

Easing global marketing implementation

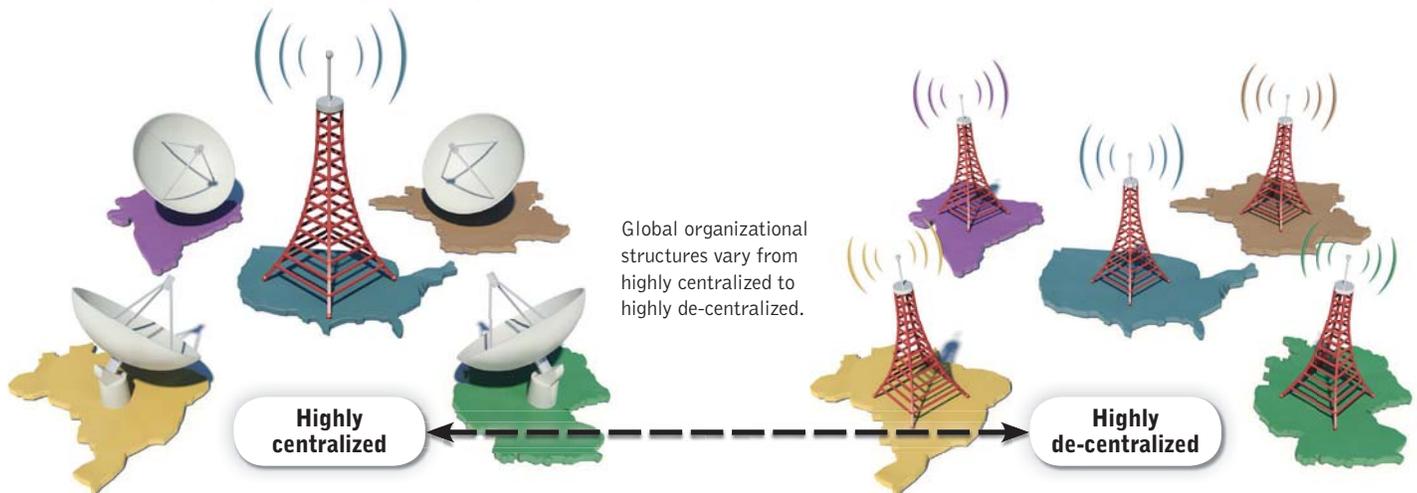


Global marketing presents a world of opportunities and complexities. Implementation is often a major challenge, as markets vary in their needs, resources and cultures. Forty percent of 5MetaCom's business involves working with international markets of U.S. companies. We've learned that while no two global markets are alike, there are some strategies that can help improve implementation anywhere, while still maintaining brand integrity and market agility.

Review your global organizational structure

Take a step back and look at how your organization is structured, and how it tends to create and disseminate information. This helps you better understand what is expected and needed at the local level. Is your organization highly centralized, with all operations and strategy flowing from the home office, or highly de-centralized, with autonomous local offices? Is it somewhere in between? The more centralized your structure, the more local offices will look to you for support. If your organization is more de-centralized, local offices may be willing, able and expecting to take a bigger role in the process.

The spectrum of global organizational structures



Your marketing can be thought of in the same way, on a spectrum of centralization. Your corporate brand strategy and message may be consistent across the world, with just a few creative tweaks needed to suit local markets (more home office ownership). A particular product brand, however, may require different approaches in different countries. This will mean increased customization (more local input needed).

Whatever your mix of authority and autonomy, consistency and customization, check out the tips on the next page to help make local marketing implementation easier and more effective for your organization.



4 tips for global marketing strategy implementation

1. Keep it simple

- Create easy-to-use standards and follow them.
- Develop templates and other “drag-and-drop” solutions whenever possible. For example, an area office working from a website template can efficiently swap in pictures and translated copy to create a site that is localized but still aligns with the organization.

2. Require global uniformity on the “big stuff”; encourage localization on the “little stuff”

- Define “big” and “little” for your organization. Your corporate logo and tagline are likely “big” and should never be altered, but localizing the images that go along with them may help you forge a more meaningful connection to your desired market.
- Be clear about what brand elements cannot change. The values your brand stands for should never be compromised.
- Look at localization as an opportunity for innovation. You could uncover a competitive edge that can be applied elsewhere.

3. Leverage owned media

- Make the most of the communication channels that belong to you (think: website, sales force, physical office locations). An emphasis on owned media can help stretch budgets and increase consistency, as you take available marketing tools and determine how they can be applied globally.
- Understand the way owned media is used in different countries. In the U.S., you may have a dedicated sales team that carries only your products. In another country, the salesperson may be contracted to sell your product *and* others. In this case, your marketing pieces need to be extra-compelling—you’re selling the salesperson first.
- Don’t forget about the technology used to deliver owned media. For example, if a particular market lags in technology adoption, you’ll want to use more traditional channels. Make sure you account for user technology preferences in your targeted market.

4. Understand local cultural norms and take them into consideration

- Use local personnel as experts, and convene small groups to review materials for any cultural sticking points.
 - If you don’t have a local office, create partnerships with an area creative agency, business organization or advocacy group to gain helpful insight.
- Make sure there are processes and procedures for ensuring representation of the *right* culture. Form, fashion, flora and fauna can vary widely even within a region. This goes for translations, too. Should your Spanish really be Mexican, Latin American or Castilian? Is your French European or Quebecois? These issues are usually best handled at the local level, especially if the local office has easily-adapted materials to work from. Attention to cultural detail may be all that keeps your customers from saying sayonara.

Conclusion

When you factor local implementation into your global marketing plan, your brand remains strong but agile to meet market demands; it’s a strategy that can translate anywhere.