

The importance of corporate terminology management

Why terminology is key for today's
global business

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Introduction

In today's fast-paced world, businesses are required to go to even greater lengths in order to stand out and be heard in what is becoming an increasingly noisy marketplace. Today's prospective customer not only expects information to be delivered via the medium of their choice, but also at the right time and in their language.

For companies operating in international markets the need for consistent localization is now more important than ever – and for some it is even a prerequisite for complying with standards and ensuring legal compliance. This eBook discusses the role professional corporate terminology management plays in the provision of consistent localization and why it should be a key strategic goal for your entire organization.

This eBook was written in conjunction with two leading corporate terminology experts, who between them have worked with a number of large multi-national organizations to develop professional corporate terminology strategies.

What do you mean?

Even with the simplest of terms misunderstanding can easily occur and cause confusion amongst your audience.



About the authors

Silvia Cerrella Bauer



Silvia Cerrella Bauer is Owner and Project Manager of CB Multilingual, a company providing high-end multilingual communications solutions based in the Zurich region. She regularly provides her expertise for terminology research and training projects run by specialised professional networks, associations and institutes of higher education Europe-wide.

Diana Brändle



Diana Brändle holds a degree in translation and did her diploma thesis on terminological entry structures. She has worked in the domain of terminology for nearly 20 years. In 2005 she started her own terminology consulting and training business and supports small and large companies/organisations in terminology work through her company dbterm terminologieservice based in the Munich area.

What is terminology?

Terminology can be described on a basic level as a vocabulary of words, terms and phrases that are used for a specific industry, organization, or field of study.

Within a business, terminology holds the key to a company's global knowledge management and sharing. Every business is likely to have unique terminology that helps with differentiation, branding, global communication and legal compliance.

In the modern world, ruled by the globalization of business and the rapid creation and dissemination of online content, the unique terminology of a business (its technical terms, brand names, trademarks etc.) becomes increasingly important to manage and keep consistent across languages in order to communicate effectively with customers worldwide.

85%

of employees often use a different term to their colleagues in other departments to refer to the same concept*

*Successful terminology management in companies, by Straub and Schmitz, 2010.

Corporate terminology management explained

By Silvia Cerrella Bauer

Corporate terminology management is the process of systematically gathering terms that are primarily used in corporate documents and deliverables. Any organization active at an international level needs to make its deliverables available in various languages, and the terms collected need to be explained, described, updated and made available to different target groups within or outside the organization.

Professional terminology management is predominantly prescriptive, i.e. the use of certain terms is regulated. Their use can become mandatory for several reasons: these terms are organization-specific or used exclusively by the organization, their use is banned since they either do not comply with the organization's language conventions, or simply because they are used by the competitors.

Through their spoken and written language, organizations are constantly creating terminology, irrespective of whether they manage it or not. The question is whether the terminology generated is systematically used in a standardized fashion or not.

The importance of managing terminology

Organizations that set out to manage terminology recognize the value unambiguous and consistent terms can have in helping to build a successful business in a fiercely competitive market. Without professionally managed terminology, corporate language and communication between the organization and its staff, partners and stakeholders can suffer.

Managing corporate terminology provides real benefit to a company's bottom line and can be measured in ways that managers appreciate (e.g. monetary based reasons). Put simply, by establishing an effective way of managing terminology the business benefits from:

- Strategic advantage in globalized, multilingual markets
- Reduced translation costs
- Greater reuse and retrievability of information
- Clearer messages within the organization and to its customers
- Advantages in markets where compliance with regulations is necessary
- Easier understanding of documentation and collaterals
- Reduced need for additional content/explanations due to clear and comprehensible terms
- Stronger corporate and brand identity inside and outside the company
- Less time spent researching or querying terminology

How terminology management benefits the wider business

By Diana Brändle

Managing terminology supports every part of the business that uses a non-native language, as well as all those who use corporate language as part of their work.

By defining a concept and assigning one allowed term per language to it, a company can make sure that everybody involved in the communication process is clear and consistent, no matter which department, subject area or which text type is concerned. This consistency and clarity can deliver a wide range of benefits beyond the typical sales and marketing benefits, such as:

- **Customs department.** No more problems at customs when exporting products, because terminology is consistent in product documentation and labels
- **Legal Department. Conformity with legal requirements, e.g. Machinery Directive 2006/42/EC**
- **Research & Development.** Enable clear and consistent terminology throughout the whole lifecycle of a product/service by defining concepts from the start
- **Standardization / Quality management department.** The use of standardized terminology is a prerequisite to comply with legal requirements and standards. The new standard IEC 82079-1 "Preparation of instructions for use - Structuring, content and presentation - Part 1: General

principles and detailed requirements", for example states: "Consistent terminology shall be used in the instructions for use, on the product and its packaging, and in supplementary materials, all training and promotional materials including markings, labels and transport packaging."

- **Translation Department efficiencies:** faster delivery of translations, delivery of quality-controlled translations and lower translation costs through higher fuzzy-rate matches.

UP TO **70%**
of errors in technical documentation
are due to use of wrong terminology.*

*acc. to Jörg Schütz and Rita Nübel, MULTIDOC project

Terminology management systems

A terminology management system is a dedicated software solution that enables mono or multilingual corporate knowledge to be stored and shared across the entire enterprise, regardless of their physical location.

Providing a wealth of information, a terminology management system will contain more than just isolated terms by providing the possibility to store and manage:

- Valuable and meaningful illustrative information
- Data fields for describing individual concepts like Domain, Definition, Project, Product and other details
- Essential additional information about every term like: Usage Recommendation, Part of Speech, Gender, etc.

The reasons for the success of terminology management systems within organizations today are the result of more than their ability to

capture terminology and associated information. Their flexible nature allows them to cater for the real world needs of the organization, by providing:

1 The ability to handle multiple languages

A terminology management system offers the ability to manage all worldwide languages; this means that it must be 100% Unicode-enabled. By managing terms in all languages (European, Eastern European, Asian, Arabic), companies can standardize on one workflow, using a single piece of technology.

2 Scalable infrastructure for a distributed environment

Connecting many users to the same data repository in real time cuts significant data replication costs and avoids outdated data. A terminology management system can grow with the needs of an organization, from small to enterprise-level. A modular architecture that is easy to implement and cost effective to scale guarantees the best performance, regardless of system load.

3 Integrate into global workflows

The more people who have access to the system, the higher the benefit of using and maintaining the content in a central repository. Knowledge workers want access to term assets from within their business application: developers from within a design tool; technical writers from within word processors; translators from within translation memory systems (including the capability to do fuzzy searching, ensuring that inflected or transposed forms of terms will be found); marketing managers from within an internet browser or a content management system, and so on.



Terminology technology - why MS Excel or MS Word dictionaries are not enough

By Diana Brändle

To collect corporate terminology a text processing or spreadsheet programme such as MS Word or MS Excel, may seem to be sufficient. In some cases, they can actually be used to collect terminology, provided that the basic rules of terminology work are observed.

But if an organization is looking to develop a professional terminology management strategy then it is imperative that they consider implementing a system that can truly manage a large terminology collection for multiple authors and translators in a distributed environment that can offer the following capabilities:

- Assign a usage status to a term e.g. prescribed or deprecated
- Filter terminological data according to certain criteria, like subject field and languages
- Add illustrations, bibliographical and source information
- Add cross-references from one term to another

- Record metadata like date of entry, user, modification date, etc.
- Define read and/ or write permissions for accessing certain terminological data
- Provide terminological data online
- Use terminological data with other tools and interfaces such as Authoring Tools, Controlled Language Checkers and Translation Memory Systems.

Neither word processing or spreadsheet programmes are capable of meeting the needs of a professional terminology strategy and therefore cannot be considered a viable solution.

Getting started - tips from the professionals

It's hard to know where to get started in building a terminology strategy for your organization, so our two corporate terminology consultants offer up some top tips.



Silvia Cerrella Bauer



Diana Brändle

Tips from the professionals

Silvia Cerrella Bauer

Introducing terminology management internally can meet with some resistance. Proper planning is therefore essential, with the objectives clearly defined at the outset. This includes formulating the needs for terminology management and specifying the problem areas which will benefit from it. Goal development is essential. Any terminology management project should include quantitative and qualitative goals. So when it comes to planning your project, consider the following:

- Form a representative project team and make sure to include members from the various locations (if applicable)
- Outline precisely how terminology management will be integrated in the (current or future) working processes of the target users and beneficiaries
- Draw up at least two scenarios for introducing terminology management: with either a lesser or greater investment and either a shorter or longer time span within which to attain the expected results
- Use the SMART model for formulating the project goals. SMART stands for “specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely” and is applicable in many management contexts
- Take the time for eliciting the needs for terminology management as you see it and as seen by the different target users and beneficiaries
- Make sure that terminology management is integrated as early as possible into the document and deliverables production processes, thereby eliminating gaps between authoring, design and translation
- Be sure to furnish qualitative goals with hard figures
- Begin any project by taking small steps (e.g. pilot project involving the terminology related to a given product or service, or project with an initially modest budget/production volume)
- Define intermediary goals as project milestones on a short-term and a long-term basis
- Articulate the benefits for as many users and beneficiaries as possible
- Target continuity, not perfection.

Tips from the professionals

Diana Brändle

Whether you want to start with terminology work from scratch or raise terminology work in your organization to a higher level, here is a list of basic tips and best practices that will help you to get started and define how to proceed:

- Be clear about your goals (Why do you want or need to manage your terminology? What do you want to achieve, to improve or prevent?)
- Check which terminological collections are already there, in which format, what amount, which languages, the quality and from which sources
- Check which languages/locales you need to cover
- Take existing systems and other tools and interfaces into account
- Check what type and amount of information you need for your terminological collections (e.g. Definition, Domain, Business Unit, Source, Illustration)
- Analyse, what project, domain, type of text, language, etc. has priority, as well as whom you have to involve, get the support
- When you enter or edit data, make sure to abide to basic rules of terminology management like concept orientation and term autonomy; stick to existing style guides or create guidelines
- Check if you have the knowledge to implement a terminology management process yourself or if you need further education or possibly external help
- Set up a project plan: who does what, for how long, how?

Terminology technology - a look at SDL MultiTerm

SDL MultiTerm is the market leading terminology management software from SDL. It provides one central location to store and manage terminology in multiple languages. By integrating with the content creation and translation processes, SDL MultiTerm provides the consistency, quality and productivity that companies need to deliver content to their global customers.

A flexible and scalable solution, SDL MultiTerm allows users to manage a range of terminology databases (termbases) as well as large-scale enterprise-level terminology via their desktop or online through an internet browser.



Terminology technology - a look at SDL MultiTerm

Benefits of SDL MultiTerm:

Ensures central access for all involved in applying terminology

- A central location for everyone that ensures source content, translations, and global branding are consistent
- Engineering, marketing, support and other departments within an enterprise can access and contribute to centralized terminology

Improves brand consistency and multilingual content quality

- Ensures consistency in branding and clarity of content in all communications with your customers
- Translators can provide better quality multilingual content for their clients

Reduces costs and increases productivity

- Increased translation efficiency, as terms are defined and researched at the authoring stage and applied consistently through to translation
- The cost of creating multilingual content is reduced, as consistent terminology eliminates errors and duplication of effort, as well as reducing the length of the translation review cycle.

The hard facts - customer ROI results

Companies that have implemented a corporate terminology strategy that includes SDL MultiTerm at its core have gone on to realize some dramatic results.

Here is a selection of ROI results from SDL MultiTerm customers.



- Achieved higher quality and consistency of translation of 30 million + words per year in 36 languages
- Prevented legal problems by avoiding the misuse of inaccurate terminology that could result in legal action

30 WORDS
MILLION



- Increased the average first-time translation quality from 75% to 95%
- Helped bring new healthcare solutions to market 60% faster

95%
FIRST TIME TRANSLATION

The hard facts - customer ROI results



Giesecke & Devrient

- Translation costs reduced by 15-20%
- 30-40% increase in terminology reuse

TRANSLATION COSTS

REDUCED **20%**



- Translation specialists achieved 30% more productivity when using SDL MultiTerm
- Time required for localization of user manuals reduced by 50%

30%

MORE PRODUCTIVE

BOSCH

- The Bosch terminology portal ensures terms are only localized once. When approved, each newly translated term is then available to all departments
- Bosch's cross-departmental approach saves time and money. Centralized and always accurate access ensures the consistent use of up-to-date terms, in all business divisions, and departments in this international company.

About SDL

SDL enables global businesses to enrich their customers' experience through the entire customer journey. SDL's technology and services help brands to predict what their customers want and engage with them across multiple languages, cultures, channels and devices. SDL has over 1,500 enterprise customers, 400 partners and a global infrastructure of 70 offices in 38 countries. 42 out of the top 50 brands work with SDL. For more information, visit www.sdl.com.

www.sdl.com/terminology