



# HOW TO SCALE CREATIVE FOR INTERNATIONAL BRAND EXPANSION

## WHAT'S THE ISSUE WITH SCALING CREATIVE?

**Many organizations struggle to scale their marketing and creative content efficiently and effectively. Managing brand consistency, content quality, budgets, and time-to-market are all common issues. And they're made even more complex as brands become more global and their consumers more international.**

A lot of businesses lack the local presence, cultural understanding, and structure to support their ongoing global content and international growth goals. And traditional localization agency partnerships, on which many organizations rely to solve those problems, are often ill-equipped to support global marketing and creative content needs.

The standard approach to scaling localized content – via technology to support high-volume language delivery and media localization – focuses on content efficiency, consistency, and reuse. But this approach doesn't naturally lend itself to locale-specific marketing and creative nuance.

The same best-practice marketing tactics and evolving strategy that work for US domestic efforts need to be adapted for international markets as well. However, sourcing and scaling localization services across multiple markets and content types to support that can be a challenging (and sometimes risky) process. Especially when it comes to creative content and delivering an authentic and engaging brand experience globally. **Here's what typically goes wrong and how to get it right.**



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More and more we find companies building out their own localization functions in-house because they can't get what they need from language service providers. These in-house teams typically innovate quickly due to aggressive business goals, but are often in an ongoing cycle of trial-and-error, continuously striving to find the balance between time-to-market, language quality, international customer engagement, and business growth goals.

The need for flexible content development models and language services and then connecting the dots with local customers via global digital marketing services are major trends we've seen with companies looking to maximize on their international growth opportunity.

Jenna Harding, Senior Director, Customer Success at Wordbank

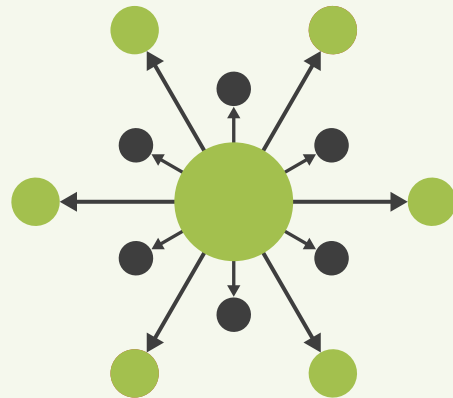
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## HOW DO COMPANIES APPROACH THE ISSUE OF SCALE?

The biggest challenge for scaling localized creative content across multiple markets is achieving **a balance between efficiency and effectiveness**. Efficiency addresses budget, quality, and time-to-market. Effectiveness addresses user experience, connection, engagement, and ROI. For marketing and creative content, both are critical. However, when looking to scale multilingual content for global marketing, US companies typically take a centralized or decentralized approach to producing multilingual content at scale. Both models have their pros and cons when it comes to creative content efficiency and effectiveness.

### CONTENT MODEL

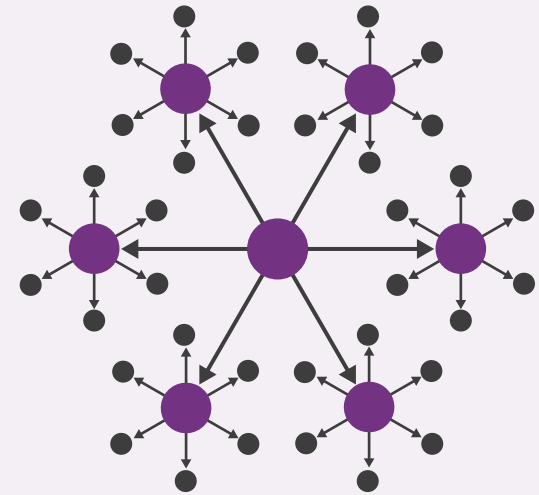
#### CENTRALIZED



##### CENTRAL MANAGEMENT TOUCHPOINTS

Language, design, and production managed centrally. Typically involves one or more localization service providers (LSPs) working with HQ and/or agency of record (AOR).

#### DECENTRALIZED



##### LOCAL MANAGEMENT TOUCHPOINTS

Content is created by regional offices in-country, working with local agencies against central brand and marketing guidelines.

KEY FEATURES

CENTRALIZED

High-efficiency content. Empowers HQ around global content goals.

Maximum control over branding, messaging, and design.

Localization technology easily implemented to manage high-volume, in-language content.

Translation memories and glossaries maximize content consistency and reuse.

Cost-efficiency and time-to-market centrally managed.

WHERE IT GOES WRONG

**Overcentralization: efficiency becomes everything, technology rules**

Efficiency and cost control can easily become the organization's main drivers. High-volume, quick-turnaround language delivery becomes the definition of scale:

- Localization technology dictates content-creation process, and "quality" becomes a unicorn that companies seek out in endless RFP cycles.
- In-country linguistic talent is devalued in the process.

**The outcome is a lot of localized content, the appearance of scale and short-term growth. But the model may not scale for longer-term, market-specific needs.**

DECENTRALIZED

High-effectiveness content. Empowers in-country stakeholders around local content goals.

Each market responsible for its own content development, reducing the need for global management and oversight.

Increased flexibility and maximum tuning of content for local needs.

Budget and time-to-market managed on locally relevant objectives and goals.

**Decentralization: empowered local markets and loss of brand control**

Many organizations find that local markets can go beyond adaptation. Modified brand standards, value propositions, or misinterpreted messaging becomes the norm:

- Brand positioning, look & feel, and tone of voice, can become inconsistent.
- Use of different colors, fonts, and logos from country to country.
- Unclear or altered campaign goals, such as implying premium positioning for a mid-market product or, worse, the opposite.
- Poorly managed online assets, which may have an impact on the performance of search marketing campaigns.

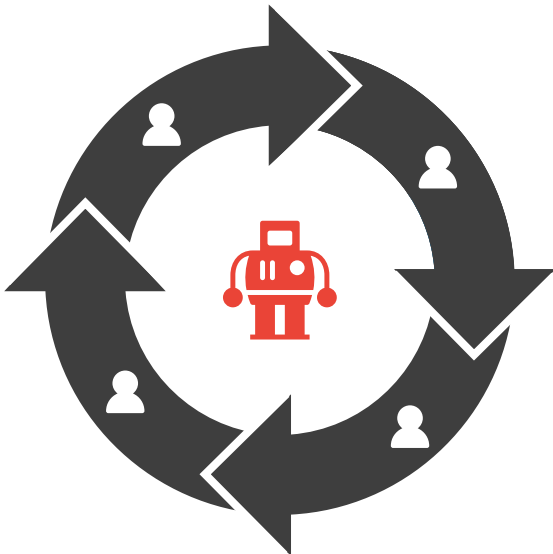
**The outcome is loss of brand integrity, duplicated effort, and the loss of opportunity to leverage insights & content successes across markets.**



WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR WHEN WORKING WITH LSPs

LSPs operate on a **centralized approach to scaling global content**. Their business models are geared toward efficiency in broadscale, multi-format language production with a heavy dependency on English source content.

Localization tools and software form a major part of their services, some of which boast **“plug and play”** solutions for scaling multilingual content. For companies looking to manage their global content more efficiently, these can be hugely appealing. However, for marketing and creative content, the benefit of this approach can be short-lived. Over-centralization, which limits longer-term marketing ROI, often happens by accident because companies engage with localization providers who lead them down a heavily centralized route. Companies find out too late that the **model doesn’t work too well for long-term marketing needs**. They get “locked-in” and find it hard to pivot for long-term business goals.



| AVERAGE LSP                                                                           |                                             |                                                                                       |                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
|  | Revenue focused                             |  | Low rates                                  |
|  | One-to-many model<br>One-size-fits-all tech |  | Little value or investment in human talent |



## YOUR AOR MAY BE WORKING WITH AN LSP

If you're relying on your agency of record (AOR) to manage your international marketing efforts, be aware of who they're working with. Many creative agencies (even international ones) lack the global infrastructure to think strategically about localization and will simply outsource translation and media localization needs to an LSP.

To maximize your chances of campaign success and ongoing efficiency, it's important to be part of that decision-making process and know who your AOR is working with.

**Failure to do that can result in mismanagement of the localization process, dubious quality, limited campaign success, and lost opportunity in achieving economies of scale.**

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Heavily centralized translation solutions aren't relevant in today's market. And many technical solutions that are based around replicating English content + design actually prevent companies from developing locally independent marketing content. The more international competition a company faces, the more important locally authentic content becomes. The objective is to balance your content goals, your budget, and the quality you need to achieve those goals.

Jenna Harding, Senior Director, Customer Success at Wordbank

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## HERE'S HOW TO GET IT RIGHT

**Align the right people, process, and systems with the tactics that will help you get the best results. The right model for your organization likely doesn't exist "out of the box."** Avoid the temptation to trade long-term marketing localization scale for short-term quick and easy outcomes. Remember that people are central to creative content, from in-country linguists to designers to your in-country stakeholders. Processes and systems should be geared toward maximizing human creative talent, setting everyone up for success. And agency "partners" work far more effectively to help you grow than "vendors."

**Ensure brand consistency while tailoring style guidelines and key messaging based on in-country UX standards.** A hybrid approach enables better control of messaging across media, while leveraging crucial local insights and feedback from in-country stakeholders and offering the opportunity to share budgets with local offices.

And it is possible to leverage centralized localization industry-standard tools, such as glossaries and translation memories, for creative content. They simply require a content management strategy adapted for creative needs and skill in managing and maintaining these living assets.

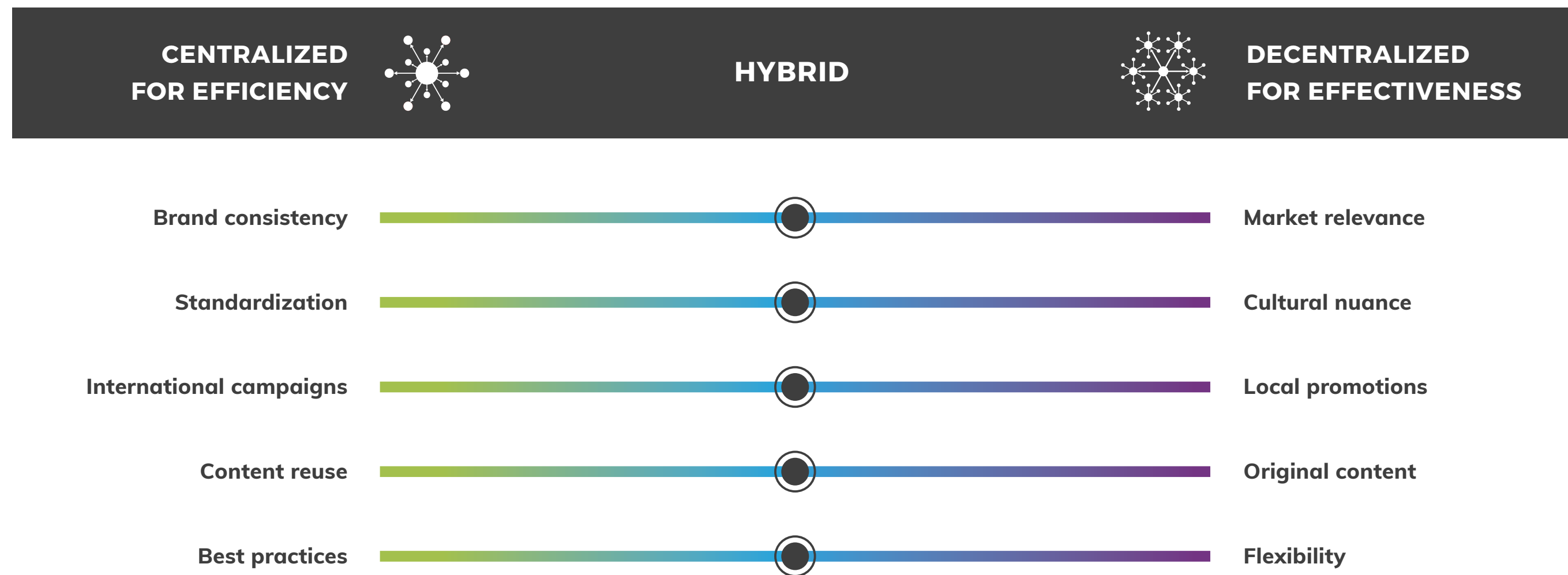
$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
 \text{CENTRALIZED} & & & \text{LOCALLY ADAPTED} & \\
 \text{BRAND STRATEGY} & + & \text{BRAND GUIDANCE} & = & \text{WIN} \\
 \text{FOR EFFICIENCY} & & \text{FOR EFFECTIVENESS} & & 
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**Don't get hung up on translating everything.** Consider what will have the biggest impact in each market and be selective. Remember, when it comes to marketing, translation is a tactic, not the goal. It's just one piece of the puzzle. It often pays, from an ROI perspective, to think beyond language delivery at scale and avoid the temptation to mass-translate every word of English.

**Select the right localization partner.** Check whether the agencies you're working with offer marketing and creative services that combine local insights and in-country talent with processes and systems designed to scale for your long-term marketing needs. Look for core competencies and opportunities to leverage economies of scale, alongside experience and expertise that complement your internal strengths. The right partner will operate as an extension of your team and pivot with you as you grow and scale your international content.

## BALANCE BETWEEN GLOBAL INTEGRATION AND LOCAL MANAGEMENT

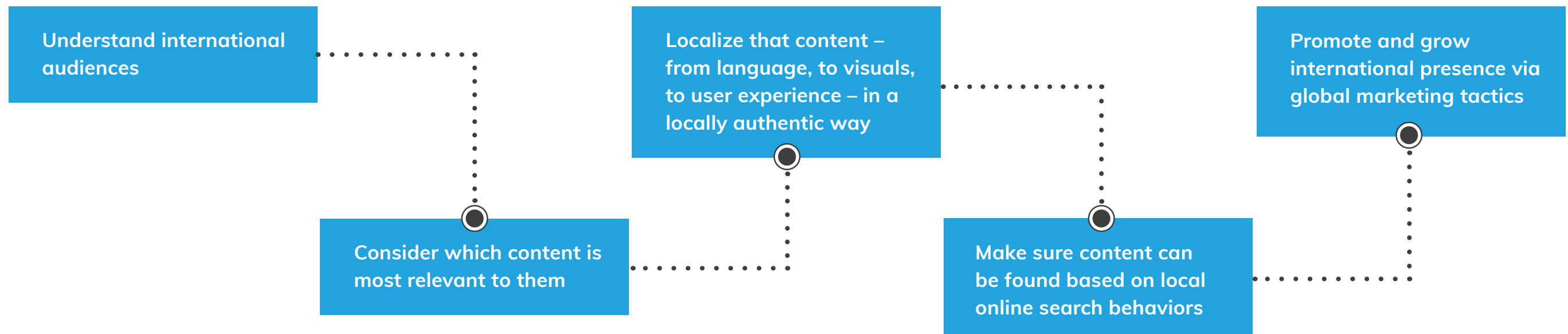
Getting the balance right between locally and centrally managed campaigns is crucial to marketing localization success.



## THE HYBRID MODEL APPROACH: THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

As US consumers, we're not very forgiving of a poor customer experience. It's no different for international consumers and what they expect from localized marketing content. The array of embarrassing localization errors we've all seen made by major global brands over the years are almost always related to brand messaging, product marketing, and advertising. That's no coincidence. Scaling creative content for international audiences – and doing it well – is challenging.

**The answer lies in connecting the dots between traditional language services, strategic local content, and localized marketing activities to drive action and results.**

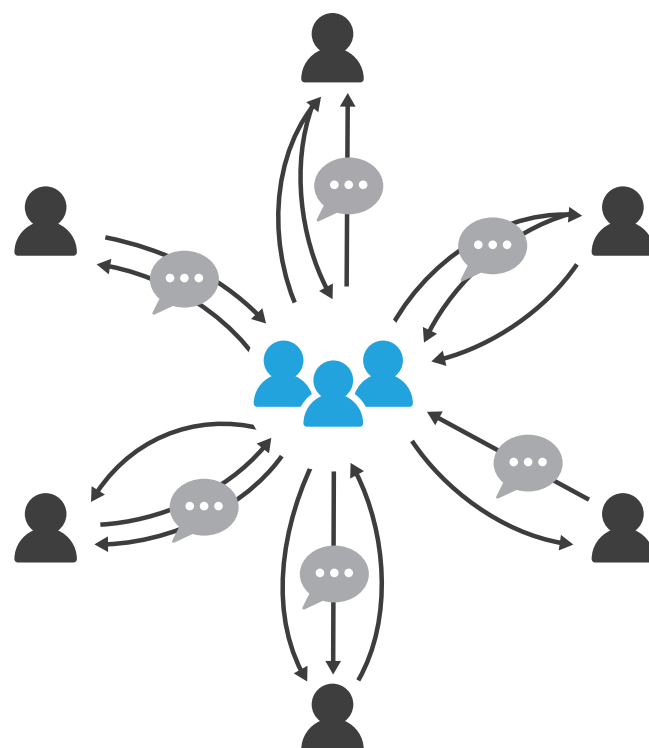


In this way, marketing and creative content localization is part of a broader global strategy that's a business investment with measurable goals and KPIs, including ROI.

## THE HYBRID MODEL APPROACH

The only way to achieve this and scale for both efficiency and effectiveness is to implement a **hybrid strategy** designed specifically to **meet both short- and longer-term needs**. A global content model that balances the best features of centralized efficiency with the essential involvement of in-country stakeholders and creative talent.

The right partner for your marketing localization and creative content needs will mobilize the people, process, and systems essential to an effective delivery model in order to drive **success based on your content goals**. In a hybrid model, strategy and KPIs are centralized. Execution involves heavy engagement and collaboration at the local level based on your organization's needs. In this way, the results win out, not any one method of scaling content delivery.



### MARKETING LOCALIZATION AGENCY



Results focused



Fair pay



Tailored, flexible solutions



High value or investment in human talent

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