

LIONBRIDGE



## THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO GOING GLOBAL

Since our founding in 1996, Lionbridge has partnered with some of the most innovative companies in the world. Here are our most valuable tips and strategies to put you on the path to success in the international marketplace.

### Inside, Learn Why:

There is No Better Time to Go Global

It All Starts With Strategy

The Competition Can Be Your Best Resource

### Plus,

Top 10 Takeaways

The Going Global Glossary

# TOP 10 TAKEAWAYS

## 1 Localize To Globalize

In today's market, globalization means customer personalization. The best way to go global? Go local. By personalizing content to customers' needs, you can make an impact in any new market.

## 6 Realign With Your Goals

Globalization translates differently for different businesses. Depending on your company, you might require a broader or narrower global strategy. Localizing for 100 global markets requires a different strategy than one specific region.

## 2 Expand With Intention, Not By Chance

Technology is changing the game. Anyone with a website has the capability to publish content for all the world to see. You must set yourself apart in the increasingly crowded global marketplace.

## 7 Optimize In Every Language

SEO strategy is not a one-language-fits-all endeavor. Your multilingual SEO strategy should reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of each new market you enter.

## 3 Kickstart A Competitive Analysis Initiative

Learn from others' successes—as well as their failures. Be efficient and leverage the work other competing companies have done before you.

## 8 Craft Your Localization Strategy First—Not As An After-Thought

Companies should plan for translation before they go global. A 2014 CSA study reports **84% of international consumers** are more inclined to purchase online when information is presented to them in their own language.<sup>1</sup> Before launching in new markets, anticipate localization for all client-facing content.

## 4 Invest Time In Analytics

Don't underestimate the power of website analytics. Customer demographic information, language preferences, and abandonment rates are all powerful analytics that give insight into markets you are already resonating with.

## 9 Localize Your English, Too

Even when you and your target market speak the same language, you still need to localize content. Tone, word choice, and digital medium preferences vary from market to market.

## 5 Start With What You Have

Look at who is interacting with your website. Even before you have performed extensive localization, you might have captured the attention of certain foreign markets. These countries and languages should be the first step on your globalization journey.

## 10 Build Bridges, Not Barriers

Globalization is an opportunity to bridge communities and build relationships. Embrace your global citizenship and go forth with intention.

1. Donald A. DePalma, Vijayalaxmi Hedge, and Robert G. Stewart, "Can't Read, Won't Buy," (Common Sense Advisory Inc., February 2014).

## I. THERE IS NO BETTER TIME TO GO GLOBAL



*It's about what your customers want and expect.*

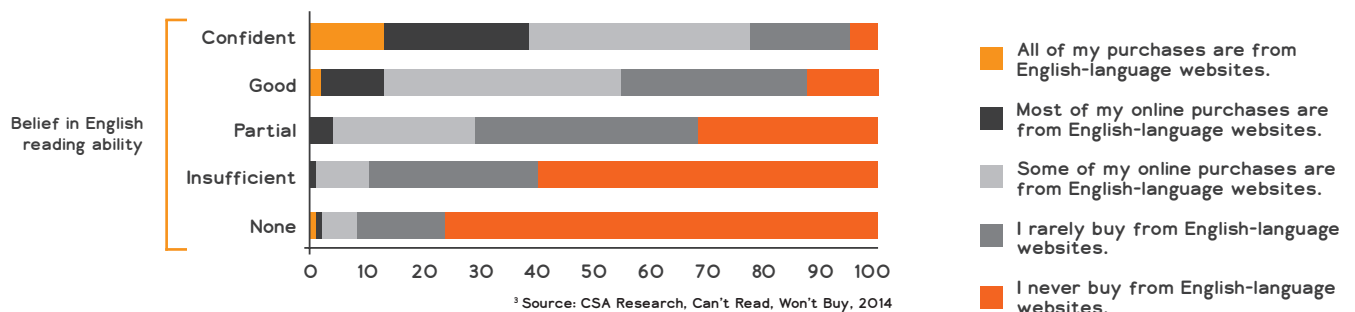
According to Ethnologue.com, English is the #1 most widely spoken language in the world.<sup>2</sup> If you are an English speaking company that does a bulk of your transactions in the US, you might be wondering: Why do I need a globalization strategy?

Simply put, you can choose globalization, or it can choose you. With an expanding global network, more and more companies are being ushered onto the global stage—whether that was their original intention or not.

The key to making the most of this golden opportunity? A thorough localization process. In a 2019 study by Common Sense Advisory, evidence revealed that customers strongly prefer content presented to them in their native language.

By localizing your website into different languages and cultures, you increase your company's chances of resonating within a multitude of different markets.

### HOW OFTEN DO YOU BUY FROM ENGLISH-LANGUAGE WEBSITES?



2. "What Is the Most Spoken Language," <https://www.ethnologue.com/guides/most-spoken-languages>, (Ethnologue, September 24, 2019).

3. Depalma, Hedge, Stewart.



## THE GOING GLOBAL GLOSSARY



*Know the terminology.*

**Globalization:** the formal term for “going global;” it incorporates any business action that has an international scope

**Internationalization:** the practice of designing products and services, and structuring the internal operations, in a way that facilitates expansion into international market

**Localization:** the adaptation of a particular product or service to one of those markets

**Localization Strategy:** an element of your globalization strategy; how you cater your business plan to resonate with local cultures and communities

**Translation:** the conversion of written text into another language

**Interpretation:** real-time translation of spoken interactions

**Language Services Provider (LSP):** an organization that serves the linguistic needs of a globalized company by providing a range of services including: translation, interpretation, localization, market testing, content creation

**Globalization Strategy:** your game plan to meet the preferences and expectations of target markets on a global scale; involves: adjusting product offerings to suit local tastes and expectations, creating social media strategies that appeal to multiple cultural audiences, releasing marketing materials in local languages, and more

**Search Engine Optimization (SEO):** the process by which you design and edit your website to rank highly when target visitors conduct a search on an engine like Google

**Multilingual SEO:** adjusting the optimization of your website to support the multilingual needs of your multinational customers



## II. BUT WHAT DOES GOING GLOBAL ACTUALLY MEAN?



### *Making an impact in the international marketplace.*

**G**oing global means implementing business practices that allow you to connect more effectively with customers and partners around the world.

In the past, select aspirational companies implemented a globalization plan in order to access one or more international markets. But over the years, the true meaning of “going global” has changed. Today, “going global” has transformed from its beginnings as a mere recommendation. Now, it has become an absolute necessity.

#### **The Transforming, Tech-Driven Marketplace**

What spurred the need for businesses to think proactively about international expansion and engagement? Rapid technological enhancements and innovations have widened professional and social networks at an unprecedented rate without boundaries. As a result, accessing global audiences becomes easier with each passing year. But it also makes *avoiding* global audiences much harder.

According to **McKinsey**:

- Border data flows are increasing at rates approaching **50 times** those of last decade.
- **1 billion** social networking users have at least one foreign connection.
- **2.5 billion** people have email accounts, and **200 billion** emails are exchanged every day.<sup>4</sup>

Everyday, a growing number of people around the world are connecting to the Internet. This increased connectivity enables these disparate global groups to connect to businesses and purchase their products.

Individuals and businesses alike publish digital content that audiences across oceans and borders can access instantly via the touchscreens in their hands. With the click of a button, the content producer has landed squarely on the global stage.

4. Ezra Greenberg, “The Global Forces Inspiring a New Narrative of Progress,” <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/the-global-forces-inspiring-a-new-narrative-of-progress>, (McKinsey & Company, April, 2017).



### A Leading Role on the Global Stage

Content creators, be advised: the “global” stage on which you have landed is as vast and as populous as its name implies. In simply occupying a space on the stage, can we say that we have “gone global” as we define it in 2019? Some say yes and posit that a globalized business is any organization that interacts, in any capacity, with the global marketplace. Others believe the definition of globalization has evolved with the world around it and requires purposeful interaction. Either way the struggle is the same. How can you make your company stand out?

Prove your company’s intentionality with these **three key skill sets**: a global mindset, global entrepreneurship, and global citizenship.<sup>5</sup>

### A Global Mindset

First, going global today means adopting a **global mindset**. Before you can address an international audience, you need to adjust your strategy accordingly. How do you plan to adjust your business strategy in new markets?

### Global Entrepreneurship

Next, use your global mindset to be globally savvy in your endeavors. Brainstorm new ways you can create value for your global audience as well as how you can glean value *from* them. Consider yourself a global entrepreneur, and exercise creativity in creating value for yourself and your new customers.

### Global Citizenship

Finally—and perhaps most importantly—go global with intention by becoming a global citizen. “Global citizenship” is a buzzword that has worked its way into the world of business. As doors open and bridges are built, we meet a new responsibility to engage mindfully and respectfully with unfamiliar cultures and societies.

By recognizing the diversity, complexity, and potential challenges associated with targeting new multicultural, multilingual markets, companies can demonstrate their dedication to be truly active, intentional citizens of the global marketplace.

In 2019, how do you “go global” with intention? How can you interact with new markets to drive awareness and effect resonance?

Like it or not, every modern business needs to consider these questions.

*Going global can feel overwhelming, but it doesn't have to. At Lionbridge, we've made other companies' global business our business for more than 20 years.*

5. Ángel Cabrera, “What Being Global Really Means,” <https://hbr.org/2012/04/what-being-global-really-means>, (Harvard Business Review, July 23, 2014).



### III. IF YOU HAVE A WEBSITE, ARE YOU A GLOBAL COMPANY?



#### *Going global by default vs. design.*

In 2019, a simple **voice-command to your phone** can do almost anything—even upload content to the Internet for all the world to see. In the midst of the digital revolution, some argue that the concept of *trying* to “go global” is irrelevant. If you have a digital presence, then you effectively already are global.

But does *true* globalization imply a deeper understanding of how to conduct business with multiple international populations?

#### **Going Global by Default**

Let’s say you buy a website domain for your company. The instant that website goes live, anyone in the world with Internet access—beyond the “Great Firewall of China,” that is—can view it. Whether intentionally or not, you have just created a global presence. But does that mean you’ve “gone global?” You could argue yes.

In that case, every global company needs to take note of their digital presence. Lionbridge CMO Jaime Punishill explains: the companies that will find the most success with a global audience are those who understand that a global presence opens them up to a growing population of multilingual, multicultural people with Internet access. But global *presence* and global *resonance* do not necessarily align.

#### **Going Global by Design**

Being truly, effectively global entails more than a digital presence. If you are globally present, you are considered an “international” company. If you are globally represented, you are “multinational.” But you can boast both these titles without being a “globalized” company.<sup>6</sup> What is this extra element that distinguishes truly globalized companies?

You can take two simple steps to prove your intentionality to your customers: First, preemptively research your target

market. Second, cater your material to suit their needs. Much like localization, globalization requires a profound understanding of how your target will best receive your service and a willingness to alter your approach accordingly.

#### **Personalize to Globalize**

In the plainest terms, having a website in the modern marketplace grants you a global reach. But, to be a truly globalized company, you must have not only the ability to communicate with a global audience, but also the worldly knowledge to communicate with them effectively.

Both B2B and B2C companies are embracing **personalization** as a major trend in their marketing. MarTech cites:

- More than **75%** of marketers believe that real-time personalization is essential.
- **94%** focus their resources on analytics and customization.
- **60%** of marketers find effective personalization very difficult to accomplish.<sup>7</sup>

Your company may be (and likely already is) digitally connected. The steps you take next will define whether or not your message resonates outside your home market.

*“The moment you created that social account, blog, website, or app for your company, you started communicating with a global audience. And that audience just keeps expanding.”*

Jamie Punishill  
Chief Marketing Officer, Lionbridge

6. David Goldsmith, “Going Global: What it Really Means Today,” (Fox News Network, LLC, August 8, 2103).

7. Andy Betts, “A New Era of Personalization: The Hyperconnected Customer Experience,” <https://martechtoday.com/new-era-personalization-hyper-connected-customer-experience-20952>, (MarTech Today, November 16, 2018).



## IV. IT ALL STARTS WITH STRATEGY



*Plan your work, work your plan.*

Once you've made that decision to go global, you immediately have a new question to grapple with: where, exactly, are you going?

To globalize successfully, you need to select your first international markets carefully. In a literal world of options, how do you choose?

### **Analyze Your Analytics**

First, examine your current funnel to see where you're already (perhaps unwittingly) capturing attention in foreign markets. A simple, effective place to start? Your website analytics.

Site analytics are a valuable source of information for global marketers to leverage. You can discover data such as the

demographics of your average visitors, or which sites are referring traffic most often to your page. Plus, you can find out the location of visitors' browsers, as well as their language preferences.

Visit and abandon rates will tell you both how many people from potential new markets find your site and how many are interested in your business—despite the language barrier that currently exists without localized sites for given markets.

Do you see a pattern emerging among visitors from certain countries or who speak certain languages? Who is interacting with your site despite cultural and linguistic obstacles? Take note: these countries and languages should be the first stop on your globalization journey.





## Narrow the Field

Once you have a menu of market options, you can narrow it down in two ways:

1. An analysis of the competition
2. Consumer research

## Understanding Competitors

When examining the competitive market, keep two things in mind. First: claiming unoccupied market share is easier than fighting for it against a brand already established in the market. Second: you can learn as much from failures as from successes.

What if the market you select has no current competitors? Before you celebrate, consider why. Did another company try to expand there and fail? Why? Make sure you fully understand the landscape before you leap. We will go into more depth on the benefits of a competitive analysis in the next section (see “The Competition Can Be Your Best Resource”).

## Understanding Consumers

This is where research on the consumer side comes into play. Don't just examine the customers that currently exist in the new market—consider the trends of the future. For example, a bicycle accessory company probably has a bigger market in Berlin, “a cyclists' paradise,” than Cairo, where biking is often dangerous and carries a social stigma.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, the growth opportunities in Cairo for such a company could be

huge—the local cycling club grew from four people to hundreds in just five years.

If possible, form a few study groups of potential consumers to ensure you understand how their demands differ from those of your original market.

## Maximize Your Choice

With analytics, competitive research, and consumer details on hand, you're ready to pick target geographies and languages. Here, you should start small, while optimizing your eventual ability to scale.

This applies to the localization process itself. Choose one language to create a complete customer experience before you add multiple languages to the mix. You should also be mindful of which language you start with. In both cases, you need to be specific with your choice but thorough with its implementation.

Some target markets may have a common language that is broad enough to feel accessible to prospects from multiple geographies—think, for example, of Spanish. Each Spanish-speaking country has its own dialect, and in many cases, multiple dialects. But it is possible to communicate in a standard, widely understood dialect of Spanish, so people in multiple countries will relate to the content. Even if you decide to invest advertising dollars in a very specific area, choosing a language that can appeal to multiple regions helps you collect information on the feasibility of future markets. As with all business decisions: test, analyze, and revise to improve your next globalization choices.

8. Richard Orange, Philip Oltermann, Jonathan Kaiman, Kim Willsher, Shaun Walker, Lizzy Davies, Patrick Kingsley, et al. “How Safe Are the World's Cities for Cyclists?” <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2013/nov/20/how-safe-are-worlds-cities-for-cyclists#cairo>, (The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, November 20, 2013.).



## V. THE COMPETITION CAN BE YOUR BEST RESOURCE



*Learn what others are doing and how you can do it better.*

**Y**ou've secured your spot in the Global Marketplace—whether by **default or design**. But before you get ahead of yourself, take a good look around you. You are not alone. You are one of thousands of companies going for that global gold. Yes, that means more competition. But more competition also means more companies to learn from. An important part of your globalization strategy should be regular and thorough analyses of talent. You should even—perhaps especially—take note if that talent comes from your competitors. To give you a head start, we've compiled some tips on how to leverage the work other globalized companies have done before you.

### **Look Ahead**

Who are the leaders in your current market? What about their business strategy makes them a powerful global competitor? You aren't starting in a vacuum. Be resourceful and use others'

successes to your advantage. Experts advise **analyzing how your competition engages its audience**.<sup>9</sup> Identify the language and tone competitors use in their messaging, their primary marketing channels, and the types of content they create to promote their products and services.

### **The Toughest Competitor is the Local Competitor**

Your biggest challenge to reaching new customers will be companies born and raised in that local market. These adversaries already have in-country experience. Plus they understand first-hand the social and cultural norms of their local customers. Established competitors still have some name recognition advantage. How can you compete? Offer a better product or experience—or lean into localization and upend another outsider who has made a splash.

9. Chad Brooks, "How to Go Global: Challenges, Considerations and Tips," <https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/8211-expand-business-internationally.html>, (Business News Daily, May 8, 2019.)



### Fill (or Avoid) Gaps

That said, when you are looking at what other companies *are* doing in a particular market, don't forget to recognize what they *aren't* doing.

Perhaps you have identified a gap in the market where you are looking to expand. That can mean a few things:

1. There is some reason why that market is inaccessible. Perhaps consumers are fiercely loyal to local industries, and foreign companies have not been successful there.
2. Some quality of your product or service might clash with the cultural conventions of the target market.
3. You have found an opportunity that other top competitors have overlooked. Take the chance to slip through a gap and pull ahead.

### Now Look Back

You can certainly learn a lot from your stronger competitors, but it is important not to discount those who have not succeeded. Who are these players? Where did they falter? You can learn a lot from past companies' missteps. Did they launch a product without conducting the proper analysis to ascertain whether customers in that market needed or wanted it? Was their **website poorly localized** and thus inaccessible or—worse—offensive to prospective customers? Did they run a marketing campaign delivered by a medium their target customers weren't using?

A benefit of taking part in a global-sized competition is that you have the knowledge and experience of scores of other companies at your fingertips. You have the privilege of learning from mistakes others have made in the past, so you can avoid them in the future.

### It's a Marathon, Not a Sprint

The path to globalization is a long and challenging one. The effort you put into strategy and preparation will be well worth it in the end.



## VI. OPTIMIZING YOUR DIGITAL PRESENCE

*You have your roadmap. You created your strategy. You built your digital experience. Now make sure your customers can find you.*

### What is SEO?

Search Engine Optimization is the process of strategically designing and editing the content and structure of your site so people can find it via a search engine. Search engines have three main functions: **crawl**, **index**, and **rank**.<sup>10</sup> That final part—ranking—is what determines how far up the page your site appears in search results.

### What Contributes to Higher Rankings?

SEO isn't a one-size-fits-all endeavor. Multiple factors affect rankings: user-friendly web designs, inbound links from reputable sites, click and bounce rates, location—all contribute. For multilingual websites, properly localized content is perhaps the most powerful driver of all.

Quality **website localization** should be as simple as translating high-performing keywords into the new target language, right? No—nothing could be further from the truth. Just as **word-for-word translation** will lose some of a source material's meaning and intent, simply translating keywords word-for-word does not yield an optimal global SEO strategy.

### When to Start Thinking About Global SEO?

Companies that effectively optimize their multilingual websites for search engine traffic are those that do not treat SEO as an afterthought. Strategically considering how, where, and why prospects in a new market—who speak a different language—will search for your company will enable you to more readily ensure they find it.

10. Britney Muller and Moz Staff, "How Search Engines Work: Crawling, Indexing, and Ranking: Beginner's Guide to SEO," <https://moz.com/beginners-guide-to-seo/how-search-engines-operate>, (Moz, Moz, Inc., 2019.)



## VII. UNLEASH YOUR LOCALIZATION STRATEGY

*5 steps to success.*

1

### **Start Small To Go Big**

In the initial stages of your globalization journey, dedicate your attention to one target market or region. We have found that starting small nets more benefits than overloading your business with too many new localization projects. Your new customers will thank you for putting time into understanding their needs and delivering a quality product.

2

### **Make Content Easily Adaptable**

Create material that can be easily altered for multiple markets. This will reduce the time and resources you need to localize effectively.

3

### **Align With Your Globalization Goals**

Finding the right balance between global consistency and local resonance is key. How to decide? Consider your industry and audience. If you're in the healthcare industry, providing consistency in product and service communication is a must. For those selling travel or consumer goods, a more hyper-localized approach may prove most successful in global markets.

4

### **Consider Cultural And Linguistic Nuances**

Localization doesn't stop with translation. Localization ties elements like tone, imagery, and subject matter together to drive impact with multicultural audiences. Be aware of how the culture and customs of the people you interact with shape how they behave as consumers.

5

### **Choose The Right Digital Medium**

Study the analytics of your target market. You will find that different demographics have different preferences for how they access digital content. For many customers, the first impression they have of your service is on a digital platform. Guarantee that your material is optimized for the digital medium that your clients are actually using.

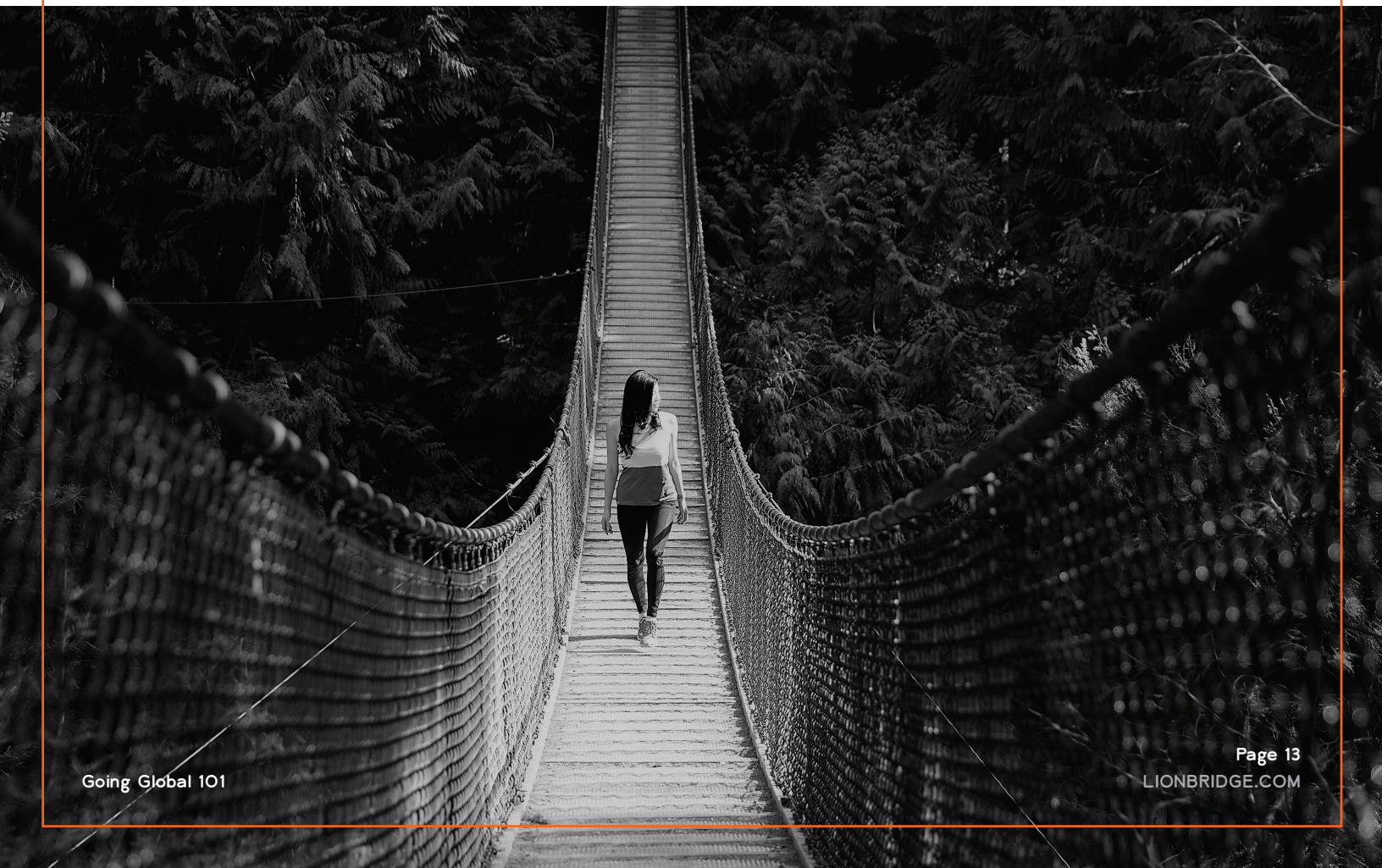
*Success in globalization comes from being intentional with every step.*

## LET US BE YOUR PARTNER



Since our founding in 1996, Lionbridge has been the partner with the team, expertise, and scale to solve our customers' challenges. Two decades in, and we're just getting started. No matter what obstacles emerge, our customers can call upon our global community of lions. We are ready to break down barriers—linguistic, data-related, or otherwise—and build bridges to unite the world.

- **Translation and localization services:** resonate with anyone, in any language, anywhere—just the way you intended.
- **Multilingual marketing services:** more locally targeted, culturally appropriate, personally relevant campaigns—more quickly, easily, and repeatably.
- **Language QA services:** exhaustive linguistic testing to assure the accuracy and quality of your content across all locales.
- **Editing services:** meticulous proofreading and linguistic testing so you never miss a word or bend a rule in any language.





## About Lionbridge

Lionbridge partners with brands to break barriers and build bridges all over the world. For more than 20 years, we have helped companies connect with global customers and employees by delivering localization and training data services in 350+ languages. Through our world-class platform, we orchestrate a network of one million passionate experts in 5000+ cities, who partner with brands to create culturally rich experiences. Relentless in our love of linguistics, we use the best of human and machine intelligence to forge understanding that resonates with our customers' customers. Based in Waltham, Mass., Lionbridge maintains solution centers in 26 countries.

LEARN MORE AT  
[LIONBRIDGE.COM](https://www.lionbridge.com)

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