

Introduction

### The global content challenge

As a global marketer within an international business you face unique challenges – and nowhere are those challenges more apparent than when it comes to getting the balance right between global and local content.

The promise of leveraging brand content effectively across markets is a powerful one. Get your global content strategy right and you'll create more relevant content, see better marketing performance and exceed local marketing objectives. Get the balance wrong and you can find yourself tearing your hair out, wondering why there's no enthusiasm for your content at a local level - or having sleepless nights over the lack of consistency for locally produced content.

You need to speak to audiences in their own language about the issues relevant to them, but you also need to maintain a common message and meaning that's instantly recognisable wherever in the world you are. If your content is dominated by stories and data from one central market, you might be alienating local audiences and undermining engagement in other key regions. Local audiences may need regionally specific data to tell their story effectively - but go hyperlocal and you could exclude them from global assets that could interest them.

Whether you are a regional marketer whose goals are defined by a global directive, or you're working in global HQ yourself, you will most likely have encountered these types of dilemmas. We'll never claim to have all of the answers - because no marketer in their right mind would believe us. But we've definitely found a clearer picture emerging about how best to manage brand content and B2B marketing across different countries.

Managing content across markets doesn't necessarily mean micromanaging every local initiative - or learning to live with a less handson approach. It's about adopting a more effective and empowering strategy; identifying when and where localisation of content makes sense and economies of scale can be found, and rallying resources at all levels around it. And it's as much about ensuring that local voices have a role in global content planning as it is adapting global content to local markets.

As marketers who manage programmes across multiple countries and cultures, we wanted to share our knowledge and experience. In this guide, we explore the key questions that we all face as we aspire to be truly global marketers - and reveal the answers that will help your content strategy take off.

### We hope you enjoy!



**Christina O'Connor,** Associate Marketing Manager LinkedIn Marketing Solutions EMEA



Jane Fleming, Digital Marcoms Manager LinkedIn Marketing Solutions EMEA

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### Why should I read this guide?

Sophisticated Global Content Marketers don't just roll out the same content across every market, subbing in a different stat here and there. They aim to leverage their global, regional and local content resources in the most effective, responsive and creative way possible. They don't see dealing with different markets as a chore – they have a passion for telling stories that resonate with diverse audiences around the world.

At LinkedIn, we strive to be Sophisticated Global Content Marketers - but we know it isn't easy. That's why we wrote this guide. If you are tasked with planning or executing content across different markets, then this book is for you. Whether you're operating within a global content HQ or at a regional level, dealing with a handful of territories or hundreds, you'll find ideas in here that can help to identify the right approach, put in place the editorial structures and working practices that you need to succeed, empower local teams and ensure that your global content programme sparks enthusiasm and engagement across your different markets. In our experience all global content programmes are a work in progress. They often start centralised as a means of getting regular content updates off the ground, and then evolve to become more localised as teams become engaged and empowered, and as the content organisation itself evolves to make their voices heard at a global level. Supporting that process is a big part of your role as a Sophisticated Global Marketer.

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Guide to

**GLOBAL CONTENT** 

MARKETING



### In the guide you'll find:

#### Chapter 1:

### Finding the right balance between global and local

You'll need to match your global content resources and structure to your global content strategy. We look at the factors that should guide your decisions.



#### ASK THE GLOBAL EXPERT:

Doug Kessler, Creative Director and Co-founder, Velocity Partners

### Chapter 5: What's the future of global content?

Leveraging the full potential of a global organisation has never been

more important for content marketers.

#### ASK THE GLOBAL EXPERT:

Aoife O'Mullane, Social Media Strategist, King Content



#### **Chapter 2:**

ASK THE GLOBAL EXPERT:

Marketing Strategist

Your global content

We've put together the ultimate

marketing gameplan

checklist for localising and globalising

Pam Didner.

**Chapter 6:** 

your content.

**Global Content** 

# Running your global content organisation

The way that you organise content planning will have a big impact on how empowered and engaged local markets are - and how much engagement they can therefore drive around your global content assets.



### ASK THE GLOBAL EXPERT:

Alex Cheeseman, Global Head of Strategy,

Sophisticated global content marketers you

The global content marketers we turn to for inspiration.

### Chapter 4:

### Enough about localising content what about globalising content?

If your content only flows outwards from the global centre, then the chances are you are missing some great opportunities. We explore how to elevate great local

content and introduce it to the audience it deserves.

#### ASK THE GLOBAL EXPERT:

Harry Wake, President EMEA, Group SJR

### **Our Certified** Marketing Partners

A selection of companies, specially selected by LinkedIn, which have the

expertise required to support

global content

marketing programmes.





# **Chapter 8:**

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**Chapter 3:** 

Skills and attributes of

Keeping a global content organisation

running smoothly requires a particular

set of skills and attributes. Here are

the qualities you should consider.

Sophisticated Global

Content Marketers

Newscred

Chapter 7:

should follow

# Finding the right balance **between** global and local

Sophisticated Content Marketers have a content strategy – and Sophisticated Global Content Marketers have a global content strategy. That strategy needs to reflect the type of business you are working for, the size of the opportunity for your business in each market, and the types of content that your audiences in those markets expect. It also needs to reflect your available resources. Success in global content marketing involves matching the right organisational structure to your content strategy and ensuring you have content-producers where you need them.





# Finding the value in global content

Finite global marketing resources often mean it's impossible for every market to have its own local content operation – or to produce localised versions of global content for every market in which you operate.

Economies of scale can be crucial - and it's vital that the content your audiences receive is genuinely aligned with your business objectives and product pipeline. For many businesses, those objectives and products come from Global HQ - and global content produced centrally is therefore an important starting point.

There are other reasons for asking strategic questions of your localisation approach before jumping into it. Localising for the sake of it can spend money and resources whilst fragmenting reach unnecessarily and undermining the social proof you gain through the number of shares and comments that a piece of content receives. If you're thinking of creating a local version of a highly successful global post, for example, it's worth considering whether the original, with its 500 plus LinkedIn shares, might not be a more compelling vehicle.



# Planning structure and strategy around the value of localised content

Plan your strategy and resources around the value that localisation will deliver for each market: will it make content more relevant or just different? How many locally generated or localised pieces of content would your audience have an appetite for – and how relevant are the issues that you address globally to each market?

At LinkedIn, we know that a lot of the ideas and value in our content (around B2B and content marketing, for example) apply across markets. When we produce a 'Big Rock' eBook on thought leadership, for example, it's potentially as relevant in France and the Netherlands as it is in the US. However, we know that we need to maximise that relevance by ensuring that the stories we tell and the tone of voice we use resonates locally.

At the same time, we write and share a lot of blog posts that often talk about more market-specific subjects and people - and a post that feels natural and relevant in the US can often feel out of place in EMEA. That's one of the reasons why it's important for us to have content resources in place for different markets that are intune with the issues that motivate our audiences in those markets.

An understanding of the type of content that you need to produce should inform the content resources that you recruit at a local and regional level - and the agency relationships that you put in place. You'll need to decide whether content resources need to exist for each market - or whether a regional hub is best placed to liaise with your local teams, and create and adapt content based on their needs.



"To make content truly global, the overarching theme needs to be applied on a global scale, but can be tailored and adapted at a regional or local level.

Any global initiative should be adapted to fit the target audience in question so you can create a customised experience for them."

says Aoife O'Mullane, Social Media Strategist at King Content.





"We leverage the heck out of global work. When you receive something that's more or less done, you already have a huge head-start in how you execute and engage with your audiences. Our job at a regional level is to identify the gaps in that global work - things which the region uniquely demands – and help the local teams fill them. Don't think of it as global vs. local: it's more like global plus local."

says our colleague **Edward Bray**, the Director of Marketing for LinkedIn Marketing Solutions in Asia Pacific.

# Using local and regional expertise to maximise engagement

Here's a quick checklist that can be useful when considering just how local you should go when setting out your content strategy:

What are the audience's expectations in each market? Will localised content add real value in their eyes - or would they barely notice the difference between this and your global content?	Will local marketers be able to launch localised versions in sync with your global content assets? If not, you could waste time and resources because interested local audiences will probably have found the global version by the time the local edition is released.	What is the size of your audience in each market? If you invest in localising content or producing it locally, will the content transaction be worthwhile in terms of reach and the number of leads you hope to generate?
What goals will your content	Are there unique market	<b>Is your global content genuinely</b>
have?	dynamics and local	<b>global -</b> of potential relevance to
Are you aiming to drive awareness	perspectives to bring to your	all - or is it dominated by findings
at scale or demonstrate your	global content assets?	and stats from one particular
sophisticated understanding of	Or would you simply be editing	market, which would undermine its
local issues?	minor data points?	relevance in others?

**Realistically, how much time and resource do your colleagues in local markets have to produce content themselves?** It's important to remember that a big part of the role of global and regional content marketers is filling the gaps - and supporting local colleagues with content that they would not have the resources to create.

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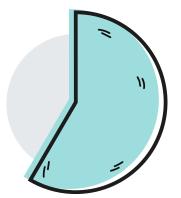


# The role of a regional marketer

Your content strategy doesn't have to be a choice between sharing the same content across all markets – and producing wholly different content for each. That's where the role of a regional marketer comes in, and it's a very important aspect of global content strategies.

If global content strategies are a balancing act between global and local initiatives, then the regional marketer is often the fulcrum at the centre of that balance. When resources are scarce, regional is often a great place to house contentproducing resources, editors and writers that can work with your local colleagues to produce content that's relevant to them.

One of the big questions that many global content organisations face is how autonomous their regional content operations should be in making decisions on behalf of different markets. We've found that, both within LinkedIn and across our clients, there's a very strong argument for autonomy at a regional level. You lose many of the advantages of having regional or local resource in place if you try to control everything from a global centre. It's also difficult to build momentum around content in different markets if those markets don't feel included in the creation of that content.



# **58**%

OF TOP PERFORMING COMPANIES ALLOW LOCAL MARKETERS TO EXECUTE CAMPAIGNS INDEPENDENT OF CORPORATE<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gleanster Research, Turnkey Personalisation Strategies for Localized Marketing, August 2014 "Global should set goals, and regional should decide on how to reach them. Without autonomy, you'll never have agility - and agility is what you need, because you have to be able to iterate your strategy extremely quickly in order to keep up with what customers want. If you have to wait for global to approve an email campaign before it goes out to one or two local markets, you're going to be too late to convert big, time-sensitive opportunities to really connect with your customers."

says **Ryan Bonnici**, the Marketing Director for HubSpot in Asia Pacific.



"There's a 'handshake' of sorts between global and local, which we try to cultivate. Our global team has large R&D capabilities when it comes to product innovation and trends, but they don't know how the business operates in local markets, which is where our in-country teams provide insight into their consumers' preferences and behaviours. Our regional team facilitates for this sharing, and we're in a position to take insights from both sides when we plan campaigns or regional strategy."

explains **Elaine Chum,** Head of Digital at Philips Asia Pacific.

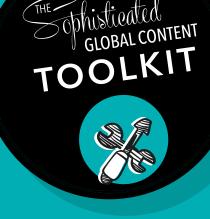
Speaking as regional marketers, it's this role as the natural interface between global and local that we most enjoy. Collaboration and the ability to see the perspective of colleagues from different backgrounds are critical. When you're putting a global content structure in place, it's important to have talent at a local level that's passionate about their market - and in touch with the relevant issues for your business on the ground. However, it's just as important to recruit talent at a regional level that's skillful and passionate about bringing those ideas together.



*"The real key to global content is having the right frameworks and governance in place to ensure there's some consistency across different markets.* 

We find that having regional leads that liaise with local markets and then all ladder back up to a central organisation is often the best structure."

says **Alex Cheeseman**, Global Head of Strategy for Newscred.



# Ask the GLOBAL EXPERT

Following relevant influencers from within your local markets can provide valuable insight on the issues that are motivating your industry on-the-ground - and the differences in perspective that different markets might have.

### GLOBAL MARKETING EXPERTS

How do you structure your content organisation globally and why have you gone for the structure that you have?

For our clients, we're evangelising a concept we call the Content Centre of Excellence. Instead of trying to produce and control all content that a big company produces especially global content - the CCE is a centralised team that promotes best practice and adds transparency to content production and distribution processes.

The bigger the company, the greater the need for some kind of Content Centre of Excellence - the alternative is a lot of duplicated effort, wasted budgets, inconsistent messages and highly variable quality. What are the must-have skills for a content marketer on your global team?

Being a great change manager is a core skill that's under-valued in global content operations. This is a massive change management exercise involving people, processes and technology.

Companies that under-resource the change management part of this transformation will always struggle. The ones who fly are the ones who invest the time, money and effort in bringing people along to the new way of working.

On top of this, your global team also needs skills in strategy, analytics, SEO, social media and a deep understanding of the company's mission, markets, products and customers.



**Doug Kessler**, Creative Director and Co-founder, Velocity Partners

Do you have any examples of Global content that originated within the EMEA or APAC region?

Almost all of the content we produce in London for our clients is global content. We work with really high-quality transcreation partners (ours or the client's) to make sure the soul and spirit of each piece is translated along with the language.



The City Analytics eBook produced by Velocity Partner for Xerox

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### GLOBAL MARKETING EXPERTS



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**Doug Kessler**, Creative Director and Co-founder, Velocity Partners

# What is the future of global content?

The economics mean that content will become increasingly global. But the future isn't one-size-fits-all. It's all about empowering in-market teams to use content from other regions (or the centre), adapting it for the local market.

We'll also see the rise of "intelligent content." Ann Rockley defines this as, "Content that's structurally rich and semantically categorised and therefore automatically discoverable, reusable, reconfigurable and adaptable". Intelligent content will help content become global-ready.

# How would you define a piece of truly global content?

A piece of truly global content would have to hit an issue that is experienced everywhere, and deal with it in a way that's relevant everywhere. That's a high bar and not many pieces will actually pass the test. That's okay; not every piece needs to be global from birth.

Once you've got the issue and your point of view on it, the ideal global piece of content would be a video that has no on-screen words and no voice-over - the story is told entirely in pictures, so it's ready to go in every market.

# What brands or teams are inspiring you in this space right now?

GE is always doing amazing, innovative content marketing - and, not surprisingly, a lot of it is global.

From the 6-second Science Fair to a hit podcast series ("The Message") to a National Geographic channel partnership ("Breakthrough"), they have a lot of fun without overbranding everything. They also jump into a lot of different social channels and quickly figure out what each is best for. What advice would you give to an organisation embarking on launching their first piece of global content?

Think about showing instead of telling. Demonstrate ideas visually, with the least amount of language. It might be a 3-second GIF demo or a Snapchat video - but see if you can keep the words out entirely and still tell your story.



### **GLOBAL MARKETING EXPERTS**

#### Are there any mistakes you've learned from as a global content marketer?

One big mistake is to think that every piece of content has to work in every market. You want to optimise in each market and not have to dumb-down the piece to a bland vanilla in order for it to be accepted everywhere.

The goal is not "acceptable everywhere," the goal is "insanely great wherever it goes." But that means it's okay if a piece is NOT suitable for a given market. Or that it needs lots of rewriting to make it relevant locally.

It's better to think of your content programme as a menu that local marketers can choose from. Not as a mandated list of content that every market must use. And finally, your team won the Content Marketing Agency of the Year-congratulations! What tips do you have for content marketing teams looking to follow in your footsteps?

Rather than following any one set of footsteps, we got here by stealing from a wide variety of places. The main guiding principles are to produce marketing we'd be happy to receive - and to follow the fun. **Fun is a great** guidepost to making great content. But a deep respect for your audience (and their time) is a core idea for us.



Doug Kessler Creative Director and Co-founder, **Velocity Partners** 



# Running your global content organisation

You've set the structure and strategic framework for your global content organisation – how do you go about playing your part in bringing it to life? When a global content organisation is running well, it's far more than the sum of its parts: you've got energy and ideas coming in from local, regional and global levels, and you get to focus your attention on using those assets in the most effective way possible to achieve your goals. It can take time and effort to get to this point, though. Finding the right rhythm and routines for running your global content organisation has a big part to play.



The best way to produce content that speaks to a market's priority issues is to empower the people closest to that market to create it. However, this is also the point at which global marketers can start experiencing sleepless nights about maintaining control of their brand's tone of voice. Global doesn't have a monopoly on frustrations though. Local marketers who have hot-button issues or great local opportunities that they want to leverage content around, can often find it a battle to elbow their way onto a content schedule that's dominated by global initiatives.

Part of the problem is that judgments about the relevance of content and its alignment with your brand values are always subjective. In this case you are seeking to balance subjective judgments from three different directions: global executives and brand guardians, local marketers, and the target audiences themselves. This balance can be shifted with the result that you occasionally tilt in one direction; occasionally in another. However, your approach should never become imbalanced to the extent that one of these three constituents feels wholly disconnected from your content.

Two of the most important tools in resolving these potential frustrations are your content guidelines - and your editorial calendar. When you create and manage these in the right way, you defuse tensions, empower autonomy and enable more effective collaboration.



# Setting content guidelines

Let's start with the content guidelines. It's important to get these in place early, as it's very difficult for regional and local operations to contribute to your content strategy if they don't have a framework to work to. The guidelines can take many forms (and have many different names) – but they should reflect the content strategy you have in place and the types of decisions that regional and local colleagues are empowered to make.

Some organisations go the full template route - setting a look and feel that global are comfortable with and asking everyone to work within that. The risk here is that you damp down local initiative and produce guidelines that make sense in one market but not necessarily in others.

There's a lot to be said for a slightly looser and more empowering 'Content Playbook' approach. The emphasis here is on giving people the tools they need to create content that your brand will be proud of: you can include guidelines for what's appropriate and what isn't, but also ideas to help with content generation - how to brief writers, how to create your own video and audio, the value of photo shoots in generating original imagery. You'll need to include design guidelines on look and feel as well, of course, but here too there's real value in allowing room for creativity at a local level.

In our view, the content that you are distributing locally should always be able to meet two important criteria:

### IT SUPPORTS WHAT YOUR BUSINESS OR BRAND STANDS FOR

This isn't the same as working a product agenda or direct call to action into everything that you publish. However, everything that you publish should feel consistent with your global brand values and your proposition. And it certainly shouldn't question or undermine them. "The ability to push back is one of the most important for content marketers," says Alex Cheeseman. "Having the ability to say 'no', that content doesn't fit requirements or is outside of our standards, is critical in ensuring the effectiveness of the team and maintaining any meaningful governance."

### IT'S LOCALLY RELEVANT

The value of local content initiatives should be that they are rooted in a more intimate understanding of local customer needs, issues and interests. You have to trust local teams to guide you as to whether you are talking about issues in the right way, but there are shortcuts and sense-checks that you can use as well. If the issues you're talking about never appear in industry journals, competitors' brand content or LinkedIn thought-leadership posts from the country in question, then it's worth applying closer scrutiny to the question of how relevant they are.

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# Managing the content calendar

Your guidelines or playbook set out your content philosophy. Your content calendar is your vehicle for executing it. How you set about planning your calendar has a big influence on how empowered your local content teams will be – and how relevant your content ultimately feels in different markets.

Here are some key questions to bear in mind when finding the content planning approach that works for you:

### How frequently do you aim to publish content in different

**markets** - and does that allow enough space for local content assets to sit alongside global ones?

### What's the most efficient way for getting the team together for content planning? Will a weekly call do the job? Or do you need more in-depth

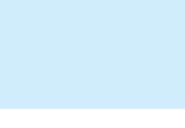
monthly sessions to surface insights and ideas from local markets?

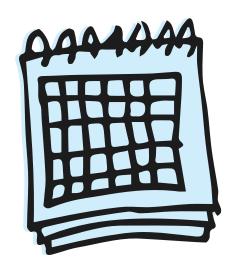
### Could technology help things to run more efficiently? At LinkedIn

we use Kapost as our Content Management System - a platform such as this can help hugely in sharing content across your team and localising it more efficiently.

### How will you use data in optimising your content strategy? Are

you able to generate data locally to inform you about which content is hitting home in different markets? How much time do you need to allow time for translating and localising content assets for different markets?







# Making judgments on a content-by-content basis

Your editorial planning sessions will involve making judgments about a range of different global content assets. These questions will often involve asking whether a particular asset needs localisation - and what level of localisation is justified. It's important to approach this from an ROI perspective. At LinkedIn, we use the Impact vs Effort Matrix when we're making these decisions. We look at the size of the audience in each market and the benchmark results that content in those markets usually delivers.

Different types of content tend to have different localisation requirements. Research-led content often needs reengineering around the particular story that the data tells for each market, whereas brand-building content can be localised effectively by including relevant case studies and success stories. It's important to allow time and space in your content calendar for the level of localisation that an asset will need.

Where possible, use data-driven insights to inform what will work in your region - whether incorporating local influencers within your content (or using them to promote it socially) will have an impact, for example.



"Data has to be hyper-relevant to each country. We work with a lot of in-region research teams to deliver data that can be distilled into meaningful customer insights at a local level. That, in turn, informs how we both select and create content for channels like our Digital Dialogue blog, which houses local content for all our Asia markets"

says Paula Parkes, Director of Marketing, Digital Marketing Business for Adobe Asia Pacific.



# Leaving space for local initiative

It's important that your content philosophy and content planning leave space for local initiative - and this isn't restricted to the creation of content assets themselves. The way that you socialise, promote and go to market with your content all creates opportunity for local creativity.

This can relate thought leadership to local concerns and issues and multiply the value of what you have to say. At LinkedIn, 'Big Rock' content assets play a major role in our content strategy. We organise entire launch campaigns around these on a region-by-region and market-by-market basis. And we also 'turkey slice' our content assets, breaking out different elements in different formats to provide the content for blog posts, infographics and more. Every one of those turkey slices provides an

opportunity to adapt around local data, talk to specific local issues, and demonstrate the relevance of our 'Big Rock' thinking to different markets. It also provides an opportunity to adapt content to the formats that resonate in each market. Research from HubSpot, for instance, shows that while video is the most popular form of content for B2B audiences in North America, those in Europe are more interested in news articles, social media posts and research reports<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> HubSpot Consumer Behaviour Survey, Q1 2016





# Building enthusiasm for localising content

Perhaps your greatest challenge as a global or regional marketer comes when you find yourself distributing global content that your markets have no interest in localising.

If your local teams are distributing global content as it stands - and generating great results through it then this isn't an issue. However, if the content is not delivering the results you would expect in a particular market - or if local teams are not showing the same enthusiasm for distributing it - then it's time to start asking why. There are several potential explanations:

The local marketing team **isn't engaged with the content programme** 

The local team knows the content isn't connecting but **doesn't feel empowered to localise content or make suggestions** 

Your global content **is not as relevant to the local market** as you and the local team thought it would be A grassroots organisation with its ear to the ground should be a great asset when it comes to making sure that your global content programme is engaging at a local level. However, it's only an asset if you can surface actionable insight that you can use to improve your content output. This is why an inclusive editorial planning process is so important.

If your regular planning calls aren't providing enough opportunity for local teams to get involved, try holding monthly or quarterly content roundups to assess how different pieces performed in the market - and what

might have improved the performance. Build on success by identifying the characteristics of pieces that perform well for the local team and invite feedback on how others could have been revised to be more effective. At LinkedIn Marketing Solutions we have a Global Content Council. which includes all content creators in our organisation - and we hold a monthly call for all Council members. We change the time of the call each month so that it's as convenient as possible for all regions - and so we're not sending unconscious signals about which countries are most important.



"Our monthly global content council brings together all content creators around the globe for real time collaboration and transparency.

This consistent communication and alignment is absolutely critical to scale your global content machine effectively."

explains **Megan Golden**, Senior Content Marketing Manager for LinkedIn Marketing Solutions in North America.

# The translation challenge

One of the key questions to ask as part of your content planning process is when and how to translate content into local languages. This is a big call. Translation involves budget, time and resources – and just as importantly, it also involves risk.

We talk to a lot of marketers who find translating content very frustrating. When you outsource it, the quality of translation can be very inconsistent. You need a plan for sense-checking the results you get back or you could end up looking less attuned to the local market than if you hadn't bothered with translation at all.

This is where having empowered, multi-lingual local marketers is a huge asset. They can check that translation captures meaning and tone - and in many cases they can even handle the translation themselves. Remember though, that even translation that you can handle internally still represents a significant cost in terms of time and resources. We have a great internal localisation team at LinkedIn - but the process still takes time.

For these reasons, translating content into every language as a standard approach is rarely the right way to go. There has to be an ROI calculation at work here - and a sense of what the impact of translation will be. We use data-driven insight to inform when translation makes sense. We know for example that translating our thought leadership content into French is an investment worth making, because of the results we consistently see. When you don't have data available, it's well worth testing translated versions to see how they perform before rolling out across a market.

"There isn't an approach to translation that won't involve an investment of time from someone on your team – so it's important to focus that investment where it will make

### the most difference"

says Natália Rocha, Field Marketing Manager LATAM, LinkedIn Marketing Solutions, who handles translation for our LATAM content team. "We keep a close eye on the data to identify which assets, for which markets, will generate the greatest additional engagement through being translated. We can then focus the time and effort on translating meaning rather than just putting words into another language. It's vital to have a grasp of the way a professional audience will naturally think and talk in the market you're dealing with – not just which language they use."

> **Natália Rocha**, Field Marketing Manager LATAM, LinkedIn Marketing Solutions.

> > Our colleague in Asia Pacific, **Edward Bray,** agrees. Here's the approach he takes:

"Test the market to find out! One way is to translate some of your assets and host them on a gated platform like Slideshare – this lets you track engagement without translating an entire campaign or website."

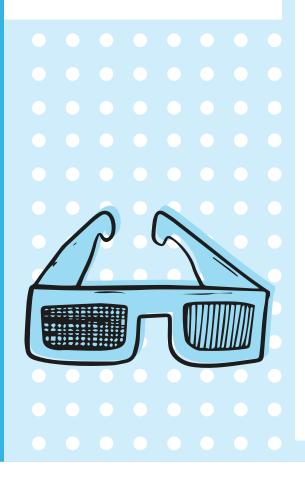


# Direct Sponsored Content

Direct Sponsored Content enables you to test approaches to localisation by distributing content in the LinkedIn feed of an initial test audience - and then scaling your approach on the basis of the engagement it generates. It's also a great platform for A/B testing localised content and localised landing pages, to see if they actually generate greater engagement within a market.

### LANGUAGE PREFERENCE TARGETING

When you decide to translate content into different languages, Language Preference Targeting of your Sponsored Content ensures that your LinkedIn audience always receives it in the language they prefer.



# APPLYING A LOCAL LENS TO YOUR VISUAL APPROACH

Effective content marketing is visual content marketing. People are more likely to notice, believe and remember what you say if it's accompanied and supported by impactful imagery. This means that localising visuals can be even more important than localising the headlines or core content that accompanies them.

This is particularly important when it comes to using stock photography. These images often have subconscious cues embedded within them that link them to a specific market - and prevent people in other countries identifying with them. It could be the type of lighting, the environments people are pictured in, the fashions they favour or the devices they use. If you're using abstract imagery to make a point, be particularly wary of elements such as roadsigns, which can vary significantly from country to country. The good news is that the best way to avoid turning local audiences off through imagery, is also the most effective approach for increasing visual impact. Where possible, use original, locally sourced photography. A photo shoot with your local marketing team is a great way to produce a bank of unique, characterfilled and authentic images that you can use going forward.

Photos aren't the only visuals that you need to be ready to adjust to different markets. When planning Infographics, allow time within your content calendar to localise your visuals, and reflect the particular story that the data tells for different markets. Otherwise you could find yourself with high-impact imagery telling a slightly different story to the numbers integrated with it.

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# Ask the GLOBAL EXPERT

Following relevant influencers from within your local markets can provide valuable insight on the issues that are motivating your industry on-the-ground - and the differences in perspective that different markets might have.

### GLOBAL MARKETING EXPERTS

How do you structure your content organisation globally and why have you gone for the structure that you have?

I feel there is no one-size-fits-all org chart, per se. It's very much company-dependent. If you focus on content creation and editorial planning, it will be great to have writers, designers and video producers work directly for you. If not, they should be dotted-line to you.

It would be nice to have a manager who works directly with each region and country. If you are working closely with campaign and brand managers, you may need a program manager who interacts with all campaigns and brands. What are the must-have skills for a content marketer on your global team?

Ability to understand the local audience's needs. There is a lot of give-and-take when you work with local teams. You need to understand their needs and balance that with corporate objectives. There will be times when you need to say "no" and you need to be able to articulate why.

# How would you define a piece of truly global content?

Something that can be scaled easily. The best examples I've seen recently are Procter & Gamble's <u>"Thank you, Mama"</u> videos. You literally need no translation, customisation or localisation.



**Pam Didner**, Global Content Marketing Strategist

Do you have any examples of Global content that originated within the EMEA or APAC region?

In 2009, Dell created its small business campaign (Take Your Own Path) from its APAC region, then scaled it worldwide. In general, global content tends to be led and managed out of headquarters. If the local team wants to take the lead, that's OK. They still need to work closely with the headquarters.

# What brands or teams are inspiring you in this space right now?

Big brands like Coke, Lego, Intel and Apple are all making stellar efforts to reach their audiences globally. It's not all the big players, though–start-ups like Evernote and Birchbox are making strides as well.

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### GLOBAL MARKETING EXPERTS



**Pam Didner**, Global Content Marketing Strategist

GLOBAL CONTENT

# What is the future of global content?

It really depends on the usage models. Some tools such as Facebook, Snapchat, and Google are global in nature. People across countries are using them. However, the content itself is very local. I think content will need to be customised for local's needs. Some content can be scaled easily, while some will be need to be created at the local level. I see more customisation of content. What advice would you give to an organisation embarking on launching their first piece of global content?

Pick a topic. Present the topic with a couple of creative approaches. Solicit feedback from your local teams. You don't need to incorporate everyone's feedback, but you need to give them a chance to voice their opinion. Create the content, allowing your team to localise as they see fit.

### Are there any mistakes you've learned from as a global content marketer?

There are plenty. Don't try to make everyone happy. Sometimes, you just need to say no and be OK with it. If you say no, be able to articulate why you said no. What has changed in global content marketing in the two years since you published Global Content Marketing?

More people have started working closely with other regions. People are making efforts to be inclusive. The central team is more cognisant of the local's needs. What challenges and/or opportunities for global content do you see on the horizon?

The challenges and opportunities come from strategy alignment, people collaboration, process and tool implementation. You need to make sure that everyone is aligned on the overall marketing objectives, personas, messaging/position, creative and editorials.

Then, the team needs to think about using tools which can be scaled across multiple regions. This tends to be the hardest part; to have everyone use the same tools. If not, you need to be aware which regions are using what tools.

Global content marketing efforts are never-ending journeys. There is always something to do, fix or improve.





>

# Skills and attributes of **Sophisticated Global Content Marketers**

As regional content marketers, our role is as much about curating content, and empowering teams to come up with ideas, as it is about creating and originating content ourselves.



We know from our own experience and talking to our clients that keeping a global content organisation running smoothly requires a particular set of skills and attributes – not just marketing skills but negotiation, entrepreneurship and humility as well. You'll need to combine hard data with soft skills, top-down strategy with grassroots customer engagement, consistent branding with uniquely local tonality.

The particular executional skills you'll need may depend on the level of the global content organisation at which you're operating. As regional marketers, ours is a hybrid role. We need a varied skillset and the ability to balance content generation, demand generation, field marketing and many other roles. When you operate as a content marketer within a global HQ, there's often the opportunity to be more specialised in the areas that you focus on.

>

However, at both regional and global levels, there are certain qualities and characteristics that you definitely need in order to manage a content strategy effectively.

Here are some of the characteristics you should be looking to recruit for, when building up your global content team:



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# Content and data specialists



You'll need to be able to make a lot of decisions quickly - and the ability to root this in relevant data-led analysis is invaluable. It's important for global and regional content marketers to be comfortable with a testing-led approach, iterating as you go and reacting to audience engagement levels to find the right approach for different markets. "Our content marketers need to be savvy when it comes to data and analytics, using performance metrics to look at what's working and optimise the strategy at a local level."

> says **Aoife O'Mullane**, Social Media Strategist at King Content.

### Bridge-builders

Global content marketers need the skills to understand the objectives of both global and local marketing teams - and connect them together through the types of content they produce, and the way it's localised. You'll need to help local teams connect global messages to local pain points, but also sense-check the ideas that come from local markets themselves.

### Advocates for ideas

A big part of the role of regional marketers, in particular, involves advocating for the ideas of their local markets at a global level and ensuring that the issues animating their markets are incorporated into global content planning where possible.

# Natural collaborators

Balancing the interests and agendas of so many different parties requires natural collaborators: the kind of people who love coming up with ideas, but aren't overly precious about any of them. You need selfawareness about the value that you add and where it's best to defer to others views.

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### Autonomous entrepreneurs

Global marketers have to be selfstarters – and able to appreciate it when others show similar initiative. If you're operating at a regional level, you'll need to be comfortable taking decisions independently of the Global HQ – and there are times when you'll need to step in and get the ball rolling on local content. On other occasions, you'll need the ability to step back and give others the freedom to plan and create.

"It's important for everyone in a global content team to be a strategist at heart. That's what ensures you can drive work forward through innovative thinking."

#### says Harry Wake,

President EMEA at the Content Marketing Agency, Group SJR.

# Skilled and passionate writers

"The Number 1 attribute for content marketers has to be writing skills, because they apply across every type of content that you work on. Even video content has to be essentially well written, with a strong narrative behind it. It's what provides your content with differentiation and originality."

#### says Kirsty Brice,

Director of Marketing EMEA at the data science and media technology business, 4Cinsights.

A passion and skill for writing is important, not because you'll be creating every piece of content that you distribute across your local markets, but because a writer's eye breeds enthusiasm for finding angles, perspectives and a tone of voice that can resonate with any audience you're dealing with. That's a great asset in any global or regional content team. "That's why people with editorial backgrounds are so good at content marketing. You need to start with someone who knows how to write and tell a story."

adds **Rebecca Allen**, General Manager, UK & Europe for Contently.

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# LinkedIn Showcase Pages

Showcase Pages help to give your localised content a clear identity on LinkedIn, creating a tailored experience for your market whilst still enabling others to explore content that's of interest.

### GLOBAL MARKETING EXPERTS

What structure do you recommend to clients for a global content organisation?

It depends on the purpose of the global content organisation. Is their purpose to provide governance against all content that is published? Or are they looking to drive operational efficiency and effectiveness through global partnerships, in order to streamline content production? Where does the budget sit? Where does the political power sit? Once you have a true understanding of the role and purpose of the global content team, you can then begin to put the right structure and governance in place to achieve your objectives.

# What are the must-have skills for a content marketer on a global team?

Honestly - it's the ability to push back. Content marketers often have to manage multiple stakeholders with very different perceptions of what meaningful content is both in terms of true customer value and business value. Having the ability to say 'no', that content doesn't fit requirements or is outside of our standards, is critical in ensuring the effectiveness of the team and maintaining any meaningful governance.



Alex Cheeseman, Global Head of Strategy, Newscred

# How would you define a piece of truly global content?

An idea that would appeal to people no matter which region or market they are in; there would be a common understanding of the core message and the underlying customer insight behind it. It would truly cut across borders. You need to dive into our fundamental emotions, those that are ingrained into our DNA, and bring to life a story that cuts through any language barrier.

We are, however, often asked about what the balance between global and local content should be and how best to structure an organisation. To be both efficient and to create assets that can be used across multiple teams, lines of business and markets. To do so, you need to have the right data, structure and processes in place to see how your existing content is performing at a market level. This will help you to determine where the strengths and weaknesses of your market's content are. You can then make tailored adjustments between centrally and locally produced content, at a market-bymarket level

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### GLOBAL MARKETING EXPERTS



Alex Cheeseman, Global Head of Strategy, Newscred

# What is the future of global content?

The future of global content is a business that doesn't operate in silos, has a clear picture of their customers across paid, owned and earned channels. It is able to create assets once and repurpose and reuse with the click of the button. It's able to track and attribute against every dollar marketing spends, from first customer touchpoint to a sale and then into loyalty. They will use a combination of in-house expertise and machine learning to refine their processes and feed data-driven insights into creative, media and other valuable areas across the business.

### What advice would you give to an organisation launching its first piece of global content?

Don't be afraid to fail. Concentrate on getting the right frameworks in place to better understand, measure and optimise what you're doing. Use your own measurements to benchmark and A/B test new ideas. This will enable you to make data-driven decisions vs emotional decisions.

What mistakes have you learned from as a global content marketer?

If you haven't got the right analytics or access to the right data set against a given point within a customer journey - then you're not getting a full picture and are making myopic decisions. What contribution can technology make to global content marketing?

You can't deliver true global content marketing without software - it's impossible. As a minimum, you need something that enables multiple teams to plan what they're doing, put a workflow in place and make sure assets are compliant, approved and signed off on time. You need a technology partner that can help you distribute content across the right channels and put it in front of the right people.

You need analytics and insight to see how you're performing and how you can then feed the loop and continue to drive measurable business value.



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Enough about localising content – what about globalising content?

> Global content marketers find themselves focusing much of their attention on adapting global content assets to maximise their effectiveness across markets. This makes a lot of sense. As we've discussed, your global content assets are where a lot of your content investment happens; they are often big and valuable 'Big Rock' items that you can leverage in a number of different ways to create opportunity; and they are closely aligned to your business objectives.



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However, if the flow of your global content only goes in one direction (from the centre outwards), then you're likely to be missing some big opportunities. Elevating original, local content ideas will give you a more varied content pipeline – and demonstrate the wealth of inmarket expertise that you have available.

When you have local markets producing frequent, on-brand initiatives and content, look for opportunities to distribute these more widely: either broadcast across markets or targeted at territories sharing similar characteristics to the market where the content items first proved a hit. As a global brand, your audience will expect you to share insights from a range of different markets and cultures, especially if you can bring out their broader relevance. And globalising good content can also help to avoid friction with local marketing teams by demonstrating they have a voice on your central marketing platform.

The most successful brands simultaneously assume a top-down and bottom-up approach. They are able to re-engineer global content to bring out its potential relevance to different local markets - but at the same time they are able to feed their local markets' ideas and insights into the global content planning process.

That old favourite, the case study, can play a multi-dimensional role in this process. Originated at a local level, and reflecting the issues and objectives of local customers and audiences, case studies are a very effective way of bringing out the relevance of global product messaging or thought leadership.

In our experience, though, they can also do a lot more. We find that our clients' success stories translate very effectively into other forms of content as well especially blog posts that discuss the key issues they face and the nuggets of insight that they took away from successful campaigns. This form of localised thought leadership is ideal for rolling out at a regional or global level.





# Ask the GLOBAL EXPERT

Following relevant influencers from within your local markets can provide valuable insight or the issues that are motivating your industry on-the-ground - and the differences in perspective that different markets might have.

### GLOBAL MARKETING EXPERTS

How do you structure your content organisation globally - and why?

Our role is to help brands function like media companies, and our own structure reflects that. Our global editorial team operates as a newsroom, with subject-matter experts for each account. We have a Pulitzer Prize-winning science writer leading our science vertical, for example. Under the same roof we have in-house designers, videographers and developers - and an audience development team focused on placing our clients' content in the right channels. We believe it's important to have all of these teams under one roof so that they can work together cohesively and we then work with our markets. to implement content locally.



Harry Wake, President EMEA, Group SJR

What are the must-have skills for a content marketer on your global team?

There are so many, but one that really stands out is the need to be able to operate at a fast pace. Content marketing isn't like traditional ad campaigns where there is a gradual build up to key episodic moments. It's a living, breathing entity that needs nurturing in real time, yet which can't afford a dip in quality. Great content marketers can plan, produce, analyse, and adjust at pace and without taking their eyes off quality – much like content producers and journalists in any publishing organisation.

It's also important for everyone in a global content team to be a strategist at heart, regardless of their specific disciplines. This is what drives work forward through innovative thinking.

#### What is the future of global content?

The world is saturated with content. As brands think about the future, they must focus on how to cut through the clutter and matter to people: being provocative, innovative, or radically authentic. The content that wins today and that will win in the future is content that helps people become the people they want to be.

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### GLOBAL MARKETING EXPERTS



Harry Wake, President EMEA, Group SJR

# Which brand or team is inspiring you in this space right now?

Content comes in all shapes and forms, and there are virtually limitless ways to bring a story to life. When I think about the brands that inspire me, it's the ones that are taking full advantage of the versatility of content, and leveraging it to create a seamless brand narrative across all their platforms. GE (disclaimer: a client) has done a great job in this regard. It's highly experimental, bringing long-form storytelling to life in their partnership with National Geographic, or partnering with influencers on Instagram to bring different perspectives to their stories.

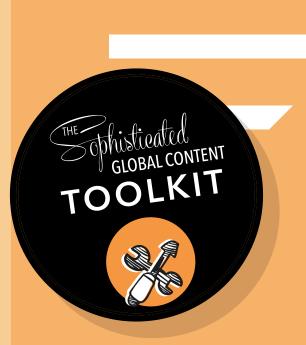
# How would you define a piece of truly global content?

Truly global content is content that has such an inherent authenticity and truth in its message that it can be understood universally. Are there any mistakes you've learned from as a global content marketer?

**It's important that an organisation's message is and feels authentic.** People rightly worry about biases in content and the media, but as a brand you have no reason to hide behind anything. Rather you have the freedom to express yourself as you wish to, and allow people to make up their own minds about you.

# What advice would you give to an organisation launching its first piece of global content?

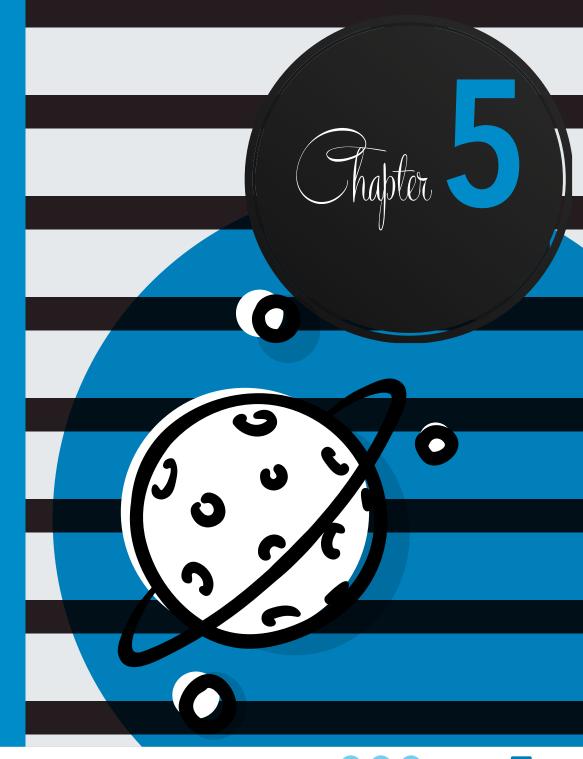
Think about who you are, what you stand for as an organisation and what your message is – that sounds simple but it's remarkable how many organisations fail to do the groundwork before launching into publishing content. Work out who you are aiming to talk to. Once you know that, you're halfway to working out how to engage and how to translate your message most effectively to be heard by your target audience.



What's the future of global content?

> As we hope we've shown in this guide, sophisticated global content marketing isn't just a logistical exercise in repackaging and distributing content across markets. It's a hugely creative and hugely collaborative endeavour that's focused on tapping the full potential of your global business as a content organisation. That's why its importance is only going to increase.

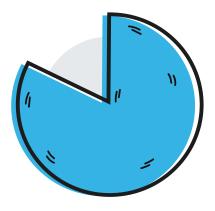
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#### IN A 2015 ACCENTURE SURVEY,



83%

OF RESPONDENTS SAID THAT THEY EXPECTED TO PRODUCE MORE CONTENT GLOBALLY OVER THE FOLLOWING TWO YEARS<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup>Accenture, Digital Content Survey, 2015

Traditional big, global media companies derive much of their authority from the fact that they have experts, reporters and sources on the ground in every region and country. They can put an audience in touch with what's happening anywhere on earth – but they can also provide a global perspective that brings out why those events and issues matter.

Now, we're not suggesting that your global brand attempts to replicate the big global news channels - but if you are looking to build thought leadership and authority around the issues in your sector, then you can learn a lot from the way such organisations manage content globally. When you are able to connect global content production with local expertise and insight you quickly expand the relevance of your content to all of your potential audiences - and you also find that you have a lot more original and compelling content ideas to draw on. You are well on your way to becoming a fully fledged global content organisation.

In our experience, running a global content organisation is a journey. Many brands and businesses start out with their content creating resources

centralised in a global HQ - and as a result, they distribute very similar content across all of their markets. As they build up regional content capabilities, they're able to adapt their assets more imaginatively to reflect local priorities and feed local insights and ideas into the global planning process. Then, as regional marketers empower and encourage their local teams, they develop new sources of inspiration that help them to become a more sophisticated and responsive content organisation. More and more businesses are reaching the later stages of this journey - and that's raising the bar for global content marketing.

As content marketing continues to take centre stage in B2B and B2C marketing strategies, leveraging your global advantages in this way becomes all

the more important. We believe that audiences will increasingly be able to tell the difference between content that's been produced somewhere else and simply dropped into their market - and content that shows a global brand takes a real interest in their pain points and opportunities. "The world is saturated with content," says Harry Wake. "As brands think about the future, they must focus on how to cut through the clutter and matter to people. Truly global content is content that has such an inherent authenticity and truth in its message that it can be understood universally."

That's why the future of global content marketing is sophisticated global content marketing.

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# Ask the GLOBAL EXPERT

Following relevant influencers from within your local markets can provide valuable insight on the issues that are motivating your industry on-the-ground - and the differences in perspective that different markets might have.

## GLOBAL MARKETING EXPERTS



Aoife O'Mullane, Social Media Strategist, King Content

How is your content organisation structured globally - and why?

Our agency has undergone rapid expansion in the last two years. We've opened offices in London, New York and Hong Kong to be closer to our clients - and to develop bespoke strategies that can resonate with their local audiences. But this more global presence means nothing without an effective approach to sharing resources, content and results. We have a custom-built platform, Communiqué, which allows us to streamline our approach and manage end-to-end content creation and optimisation on a global scale. We typically use a pilot audit and strategy in one key market as a test case and based on success, this then forms the basis for strategies in additional markets. Having transparency of content and results across regions helps clients to align their international content and brand objectives.

# What are the must have skills for a content marketer on your global team?

Good communication skills are mandatory. Success depends on constant communication between our offices, sharing results and strategic initiatives. Our content marketers also need to be savvy when it comes to data and analytics, using performance metrics to look at what's working and optimise the strategy at a local level. Do you have any examples of Global content that originated within a particular region?

Our Sydney office developed ThinkFWD, a content programme for Lenovo that helped the brand move away from product-led messaging and take a more content-focused approach. It was such a success that Lenovo asked us to roll it out across EMEA as Think Progress, a suite of editorially driven sites. We built on what the team had learned from running ThinkFWD in Australia and adapted this for EMEA. We use a mix of European content that is relevant in all markets, along with content specific to certain countries - and we constantly look at opportunities to share learnings with the Australian team and repurpose content from the different regions.

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### GLOBAL MARKETING EXPERTS



Aoife O'Mullane, Social Media Strategist, King Content

#### What is the future of global content?

I think the future of content marketing is personalisation. It's important to consider how global strategies can be tailored to resonate with target audiences at a local level and make the content immediately relevant. A strong knowledge of the region and the target audience is vital - and you have to be willing to learn from that audience. A/B testing of content, images and headlines is key. What works in one market doesn't always translate to others. A/B testing allows you to gain insight into the kind of content that really resonates with your target audience and you can use this insight to inform and optimise future content and strategy initiatives.

#### Which brand or team is inspiring you in this space right now?

For me, brands that have established a local identity, but can remain consistent on a global scale, are winning in this space. With this in mind, it's hard to look past Airbnb. They have outstanding website and content localisation, while maintaining a consistent brand identity worldwide.

The best lesson you can take from Airbnb is getting your audience involved. Using their social channels and trending hashtags, they have inspired so much user-generated content that is immediately relevant at a local level. Another brand that I feel is really up and coming in this space is Intuit. They have created some really great content for their audiences globally, but also run incredibly creative campaigns at a local level. A great example of this is The Small Business Big Game in the US, where they have created an online community and used social media, UCG, traditional marketing and live events to champion their small business customers.



How would you define a piece

To make content truly global, the

overarching theme needs to be

can be tailored and adapted at a

regional or local level. Any global

initiative should be adapted to fit

the target audience in question

so you can create a customised

experience for them.

applied on a global scale, but

of truly global content?

# Are there any mistakes you've learned from as a global content marketer?

I think the biggest mistake you can make as a global marketer is assuming you know what your audience wants based on what has worked in other markets. Never assume that you know what your target audience wants - they can often surprise you. Testing and learning is key to developing a strong strategy that can speak to the needs of that particular region. Be fluid with your strategy and allow your insights to guide your approach.

# What advice would you give to an organisation embarking on their first piece of Global content?

Find a way to aid effective communication and sharing of content and resources on a global scale. Clients are increasingly looking for proof of ROI and achieving more with less. Analyse results from other markets, see what works, and look at how you can to tailor it for local audiences. When applicable, always look to scale your initiatives and repurpose content that you know works well in other markets.

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# Your global content marketing gameplan

Whether you're adapting global content assets to different markets, or looking to elevate engaging local content for a wider audience - here's our checklist of top tips and ideas:

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# When **localising** content:

Use local data and market insights to understand the tactics and content formats that best engage your priority audiences Distinguish between the localisation requirements of different types of content – brand building vs research-led content, for example

#### Incorporate an understanding of ROI into your decisions

- where is localisation (and translation) justified by likely results? Keep core messaging consistent, but remove irrelevant content and tailor delivery elements through localised customer stories

#### Localise your approach to socialising and amplifying content

- and create bespoke 'turkey slices' that reflect your markets' pain points and priorities

Use A/B testing to determine the impact that localising different content assets has in each market

#### Pay particular attention to imagery:

if you're using stock photography, make sure it's locally relevant and browse past the first page of results to find more original shots

## When **globalising** content:

Advocate for relevant local content ideas at a global level – the opportunity isn't just to distribute local content but to incorporate local ideas into the planning of global content assets

Identify markets whose audiences have similar priorities - content that flies in one of these may well find a ready audience in the others Explore the potential of local content assets such as case studies could the insights in them provide the basis for region-wide blog posts and thought leadership?

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"One of our in-country teams was initially running their social media channels in a very tactical, ad hoc way: if a promotion came through, they'd immediately want to create the post without considering how it fit in the broader strategy.

In this case, we worked with the local team to research the consumer persona: which social media platforms they used, how they interacted with content. Then we developed a social content strategy, which localised some global and regional material, but also left room for original local content. They saw huge growth in not just the number of followers on social, but the level of engagement with their customers."

**Elaine Chum**, Head of Digital at Philips, Asia Pacific

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LinkedIn's Certified Marketing Partners are experts in their field that we've selected because of their track record developing and executing best-in-class marketing strategies on LinkedIn.





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Our partner programme includes businesses that can support across all of the areas of global marketing that we've discussed in this eBook, including:



Here is a selection of our Certified Marketing Partners with relevant expertise for supporting global content marketing programmes.



For more details and our full range of partners, visit

https://business.linkedin.com/marketingsolutions/certified-marketing-partners

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