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White Paper

Translation and Manufacturing

How Managers Can Successfully Mix the Two

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At a Glance

To build products that satisfy customers in a variety of regions, most manufacturing firms want to centralize their translation work, maintain consistency of terminology, and engage a flexible vendor well versed in manufacturing.

Executive Summary

Business managers in manufacturing firms often struggle with the role translation plays in bringing their products to international markets. Even when the return on investment is compelling, the best way to integrate translation into manufacturing is not always clear.

In industries such as software, Web, or financial services, products are "soft." Because they do not market an assembled product, companies in these industries can make quick, on-the-fly adjustments in the factors that affect translation projects. With changes as simple as making an update available for download or reprinting, they can accommodate different product lines, staggered release schedules, varying requirements among regions, tight turnarounds, and last-minute alterations.

In manufacturing companies, these same factors ripple outward physically to shop floors, assembly lines, supply chains, and shipped product itself, resulting in costly changes. What do managers in manufacturing companies need to avoid these costly changes? What do they require in a translation partner? What roles can technology play in helping manufacturers meet goals for their worldwide products? Managers tasked with delivering manufactured products into global markets can use this paper to examine the translation landscape in their own companies and begin to answer these questions.

Main Messages

- Unlike industries that market and support "soft" products internationally, manufacturers deliver physical goods dependent on large supply chains.
- To build products that satisfy customers in a variety of regions, most manufacturing firms want to centralize their translation work, maintain consistency of terminology, and engage a flexible vendor well versed in manufacturing.
- The ideal language service provider meets these priorities with strong processes and the constantly evolving technology to support them.