

# Band-aids Don't Fix Localization Challenges

How a major athletic apparel company made a bold move to reinvent its localization approach - and solved for scalability in the process.

When a major international athletic apparel retailer connected with Summa Linguae Technologies two years ago, the company was looking for the best way to maximize limited internal resources to manage growing localization needs for their websites and apps. Like many large corporations struggling to keep pace with digital multilingual content demands, it turned out they were asking the wrong question.

What began as a limited consulting engagement has since blossomed into an ongoing strategic partnership, where Summa Linguae acts as an extension of the retailer's team and leads all aspects of their digital localization activities.

As a result of this trusted relationship, the retailer can now keep pace with growing digital content needs – without compromising on the customer experience for their global audiences.



The retailer can now keep pace with growing digital content needs – without compromising on the customer experience for their global audiences.

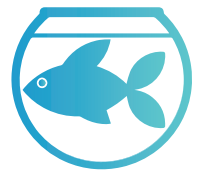
# THE OLD WAY: Why the Traditional Model Failed

Before this retailer partnered with Summa Linguae, their localization activities were led by an internal group of globalization managers who each relied on their own contractors (provided by a localization services partner) to execute day-to-day work.

At the time, this hybrid approach seemed like the best model. As internal employees, the globalization managers were aligned with organization's business objectives. As translation and localization specialists, the contractors could provide the necessary language expertise.

But rather than being the best of both worlds, this model actually ended up being the worst.

The teams struggled to keep up with project volume and often couldn't respond to new requests without taking weeks to staff the project. Every time the retailer launched a major new digital initiative, the team felt like they needed to hire a new globalization manager to manage all the localization work associated with it. The company had painfully outgrown its current localization model - they just didn't fully realize it yet.



The company had painfully outgrown its current localization model - they just didn't fully realize it yet.

## How we engaged ▼

“We started working closely with them to understand what they do and how they do it,” says Emre Akkas, Managing Director Canada, Summa Linguae Technologies.

“We asked how much time they spend on each project, what kind of tools they use and what kind of processes they follow. And we discovered they all did something different. They didn’t really talk to each other. They all figured out how things worked on their own with their globalization manager.”



Summa Linguae quickly realized that simply hiring more staff was a band-aid solution that wouldn’t address the bigger-picture challenges the retailer was facing. They needed to re-think their entire approach to how localization work got done.

# THE BETTER WAY: Why Managed Services Was the Answer

Unless you're a language services provider, translation and localization aren't your core competencies. That was the problem with this sports apparel company.

"It didn't make sense for this company to keep investing internal resources in an area that wasn't part of their core business," says Akkas. "And if you're going to outsource some of your language services, it's better to outsource the whole team while maintaining onsite visibility."

That's where Summa Linguae's Managed Services came in. By hiring the digital language team under the Summa Linguae umbrella and working as an extension of the retailer's team, Summa Linguae could build a more scalable and efficient translation and localization model.



It didn't make sense for this company to keep investing internal resources in an area that wasn't part of their core business

## Here's how it worked ▼



## A Centralized Model Drives Scalability

Keeping globalization managers and their individual contractors in silos meant no one knew what anyone else was doing. Summa Linguae solved for this problem by breaking down those silos and creating central project management.

In the company's previous support model, globalization managers managed their own localization projects and contractor resources to support day-to-day execution. But this decentralized structure bred inefficiencies and actually slowed work output. Without a central intake process, projects would get bottlenecked with globalization managers who were too busy to assign them, or who were unsure about how to determine the best path forward.

"They weren't able to respond to new requests," says Akkas.

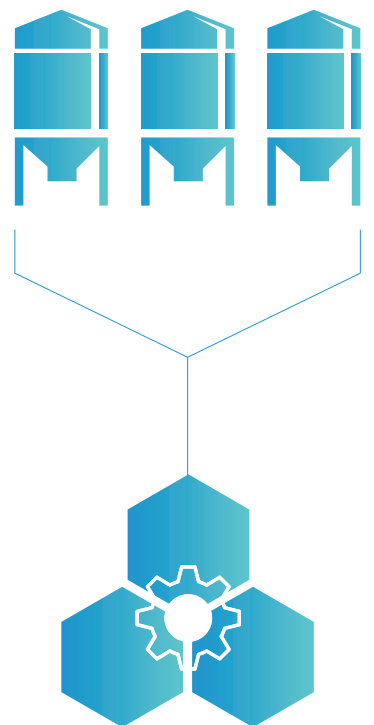
"They were overwhelmed, people were way overworked, and the globalization managers didn't know what to do in some cases because they didn't have the right expertise."

Summa Linguae created a new centralized team model to address these challenges. The contractors became a shared resource and were brought into the Summa Linguae family. A new project manager role was established to lead the group, and to help create a central project intake and tracking process.

As a result of these changes, the team developed a better cadence for handling work more equitably and gained better visibility into where they were should spend their time and energy.

---

### From Decentralized Silos To Centralized Project Management



# 2

## Proper Skills Match = Faster Speed and Higher Quality Output

Summa Linguae also discovered critical missed opportunities for knowledge sharing and skills development with the retailer's decentralized model. The silos meant that no one was learning from each other, and unique linguist skillsets often weren't appropriately matched with the right projects.

"We began to cross-collaborate," says Akkas. "We talked with each other and we started to learn from one another. We established weekly lunch-and-learn sessions. As the team grew, we identified and filled skills gaps so we could serve a bigger variety of needs."

A new app with audio cues, subtitles or rich multimedia items requires a different localization approach than a straightforward e-commerce app, which means matching the task with the right talent is critical. Armed with a better understanding of their own collective strengths, the team could more effectively assign projects based on individual abilities. This sped up work production and resulted in higher-quality output.



We talked with each other and we started to learn from one another. As the team grew, we identified and filled skills gaps so we could serve a bigger variety of needs

# 3

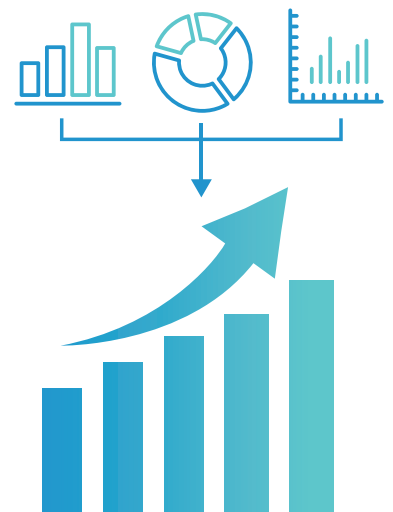
## Data-Driven Insights Drive Better Decision Making

Now that they'd found a way to efficiently scale and manage localization activities with support from Summa Linguae, the retailer was ready to go beyond treating localization as a problem to solve and to start using it as an opportunity to innovate.

They wanted to start using web analytics to zero in on the impact of specific localization investments. Within their previous model, a project like this would have been impossible. But by working as part of the retailer's team, Summa Linguae can supply the additional data visualization expertise the retailer needs to quickly get this initiative off the ground.

"Our client didn't have to go find another resource who had the skills and then teach them the details," says Akkas. "Ultimately, we'll be able to use data visualization to answer the question, 'If I spend \$200,000 localizing this content into Japanese, what is the value of that? What kind of impact does that provide? As a result of \$X spent on localization, we sold \$X in merchandise.' "

The ability to use data to understand localization ROI at a project level will add enormous value to the retailer's digital strategy by giving them the data to pursue initiatives that generate the highest returns and more easily prioritize projects for expansion.







## Streamline Localization with a True Partner

The retailer has increasingly relied on Summa Linguae's deep expertise to drive their localization strategy, because they now understand their own limitations in a space that's unfamiliar to them.

"You don't have to worry about finding and retaining the right talent in an area that's not actually your core business," says Akkas. "If you're an athletic apparel company, localization is not the thing you understand best. So having a supplier manage this while acting as an extension of your team gives you the best of both worlds."

"You don't have to worry about finding and retaining the right talent in an area that's not actually your core business,"

## Looking for a strategic partner to manage all aspects of your company's localization efforts?

Summa Linguae Technologies offers a complete range of multilingual content solutions to support your most complex translation needs. We connect you to global markets with unprecedented efficiency using in-country, native speaking linguists and cutting-edge language services technology. By leveraging your target audience and subject matter experts in the vetting and testing of your content, we can help you communicate authentically – and achieve market-certified translation quality.

---

**Turn Language into Your Competitive Advantage —  
Book a Consultation Today!**

1-508-616-6660 | [office\\_us@summalinguae.com](mailto:office_us@summalinguae.com) | [summalinguae.com](http://summalinguae.com)

**SUMMA  
LINGUÆ**  
TECHNOLOGIES