Getting Started in Localization Program Management

Global Pragmatica

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FACILITATION • G11N • I18N • L10N • PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

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Localization program management is a great job. You work with people all over the world. Every day presents a new and interesting problem. You get to play with all kinds of technology that’s changing rapidly. If you’re smart, you get to travel lots of interesting places.. You are never bored.
The problem is:

LPM: if you’re new to this, you don’t know where to start. If you’ve been at it for a while, you really don’t know where to start ➔

For you managers out there who have localization reporting to you: your problem ➔ is that you’ve had layoffs and hiring freezes but still need to get the work done

For you executives out there, you know that your business needs to go global, but ➔ you’ve got a lot less money to spend

So instead of seeing smiley faces in the localization office, what you often see is...
QUESTION
How are LPMs supposed to survive?
How can their managers help?
How can executives take their business global without going broke?
Poll

- Which role do YOU play?
- What keeps YOU up at night?

[ Explain about program manager vs. project manager ]
Localization is important and it's complex.
I believe that EXPERIENCE is the only answer.
But you need results now, and you might be starting from zero. So I’m going to offer an overview of some of the complexities, along with some resources for learning and growing in the job.

As you listen, think about where you need the most help.

My presentation will show:
- LPM: ways you can learn and grow in the role
- manager: how the role is probably more complex than you realize
- exec: bear in mind that what it takes to go global in a sensible, sustainable way merits some investment.
Erin Vang, PMP

Global Pragmatica

Clients <-> GP <-> Vendors

Musician – degrees in music performance and math – 20 years in stats software
both direct & managerial experience in
doc, QA, localization, project management
both S&M and R&D management teams
PMP, facilitative leadership, conflict resolution ➞

GlobalPragmatica offers facilitative leadership with domain expertise in localization,
internationalization, and project and program management. We provide pragmatic guidance
to help a client-side organization develop and achieve its global vision through sustainable
strategies, effective tactics, and committed teams.

We fill the gap between the clients and the vendors ➞ in the localization industry
I'll address 3 points today

1. ➔ Complexity of l10n
   - many technical issues with lots of hidden complexities

2. ➔ LPMs serve many different constituencies
   - different professional and personal skills needed for each

3. ➔ Resources to help you learn and grow in the role
   - because EXPERIENCE is the only answer in the face of overwhelming complexity
So let’s start with Complexity.
Many technical issues to learn

Each one is complex – often more than you realize at first

Must understand each of them JUST ENOUGH to set priorities

For each that is a priority, you need to understand it WELL ENOUGH to recognize all its implications.

Most of the time, it’s hard to see the forest for the trees.
Let’s look at ONE of the trees – translation memory

Basics:
Translation Memory starts out as a tool for translating storing text in parallel with your source text. It becomes a Search and Replace tool on steroids, that is tied to a database, to find all the copies of a phrase or sentence and replace it with its translation.

But it’s more complicated than that. You need to understand a lot more than that about TM to realize its implications on all the different aspects of your project, and how it affects each your stakeholders differently.
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Translators need to keep your English aligned with their translation. Each segment needs to match up exactly with another segment, and the segments need to stay in the same order. So you need the source text to be written in an order that will make sense in any language... ...or else your translated text backwards and inside-out seem will to become.

Engineers need to keep the English and translation aligned over time, so your team needs to stop rewriting and redelivering files to your vendor... ...or else your vendor's engineers will burn a lot of hours keeping everything sorted.
When the translation goes out to your in-country reviewer, her job is to be your subject matter expert and to ensure linguistic quality. But your reviewer needs to understand that she can’t rearrange anything to make it “better.” She needs to let the same sentence be translated the same way every time, so that you’ll get the most leverage out of your TM over time. …so if she doesn’t understand how TM works, she’ll think you’re telling her not to do her job!

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Here's my advice: at your project kickoff meeting, sit down with a few translators AND your reviewer, and see how TM works. Have the translator explain everything to both of you. Ask a lot of questions. Have someone from your R&D team with you, too, if you can.

And then at your next meeting, do it again. And keep doing it every time you get your team together. Over time you’ll all get to understand it better and better, and you’ll all work smarter as a result.
And translation memory is just ONE of the issues. Localization project management is complex.
Constituencies

LPMs serve many constituencies and need different personal skills when working with each.

Wear a lot of hats. I’ll show you what I mean.
Vendors – You’ll need to find the right vendor for your needs. You need to manage your vendor, too—make sure the contract is right... Vendors need you to have a grip on your priorities, schedules, and budgets.

Project managers – need you to understand overall workflow, resources, & coordination

Translators – need your support in understanding the product

Engineers – need your help to work efficiently

Desktop publishers – need you to advocate a sensible publishing strategy that scales up to many languages and future updates

Reviewers – need your respect and advocacy but also need you to educate them and set limits

Representatives of the business in each country – need you to advocate their needs to the home office

Internal team – need you to educate them on how their work impacts localization and how localization impacts their work
  - need you to lead them in technical issues of localization & internationalization, e.g. adopting Unicode instead of legacy character sets

Management – needs you to make decisions, keep them informed, educate and manage up, know when to escalate

Executives – need you to keep it all in balance with the organization’s mission & its means
  - need you to be able to give them the big picture, quickly and clearly, without all the details
So the cumulative effect is sort of like this...
but it’s worse--you’re not switching hats, you’re ADDING hats!
...which leads to a need for this, or this...
or this...
back to this...
and finally...
1. Complexity

2. Constituencies

3. Resources

3. Resources to help you learn and grow in the role
   - because EXPERIENCE is the only answer in the face of overwhelming complexity

And YOU CAN DO IT.
http://GlobalPragmatica.com/resources

You don’t need to copy these down – just go to this link & you’ll find them all
Advice: Lead with your strengths
Build on your success

So:
First Discover your Strengths
Find your leadership style
Subscribe to MultiLingual magazine

I write a regular column in this magazine, so I have a bunch of coupons for a free subscription. If you’d like one, send me email--first come first serve.
conferences – Localization World
training – Localization Institute
   especially Localization Round tables
Learn more about project management.
Consider pursuing PMP certification.
If you’d like to learn about facilitative leadership and conflict resolution...
Learn about the localization industry from Common Sense Advisory. Read their blog, the Global Watchtower
Talk to the good folks at your vendor—they’re talented, knowledgeable people. They can help you if you let them.
It all comes down to experience.

In the face of overwhelming complexity, EXPERIENCE is what you need.

Experience takes time, or it costs money, or both. But it’s the only answer.

Lots of resources...
your vendor can....
Global Pragmatica can...
1. Complexity
2. Constituencies
3. Resources

REVIEW

1. Role is technically complex. There’s lots to learn before you can make wise decision and pursue the right priorities.

2. LPMs serve many different constituencies
   - big mix of professional and personal skills needed for each

3. Many resources available to get the experience you need.
complexity and the importance of the role demand an investment in experience

Go to our website at Global Pragmatica.com
Send us email or give us a call.
You’ll find resources to learn and grow, and we’ll do everything we can to get your organization the help it needs.
What is the value of success?

What is the cost of failure?

L10n is important, and it’s worth investment in both quality and sustainability.

The economic crisis means organizations must expand their global reach to survive. We must all spend and work smarter than ever before.
empathize – answer – reinforce my main points (complex, hats, lead with strengths, invest)