



MEDIALOCATE

Transcreation Guide 1

Understanding the Concept

At first glance, **Transcreation** may seem like just a fancy word for Translation. After all, the two processes may look very similar: start with a text in one language and render its meaning accurately and appropriately into another language.

But in many cases, transcreation may not even start with a text at all.



Creating the idea from scratch

Marketing departments will often brainstorm new concepts to sell or position a product. Different ideas are thrown around until a few are chosen as potential fits for the intended audience and launch strategy. Once a consensus has been reached on which concept is the right one to use, then it's time to start finalizing the wording, graphics, and any other media that will be used to complete the picture.

MediaLocate has worked with a number of marketing agencies and in-house creative teams on the client side to put together a **creative brief** that will be used as the basis for the transcreation project. The creative brief is an excellent way for transcreators to understand what the intended meaning, message, image, and tone should be in the target market.

In the same way that the concept is born during the brainstorming session for the domestic market, the transcreation resources need to be given the same level of leeway and creativity in adapting the messaging to suit their own target markets. MediaLocate's transcreation teams are composed of creative writers, marketing professionals, and translators with years of experience rendering culturally nuanced promotional texts, slogans, brand names, ad copy, and other texts into their native languages. While technical translator generally need to stick as close to the source text as possible, transcreators have total freedom to adapt the messages and concepts to their native language, country, and market. Certain metaphors, ideas, and sometimes even certain key information, may even need to be removed or replaced with a more locally-appropriate set of ideas. The resulting transcreated text may have a completely different structure than the original concept.



Adapting an existing text

Sometimes transcreation projects do involve a finalized, “international-ready” source text. We see this often with brands that are firmly established in one market and are ready to branch out globally. We also get many requests to help with new product launches, new ad campaigns, or the rebranding of an existing company or product line. While the initial phase will be different than with the creative brief, we still recommend an initial session to help us understand the overall intent of the messaging and business needs.



The editing and reviewing process

As with any creative process, transcreation is an iterative process. We encourage our clients to use their in-country resources to help vet our transcreation drafts. The client-side resources will work with our transcreation resources. We have found that bouncing ideas off of at least two creative writers in the target language yields better results than relying on just one transcreator to handle all of the linguistic, cultural, technical, and marketing nuances of the client’s messaging.



Simple file formats

Given the back-and-forth nature of the process, a successful transcreation project requires the use of simple, intuitive, and easily accessible file formats. Anything that is as complicated as Excel, InDesign, FrameMaker, XML, HTML, or any other formats that might require special programs to be used or could complicate editing, should be avoided. Instead, we strongly recommend using Microsoft Word online or Google Docs. This way, anyone with a browser can access it, add their comments, and not need to worry about the format.



Understanding the cost and benefits of Transcreation

Transcreation will cost you more than translation. If you have a new product name, slogan, positioning statement, or other creative copy, and you want to have it translated and ready to go for your upcoming international launch, you can certainly go the translation route. You will most likely save some time and you will certainly save some money.

We had a French client recently that wanted to have their human resources web pages translated into English. The company is in the digital imaging industry and develops highly specialized products for use in various vertical markets. The brand is known in the French-speaking world for its consistently high standards. One of the key messages on their HR site was their "Culture d'exigence" and the company was having a difficult time trying to think of how to render that concept into English. A simple translation would have produced "culture of high demands" or "culture of high standards" and the company did not want to use the notion of "high-performance culture" as the founders felt it was too cold.

In our sessions with the client we learned that wanted to infuse the idea of being committed and a passionate member of the team. Our transcreators proposed "passion for excellence" and the client loved it. So did their English-speaking sales and marketing staff. And then we proceeded to adapt the rest of the site, including the benefits pages, job descriptions, videos, and other promotional content to align with the notion of looking for inspired, passionate, and technically adept people. The client ended up using the notion of "passion for excellence" in their brochures, product briefs, and other promotional content. And of course, we ended up transcreating all of this content to ensure that the overall messaging was consistent and culturally appropriate in the English-speaking market.

Let's look at a simple comparison, a type of cost-benefits equation, between selecting transcreation or translation as your process to ensuring a successful international launch:

	Basic Translation	Transcreation
Cost	\$200	\$1,000
Units Sold	50	5,000
Translation Savings	\$800	-\$800
Global Revenue	\$50,000	\$5,000,000
ROI	\$49,800	\$4,999,000



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