



Top 10 Tips for Search Engine Marketing (SEM) Localization

Optimize your company's or client's multilingual website

Search engine marketing is one of the most popular tactics in online marketing and sales due to its effectiveness and relatively low cost. Whether you're going into new language markets within the U.S. or taking your website global, you'll need to localize your website (see <http://www.acclaro.com/web-translation-tips>) and you'll need to localize your SEM as well in order to drive potential customers to your site.

For those new to SEM, note that SEM consists of two primary groups: Search Engine Optimization (SEO) or "organic", "natural" search and Pay Per Click Advertising (PPC) or "paid" search. There are other aspects, such as paid inclusion and digital asset optimization, but the majority of SEM tactics fall into one of these two areas.

Here are our top-10 tips to help you adapt your SEM strategy for new language and global markets:

1. **Integrate your SEO localization into your initial website translation project.** Once you know the details of the translation of your website – content selection, languages, and other specifics – take that information and apply it to your search engine marketing strategy. Early integration can significantly reduce costs associated with post-launch optimization and content update.
2. **Consider a local domain, IP address, and hosting provider.** Adopting a local domain for your new site results in a higher ranking in that country. Also consider taking it one step further and localize your URLs, which means translating each unique URL into the target language. Using a local IP host also helps with search engine rankings.
3. **Conduct a thorough keyword analysis for both SEO and PPC.** If you do not already have a strong set of keywords from your natural or paid search efforts, work with your marketing and communications team to compile a list that not only has significant search volume, but also fits your brand and offering.
4. **Cover all your bases.** Like an iceberg, a good percentage of your language-based website content is underwater, or invisible. Underneath the actual words that appear on the page, there is a whole ocean of metadata that needs to be translated. Create a checklist to run through for each page that includes: meta tags (keywords and descriptions), title tags, alt tags (for images), and file names.
5. **Submit the new site to local directories.** Are your SEO efforts going to be limited to site architecture and translation, or are you going to use other tactics, like submitting the new URL to directories? If that's the case, find the most popular local directories in the target language. For example, in Holland many web users refer to the directory site Startpagina.nl when conducting a web search.
6. **Help your translation company help you.** When localizing your PPC campaign, your vendor is going to try to emulate the same process you went through when creating the original campaign. (This process is called "transcreation," and is used to accurately translate marketing campaigns.) Provide your vendor with a creative brief with the following components: campaign goals, target customer, product information, terminology/style guide, keyword list, branding guide, and your strongest competitors in the region.

7. **Decide which misspellings (if any) make the cut.** Web searchers are not always the best spellers, and they may leave out or misplace diacritical marks, such as an accent (á), umlaut (ö), or tilde (ñ). We recommend including misspellings only if they get enough web traffic to justify their use. Use a search tool in the target language (e.g., Google's French keyword tool) to mine the data.
8. **Expect your ad text to change – often dramatically.** Like advertising translation, your PPC ad texts are not going to be a literal translation of the original. Rather, the translator is going to work from the creative brief to transcreate your marketing message using the target language keywords, and the original ad text as reference. The final result will be adjusted in tone and style, making it more effective in the target culture and region.
9. **Localize your landing pages.** Landing pages are the bread and butter of PPC. Build landing pages that are not only linguistically correct, but that are also designed with the target culture in mind. For example, payment options often vary greatly from country to country, so you'd tailor each landing page accordingly.
10. **Be aware of differences between your home country and foreign campaign.** When analyzing your SEO and PPC results, don't compare them to your home campaigns. Internet use and behavior varies greatly by country. In Japan, for instance, more consumers access the web with their mobile device, so you might see more shortened or misspelled keywords, less time spent on a landing page, or a higher abandonment rate. Analytics from local search engines (e.g., Baidu in China) are going to vary as well.

SEM localization is a relatively new field, so it's important that you align yourself with a localization partner with the right skills *and* experience to maximize the impact of your campaign. Increase your visibility in foreign search engines and help international customer find what they're looking for – you. Visit us today at www.acclaro.com/sem-localization.

About Acclaro: Acclaro is an international translation and localization firm that helps the world's leading brands succeed across cultures. We translate websites, marketing campaigns, documents and software to give clients an authentic voice in key language markets.

North America: 1-866-468-5106 Worldwide: +1-914-468-0222
www.acclaro.com sales@acclaro.com