“Glocal” Marketing: 
Building a Brand Based on Global Unity with Local Sensitivity

A Frost & Sullivan White Paper
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INTRODUCTION

To a business with an engaging product, geographic boundaries are no longer an obstacle in identifying and reaching prospects and closing sales. Increasing global access to the Internet; online social media networks; and multiple device types such as smartphones, tablets, and gaming consoles, are offering customers new means to collect information and make purchases, and providing companies large and small with more developed channels to bring their product to market.

Yet the benefits of these technological advancements afford the globalizing company with unique marketing challenges and unforeseen process pitfalls. Marketers must be prepared to address increased workflow complexity, campaign management across multiple borders and channels, and variations in multicultural communication.

This white paper is in continuation of a series exploring the diverse capabilities that Marketing Asset Management solutions bring to marketers around the globe.

In the first paper, Frost & Sullivan explored the broad value proposition spanning cost reduction, workflow optimization, revenue generation and brand consistency using H&R Block as an example of a company that benefitted tremendously through its marketing asset management deployment.

In the second paper, Frost & Sullivan described the achievable benefits of marketing asset management when leveraged in conjunction with a collateral customization solution, further expanding upon the previously described value proposition. Illustrating the use of these technologies, the paper explored how Hospital Corporation of America (HCA), a leading healthcare management vendor, streamlined its marketing content workflows and achieved astonishing return on investment through its deployment of marketing asset management and collateral customization solutions.

Now in the third part of this series, Frost & Sullivan scales the concepts laid out in the previous two papers to a global level. Using General Motors as a case study, we examine how these technologies can be used to support and reinforce a global brand, while tailoring its marketing messaging to become relevant and targeted to a local audience.

In this paper you will see why locally customized content matters more than ever, how you can effectively feed—or kill—your hard-earned global brand through your choice of channel and message, and how streamlined market asset management can create an even more powerful return on assets.
HOW TECHNOLOGY HAS SHRUNK THE WORLD

In today’s digitized business ecosystem, the local business can convert into a successful venture with customers and operations all over the world, and the global business can grow into a larger-reaching enterprise with efficient logistics and a strong brand.

Yet there is insanity to globalization for the company who struggles to adapt to ever-changing trends in digitization and the diversity of business norms. Technology can manage the core messaging of a global company, construing a bridge between vendors and customers, or it can quickly expose a brand’s inability to fit with the sociocultural norms of other geographies.

Business is Globalizing and so are its Marketing Channels

Now more than ever, businesses are looking to enter foreign markets to develop key customer and partner relationships around the globe, improve their international operations, and forge a strong global brand presence.

In some cases, tried-and-true offline marketing channels such as billboards, print ads and TV commercials will be important tools, but in most cases, Web 2.0 or 3.0 and other digital technologies will be indispensable in marketing to the global prospect and driving monetization.

Web-based marketing channels, including targeted or personalized display ads, product suggestions, landing pages, and social and geosocial media, can reach diverse populations and convert them into qualified leads or customers, while software or Web applications support the company’s global logistics and workflow.

If used appropriately, these tools afford the company many cost and efficiency advantages. But they may also come at a price. The channel that works in one country may not appeal to another. The business’s value proposition may transform as it crosses a country border. Learning how to deploy and manage newer technologies may be cumbersome at best. Further, customers may engage with multiple channels in a single transaction.
The global marketer must then skillfully select the medium with the right fit for the environment or product, and navigate the complexity of multichannel integration, campaign management, and results tracking.

**WHY LOCAL MATTERS MORE NOW THAN EVER – REGIONAL VARIATIONS IN CONTEXT**

Attempting to speak to billions can turn off millions, and every skilled marketer knows it’s better that a message reach and appeal to precisely the populations it intends rather than falling on the deaf ears of the masses.

This concept of “ad waste” is especially important to pay attention to for businesses that primarily leverage online media for their marketing, since a global online presence may tend toward broad, but not deep, appeal. Interfacing with languages, social norms, and political influences it may not understand, a business’s Web-based marketing efforts can quickly derail when a local culture doesn’t find its widely broadcasted global message relevant or worthy of engaging.

Yet with any channel, online or off, attempting to use the same marketing tactics as in other regions will be unproductive, at best. Global businesses must be especially adept at identifying the most appropriate means to reach diverse populations and hook them in with relevant messaging. They must be sensitive to perceptions around emotion and humor, linguistic nuances, social identities, cultural values, and rules and regulations of the foreign markets into which they seek to expand.

For example, take Pepsi’s marketing launch in Japan. While MTV-like advertising with beloved pop stars captured American consumers, these same promotions in Japan felt disunified and inconsistent, and failed to tap into the idolization of American pop music that Japanese teenagers had at that time. Pepsi also began a taste-tasting challenge against Coke, which had been successful in playing on enthusiasm for the American lifestyle with its “I feel like Coke” campaign, and Pepsi again took a loss as the Japanese perceived this competitive style to be arrogant and off-putting.

These two leading soda brands dueled neck and neck for decades as they sought to claim a larger global footprint in each new territory through their marketing efforts. But sometimes to become globally appealing, a brand needs to look beyond its marketing channels and messaging and ask whether the product itself is locally relevant. A full-size pickup truck might be a great work vehicle for a Texan ranch, but would be costly, inconvenient, and bizarre on the crowded narrow streets of Istanbul.

The price point of how a product fits with the local environment is also worth re-examining. For example, many technology companies offer a “pay-as-you-grow” fee structure for their software when developing their presence in Southeast Asia or India, rather than expecting to sell on volume at North American prices.
To keep alive and healthy in these new territories, the global company must leverage technology to manage these diverse needs and must relentlessly think locally.

**THE SIMULTANEOUS CASE FOR GLOBAL – CONSISTENT BRANDING AND MARKETING OPTIMIZATION**

Marketing that speaks to the region-by-region needs, interests, and cultural communication norms is a must-have for local-level acceptance of a brand’s message.

Yet an overly adaptive brand that radically changes its core messaging from country to country risks sounding insincere, and misses out on presenting a strong brand with a defined personality that people know and trust. In fact, the purpose of a global brand is that it leverages its successes in one or more regions to strengthen its share of voice in another. Otherwise, why not have a separate brand for every country?

It also benefits from cost-savings in marketing operations, and combines marketing channels in a unique and powerful way. Yet these assets cannot be taken advantage of with a fragmented presence.

All good brands evoke a feeling, so how does that feeling stay consistent and carry across borders? Be it a logo’s color scheme or a tagline’s implications, the brand must be accurate, emotive, and congruent.

For example, a “made in America” clothing label for someone in the United States may conjure up a feeling of national pride or reinforce a belief about ethics and manufacturing practices; overseas, “made in America” is an appeal to entirely different feelings around a lifestyle or cultural aspiration. The symbolism of a logo or the nuances of a tagline need to be globally acceptable and must speak to a non-geographically bound social community.

**GOING “GLOCAL”: THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS**

**The Whys**

A global brand needs consistent messaging, yet flexibility to adapt in different regions. If a marketing message is too universal, it fails to endear itself to its local customer. Yet if it’s too local, it becomes entrenched in the minutiae of regional preferences, loses sight of the brand’s big picture, and creates a lot of redundancies and inefficiencies in the process.

“Glocal” marketing—global unity with local sensitivity—is the best way for a brand to meet its objectives and its customers’ needs.

As we have seen, there are benefits and pitfalls to investing too heavily in either the regional or the universal. A global approach encourages the product line as well as marketing channels, core messaging, and campaigns to earn widespread positive attention.
Brand confusion is disastrous for a company. It’s a waste of limited resources and a quick way to repel a community or lose hard-earned customers. So how can a brand maintain consistency while also catering to its communities’ needs and wants?

**The Hows**

Glocal marketing needs a well-thought-out strategy and skillful execution to be relevant and interesting. Here are two key ways a brand can do just that.

**Understand What Matters to Locals and Create Relevant Marketing Content**

For a brand to have a strong impact in multiple regions, it must recognize the broad range of cultural values and motivations across geographies, even when its prospects may share similar needs or desires.

For example, where a wristwatch might be a practical time-keeping device for a businessman in one community, it might be a status symbol or fashion piece for a businessman in another, thus the brand’s image and communication objectives will be completely distinct in each of these settings.

The brand must understand what matters to which customer group or set of prospects worldwide and then create the perfect product framing. It must position the product correctly in the middle of the right message.

And then it must be relevant and intriguing enough to pull people in.

High-yield marketing is no longer about blasting a message; it’s about building a community around your product. Respected marketing author Al Ries said, “The more you say about your product, the less people hear.”

Glocal marketing, then, is not just carefully delivering a message to people in select areas around the world; it’s using inbound marketing to attract people into a global affinity, to experience the product in an engaged and connected context.

The glocal message is not always bought. It is earned.

**Identify the Appropriate Channel(s) to Meet Regional Media Preferences**

Glocal marketing creates a community around its brand, and it travels far. Choosing the marketing medium that is most effective allows a brand to be proactive as it spreads its reach, identifying the prospects it wants to build relationships with, and creating stickiness in its product and message.

After identifying the different needs and motivations its global customers may have and cultivating a relevant message, the next piece of the glocal brand’s communication strategy is selecting the communication channel that most makes sense to its various communities.
In some cases, the conversion chain will happen across multiple mediums—radio to print to coupon to store, or Web forum to social media to shopping cart. Again, the method that yields a high return in one country may not in another.

For example, India today has the highest growth of mobile phone penetration, and texting is all the rage. SMS, then, could be a worthwhile avenue for a brand to boost its awareness. In the U.S., newspapers are a dying breed, but in other countries like Brazil or Russia, they are alive and well. A healthy channel in one geographical location might not be the most effective in another.

The global brand must be nimble and adapt to the medium that makes most sense for the lifestyle and behaviors of the customer community it wants to engage, and it must be willing to change as new technologies become embraced and regional preferences shift.

GLOBAL CHANNEL, SINGLE PLATFORM

As we can see, launching global campaigns or managing multiple channels across one or many geographies can be challenging at best. Text and images and ad creatives are being developed in more than one region at the same time, and even within each regional office there may be several parties involved in the campaign-building process. Each region has its own measurements, and channel- or segment-based analytics are likely getting tracked as well.

The only way order can be brought to this chaos is through using a single, unified platform. Being able to assemble this ever-changing information in a dynamic way helps the glocal company be nimble and eliminate many manual redundancies that have grown out of a stunted legacy workflow.

Automating this workflow in an integrated platform means every piece of information or marketing collateral is freed from its prison of scrutiny, but can become self-aware through pre-established triggers and essentially manage itself. The process will be initiated and will proceed through a standardized course, and abnormalities will be red-flagged to call attention to any aspect that does not conform to what has been specified. Now, rather than sifting through every document, the marketing manager can get involved as needed, and instead of performing routine tasks, can focus on those with greater revenue-generating potential.

This becomes especially important as different global regions have different needs, requirements, and regulations.

For example, through a glocal automated workflow, process flagging and in-region approval systems for end-version control can be incredibly important where geographic regulations vary. GM might need to comply with certain emission standards that have been adopted by another economic bloc, and an end-region approval process can help catch such a nuance and ensure it accurately positions and represents the integrity of the company by using the right version of its collateral. This helps the company forgo money going down the drain from declined sales, expensive lawsuits, and long-term brand damage.
A NEW KIND OF MAM

These capabilities sound great, but does such a platform exist?

Saepio’s MarketPort is built to handle the complexities of building and running a cross-channel campaign, either from a corporate marketing level or in partnership with your local marketing network.

Marketing fulfillment automation takes as much of the human process out of the marketing execution workflow as possible, allowing for time and cost-savings.

At the heart of its solution lives Saepio’s marketing asset management, but rather than stopping at the traditional limited capabilities like file structure or version management, marketers can break down their branded content into a headline, a descriptor, a call to action, and other relevant information tagging to facilitate ease of sale at a local store, for example.

Sending an automated email is a fairly simple task for most marketing software, but when more complex activities like sending a direct mail piece are needed, several more steps are involved. An online list may need to be carefully selected, localization concerns arise, and the cost of mailing in the specific currency must also be calculated. Saepio’s platform allows the glocal marketer to select a list and give a command to calculate its cost along with printing, postage, and local taxes. Then once he or she has transacted with the order, the file for printing gets routed to the company’s printer and the appropriate payment is sent out to the list provider, printer, or postage to the mail house. All these activities that happen in the background throughout the process of creating marketing collateral become easily automated.

This simple, turnkey solution reduces the time and cost of each activity, and requires no expertise from the local marketer.

Shared Dynamic Content Assembly

Brand control is the biggest concern of Saepio’s most skilled global customers. It can take years to grow awareness, trust and a devoted customer base, a process which takes even more time and resources to develop in new geographies.

Every customer touchpoint for a brand must be relevant, polished, and consistent. Yet as we saw above, there are usually several people in different functions, divisions, and regions of an organization, all who play a part in developing and distributing marketing content. Typically there are two types of users: at the corporate or administrative level managing digital assets, creating templates, initiating roles and managing permissions; and the front-end user who consumes and works with that information, and tries to customize that marketing material to suit its customer, be it a print ad, Web campaign, or other customer touchpoint.
Now more than ever, reaching your prospects and building community is a job for content marketing. And while entire volumes have been written on the how-to of effective content marketing, the name of the game is speed.

Speed means an organization can react quickly to consumer trends and preferences. It requires minimal time to prepare for and launch campaigns. And it is first to come out with fresh material. The successful glocal brand absolutely must get its message dialed in quickly and published repeatedly if it wants to be top of mind around the world.

Through a platform like Saepio’s MarketPort, this process is collaborative and dynamic. All participants, regardless of their silo, can quickly drill down to the content layer they need by product level or campaign, for example, and make the appropriate glocal adjustments. MarketPort’s shared dynamic content assembly means multiple people in an organization can easily collaborate and contribute to building the right glocal message as fast as possible.

**Fulfillment Automation and Workflow**

With so many sets of hands on a piece of marketing collateral, redundancies and inefficiencies begin to emerge. Thankfully, automated workflow and fulfillment triggers can be set up to reduce mundane tasks and alleviate marketing team miscommunications and process lag times.

Most of the marketer’s daily tasks can be made actionable in the MarketPort platform within templates and sub-templates that drive information and commands and create ease in the process of execution.

Workflow systems can intelligently look for duplications, inconsistencies and other common errors throughout the content creation process, and flag them for special attention. Merchant capabilities, budgetary constraints, regional printing specifications, pricing information, and asset management can all be managed and adjusted based on the user’s authentication.

At a corporate level, items related to specific pieces of a campaign can be scheduled with “to-dos” for local users, automatic expiration dates for multimedia can be programmed, files can be transformed or published in bulk, metadata can be tweaked, and the original recipe can be saved and reverted to down the road.

Rather than reviewing every single document, then, the marketing manager need only check for what doesn’t conform to the system, often only a fraction of the total pieces produced. All materials can be checked out at one time rather than having to do multiple checkouts. This frees him or her up to focus on the creative development, strategic management, and other tasks.

**System Language and Translation Matters**

Multiple language capabilities are extremely important to the glocal marketer from both a production and a publishing standpoint. If a multiregional workteam can’t communicate because they don’t share a common language, how can they push material through the
workflow process? And riskier yet, if a brand doesn’t understand the linguistic nuances of each region, it could publish something in error to a worldwide audience or miss an opportunity to attract millions.

Saepio’s MarketPort not only converts itself and the brand’s marketing assets into the language of the viewer, it allows the local viewer to set a default language preference or customize it into a different language if working in a multilingual environment.

Translation is also key in bringing out the nuances of a brand. The feeling a customer associates with a product is often preverbal and complex, and a brand must be able to convey these specific emotions and beliefs through a clear story that locals can understand and identify with.

Further, each channel also has its own communication needs. A billboard on the side of a highway employs different communication techniques and stylistic elements than a weblog, even when the same brand uses both means to market, yet the core message or feeling must remain the same. Email, banner ads, landing pages, mobile and print ads, Facebook posts, SMS texts, car toppers—these can all be tied together as a connected campaign in Saepio’s platform and launched globally with the appropriate language and implicit message.

**KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL “GLOCAL” IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT**

**Think Shared System with Local Access**

As we have seen, a glocal presence requires a universal brand message with relevant regional variations. This requires a flexible framework, a marketing automation platform that provides the building blocks but not the exact local level blueprint.

And it calls for the ability for regional marketers to be empowered to make relevant adjustments. There is simply no way a single team in one country or a few upper-level managers scattered across different geographies can understand the social and emotional implications of multiple products described through a variety of channels all over the globe.

What one culture or community appreciates, another may find confusing. A funny ad may seem lighthearted in one context and offensive in another. And a currency quoted in one e-commerce engine may disorient the customer abroad. Further, an automated system may mean marketing collateral becomes stale or redundant.

In-region approval processes mean local marketers can constantly fine-tune the details of their campaigns, keep an eye on how their audience or customer base is reacting to a campaign in real time and augment or kill it immediately, and it allows a team spread across multiple regions to effectively communicate and coordinate workflow.
TECHNOLOGY TO THE RESCUE: ACDelco, A CASE STUDY

A global leader in automotive replacement parts and related services, ACDelco’s focus has always been on building a reputation as the number-one source for quality auto parts. ACDelco professional aftermarket products cover most GM vehicles as well as many other makes and models. The company serves the globe from the Americas to Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia Pacific. Marketing is a tiered approach for the company, spanning 14 different languages.

To deal with the amount of marketing collateral across product categories/makes/models/geographies, ACDelco initially invested in a customized solution largely developed in-house and very soon realized that the total cost of ownership was not yielding the sort of return on investment that was hoped for.

Users were not happy with the searchability of marketing assets residing within the system, which was a critical requirement for marketing to be nimble. The company found that usage of the system dropped off drastically, and with the lack of a good marketing template builder tool, users were spending more time searching for and crafting the needed marketing asset in a very inefficient way.

Finally, not willing to invest more into the home-grown system, ACDelco looked at what the market had to offer. The company received more than a half-dozen competitive bids and selected Saepio to replace its system and help meet its challenge.

ACDelco was able to see the benefit of moving away from its home-grown legacy to Saepio in a short time. The company was able to move more than 100,000 marketing assets to the Saepio system within three months. ACDelco found the company to be very responsive to its needs, which helped ACDelco be more responsive to its customers.

The company was able to push out quarterly promotions to more than 6,000 of its customers on time without any additional mailings. The company also found that with the drastic improvement in usability compared to its home-grown solution, usage increased considerably and marketing asset development time was reduced by half on average. In one case, an agency that was building campaign material for the company ended up charging more than four times the original quote. Using Saepio, ACDelco is able to achieve all of that at half of the agency’s original quoted price.

Additionally, ACDelco now benefits from knowing its marketing organization and other stakeholders have the most up-to-date marketing collateral, thanks to strong version control and high usage of the system. Content discovery is now much faster and more relevant than ever. With the ability to constantly link with the marketing assets within any piece of marketing collateral, ACDelco can easily create constantly fresh marketing messages that can be customized and personalized for the many use-cases encountered.
With the ability to create marketing templates and be the go-to content management system for its marketing organization, ACDelco now has more than 5,000 users on the system that use it for not only branding and marketing, but due to its popularity, also for corporate training collateral.

**CONCLUSION**

For way too long marketers have been trying to crack the code that would enable them to be effective globally. Success in this endeavor typically has a steep price associated with it as it comes at the cost of efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Marketing organizations are constantly under time and resource pressures and do not have luxury of extensive budgets.

To launch an effective marketing campaign across regions and demographics, marketers need the tools to be effective at targeting and personalizing content for their target audience in a timely and cost-effective manner. Lead nurturing, management, intelligence and conversion cannot even start to happen if a marketer does not have the right content crafted and managed for targeted delivery. Lead tracking through marketing automation, for example, is a wasted effort if marketing does not have the right marketing assets that can be personalized and pushed to the right market constituents to start.

This paper has highlighted how in today's environment, where companies have to be global to grow, marketing can become highly effective from the very start of the marketing content creation process to enable the maximum probability of success for the marketing campaign downstream. Today, marketers have a choice of solutions thanks to companies such as Saepio that have been proactive in assessing the evolving needs of the marketing function and constantly develop solutions that help marketers succeed.
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