a clear purpose or awareness of their impact. Localization teams often find themselves caught in operational loops, focused on word counts, turnaround times and glossaries, thus mistaking these metrics for the true value of their work.

The localization companies represented by the authors of this handbook have experienced meaningful results from shifting these conversations towards a mindset centered on value creation. This has led to the unlocking of new product and service developments and the introduction of workflow automation, which has turned into relevant and cost-effective solutions.

This guide was created to promote this shift. It is a practical, experience-based resource that aims to place innovation at the heart of localization, particularly within localization teams and language service providers (LSPs). It leverages the real-world experience of two localization companies that have made long-term investments in innovation and have seen measurable results.

Escaping day-to-day “firefighting” mode is no easy challenge for localization teams. Operations often consume most of the available time and resources, leaving little room to envision, anticipate, or take concrete actions on new opportunities that result from the never-ending tech-driven disruptions of the market.

This handbook is a hands-on, publicly-available resource. It is important to note however that this is not a one-size-fits-all recommendation. In fact, quite the opposite: the handbook’s purpose is to spark motivation and a team-wide mindset shift. Regardless of company size or structure, innovation can (and should) come from anywhere within the team, to take action and declare out loud: “We are all innovators.”

The approaches it presents, such as lean methods for developing solutions, value-driven team cultures, and streamlined internal processes, have already proven effective in boosting performance and profitability within the authors’ organizations. This handbook is an invitation to build momentum and reimagine what innovation in localization can look like.

# A Note on Who's Who in this Guide

*Throughout this document, “we” refers to innovative professionals working within localization teams—whether in enterprises or language service providers (LSPs). When we mention “clients,” we may be referring to either external clients of an LSP or internal stakeholders within an enterprise. Additionally, LSPs can be external vendors or internal teams supporting enterprise localization needs.*

CHAPTER 1

# The Value-Driven Localization Team

# The Value-Driven Localization Team

For decades, localization teams have been under pressure in regard to volumes, speed, and costs. The urge to deliver quality translations on a scale, faster, and cheaper, has shaped the industry. And while these factors remain important, they no longer define success by themselves.

In fact, efficiency alone doesn't build value. It may attract clients in the short term, but it doesn't make them stay.

Along with the evolution of information technologies, the language services industry is continually exposed to profound transformations. Customers don't just look for a translation provider; they look for a strategic partner and consultant. They want more than words. They want solutions that drive business impact.

This shift raises some essential questions for localization teams:

- **What does "value" truly mean in the industry?**
- **How can we ensure we are not just delivering services, but creating impact?**
- **How can innovation help us maximize value, not just efficiency?**

The most forward-thinking localization teams reimagine their role continually. They move beyond word-count economics and position themselves as consultants, problem-solvers, and innovation partners. Failing to evolve represents the risk of becoming commodities: easily replaceable, interchangeable, and stuck in an endless race to the bottom.

The goal of this chapter is to challenge the traditional efficiency-first mindset and introduce a new paradigm: value-based innovation, redefining success beyond speed and cost.



# 1. Defining “Value” in the Localization Industry

The word "value" is one of the most overused (and often misunderstood) terms in business. In the Language Services industry, value is frequently reduced to cost savings, faster turnaround times, or quality assurance. Although they all represent important factors, they don't tell the whole story. The real question isn't just "What does a localization team provide?", it is "What does the client experience and gain from it?"

If a localization team defines value purely in terms of efficiency, but their client defines value as strategic guidance, then there is a fundamental disconnect. And disconnects can lead to the loss of relevance or even businesses, not because they are failing at what they do, but because they are failing to deliver what customers actually need. So, what is "value" in the language industry? And more importantly, how do we define it in a way that creates a win-win scenario for both the localization experts and their clients?

It all comes down to two key dimensions of value: one that ensures business sustainability, and one that ensures client success. Both sides of the equation must be considered:

## **What creates long-term success for the business**

## **What creates measurable impact for the client**

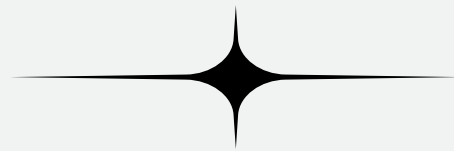
If a localization team optimizes only for internal efficiency or profitability, it risks losing relevance in the eyes of its customers. But if it focuses only on client demands, it risks becoming financially unsustainable.

For years, localization teams have been told that faster is better and that cheaper wins more clients. This thinking has led to hyper-efficient workflows, automated systems, and streamlined processes. At first glance, this seems like progress. But ask yourself, "Has this race to optimize actually made them more valuable? Or has it made them more replaceable?"

When price and speed are the only differentiators, clients start treating language providers like interchangeable suppliers rather than trusted partners. And the moment a cheaper or faster alternative emerges, loyalty disappears. The top teams are no longer just the fastest or the cheapest, but rather those that provide value beyond translation; instead, they also help clients navigate global markets, expand brand reach, ensure legal compliance, and optimize content strategies.

A value-driven localization team defines success by business impact and problem-solving rather than by cost-cutting and word counts. It focuses on:

- Solving a client's real challenges, not just translating content.
- Enhancing business outcomes through strategic language solutions.
- Differentiating beyond pricing by offering expertise, technology, and insight.
- Building long-term partnerships, rather than transactional relationships.



## 2. Delivering Impact, Not Just Services

We must shift from service provider to impact creator.

For too long, localization professionals have been defined by what they produce: words translated, deadlines met, projects completed. But in a world where technology can process millions of words in seconds, the discriminating factor should no longer be how much you deliver, but how much of a difference it makes.

Differentiation, however, does not come from quality alone. Quality is expected, but it is taken for granted by the language services clients. In fact, it is one of the main reasons clients choose professional providers instead of simply processing their content through automated translation tools.

Impact is what separates service providers from strategic partners. It is what turns a transactional client relationship into a long-term collaboration. It keeps a localization team essential, rather than interchangeable.

Instead of asking, "What do you need translated?" start asking:

- **"What are you trying to achieve?"**
- **"How does this content fit into your business strategy?"**
- **"What challenges do you face in reaching international markets?"**
- **A product description isn't just text, but it is a chance to increase global sales.**
- **A legal translation isn't just about accuracy; it is about risk mitigation.**
- **A localized ad campaign isn't just about meaning, but about emotional resonance.**

## 3. Maximizing Value, Not Just Efficiency

If innovation were just about efficiency, every localization company would be thriving. But the opposite is happening. As automation takes over, differentiation fades, margins shrink, and price wars intensify. The more the industry optimizes, the more it commodifies itself.

True innovation is the unlocking of entirely new ways for businesses to communicate and expand.

Translation is never just about language; it should also encompass business, marketing, compliance, customer engagement, and cultural connection. In this scenario, language cannot be seen as a service anymore, but as a business asset. A few examples:

Language technologies should not be limited to processing content; they should actively shape multilingual strategies before the content is even written. This means designing content ecosystems where language adapts dynamically to markets, where global messaging is no longer a translation afterthought but a core part of business intelligence.

Imagine a team of localization experts that doesn't just translate marketing campaigns but predicts which cultural narratives will drive engagement. A provider that doesn't just localize content but helps brands test and refine it in real-time, adjusting for audience response. A partner that doesn't just follow linguistic trends but creates them.

This is what real innovation looks like: not just making translations faster, but making language smarter, more strategic, and more indispensable than ever.

The true measure of success is the client impact.

A well-executed localization campaign should drive higher engagement and stronger customer connections. Multilingual content should lead to better conversion rates and expanded international sales.

<b>Traditional (service-based)</b>	<b>Impact-driven (value-based)</b>
Number of translated words	Increase in global engagement
Turnaround times	Impact on revenue from localization efforts
Cost per word	Higher conversion rates in internationalization content
Linguistic accuracy	Brand consistency

Translated support materials should reduce customer inquiries and operational costs. Consistent brand messaging across markets should reinforce trust and strengthen reputation.

# 3.1 The Danger of a One-Sided Value Model

If we consider the two dimensions of value presented in this chapter, there is a risk in focusing too much on one side of the value equation. Prioritizing business value over client value risks facing the following issues:

- Standardizing too much, removing the human and consultative aspect of the service.
- Focusing on cutting costs but sacrificing customization and strategic thinking.
- Maximizing efficiency but failing to differentiate beyond speed and price.

On the flip side, prioritizing client demands without a strong business foundation often leads to overextension, by taking on services that are not sustainable. This lack of balance makes profitability a challenge, leaving the team vulnerable to market shifts and financial instability. Without a clear, scalable model, they become too reactive to individual client requests, making long-term growth difficult to achieve.

The best approach is not to compromise one for the other, but to find ways to create mutual value, where improving client outcomes also improves business success. Striking this balance isn't always easy, but it is essential.

To navigate this tension, language teams should adopt a dual-focus strategy, ensuring that innovation enhances core operations rather than disrupting them. This requires:

- **Investing in innovation while maintaining operational stability.** Artificial intelligence, machine translation, and automation should be integrated in ways that support and optimize existing business functions, rather than displacing them.
- **Enhancing, not replacing, human expertise.** The most successful teams leverage language technologies to augment linguistic capabilities, maintaining quality and contextual accuracy that only human professionals can provide.
- **Keeping quality as a non-negotiable standard.** While efficiency and cost reduction are priorities, they must never compromise linguistic precision, service reliability, or client trust.
- **Adapting pricing models to reflect the changing value of services.** As automation reshapes workflows, clear and fair pricing strategies should reflect both tech-driven efficiencies and human expertise.

Innovative localization teams don't ask, "How can we be the cheapest?" or "How can we say yes to every client request?" Instead, they ask: "How can we create lasting value that benefits both our clients and our business?"

The future? It belongs to those who break free from the race to the bottom and step into a new role.

## 3.2 The Permanent Tension Between Present and Future

Maximizing value requires balancing the operational urgencies of the present with the transformation that comes from a strategic vision. Usually, team members involved in operations possess the expertise concerning what it takes to keep the business running and delivering what the company is used to delivering.

On the other hand, it is normally the management team, and particularly the C-level executives, the technology team, and the sales and marketing staff who are exposed to insights into what the future could look like. They watch competitors, interact with C-level colleagues, analyze trends, and talk to new or potential clients.

Disconnection between the operational and the strategic dimensions is a disconnection between present and future, and it can gradually make a company obsolete.

Establishing open communication and collaboration between the operational and the strategic levels, while leading a localization team, fosters a cohesive and productive synergy that boosts its growth as a high value business. By doing this, the expertise from the day-to-day challenges with clients and vendors merges with the opportunities that come from actively scouting and reading the context, also producing lots of insights for value generation.

# 4. A Value-Centered Team Culture

Innovation is not a department. It is not an occasional brainstorming session or a special project handed off to a select few. It is a way of thinking, a mindset that should be woven into the daily work of every team member.

For localization teams, this means breaking down silos. Sales, marketing, operations, linguists, and R&D shouldn't work in isolation. When innovation is limited to one group, inefficiencies multiply, new opportunities go unnoticed, and resistance to change becomes the norm. But when everyone sees themselves as part of the solution, progress becomes second nature. When innovation is part of how people think, work, and collaborate, it stops feeling like an initiative and becomes the foundation for lasting success.

One way to foster a value-centered team culture is to invite, incentivize, and even challenge the team to be creative and experimental. Innovation is systemic, and it can come from any department of a company: any member of the team can explore ways to change any dimensions of the business system to increase value.

Two tools are suggested here to guide teams in this quest, and to help raise awareness of all the variables at stake: the Business Model Canvas and the Value Proposition Canvas .

<sup>1</sup>

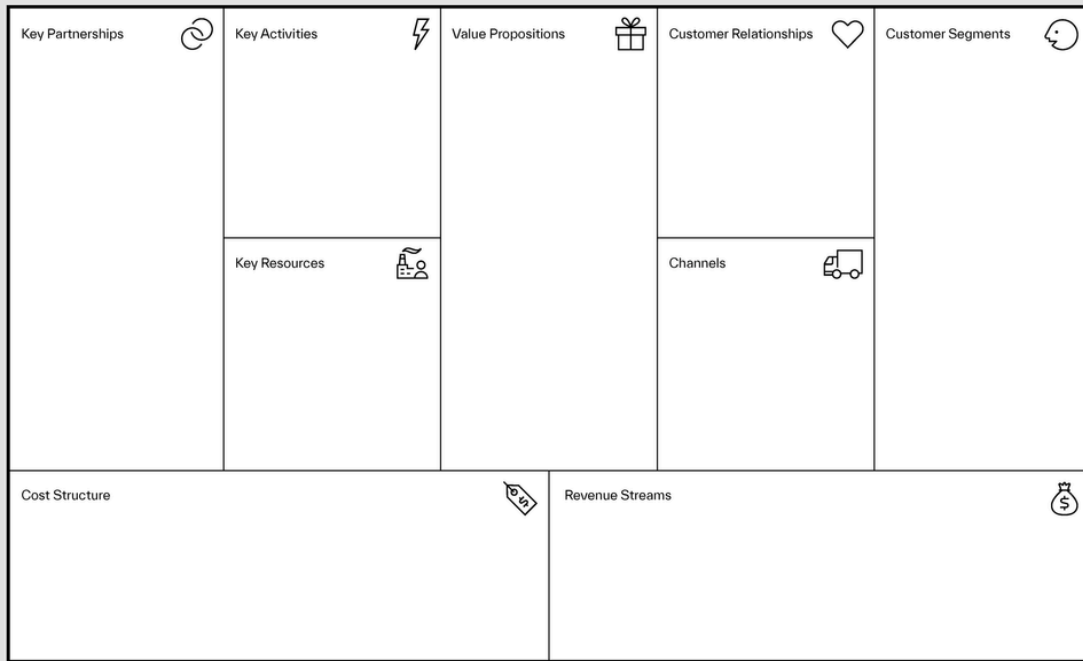
These are templates that help make strategies visible and organize all the elements that make the existence of a company, or a department, possible. Every innovation-driven team should consider having both tools at hand, visible to all, as a way to be transparent on how the current business model works and how value is generated, giving clarity to envision how both could evolve.

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Osterwalder, The Value Proposition Canvas, Strategyzer Library, <https://www.strategyzer.com>.

# The Business Model Canvas

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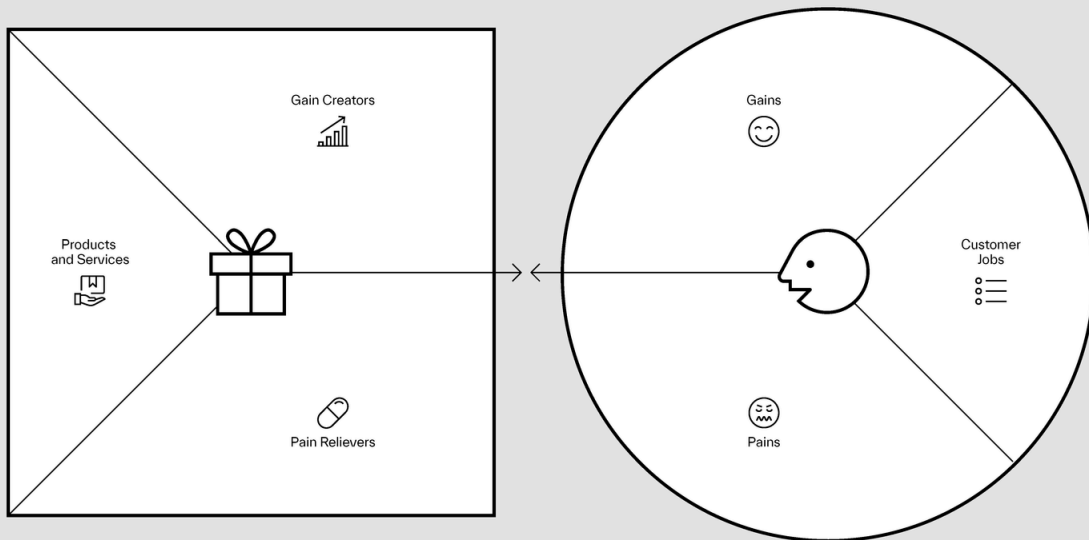
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The Business Model Canvas and the Value Proposition Canvas are easy-to-use tools that help visualize and communicate how value is created and how every business exists around it.

# The Value Proposition Canvas

Value Proposition: \_\_\_\_\_

Customer Segment: \_\_\_\_\_

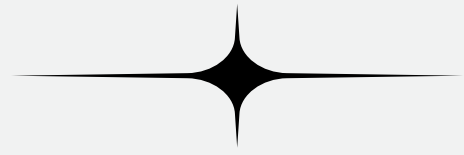


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In this chapter, we framed value as the main driver of an innovative localization team by going beyond the traditional focus on quality, speed, price, and volume. We explored how the business can foster a value-centered team culture that boosts communication and collaboration to generate value for clients and for itself. In the next chapter, we will address incremental innovation for localization professionals by diving deeper into concrete ways to continually improve existing solutions.



CHAPTER 2

# Incremental Innovation

# Incremental Innovation

In the office of a localization team, a project manager stares at their screen, watching as MT engines process thousands of words while human translators review complex content. This scene, unimaginable just a decade ago, exemplifies the transformation sweeping through the language services industry. The integration of automation into traditional workflows isn't just an option anymore; it has become a necessity for survival.

Yet, the path to improvement isn't about discarding existing processes entirely. Instead, it is about an evolution, where established practices meet innovative processes to create more efficient, scalable, and quality-driven solutions. This chapter explores how localization teams can improve on already existing solutions.

## 1. The Changing Landscape of Localization

The language services industry stands at a crossroads, and that's a fact. Traditional workflows, once dominated by human translators working with basic computer-aided translation tools, are being transformed by a wave of technological advancement where neural machine translation, Generative AI, and automated quality assessment tools are no longer futuristic concepts.

Consider a typical translation project from five years ago: a translator would receive a document, consult translation memories, and carefully craft each sentence while referring to terminology databases. Today, that same project might begin with automated content analysis, flow through multiple AI-powered systems, and involve human experts at strategic checkpoints. The core service remains the same, but the delivery path has evolved dramatically.

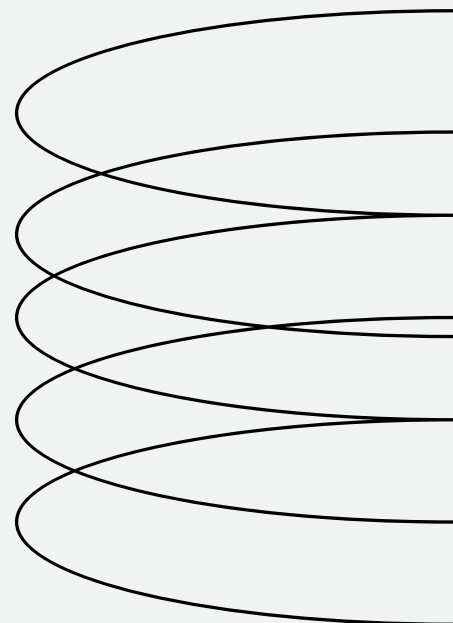
The GenAI revolution has fundamentally transformed how we approach translation and localization. Tools and methodologies that were once considered cutting-edge are now part of an evolving baseline. Neural machine translation systems, for example, can produce output that, in specific contexts, closely approaches human-level quality. Quality estimation tools predict translation accuracy even before human review, streamlining workflows and elevating standards.

At the same time, advances in Large Language Models (LLMs) further expand the possibilities, enabling automation of nuanced tasks such as context-aware content adaptation and linguistic analysis. When combined with MT engines, quality estimation tools, and translation management systems, these technologies create integrated workflows that enhance both efficiency and quality.

Yet, even as technology offers new opportunities, the pressures on localization professionals have never been greater. The all-too-familiar client request "We need this translated yesterday, and by the way, could you cut the cost by 30%?" encapsulates the challenges of the modern language services market. Clients demand faster turnaround times and reduced costs, while still relying on the high quality that only human expertise can provide in a seemingly impossible triangle to square.

While automated solutions continue to exert downward pressure on per-word rates, the importance of scalability has only increased as content volumes vary significantly across platforms and markets, requiring flexible workflows that can adapt to these changing demands.

In this high-pressure environment, embracing technological advancements is a business imperative. However, the key to success lies in integrating these tools thoughtfully, using them to enhance human expertise rather than replace them. Localization experts must adapt to these shifting demands and leverage technology to go beyond mere survival.



## 2. Strategic Framework for Improvement

Often, it is in the midst of this high-pressure environment that a localization team realizes that they need to improve an existing solution. Maybe it is an internal tool that takes up too much time.

Maybe it is a complicated process that a client expects the localization experts to go through. The upcoming subchapters offer a framework one can rely upon to improve already existing solutions.

### 2.1 Questioning the Status Quo

This might seem like an unnecessary step or even a waste of resources but taking the time to hear the user's experience regarding a solution or integration is a guaranteed strategy to improve said solution or integration. When given a stage, users will start describing their (hidden) pain points. We've all seen this way too often: users going through very lengthy processes to achieve relatively simple results because that's how they were taught or "how they have always done it".

This is where we, as innovation teams, step in. Taking the time to listen and to deeply understand how and, crucially, why, current solutions work in a certain manner is key to improving them. In other words, questioning the status quo is a quintessential step to improving already existing solutions. And, in order to question the status quo, one must take the time to understand it from the user's perspective.

## 2.2 The “Hybrid Solution” Paradigm

The key to meaningful improvement lies in developing sophisticated hybrid solutions that combine the strengths of human and machine capabilities. While automation can handle repetitive and high-volume tasks efficiently, human monitoring remains essential to safeguard linguistic quality and ensure that the outputs meet the desired standards.

Consider the content framework of a global e-commerce platform, as an example. High-volume content like product descriptions or technical specifications may flow through automated pipelines, but human linguists play a crucial role in reviewing and refining the outputs to guarantee accuracy and coherence.

For high-impact materials such as marketing taglines and brand messaging, human expertise takes center stage to ensure cultural relevance and alignment with brand identity.

The challenge lies in crafting workflows that dynamically balance automation and human input, with human review acting as the final safeguard for quality. Admittedly, there’s no one-size-fits-all solution, and only by tailoring this balance to the specific demands of each content type and business objective can organizations achieve both efficiency and excellence.

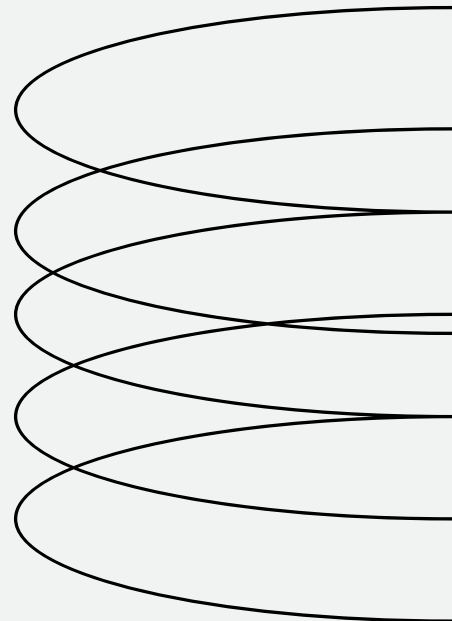


## 2.3 Quality is the Non-Negotiable Element

Cost, time, and quality form a “Bermuda triangle” for language service providers. Focus too heavily on one, and the others are at risk. As stated before, clients demand faster delivery and lower costs, yet they expect uncompromising quality. Navigating this triangle is the defining test for modern localization teams.

Automation has revolutionized workflows, excelling at repetitive tasks like catching consistency errors and verifying terminology. These tools save time and control costs, but they cannot guarantee the high-quality results clients expect. Machines cannot interpret nuance, adapt to cultural contexts, or align content with brand voice. This is where human expertise becomes indispensable. Human reviewers don't just correct mistakes: they refine the output, ensuring it resonates culturally, communicates effectively, and serves the intended purpose. It is this critical human touch that transforms functional translations into high-quality deliverables.

In an industry where automation often dominates the conversation, it is human creativity, cultural sensitivity, and decision-making that ultimately guarantee quality. Ensuring cost, time, and quality work in harmony, rather than in conflict.



## 2.4 Triageing

Modern language service operations are based on the seamless integration of advanced tools, automated processes, and human expertise. This triad creates a system that balances speed, scalability, and quality while adapting to the complexities of client demands. Yet, the current approach to workflow selection often lacks the strategic clarity required in the complex workflow we find ahead of us.


What if we fundamentally reimagined the entry point of our services? What if we incorporated a formal triage phase at the start of every project, as a deliberate shift away from the industry's entrenched "automation-first" or "human-first" paradigms?

We're not talking about another project management step. The triage phase represents a philosophical shift in how we approach language services, functioning as a strategic decision-making process that scrutinizes both traditional workflows and blind reliance on automation. In an era where "AI-first" has become a default mantra, this approach dares to ask: "Are we truly choosing the right tools for the right reasons?"

Some localization teams may indeed have processes resembling a triage phase, such as project

managers evaluating workflows or automated systems assigning tools based on metadata. However, these approaches are often informal, inconsistent, or overly-reliant on predefined pathways.

In short, the triage phase represents a strategic evolution. Consider the industry's paradox: despite having more tools than ever, we often struggle to deliver optimal solutions. This triage phase forces us to question assumptions, uncovering more effective, customized solutions. Critics may argue that adding such steps could slow processes in an industry where speed is crucial. However, the value of investing in upfront decision-making cannot be overstated. It minimizes costly mistakes, reduces inefficiencies, and prevents revisions that often result from poorly-planned workflows. It is not about adding complexity, but rather about embedding precision and purpose into the workflow, ensuring the right approach from the start. Automated solutions have driven continuous downward pressure on per-word rates, but the need for scalability has never been more critical as content volumes fluctuate dramatically across platforms and markets, requiring flexible workflows that can adapt to these changing demands.



Here's how the proposed triage phase is different and why it is valuable:

## 1. A clear, structured approach:

The triage phase replaces guesswork with a consistent, repeatable framework. By combining human expertise with data-driven insights, every project starts with a deliberate evaluation.

## 2. Choosing the right tools:

Not all projects are created equal. The triage phase determines which workflow best fits the project's needs, avoiding default, one-size-fits-all solutions.

## 3. Beyond automation for automation's sake

Many workflows over-prioritize automation. The triage phase shifts the focus to balance: speed, cost, and quality are evaluated to ensure tools align not only with client goals but most importantly, with the provider's efficiency. In other words, value lies in selecting the correct tools for the correct job. Instead of always automating, we ask ourselves if automating adds value to what we are doing.

## 4. Keeping all stakeholders, not only clients, at the center

Of course, this step aligns workflows with client priorities, creating transparency and trust, but it considers what the provider can offer in each specific timeframe. Every decision, tool selection, process flow, or resource allocation serves a clear purpose.

The triage phase can be led by localization program managers, solution architects, or senior linguists, depending on the project type, client maturity, or internal team structure. The key aspect is that decision-makers should bring both linguistic and operational awareness, so no single role is given priority.

This proposal challenges localization teams to evolve beyond simply integrating tools into processes. True innovation isn't just about having the latest technology. True innovation is about knowing when and how to deploy it. We have the chance to create new opportunities, solidify our reputation, and deliver tailored, high-quality results.

# 3. Making Change Happen

Transforming workflows is a delicate process that requires thoughtfulness and care. Large-scale changes often fail when treated as sweeping overhauls, while more deliberate, incremental shifts can lay the groundwork for sustainable evolution. One way to think about this is to start small (perhaps within a single department, process, or content type) and gradually scale outward. The challenge, of course, lies in moving beyond isolated successes. Breaking down team silos to create a cohesive, company-wide approach is not just a technical hurdle but mostly a cultural one.

At the heart of this transformation is the creation of a new mindset. Automating is not about adopting tools but rather, means rethinking how work is done and how teams interact with each other, and with technology. This shift isn't easy. It requires people to embrace the unfamiliar while preserving the expertise and judgment that have always been their strengths. In other words, it requires everyone in a localization department to have an innovative mindset and to have the attitude of a self-starter. Change is only meaningful when it comes from the people who need it, never when it is imposed.

It's at this point that upskilling and adaptation become crucial.

Linguists today are often tasked with activities that differ wildly from their original academic training (e.g., refining the outputs of advanced tools like LLMs, shifting from creators to reviewers and editors of machine-generated content); project managers are no longer just keeping schedules in check, but they're orchestrating complex workflows that rely on a mix of automation and human input. These roles are going through a significant change, and to ensure this evolution continues, fostering a culture of continuous learning and open communication, is essential. This means providing opportunities for professional development, encouraging knowledge-sharing among team members, and establishing clear channels for communication and feedback. By embracing these principles, localization teams can adapt to the changing landscape and continue to deliver high-quality results.

The transformation of workflows isn't just about tools or efficiency. It is about reimagining the relationship between people and technology. We must find the balance where automation enhances human expertise rather than weakening it. Whether businesses succeed in this balancing act depends not only on the steps they take but on the questions they ask.

# 4. Impact and Value

Innovation is only meaningful when it leads to tangible results. While metrics like throughput and efficiency are important, they alone don't define the whole picture. Real value emerges when improvements drive client satisfaction, inspire team growth, and contribute to business sustainability.

Innovation is a series of incremental, often small changes, and measurable wins that build confidence and momentum. At the core of these changes are people. Continuous training and upskilling ensure teams adapt, grow, and contribute their expertise to a changing landscape. This evolution, however, is delicate: building an open-to-change, out-of-the-box mindset takes time. There are risks around every corner, undermining the very value that human expertise brings.

True innovation lies in balance. Leveraging technology to improve efficiency while ensuring that human creativity, judgment, and adaptability remain at the heart of the process. When teams align around a shared mindset of experimentation, they build resilience and unlock growth.

# 5. Best Practice

The path to successful integration starts with a mindset where an ongoing dialogue between technology, people, and business needs is key.

## 5.1 Active Listening

Innovation often starts at the client's doorstep. We all know that clients seldom know what they are looking for, and the best solutions often emerge through careful listening. By identifying underlying needs, localization experts can create efficient solutions that optimize workflows, while meeting client expectations.

Transparency is essential. Regular feedback sessions with clients uncover opportunities that numerical metrics alone often miss. These conversations help reveal gaps where existing processes don't align with real-world challenges.

## 5.2 Meeting in the Middle

By proactively seeking opportunities, localization can be integrated directly into client workflows. One way of finding such opportunities is to offer localization consulting or guidance on content creation and focus efforts on easy-to-adopt localization and content strategies. Instead of forcing workflows, it is best to create hybrid solutions tailored to each client's development sprints, addressing both constraints and capabilities from the client, as well as the localization professionals.

This approach streamlines project management, accelerates turnaround times, and elevates the overall quality of the final product. After all, integration works best when it bridges gaps.

## 5.3 Keep it Simple

Complex problems don't always need complex solutions. Successful solutions start simple, iterate, and refine. Basic integrations can deliver immediate value, while over-engineered systems often introduce unnecessary rigidity. In three words, "Avoid technology sprawl".

## 5.4 Stay Clear

Successful solutions hinge on clear goals and measurable outcomes. These goals act as guideposts, helping teams navigate the complexity of modern workflows. By balancing technical, operational, and business objectives, localization teams create a focused framework for improvement.

Transparent communication about goals ensures alignment across teams and reduces resistance to change. When everyone understands not just what's changing, but why, collaboration flourishes and progress really becomes tangible.

## 5.5 Be Open to Change

As systems evolve, teams must evolve with them. Upskilling is no longer a periodic event, but rather, it is a continuous journey. Localization experts must invest in professional development, recognizing that integration succeeds only when paired with human capability.

In this context, upskilling is not just mastering new tools, but it is about understanding integration principles, sharpening problem-solving skills, and building confidence in hybrid workflows.

## 5.6 Be Curious!

The language technology landscape evolves constantly, and curiosity guides effective strategies. Staying informed about emerging developments, tools, client needs, and industry trends enables teams to navigate change while maintaining a critical eye on practical value.

A culture of curiosity fosters experimentation. When teams feel empowered to test ideas and suggest improvements, innovative solutions often emerge from unexpected places.

This chapter proposes a strategy to improve and refine an already existing solution, but true innovation often requires creating something totally new. The next chapter addresses this idea and explores how localization teams can actively research new solutions, moving beyond incremental improvements to transformative breakthroughs.

CHAPTER 3

# Active Research for Breakthrough Innovation

# Active Research for Breakthrough Innovation

Localization teams serve companies that target international markets. Due to the challenges represented by geographic and cultural distances, information and communication technologies have played an instrumental role in the evolution of this kind of service.

The strong link to this type of technology makes the localization and content industries fast paced and thirsty for the rapid adoption of every new generation of communication solutions available.

With this chapter, we aim to introduce a strategic approach where adapting to market changes and responding to their evolving needs are central to making a difference. By facing industry shifts head-on and researching new services, companies can remain competitive and enhance their offerings.

## 1. It is All About Innovation

Staying relevant in such an environment requires embracing innovation. But innovation is a word that has been so abused during the last decade that, at some point, it is at risk of getting lost as one more trend that comes with lots of hype and gets diluted in our daily routines.

The intention of every managing team is to know how to increase revenue and profit levels. Both are natural consequences of value: cash flows where value goes.

Value is what clients look for: authentic and relevant ways to solve

their actual needs and pains, which is what they are willing to pay for. Authentic value is key to reaching relevant positioning in any market.

Innovation is all about value. Creating “new things” is neither necessary nor sufficient for business innovation. In line with what was stated in the first chapter, innovation happens in the eyes of clients when they perceive that new value is generated. And from the perspective of a business, it also happens when any dimension of the business system is creatively transformed to create more value. Therefore, business innovation is systemic.

## 2. Finding the Time and Resources for Research

As mentioned in the first chapter, there is a natural tension in localization teams between present and future, operations vs. research, and new developments. The urgency of catching up with the operational demands is so high that the team rarely finds opportunities to take a break from being in the firefighter mode.

Amidst the fast-paced technological transformation of international markets, maintaining a proactive approach towards research becomes critical for the sustainability of a business.

Where to start? What to prioritize? These questions pop up naturally when dealing with the uncertainty of rapidly changing markets and technologies.

Adopting a hands-on approach might be the safest and most productive strategy for a localization team.

To implement this hands-on approach, there are two dimensions to consider: first, actively engaging with key stakeholders on our clients' side to understand their perspectives, motivations, needs, and frustrations. Second, identifying opportunities to generate value by monitoring and experimenting with the latest relevant technologies for our industry and markets. Let's dive deeper into both in the following sections:

### 2.1 Partnering in Experimentation with Clients

Localization professionals don't just sell translations or content. This type of team exists because it is very demanding, at times painful, to manage the human talent and the

technological resources involved in the complex localization and content creation workflows.

Businesses face goals and challenges regarding their international presence, primarily related to brand positioning, effective communication with their audiences and stakeholders, and ultimately, revenue generation. Localization experts need to understand their clients' business models, current strategies, and specific challenges to better support them in achieving their objectives.

Clients are often willing to openly discuss their goals and internal challenges, particularly when they recognize localization professionals as potential partners capable of providing solutions to achieve these objectives.

Acting as a consultant when approaching a client can generate valuable insights and opportunities to serve them more effectively. Leveraging expertise in linguistics and language technology management can help diagnose clients' internationalization challenges and identify suitable solutions. The goal is to strategically deploy localization capabilities to support clients, both in traditional and unconventional ways. In that regard, design thinking-related tools are a valuable asset. Among the various available options, there is one that is particularly simple and versatile: the Innovators' Compass. It comprises all the relevant aspects of a design thinking exercise while being extremely intuitive and easy to use. It is publicly available; just search for it to find plenty of templates and ideas on how to use it.

### 3. PRINCIPLES

What matters most?



### 4. IDEAS

What ways are there?



### 2. OBSERVATIONS

What happens? Why?

### 5. EXPERIMENTS

What's a step to try?



Image. Example of the Innovators' Compass in action being used to brainstorm the creation of this handbook.

Following the sections of the Innovators' Compass, when approaching a client, it is beneficial to identify their key stakeholders, understand their current situation, and recognize what matters most to them.

With this information in mind, localization experts can collaborate creatively with the client to generate ideas and outline simple, practical steps to test them.

# Start Small and Iterate to Scale Up

Many companies seeking to strengthen their international reach may be surprised by how a localization team's capabilities can generate numerous relevant solutions to address critical business needs. Building optimal workflows that combine human talent and technological solutions in linguistic services is not a minor challenge; managing these workflows to maximize efficiency is even more complex.

In line with the Innovators' Compass, after defining ideas or areas that represent good opportunities, it makes sense to find the quickest, easiest, and cheapest way to test whether the idea is viable. Or, on the contrary, if it lacks value, or has little impact.

Conducting such experiments in collaboration with one or two trusted clients can be an invaluable source of learning and inspiration, driving

the potential development of highly relevant solutions.

Essentially, this involves bringing together the client's ideas and the localization team's expertise, collaborating closely to address the interests and needs of both sides. Clients benefit from customized solutions tailored to their international objectives, while localization professionals gain valuable insights by designing and testing potential new products, simultaneously strengthening relationships with key stakeholders.

After collaboratively testing the idea, it is beneficial to analyze the outcomes using the Innovators' Compass framework, revisiting guiding principles if necessary, brainstorming potential improvements of the experiment, and identifying possible next steps.

At this stage, both parties will have sufficient information for informed decision-making: the localization team can evaluate the viability of the solution, while the client assesses its value and the practical considerations for its implementation. Alignment at this point creates a strong foundation for developing a shared roadmap.

For Language Service Providers, this also provides the essential groundwork for marketing the solution and extending it to additional clients, potentially transforming a working prototype into a market-ready product. Achieving this requires careful analysis and strategic decisions about balancing customization with standardization, ensuring competitive costs and pricing.

It is crucial that the product's perceived value aligns closely with the pricing structure and that internal costs allow for satisfactory profit margins.

As the solution evolves from a prototype to a product, complexity naturally increases, both for the original client and subsequent adopters. Therefore, maintaining a proactive, hands-on approach to learning, is vital. Continuously engaging the iterative process outlined by the Innovators' Compass—experiment, observe, revise, and ideate—will ensure sustained improvement and adaptability.

## 2.2 Key Technological Areas to Drive Value

Over the years, localization teams have leveraged diverse technologies to optimize language-related workflows. From CAT tools, translation, business management systems (TMS/BMS), machine translation solutions, orchestrators, and, more recently, GenAI, localization teams have gradually embraced these technologies, refining their workflows to enhance efficiency continuously.

As highlighted in the previous chapter, within the "Bermuda Triangle" of quality, speed, and cost, localization efforts typically aim to achieve the highest quality at maximum speed and minimal cost.

However, value creation is not solely dependent on balancing these three elements. Factors such as integration capabilities and information security can also significantly contribute to value for certain clients. Therefore, proactively investing time and resources into scouting and evaluating emerging technological solutions represents an opportunity likely to yield returns in efficiency and profitability. This is particularly true when combined with the close collaboration between localization teams and clients.

In this section, we will go through some of these technological areas that are worth scouting to discover new opportunities for generating value.

## Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)

Let's start with the obvious: as of the mid-2020s, LLMs have captured global attention due to their amazing capabilities and the challenges involved in effectively harnessing their potential.

Like many industries, the localization and content verticals are experiencing significant disruption from these technologies, largely viewed as a powerful pathway to automation - offering impressive quality at remarkable speed and reduced costs.

However, as happens at the initial hype stage of any new technology, localization teams and their clients have realized that the initial enthusiasm around GenAI is somewhat exaggerated, and that excluding human involvement introduces significant risks.

Nevertheless, while it is important to keep those challenges in mind, the rapid evolution of GenAI demands close attention to new releases and the opportunities they bring.

For localization clients, sourcing translators to localize documents can be straightforward, yet maintaining this process efficiently and sustainably over time is considerably more complex, even daunting. The integration of GenAI has introduced additional complexities: clients may leverage LLMs to find solutions quickly, but face challenges in maintaining consistent quality and managing workflow effectively.

It might seem like the possibilities are endless: a client can go to an LLM and find many interesting solutions, but how can they handle them over time? How to know if a text translated into Thai, for instance, is as good and engaging as the one delivered by localization professionals? How can they build efficient quality management workflows?

This is precisely where localization teams add value, by offering structured, reliable, and scalable solutions. By keeping a scouting eye and an experimental approach to GenAI as new solutions are released, localization experts can stay fit to find the best uses for their clients and markets.

Although digging deeper into GenAI is outside of the scope of this document, some of the features that have demonstrated positive results for localization and content writing are:

- **Prompt engineering and prompt management:** The “engineering” part of it might be an overused term during the LLM hype stage; however, a carefully- designed prompt management strategy is needed to take GenAI into operations at scale effectively. After some trial and error, it is possible to find the optimal prompts-or combinations of them- for each case. This is an evolving field, and for sure, prompt-related solutions will continue to appear, streamlining the use of GenAI localization workflows.
- **RAG or retrieval augmented generation:** According to OpenAI, “RAG is the process of retrieving relevant contextual information from a data source and passing that information to an LLM alongside the user’s prompt. This information is used to improve the model’s output by augmenting the model’s base knowledge”. This feature allows localization teams holding LLM’s reins tight to control its output carefully. Quite a useful feature for crafting customized solutions.
- **LLM finetuning:** It represents a deeper level of controlling LLMs, which has demonstrated effectiveness in instructing the model on following a very specific format or tone that requires complex instructions. It eliminates the need to provide the same lengthy set of instructions repeatedly.

- **Multimodal genAI:** For tasks including images, audio, or video, the decreasing costs and growing effectiveness of multimodal AI can represent interesting opportunities for the automation of multimedia-related workflows.
- **Agentic workflows:** AI can be leveraged in automations which autonomously execute multi-step tasks by integrating external tools and memory. AI Agents can coordinate translation, quality checks, and publishing tasks across tools, acting as a lightweight orchestration layer that scale efficiently while optimizing human oversight.

It's also key to highlight the importance of an agnostic approach to LLMs: the less reliance on a single provider, the lower the risk—and the greater the opportunity to leverage the strengths of each model where they perform best.

## Neural Machine Translation (NMT)

The transformer—the algorithm that revolutionized AI—was originally developed for Neural Machine Translation (NMT), a technology that's been central to localization workflows since the early 2010s. While many assume that LLMs are on track to replace NMT, there are still cases where NMT excels, thanks to:

- Higher consistency.
- Stronger adherence to domain- or client-specific terminology (especially when customized).

- Faster and cheaper due to higher computational efficiency.
- Better source-target fidelity.

Considering that it is a language model specifically trained for translation, NMT will most probably continue to adapt to shine where it outperforms LLMs.

# Natural Language Processing (NLP)

Both NMT and LLMs are specialized applications within the broader field of NLP, which focuses on enabling computers to meaningfully understand, interpret, and generate human language. Given this context, it makes sense to explore the value of tailoring additional NLP solutions

to specific tasks - such as terminology enforcement and extraction, quality control, or identifying terms requiring regional adaptation. In some cases, a task-specific NLP solution can lead to greater efficiency and higher-quality output.

## Quality Management Solutions

There are different solutions around quality, the most common being quality assurance (QA), localization quality assurance (LQA), and quality estimation (QE). All these are improving along with the evolution of GenAI, so keeping a close eye on

how linguistic-quality-related solutions evolve, can be a powerful source of opportunities to help localization teams add value to their clients.

## Linguistic Assets Management

In the age of GenAI and other NLP solutions, data is the most valuable asset. Translation memories and terminologies represent the most critical resource in leveraging the opportunities that come along with evolving technologies.

Tools that support and enhance efforts in maintaining and improving the quality of data assets - such as

terminology extraction or translation memory cleanup - are highly valuable. As with quality management tools, these solutions continue to evolve alongside advancements in GenAI; keeping a close eye on them can inspire new opportunities for value creation.

# Integration and Orchestration

There are extensive opportunities for value generation through integration. Essentially, it is about seamlessly embedding localization services into the client's workflows, minimizing repetitive tasks, and preventing potential human errors. This reduces effort and mitigates risk on the client's side, ideally also benefiting the localization team by leading to lower costs and increased profitability.

Integration can range from simply working directly within the client's existing tools to various degrees of automation, where the client's systems are interconnected with those of the localization team.

There are some interesting out-of-the-box orchestration solutions available; however, it is important to remember that integration goes beyond a simple plug-and-play. It is more about workflow alignment, which requires time and some trial-and-error iterations. Therefore, when facing integration challenges, it is helpful to have the Innovators' Compass at hand to consider all the perspectives and think of all the possible alternatives.

In summary, proactively embedding localization services into client workflows can significantly enhance value both for clients and, consequently, for localization teams.

## Cybersecurity

With the global acceleration of multilingual content production and increasingly strict data privacy regulations, the importance of robust information security policies keeps rising. For many clients, this represents a challenge—and thus an opportunity for added value—or it may simply be a critical requirement that strongly influences their decision-making when selecting localization partners.

As outlined in the ISO 27001 standard, good information security practices focus on evaluating and enhancing assets, practices, and protocols related to the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information. Adopting a proactive stance towards data security can become a source of opportunity by inspiring greater trust in clients and partners.

# 3. The Human Factor

As stated before, localization professionals are strong at managing complex workflows. This is how value is added and the reason for the existence of these sorts of teams and companies. Since the age of computers, localization and content writing have been rapidly evolving by gradually embedding information technology solutions into workflows, increasing the efficiency of human contribution in different roles. Such as translation, content writing, project management, vendor management, and quality assurance.

Nonetheless, it is the human touch that brings trust to the client side, mainly for two reasons: first, by understanding, thus adapting to the very specific needs and requests of the client, and being available and supportive along the way. And second, by making sure that quality standards are met, considering not only linguistic and locale requirements but also style, terminology, and very specific and complex instructions. In a nutshell, humans add value by making clients' lives easier and minimizing risks.

Over the decades, the role of humans has gradually shifted thanks to the evolution of language

technologies, namely CAT tools, TMS, LQA and QA tools, NMT, LLMs, amongst others. Every significant step forward in technological solutions require humans to adapt. And this usually means humans handing over to machines lower cognitive tasks, so that people can concentrate on the more complex ones.

This leads to an overall impact: not precisely less work for humans, but rather human-machine collaboration systems with increased productivity, enabling more content to be produced with less time and effort. The total capacity of humanity for producing and localizing content has grown exponentially since the dawn of the computer age.

Localization teams - with their deep expertise in managing complex workflows - are uniquely positioned to devise effective strategies and leverage technology to maximize human efforts. Particularly when serving large enterprises, every company's setting is highly specific, presenting significant opportunities to design and manage tailored workflows that seamlessly blend the best of human expertise with technological efficiency, ultimately better addressing each client's unique needs.

# 3.1 Innovative Mindsets

Achieving highly efficient human-machine collaboration requires a collective effort. Not just from any team, but from one willing to challenge its own paradigms and assumptions, a team with an innovative mindset. However, with teams often immersed in daily operational demands, how can we take a break from mental routines? How do we train ourselves to challenge our mindsets?

Of course, it is important to upskill and set aside time for training, both in soft and hard skills, especially for those tied to emerging technologies and trends. Nevertheless, many excellent workshops and courses quickly fade from memory once participants return to their regular tasks.

That is why this chapter suggests a more hands-on approach: partnering with the localization team's closest clients to explore new opportunities that could evolve into meaningful solutions, and even products. By involving the team in innovation experiments with clients they already collaborate with, the intensity of daily operations becomes part of the process, adding excitement and real-world pressure.

This, in turn, sparks a natural curiosity to explore new technologies and trends, driven by the desire to find solutions that can truly help. Over time, this curiosity encourages teams to adopt more structured frameworks, such as the one condensed in the Innovators' Compass. With repetition, practice becomes habit, and eventually, habits shape an innovative mindset.

In this chapter, we explored the challenges and opportunities surrounding research and innovation, intending to identify ways to create new solutions and deliver added value to the clients and markets localization teams serve. This will ultimately pave the way for new streams of revenue and profit. In the next chapter, we will turn to the ethical considerations and emerging possibilities shaped by the evolving human-machine interface in the context of multilingual content solutions.



CHAPTER 4

# Ethics: The Art of a Human-Centered Approach to Innovation.

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The ethical implications of using language technology are increasingly in the spotlight. Providers, buyers, and clients alike are expressing growing concerns about the cybersecurity of the tools being integrated into localization processes. On the one hand, these technologies offer immediate cost-saving benefits. On the other hand, fears around data breaches and privacy are frequently stalling progress and limiting the adoption of promising results.

At the center of these considerations are the translators, cultural consultants, and end users whose work, privacy, and rights must not only be considered but also protected as technology evolves. This chapter aims to shed light on the current landscape, highlight available safeguards, and offer practical steps to minimize risk and create stronger compliance frameworks.

## 1. By the human, for the human

The days of a simple "humans vs. machines" divide are long gone. Today, the most forward-thinking localization teams understand that real progress comes from collaboration between humans and technology. The key is keeping humans at the heart of decision-making while using technology as a tool to enhance, not replace, their expertise.

This human-centered approach should be the foundation of all ethical discussions around AI, LLMs, and automation. It is not just about efficiency; it is about preserving professional expertise, ensuring accountability, and upholding ethical standards in language services. After all, content and translations are created by humans, for humans.

The real challenge, then, is ensuring that human professionals remain central to language services. How do we reach the right balance between automation and ethical responsibility? How do we embrace technology's benefits without allowing it to undermine human expertise?

# 1.1 Holding Humans Accountable

As we move forward, the real question isn't whether machines can replace humans but rather how to distribute tasks in a way that maximizes efficiency and quality. Technology outperforms humans in many areas, such as speed, pattern recognition, and automation. Ignoring this reality would be both shortsighted and risky. The key is being curious enough to learn where, when, and how to integrate machines. So that both humans and technology can perform at their best.

Technology should be seen as a supporting tool, not a substitute. This distinction is crucial for triaging which tasks can be automated and which require human expertise.

This triage approach must be ethically driven, ensuring that AI-generated content is always reviewed, refined, and validated by

professionals, allowing humans to be placed in a position of managing the machine, approving it, and tweaking its output, thus keeping humans at the core of decision-making processes. In other words, human professionals must start thinking about where they are best suited to review the work of the machine and, less so, about how to actually do it.

These ideas can be summed up in three concepts :

- Technology as a support, not a substitute: Machines should assist human professionals, never replace them without thorough evaluation.
- Human verification and oversight: AI-generated translations and content must always be reviewed and enhanced by skilled linguists.
- Ethical accountability: Humans must define and enforce ethical guidelines for AI use, ensuring transparency, fairness, and explainability.

# 1.2 Human Approved and F2575

By adopting the “human-approved” seal, we can set a clear ethical standard, which guarantees technology enhances rather than diminishes quality, expertise, and accountability in language services.

So far, this initiative has been applied internally within companies. However, significant efforts are being made at a broader level to raise awareness about the importance of assessing raw translation outputs in decision-making processes.



One noteworthy initiative is the ASTM F2575-2023 labeling revision. This update emphasizes the need for more relevant and value-driven labels to classify translations. Specifically, it introduces two key distinctions:

- **Professionally Verified Translation Quality (PVTQ)** – indicating that the text has been verified by a qualified professional (ISO 17001:2015) and meets certification standards.

- **Unverified Translation (UVT)** – signaling that the text has not undergone professional verification, meaning caution should be exercised before relying on it.

These labels help translation consumers determine whether a given output has been reviewed for accuracy and reliability.

First and foremost, it ensures consumer protection by helping clients understand the quality level of the translation they are receiving. This clarity is essential for managing expectations and ensuring satisfaction.

Transparency is another key benefit: distinguishing between AI-generated and human-reviewed content helps prevent misleading claims about the accuracy or origin of the translation.

Additionally, labeling supports continuous improvement as it enables the collection of feedback, which can be used to refine and improve future translation projects.

With the establishment of clear processes for transparency standards, we can ensure that human expertise remains at the core of the translation and content generation workflows, thereby reinforcing the ethical use of AI.

## 2. Bridging the gap with consultancy

One of the biggest challenges in ethical AI implementation is bridging the knowledge gap, both internally within localization teams and externally with clients.

Consultancy plays a crucial role in ensuring responsible AI adoption, educating stakeholders, and optimizing processes. Let's break the concept into:

### 2.1 Internal & External consultancy

Internally, consultancy helps businesses optimize workflows, integrate AI tools effectively, and raise awareness among professionals. This is essential in a fast-evolving industry, where technological adoption must be accompanied by structured knowledge transfer.

- Optimizing processes, thus minimizing inefficiencies and streamlining tech-human collaboration
- Improve workflows, ensuring that tech-generated outputs fully align with ethical and quality standards
- Integrate tools and train professionals to use technologies responsibly and effectively

Externally, consultancy helps clients make informed decisions about tech-driven language services. Many clients don't have the expertise to tell the difference between AI-generated content and human-verified translations, which raises concerns about transparency and potential misrepresentation.

At the same time, fear often takes over, making it hard for stakeholders to see what's actually a risk and what could be a useful tool.

By acting as partners and advisors, localization teams can help clients understand these technologies, explaining their limits, benefits, and ethical implications, ultimately building trust and strengthening the value of their services.

# 3. Closing the gap with training

For humans to remain relevant in an industry where technology automates an increasing number of tasks, continuous training is essential. The skills needed today are not the same as those required a couple of years ago and are not the same that we'll need in two years. Technology moves too fast, and no one can afford to be left behind. A few examples of career shifts and training:

- Linguists must adapt to evolving roles, shifting from primarily being producers to becoming evaluators, consultants, and trainers. This doesn't mean abandoning their traditional tasks, but rather acknowledging that the demand for those specific services will continue to shrink over time.

- Training should emphasize shifting from repetitive tasks to verifying, correcting, and enhancing technology-generated output, empowering linguists to take a critical role in balancing machine efficiency with human expertise.
- Tech literacy is key. If we are asking professionals to make informed decisions, they must be trained to understand the tools' capabilities, limitations, and ethical considerations.

As a matter of fact, the lack of proper training brings with it the risk of localization teams falling behind, leading to slow, decreasing, and risky production.

# 4. Widening Horizons with Research

Research is essential in adapting to market needs and in ensuring localization teams offer true value-driven products. These products shouldn't be static but rather fully dynamic, able not only to understand, but also to anticipate and shape future trends in the industry. This proactive approach fosters resilience, ensuring that both businesses and professionals are future oriented.

By critically assessing, questioning, and reviewing industry trends, localization experts can actively shape the change they're living. In this sense, ethical research is key and helps avoid blind reliance on new technologies, ensuring that innovation aligns with core values, like inclusivity and sustainability.

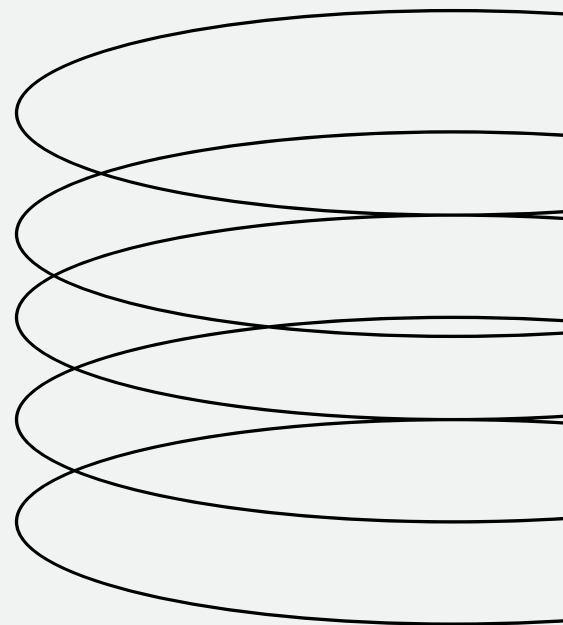
Among the main research questions relating to ethical compliance, there are those concerning the understanding of biases in the models we are relying upon, the evaluation of their inclusivity, and addressing the gap between well-supported languages and those that remain, instead, underrepresented. Raising awareness around these points empowers us as individuals and as experts, to make informed decisions, and drive change.

The reality is that much of the development process behind language technologies remains unclear. We don't have full visibility into the data sets used for their training, and this lack of transparency raises concerns. By embedding research into our daily operations, we can ask better questions, either minimizing biased and unreliable responses or gaining the knowledge to evaluate them critically.

We must ask ourselves: who takes ownership of the content that's generated, whether it is newly created or translated?

We must take ownership of the processes within our professional sphere. Turning a blind eye and placing blind trust in these systems is the greatest ethical risk we face in this evolving landscape.

In this chapter, we've outlined what we believe are the best key practices for the ethical use of emerging language technologies. By combining our current practices with an understanding of broader international initiatives, our goal is to raise awareness and encourage a more thoughtful, responsible approach. We aim to move away from unquestioning methods and inspire curiosity about the possibilities that lie ahead.



# Conclusion – The Right Questions to Ask

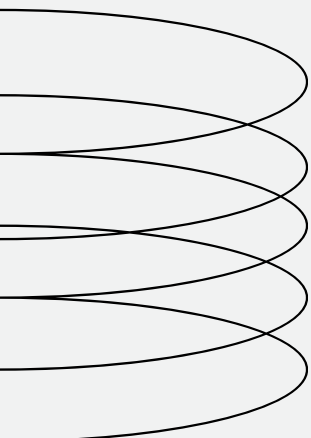
# The Right Questions to Ask

This innovation handbook is intended for localization teams who see innovation as an ongoing collaborative effort, rather than the sole responsibility of a specialized individual or department.

The ideas presented here encourage shifting attention beyond the never-ending race to cost and speed optimization, to foster value-driven mindsets and culture within our teams. To that end, we explored the opportunities and challenges related to incremental innovation as a means to cultivate continually evolving teams. We also explored the opportunities for breakthrough innovation that stem from active research. Both approaches were examined within a context where close collaboration with clients and related stakeholders is recognized as a key opportunity for value generation.

The final chapter presented an ethical framework for innovation amidst accelerated technological breakthroughs. This approach emphasizes how localization teams can evolve by continually revisiting and adapting the role of humans, ensuring that humans add value even as new automation layers are implemented.

Navigating uncertainty is inherent to business innovation. Therefore, more than relying on answers and certainties, it makes sense to have an open-minded and continually inquiring approach driven by questions. With this in mind, we conclude this handbook by providing a set of thought-provoking questions designed to guide localization teams in managing uncertainty while strengthening their innovation mindset and practices. These questions will help you discover your own path.



# 1. Questionnaire for Localization Teams: Fostering a Value-Driven Innovation Mindset

## 1.1 Understanding Value

1 - How does the localization team currently define "value," and does this align with how clients perceive the value of the services offered?

2 - Apart from efficiency metrics (cost, speed, word count), what business impact do localization services have on clients?

3- How is the success of innovative initiatives measured? Are the metrics focused on business outcomes rather than operational efficiency alone?

4 - What is the balance between creating value for business and creating value for clients?

## 1.2 Team Culture & Mindset

5 - How can the team's current approach to innovation be defined? Is it mostly reactive to market demands, or does the team proactively seek new solutions?

6 - To what extent does the current company structure encourage or hinder innovation?

7 - How comfortable is the team with experimenting, taking risks, and accepting potential failure?

8 - Are there barriers that prevent team members from sharing innovative ideas? If so, what are they?

9 - Are there practices in place that promote curiosity and continuous learning among team members?

## **1.3 Strategic Innovation**

10 - How can the team balance immediate operational demands ("the firefighting approach") with strategic innovation?

11 - Are there effective communication channels between operations teams and strategic decision-makers?

12 - What criteria are currently used to decide whether a solution requires incremental improvement or transformative innovation?

13 - What percentage of resources (time, budget, personnel) is currently dedicated to innovation versus business-as-usual activities?

14 - Are there criteria for determining which tech trends to invest in, versus which to monitor from a distance?

## **1.4 Client Collaboration**

15 - How are clients currently involved in the innovation process?

16 - What methods help identify clients' needs beyond their explicit requests?

17 - How could small-scale experiments with trusted clients be structured to test innovative ideas effectively?

18 - What feedback frameworks are currently in place to gather client insights on innovation initiatives?

19 - How can the value of innovation be communicated to clients who may be risk-averse or price-sensitive?

## **1.5 Technology Integration**

20 - What approach is used to triage which tasks should be automated and which require human expertise?

21 - How are ethical considerations evaluated when introducing new technologies?

22 - What processes exist to help team members upskill when adopting new technologies?

23 - How is the impact of technological innovation measured in terms of operational efficiency and delivered value?

24 - What safeguards ensure that technology enhances rather than replaces human expertise?

## **1.6 Research & Development**

25 - How are innovative opportunities identified?

26 - What's the best way to balance standardized, scalable solutions with customized approaches tailored to individual client needs?

27 - What methods does the team use to stay up to date on emerging trends and technologies?

28 - How are innovative ideas tested and validated before full implementation?

## **1.7 - Implementation & Change Management**

29 - How are successful experiments integrated into operational workflows?

30 - Who is responsible for communicating the purpose and benefits of innovations to stakeholders?

31 - What metrics are used to determine whether an innovation has been successfully implemented?

32 - How are lessons learned and shared from both successful and unsuccessful innovation initiatives across the team?

## **1.8 Ethical Considerations**

33 - What ethical guidelines shape the innovation process, especially regarding AI and automation?

34 - How is transparency ensured with internal and external stakeholders about the role of technology in workflows?

35 - What processes ensure that technology-assisted outputs meet quality standards?

36 - How can innovation be balanced with preserving the human expertise that defines localization services?

## **1.9 Future Vision**

37 - What role might the localization team have three years from now? What about five years?

38 - How could changing client expectations reshape innovation priorities?

39 - What emerging technologies might fundamentally disrupt the current business model?

40 - What organizational changes would be necessary to shift from an efficiency-driven approach to a truly value-driven one?

## 2. Next Steps:

After reflecting on these questions:

1 - Identify 3-5 questions that revealed the most significant gaps or opportunities.

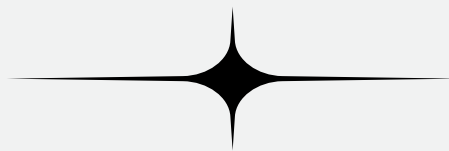
2 - Develop concrete action items to address these priority areas.

3 - Set a timeline for implementing these actions.

4 - Establish regular review points to reassess the innovation journey.

5 - Consider using tools like Business Model Canvas, Value Proposition Canvas, or Innovators' Compass to facilitate deeper exploration.

Innovation is not about having all the answers but about asking better questions. This questionnaire serves as a starting point for an ongoing conversation within localization teams about creating meaningful value in a rapidly evolving industry.



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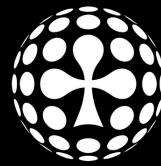
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