French News

The French balance of payment remains positive although much lower than during the great years of 1997-1999. Germany is the largest partner both for exports and imports with approximately 25% of the exchanges. The U.S. is in the third position with close to 14% of the total imports/exports. France is the fifth largest foreign partner for New England, and our Chapter is undertaking a study to understand better the components and trends of these activities.

Vivendi is searching for its new strategic direction. The global ambition has been abandoned. The company needs cash quickly. The publishing business is broken down with the French conglomerate Lagardère buying the non-American assets and Houghton Mifflin being sold for $1.7 billion. The remaining part of the environment business will also be disposed of. This would reduce the debt by $4 billion. The firm Vodafone, that already dominates the cellular phone business in Europe, offered to buy Coglitel, the telephone subsidiary. All these divestments mark the end of an exhilarating adventure aimed at creating a worldwide giant that had the vision of combining the "old and new" communication media across the Atlantic.

Tourism remains an essential business for France generating over $30 billion of revenue, 7% of the GDP, and the largest item in the balance of payments. Despite the economic slowdown... that 76.5 millions foreigners will visit France in 2002. Although 3.7% lower than the 2001 results, it will continue to place France as the most visited country in the world.

The turbulent environment of 2002 has made sales difficult, putting more pressure on sales leaders during this period of slow growth. And yet, companies such as Airbus, STMicroelectronics, Johnson & Johnson, and many others have been succeeding, despite the obstacles in their way. Year after year, Airbus exceeded Boeing in total number of orders for the first time and STMicroelectronics moved from 96 to 93 among global semiconductor manufacturers. In addition, Johnson & Johnson has leapt from #21 to #9 in the BusinessWeek Global 1000. What is it that is enabling their success?

What enables some global companies to succeed in turbulent times while others struggle to maintain the status quo? The answer lies within the ability to develop and manage global sales, specifically, their sales leaders.

The answer lies within the ability to develop and manage global sales, specifically, in the quality of their sales leaders. How do organizations develop global sales leaders like Airbus’ Chief Commercial Officer, John Leahy, and STMicroelectronics’ CEO Pasquale Pistiotto? Leahy is in America in a European company with a global sales force of 500. To produce extraordinary results, Leahy broke down the walls between departments and “built a team from the ground-up.” There are no divas here...Salesmen, contract specialists, airline analysts and pilots all work together,” he commented in a Time Magazine interview.

The linchpin of Sicilian-born Pistiotto’s success has been his vision of global partnerships with companies such as Nokia, Nortel and Robert Bosch. For Pistiotto, who rose through the ranks of Motorola’s sales organization before taking over what would later become STMicroelectronics, building relationships with key customers has helped him to increase and protect his market share in the fastest growing market segments. Stephen E. Shaver, Vice President and General Manager of EixoLens, a division of EixoL, a French global company that earned over $1.8 billion in sales last year, suggests that “Good sales leaders are the ones who keep their priorities in line. They set clear goals and objectives, hold people accountable, concentrate on ROI, monitor and track key results and focus on what generates business.”

“Effective global sales leaders have good networks and people who can listen, learn, and bring their experience with them,” comments Shaver. Furthermore, a survey—conducted by international consulting firm Global Partners, Inc., based in Boston—of Global Fortune 500 Companies from North America, Europe and Asia, finds that the most important qualities of global sales leaders are providing vision and focus, leading

—Article written by Donald Heathfield, Principal at Global Partners

Good sales leaders are the ones who keep their priorities in line. They set clear goals and objectives, hold people accountable, concentrate on ROI, monitor and track key results and focus on what generates business.
creates valuable learning opportunities that underlie the best global sales careers. One example is the career of William C. Weldon, Chairman and CEO of Johnson & Johnson. Although Weldon began his career in 1971 as a sales representative, he has held a variety of sales and product management positions; he undertook an international business development assignment in the Philippines and became the executive vice-president and managing director in Korea. He became a managing director in the United Kingdom and returned to the U.S. as a vice-president of sales and marketing. By 2002, he had progressed to the Board of Directors. Surely, without international rotations, mentoring, challenging stretch assignments and cultural sensitivity, Weldon could not have achieved the significant accomplishment of becoming the sixth Chairman in the 116-year history of Johnson & Johnson.

By developing your sales managers in this manner, your organization gains executives who are culturally sensitive, are able to align multiple perspectives from different local cultures, are able to transfer best practices and gain buy-in quickly. They have the heightened ability to understand customers worldwide—becoming a true partner in those turbulent times. Their personal knowledge of unique country conditions gives them the ability to drive a global vision and combine global and local perspectives to maximize results. It’s these international qualities of “communication, education and experience” that can transform your sales managers into successful global sales leaders, like Leahy, Pistoreno and Weldon.

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The decision to take your business international presents you with the need to adapt your company’s name, your products’ brand names and your corporate messages to different cultures and, frequently, to new languages. This is critical in guaranteeing success with your global business strategy.

Advertisers have targeted ads to local markets for decades, and software developers have been translating products to different languages for years. The Web adds new dimensions as the world is becoming one global market place and presents translators, marketers and cross-cultural businesses with new and more complex challenges. Indeed, a marketing message published on a Web site can target a large number of markets and cultures simultaneously, while a TV or print ad will target one specific market only.

This makes choosing a good local name and brand all the more important.

Famous linguistic blunders have resulted from careless selection of local brand names or messages, due to some aspect or another of translation. From the classic Chevrolet Nova brand (meaning “no go” in Spanish), to the rumoured original Chinese characters for Coca-Cola (meaning “bite the wax tadpole”), blunders occurred because mistranslations were performed at some level. In the Chevy Nova example, translation occurred on the semantic (i.e. by meaning) level, while in the Coca-Cola example it occurred on the phonetic (i.e. by sound) level. Chevrolet chose to keep the same name for their car when they marketed it in Latin America. Technically, it could have had the same meaning as its intended meaning in English (la ta), however when pronounced in the Latin American Spanish--speaking countries, the car’s name came across as “no va,” that is “no go.” As for Coca-Cola, they have now done a phonosemantic translation of their flagship brand name; Coca-Cola’s name “ke-kou-le” sounds like Coca-Cola and means “taste good and makes you happy.”

Companies invest substantial resources in market research, advertising, web design and corporate identity consultants, while translation often comes as the after-thought, a mere commodity to be purchased at the end of the marketing process. Translation or localization needs to be planned from the beginning. What does this mean? What does the translation curriculum give a student’s master’s degree, which means that certified translators far exceed the professional standards of the translation industry overall level of knowledge of their language? Second, translators always acquire some specialization. Stay away from translators who claim to work in five or six languages and tell you that they can translate a software manual just as easily as they can translate an ad or a legal document.

To select the right translation partner, companies need to conduct a thorough audit of skills and references of the persons or companies they consider.

As for the translators who have chosen to work with companies and marketers in crafting or adapting slogans and names, or who more generally translate marketing materials, they must honor this focus beyond the grammatical, stylistic and syntactical issues that have been the staples of their business. Even when translating the home page of a company’s Web site, the translator needs to consider more than just the linguistic accuracy and pleasant style of their prose. This is unfortunately a move that, for many translators, still seems hard to make. Boutique-type translation agencies with a clear focus will most likely have your ideal language partners, as they will provide you with the linguistic knowledge and field expertise to help you succeed globally.

To read more about famous linguistic blunders and mistranslations, see David A. Ricks’ “Blunders in International Business” (1993, Blackwell Publishing).

Avoiding Linguistic Pitfalls When Establishing a Global Business

—by Anne Ertl
Senior Localization Consultant

Translators all have specific language and skill sets. Anyone can claim to be a translator, even with high school language education. First and foremost, translators must always be native-speakers and demonstrate proper credentials and degrees. In Europe, notably, the translation curriculum gives a master’s level degree, which means that certified translators far exceed the professional standards of the translation industry overall level of knowledge of their language? Second, translators always acquire some specialization. Stay away from translators who claim to work in five or six languages and tell you that they can translate a software manual just as easily as they can translate an ad or a legal document.

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A translator, please! How’s that again? Say what you mean!

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On November 2, 2002, the United States Department of Justice signed into law the “21st Century Act of 2000,” or AC21. This new law is entitled, “Extension of H-1B Status for Certified Application Filing Periods.” It extends the H-1B status by two additional one-year increments. This provision allows individuals in this situation to remain in the U.S. legally and with work authorization through the adjudication of Adjudications. This provision permits foreign nationals who have Labor Certification applications caught in lengthy Department of Labor backlogs to be able to take advantage of this law.

As a result, thousands more foreign nationals who have since approved Labor Certification applications are now able to remain in the U.S. legally and with work authorization through the adjudication of Adjudications. This provision permits foreign nationals who have Labor Certification applications caught in lengthy Department of Labor backlogs to be able to take advantage of this law.

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