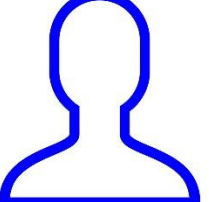


LOCALIZATION IN THE PRODUCT PRODUCTION PROCESS (A DRAMATIC REENACTMENT)

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Starring:  Head

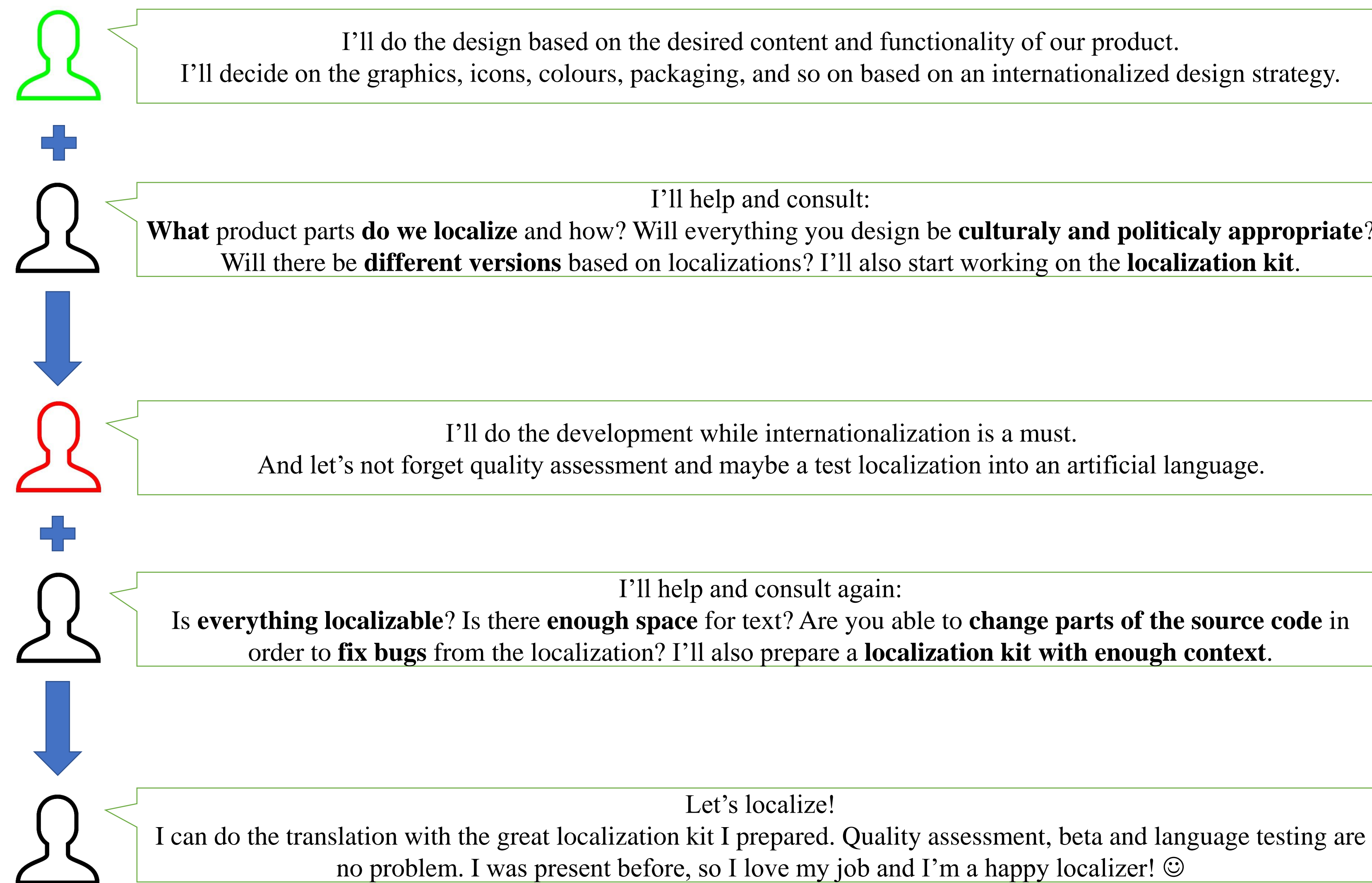
 Design

 Development

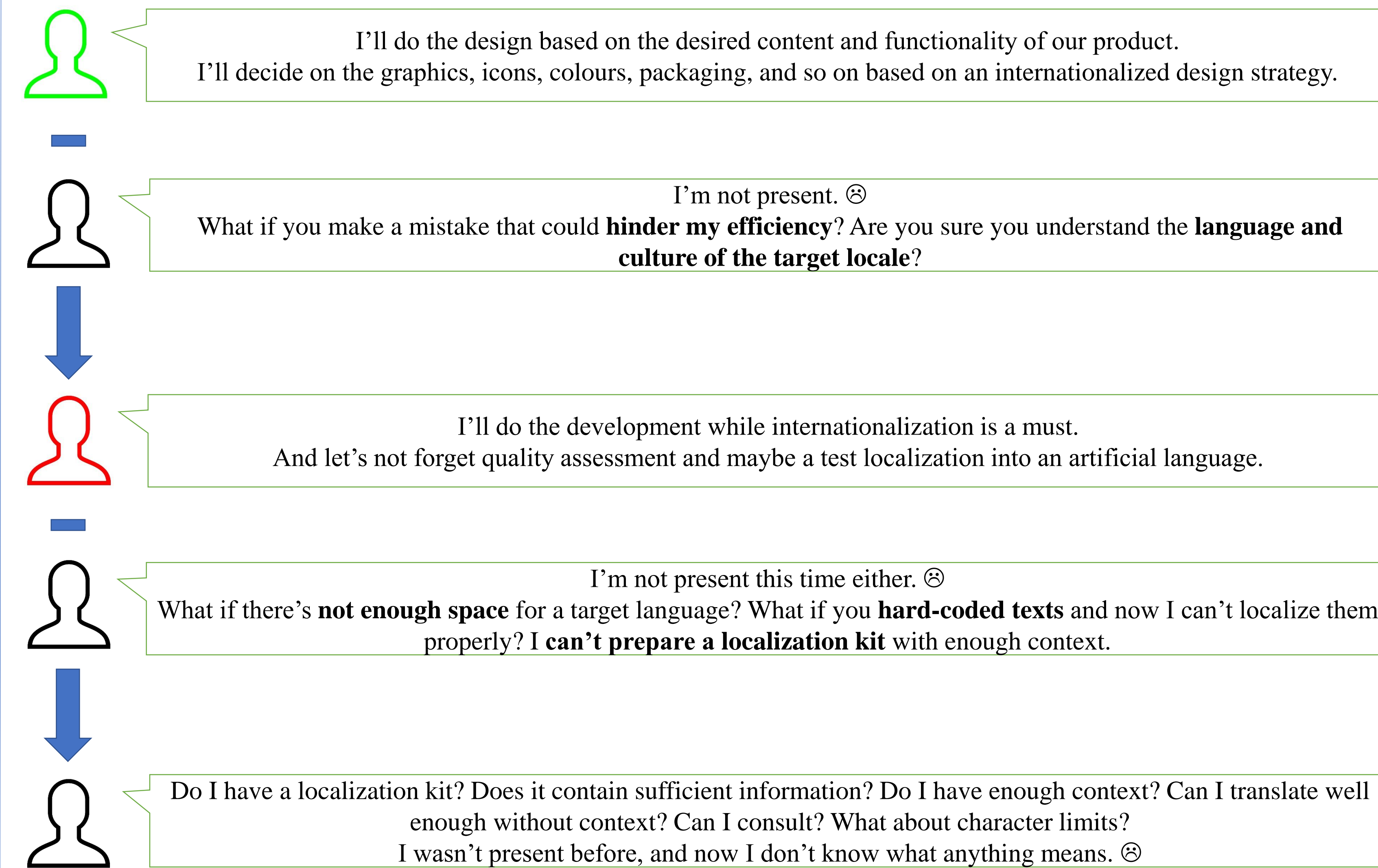
 Localization

Let's go global!

EXPECTATIONS



REALITY



So, where do I fit in?
Easy: If you're aiming for the **highest quality**, I need to be **involved in everything**. Otherwise I could create unwanted errors and wrong interpretations of the source text, and we don't want that, right?
But let's look at everything from a different perspective.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT CYCLE

PRODUCT REQUIREMENTS ANALYSIS

The product designing process begins with a basic requirements analysis. If a product should go global, the analysis should be done for all potential markets, which means that in best practices in-country staff should be employed. The result should create global product specifications that will ensure efficient internationalization and easier localization (and minimize update and maintenance costs). This step contains:

➤ CONTENT AND FUNCTIONALITY

The design and lead teams need to consider what functions and content the global product provides and what local content there is that supplies the same or similar functions and content. These issues are also closely connected to future support, possible legislation issues and best practices.

➤ LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL ISSUES

At this point the teams also consider what needs to be translated and what local or cultural conventions there are to adhere to. The teams must not forget about different types of content (e.g., colours, graphics, and marketing) that might need changes in different locales, as some could be offensive in specific markets.

INTERNATIONALIZED PRODUCT DESIGN

The requirements analysis is followed by product design with specifications needed for development. The basic design needs to be flexible (so the product can be adapted to different locales, e.g., double-byte characters or bi-directional languages) and it must not forget translation so that language parts of the product are clear, accessible, understandable (e.g., not hard-coded and with enough space for other languages).

INTERNATIONALIZED PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

The development team creates a basic internationalized product based on the internationalized product design.

INTERNATIONALIZED PRODUCT TESTING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

The developed internationalized product needs to be tested and possible bugs must be fixed, as these could reproduce themselves in different localized versions. It is also possible to "localize" the product into an artificial language in order to identify possible errors early on.

PRODUCT LOCALIZATION

Now begins the localization process, and different points from the requirements analysis are implemented. If a company localizes a product into several languages, it might divide them into several tiers according to their importance and first focus only on some of them in order to ship (simultaneous shipment) the product in the most important markets.

If the product was internationalized well and localization was taken into consideration from the beginning, localizers will understand all features of the target version and will have access to a product version as a reference (which, sadly, is not always the case).

LOCALIZED PRODUCT TESTING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

The localized product version needs to be tested as well. Other than technical, functional, and linguistic quality assurance, the localized product needs to be tested for cultural and political correctness (policecheck) as well.

LOCALIZED PRODUCT MARKETING, SUPPORT, AND FEEDBACK

After the finalized localized product version is released, it enters the support stage. Companies can collect feedback and create patches or updates that need to be localized for individual target markets.

LOCALIZATION IN PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

REVENUE FOR GLOBAL MARKETS

The product requirement analysis should take revenue projections for global markets into consideration.

WHICH PRODUCT COMPONENTS WILL BE LOCALIZED?

The same analysis should specify which product components and documentation will be localized into which languages, especially if the company has several tiers of languages into which it localizes products.

MEDIA, PACKAGING, AND OTHER FACTORS FOR LOCALIZED VERSIONS

Issues like media, packaging, and part numbering need to be specified, as these can have different style conventions in different languages.

GRAPHICS WITH TEXT, ICONS, AND CHARACTER LIMITS

The design team should also consider graphics with embedded text, culture-specific icons, and character limits when creating product parts like user interface.

FIRST LOCALIZATION KIT (AFTER THE DESIGN PHASE)

First parts of the localization kit can be created during the design phase as well (e.g., character design and window design).

DEVELOPMENT OF A LOCALIZABLE PRODUCT

The development team should consider the following points:

- the (im)possibility to localize graphics with embedded text, culture specific icons, and character limits
- the (im)possibility to localize screen shots, graphics, and inconsistent terminology
- source-code control, building tools, bug tracking, and what systems need to support localized files
- the need to fix core (internationalization) source code issues created during localization.

LOCALIZATION KIT READINESS (AFTER THE DEVELOPMENT PHASE)

After the development and quality assurance of a finalized internationalized product version, the localization kit can be completed with finite information.

TRANSLATION AND LOCALIZATION

The localization team creates a new language version for the specified language and cultural locale.

BETA PROGRAM

The beta version should be tested for functionality and technical issues as well as linguistic, cultural, and political issues.

LINGUISTIC AND FUNCTIONAL CONTENT QUALITY ASSURANCE

The beta program must fulfil several quality assurance tests (linguistic and functional) before the final release of the product.

LOCALIZATION OF UPDATES, PATCHES, AND OTHER FEATURES

Localization continues after product launch in the form of the localization of things like updates and patches.

SOURCES

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