

A byzantine world of language, culture and technology threatens to stall global brand building on the Web. Content riddled with inconsistency often rules the game. Now, the force that unleashed it—the Web—may be the force to tame it.

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Brands without borders.™

GLOBAL BRANDING

Curing Brand Chaos on the Web



The Web makes it easy to endow brands with local relevancy. At the same time, the very ease with which brand content can be modified often creates a dissonance of brand voices and strategic messaging across global markets. While maintaining a coherent brand around the world has always been a daunting task, nowhere is the pandemonium more apparent than on the Web.

Balancing global brand integrity with local cultural authenticity is perhaps the greatest challenge global brands face today. Not only is the Web a local marketing medium; it's an essential platform by which to integrate global brand identity. Marketers need to take a fresh look at the Web as the hub of global brand marketing.

The increasing transparency of the marketplace—nurtured by the Web—only increases the power of consumers. Anticipating and managing ever more demanding customers is the CMO's job. The Internet is critical to getting that job done.

To meet this challenge, traditional areas of marketing expertise must evolve and converge into a new discipline that provides a clear methodology, a unified framework, and a rigorous process for building strong, globally viable, and locally relevant brands.

At GlobalWorks, we call this discipline Global Content Management™. It encompasses the sum total of services and tools for streamlining the way brands create, monitor, share, revise, and publish brand content—online and offline—at home and abroad.

The Five C's of Global Brand Management Online

As much as the Internet empowers, it also overwhelms with information and choice, confuses and even intimidates. That's why the role of brands in building trust and loyalty is so critical to the Web experience. It is also why recreating success in the online world is such a challenge.

The competitive edge will go to global marketers who recognize and embrace what we call "The 5 C's" of global brand management online:

1. **Control.** *Who controls the online channel at the corporate level? How is regional control over local sales and marketing balanced against corporate branding imperatives?*

Building brands has always been about control—of time and space, frequency and audience, and most of all, the message. In other words, controlling—in its totality—the brand experience. The globalization of the Web is perhaps the most dramatic example of forces obliterating control.

Globally, these complexities multiply across divisions, product lines, markets and agencies. Multiply that again across language, culture and border—and yet again across scores of Web sites, each using different technologies. Controlling brand identity in this environment demands extraordinary flexibility.

The answer? Strike a balance between marketing flexibility and central control. Move Web activity from the periphery of the marketing mix to the center of a fully integrated marketing solution.

Web Globalization Case Study

Situation

A global technology leader needed fresh solutions to manage brand and marketing content shared among an ever-growing number of countries, cultures, markets and languages. On the Web, the company manages vast resources, populating more than 20 sites, in four regions and 12 languages. It also uses massive amounts of collateral to support its global marketing in 12 languages.

Demand for global brand content was expected to rise as the company's business expanded worldwide. Current brand strategies and content were mainly U.S.-centric, and not culturally relevant for global markets. In addition, as the manufacturer began to add professional services to its base, demand for cultural relevance intensified.

Governance emerged as a key issue. IT owned the online realm, impeding Marketing's ability to effect change. Content was locked into formats that could not be readily adapted for global use, and systems were neither flexible nor fast enough to meet marketing's expanding needs.

Solution

A complete portfolio of brand globalization services—a combination of strategic consulting, implementation services, and marketing technology solutions—proved to be the answer.

- A country-by-country, culture-by-culture analysis—from branding to marketing to internal communications—captured the brand's successes and shortcomings in developing culturally relevant messaging for global audiences.
- An analysis of the brand's existing sites, competitive sites, and an in-depth usability study were completed, including an overview of globalization best practices. This provided the brand with a definitive look at its corporate Web presence worldwide.

- A review of existing translation processes defined best practices and provided the foundation for a faster, more cost-effective language management solution.

- A global readiness assessment examined existing IT systems and provided recommendations for integrating, adapting, and extending the existing corporate technology to embrace multiple languages, content globalization, and a globally distributed authorship.

- Design templates were developed for both Web site and print collateral, and integrated with existing desktop applications and enterprise content management systems, resulting in a seamless production workflow across all media.

- Content was extracted from existing Web sites, corporate databases and other collateral materials. It was then separated into data and display layers. Users now enjoy total flexibility in choosing page designs and file formats for the publishing and distribution of multilingual content, worldwide.

- Lightweight hosted marketing technology solutions were put in place to provide a robust, comprehensive view of site usage and visitor behavior, as well as providing a framework for integrated marketing from the anonymous Web visitor to the qualified online prospect.

Results

The benefits transcend efficiency and usability. As the company advances its strategy of expanding globally, evolving towards a professional-services model, and deploying local messaging and marketing globally, the task of managing and adapting the brand improves in every way.

The outcome: Streamlining the publishing process and dramatically lowering the cost of deployment enabled the company to launch a new global Web presence in less than a year and provide them with a clear competitive advantage in the marketplace.

Turn Your Site into a Global Marketing Platform

Marketing via a content management system is slow, costly, and inflexible. Fortunately, a new breed of technology services gives marketers a unique opportunity to manage marketing communications on their Web sites independently from the underlying IT infrastructure. Such services provide a unified environment for:

- **Real-Time Analysis:** The wealth of data gathered online can be overwhelming. CMOs must assemble the analytical tools and methodology needed to discover key insights, to sort out meaningful trends, and to answer critical questions about online marketing and Web site performance.
- **Intercept Marketing:** Ensures that any online marketing effort is extended throughout the entire online experience, making sure that timely and relevant ad messages are put in front of a user at any time during a Web visit.

- **Transaction Profiling:** It is more critical than ever for corporations online to define methods and metrics for calculating ROI in online spending. Transaction profiling provides a concrete way to track and measure the impact of marketing initiatives online. The ability to tie value to specific site behaviors has long been the Holy Grail for marketers, and has traditionally required huge IT investments to accomplish.

- **E-Mail Marketing:** E-mail marketing solutions must be firmly grounded in the same analytical framework that drives the rest of the online marketing services portfolio. A shared platform provides unprecedented capabilities for engineering a truly personalized online experience—and measuring the impact on user behaviors and the bottom line.

“In our efforts to seek consumer relevance in each country, we must carefully manage and coordinate our web presence to ensure languages, cultures, technology platforms and service delivery processes don’t create discontinuity and confusion in our brand voice.”

— *Jim Speros,*
Chief Marketing Officer,
Ernst & Young

2. Consolidation. *How can redundancies be squeezed out of the global marketing process and underlying infrastructure? Can workflow be simplified and unified on a global basis? How can resources and marketing assets be deployed effectively across both online and offline sales channels?*

Nowhere is the brand chaos more evident than in this aspect. All too often, numerous campaigns, local executions, one-off production efforts and off-strategy branding slip out into the marketplace without the knowledge of the CMO.

Consolidation restores control—unifying budgets and teams is the first step to effecting the organizational and cultural changes necessary for a successful globalization effort. Utilizing the Web as the central hub to consolidate data, assets, and processes is the most logical and cost-effective solution.

While the Web may traditionally be a technology challenge, CMOs must lead the way to ensure that all decisions solve marketing’s business requirements.

3. Communications. *How do regional marketing teams around the globe stay informed and participate in the go-to-market process? How do you orchestrate marketing efforts on a global scale? How do you simplify access to critical marketing information and expose ongoing strategic communications?*

The efficient use of marketing resources and budgets, particularly on a global scale, calls for expanded insight, overview, and communication by all parties in the process. A centralized communications hub eliminates most obstacles to integration.

This orchestration of multiple marketing initiatives and communications efforts requires simple, fast and accurate views of all marketing components and activities across the company, and a shared vision of marketing goals and branding objectives. This level of transparency and open communications will foster creativity and encourage new initiatives across all regions and result in rapid adoption of emergent best practices worldwide.

4. Culture. *How do you allow for local variances in message, voice, and design without breaking underlying systems, creating a management nightmare, and fragmenting the brand?*

The seemingly contradictory forces of unification and centralization of brand processes on the one hand, and almost unlimited flexibility to meet local marketing needs on the other, demands an unprecedented elasticity in global marketing processes and supporting technologies.

Cultural relevancy exerts a powerful impact on brand perception and loyalty worldwide. The CMO can provide a vital function by demanding strategies that are globally viable from its advertising agency, in order to ease the rapid adoption and execution of these strategies from its regional marketing teams, while also providing a solid foundation for the brand online.

The result is a communications platform that reinforces the integrity of the brand, while making it culturally relevant, and thus stronger and more competitive, in all key global markets.

5. Creativity. *How do you get maximum return from your marketing resources regionally if the brand team spends all of its time cutting and pasting translations into Web pages and re-creating corporate marketing efforts?*

Given the pressures of accountability in marketing, it has never been more imperative for CMOs to focus on ROI. More disciplined approaches to global brand management save time and money, and create new levels of marketing efficiency.

Streamlining global brand management liberates time and resources for marketers to be the best marketers they can be. After all, the end game is not about reducing costs so much as it is about enabling big ideas and igniting creative sparks that drive growth and build business.

From Chaos to Accountability

By bringing order to brand chaos on the Web, CMOs are well-positioned to turn newfound efficiencies into unprecedented productivity, worldwide.

CMOs who make the Web the hub of global brand management will:

- **Maintain consistent global brand identity.** Globally viable branding standards, supported with adaptive design templates and dynamic image and collateral management, allow marketers to leverage marketing resources globally across multiple channels in a coordinated fashion, easily and quickly. Globally shared databases for terminology and translations allow the brand to speak with one consistent and clear voice, in multiple languages, worldwide.
- **Gain cultural relevance in all local markets.** An open and transparent process over a clear and strongly enforced global brand will enable local members of your marketing organization to adapt global brand communications to be culturally relevant for their local markets. Utilizing a shared base of tools for content development, and shared databases for terminology and translations, local markets will speak consistently and clearly, in multiple languages as a core part of your global brand.
- **Increase speed to market.** Using a streamlined editorial process, integrated with a suite of managed marketing services, makes it possible to publish marketing assets in multiple languages and in multiple creative executions. This dramatically increases the ability of the global marketing organization to react at the speed of the marketplace, not at the speed of IT.

■ **Reduce costs.** A consolidated platform reduces hosting, operations, and maintenance costs. Simplified workflow processes reduce overhead and time spent on redundant tasks across regions and disciplines. Building campaigns on a single, unified global platform provides a cost-effective way to stretch local budgets and provide targeted, personalized features to every user, in every language.

■ **Improve quality.** Improved communications, regional accountability, and simplified processes will increase the accuracy, relevance, and timeliness of marketing content. Smart solutions automate and manage dynamic creation of marketing materials in multiple languages, online and offline, resulting in improved quality across the board.

■ **Optimize sales initiatives and lead generation.** The ability to use dynamic data sources to generate brochures on-the-fly lets sales teams personalize collateral. Because the material reflects each customer's unique needs and interests, the result is higher response rates.

■ **Enhance tracking and measurement.** Central monitoring and cross-tabulation of campaign performance, user behavior, and content usage across regions and languages provides critical insights into the state of the brand's marketing communications globally.

Using the Web as a hub allows management to synchronize multiple layers of communication for every region, culture, country and language. The harmony of a centralized system—in creating brand content for the Web, collateral and advertising—maximizes impact and cost-efficiency.

Above all, global marketers assure brand content is relevant to local needs and cultures, and that customers enjoy the same, consistent brand experience everywhere. ■

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Ground Rules

■ Recognize that globalization is a shared, corporate-wide imperative.

■ Remember, today's global customers demand—and expect—to be treated like first-class citizens, and all that entails in terms of language and culture.

■ Demand that globalization of brand content, especially on the Web, go beyond translation, to exert a powerful strategic impact on brand perception and loyalty.

■ Practice globalization as a weapon of competitive advantage—knowing your brand will be judged not just by what it says, but how it says it.

■ Since the Web is the most visible and influential expression of a global brand voice, demand a level of management and resources equal to the task.