

Case study-removing cultural barriers for international business

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



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Introduction

Midnight Communications was founded in 1992 and fully listed on the London Stock Exchange, SDL International® (London: SDL plc) is a leading provider of globalization technologies and services. Its contributions, which enable organizations to remove cultural and linguistic problems to international markets, include present-time translation technologies, lingual data management, a great range of in-house consulting and localization services and translation memory.

Objectives

Midnight was appointed by SDL International in Q4 2000 to build the company's profile - particularly within its target trade publications - and to establish SDL as the UK's leading globalization solutions provider. Midnight's initial task was to carry out a media audit to show the current industry alertness of SDL International and the major issues of localization and globalization. The outcomes were startling! Media alertness of SDL International came out to be very low. From these results, a mere 6% claimed to have knowledge about the company's business. Furthermore, the term ' globalization' was generally associated with Anti-Capitalist May Day Riots - a far cry from translation and localization!

Strategy, research and plan

Midnight devised an issues-based campaign to bring life and meaning to the term ' globalization', and to educate the market on the importance of

effective multi-lingual communication. Midnight defined and clearly stated the fact that translation is not enough and that cultural adaptation is the basic key. The CEO of SDL International and the company itself were positioned as key commentators on content management strategies and global communication. Credibility was generated through informed comment and advice.

Midnight took the opportunity to conduct a detailed research of the region and size of the translation market, examples of organization that have successfully adapted a general approach to their web site information and the most popular languages on the Internet. Research also focused on cultural issues to be addressed when entering key overseas markets, amusing examples of multi-nationals' mistranslations and cultural faux pas, as well as analyst research into key emerging markets

Action

In addition to generating quality news stories, Midnight used this research to develop a series of strategic articles, by-lined to Mark Lancaster. The features demonstrated the open opportunities created by a global approach and a practical demonstration on how to carry out a global communications strategy. It was declared that by-lined articles are said to have appeared in six target publications, of which they include: New Media Creative, Industry Standard and Sales Director. Therefore, due to the need for change, Midnight's media-relations department developed a further 14 features that were responsible for the issue of translation and globalization.

Press Trips & Demos

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Midnight organized a number of press trips and product demonstrations to ensure SDL International was introduced to key media; messages effectively communicated, and clearly demonstrated the benefits of SDL's complex products and services

Case Studies

To support the campaign, Midnight developed a number of case studies of SDL clients who had implemented successful overseas strategies. New client win and partner stories were used regularly to encourage further blue-chip partnerships.

Creative Photography

To give the story visual impact, creative photography of Mark Lancaster spinning a high-tech globe on his finger like a basketball, was developed. This result came together with the outcomes of the coverage, even in places where no other images were used.

Roundtable Event

To encourage strategic partnerships within the industry, Midnight orchestrated an SDL-branded roundtable discussion forum to discuss the issues central to global content management. This event brought together high-profile players from companies such as Adobe, Accenture, Organic and Media Surface. The roundtable enforced SDL's position as a leading innovator in the field of globalization, and served to encourage further strategic partnerships

Measurement and evaluation

Midnight has been highly successful in raising awareness of SDL International within its target market, with all key titles now recognizing the company, and media coverage from these publications illustrating not only an understanding of SDL's business, but also the related issues. The PR campaign that is going on for the company has created excellent trade, new media, IT and Internet results, with great media coverage taking all key trade titles, thus producing over 12 million great opportunities to see. Language and translation have been successfully linked to globalization within SDL International's target market, with the key message that 'it's not enough to translate - you have to consider local culture' being effectively communicated. Supplementary strategic groupings for SDL and other related IT developments have also been encouraged.

Reference

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3. Parker M. Holmes. (1963). *Readings in Marketing*. Cornell University: C. E. Merrill Books Pub