Integrating localization and FQA processes for a global eCommerce technology provider

How Alpha employed strategy and technology to create a streamlined global system

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Note: for reasons of client confidentiality, our client remains anonymous in this case study

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The challenge

Our client, a global leader in ecommerce technology, approached Alpha to streamline and automate its approach to localization, functional quality assurance (FQA) and linguistic quality assurance (LQA).

Its approach to localization prior to contracting Alpha was fragmented, without dedicated teams focused on core localization functions such as localization engineering, automation or vendor management.

Alpha's challenge was help our client to restructure its approach to localization to create an integrated system that supported its goals for strategic global expansion, in particular through a focus on systems development and quality assurance processes.

The solution

Part 1: planning

Our first move was to link up with all teams involved in localization for our client, including development, quality assurance (QA) management, legal and regional content managers on the client side, as well as a variety of vendors connected to the process (mostly translation).

Based on the timeframes agreed with the client, a longer-term timeline was broken into carefully scheduled deliverables based on monthly releases. The plan was agreed to by all parties, including the development and core QA team on the client side alongside Alpha's global translation teams, FQA and engineering teams in Estonia.

In order to automate all workflows and bug-tracking as much as possible across the wide range of teams, it was extremely important to decide on the most useful tool for the job. After detailed discussion, Alpha recommended using Jira as the most powerful bug tracking solution for the client's global localization requirements.

Phase 2: Implementation

The implementation phase involved creating project pipelines, testing them and refining them in a cyclical process of continual improvement.

Preparations and creating test cases

The FQA team began by creating test-cases based on the specifications and user-stories shared by the client, consulting with developers or analytics on the client's side to get more information where necessary.

The FQA team began helping client's core QA team with testing the core functionality of product builds in English, focusing on specific features and plugins. This approach was a useful way to allow the Alpha FQA team to gets familiar with product updates and to create the test-cases for localization testing.

At the same time, our localization engineers began preparations for the localization process which included:

- Parsing strings for localization
- Analysis and exclusion of DoNotTtranslate strings
- Creation of the builds with pseudo-translation.

Globalization testing

Once ready, these strings were sent for translation first to project management teams and then on to translators. After this, the pseudo-translated build (a build using a "dummy translation") was sent to the FQA team for globalization testing.

This process helped to find global issues (such as truncations and misalignments) and hard-coded strings in the earlier phase of product cycle, so by the start of localization testing most of the global bugs were already fixed.

As soon as globalization testing was finished, localization engineers fixed all global defects (and, where necessary, important defects were sent to core development team) and also integrated translation into the resources. Once completed, the engineers generated the localized builds.

Over time, Alpha optimized most of these processes (such as resource compilation and build creation) with automation.

Simultaneous testing

Once localized builds were completed, three teams began testing them simultaneously:

- **The FQA team** tested the product manually using the already created test-cases.
  - o The main focus was on the new features as well as features which could be automated and critical parts of the system.
  - o Testers submitted any found bugs to Jira.
  - o Once all defects were reviewed and prioritized by the project manager and the client (in case of doubts) and then fixed by engineers, a final round of regression was carried out.

- **The QA Automation team** ran scripts, analyzed outputs and fixed the scripts where needed.
  - o The team also ran scripts on the legacy functionality to ensure the updates did not break anything.
  - o Issues found during the output analysis were sent to the manual QA team for verification. Automation scripts also captured the screenshots for linguists so they could check the translation offline if needed.
- **The Linguistic team** ran linguistic quality assurance (LQA) tests, conducting checks both online and offline.

The outcome

All FQA and QA processes were established across the client's global operations, enabling high-quality localization of product launches and product updates across multiple markets within fast-moving product lifecycles.

The system has now been up and running for several years and enables the Alpha team and client teams to work together effectively towards common goals. Performance is reviewed on an ongoing basis and processes are adapted where necessary to achieve optimal results.

The client continues to retain Alpha as a key partner in QA, FQA and localization functions in order to meet its strategic goals.