

CASE STUDY

Controlling Language, Controlling Quality

How Argos Multilingual helped an international medical devices company reduce its localization spend while improving quality.

The Challenge

Early in 2016, an international medical device manufacturer acknowledged that it had problems with its existing international publishing program. It recognized that negative feedback about its English and other localized contents would erode its international brand, and could potentially create safety risks. It was time to revisit the program and put in place a robust process which would allow it to grow its business worldwide. The business decided to reach out to Argos Multilingual for consulting services to diagnose the issues and build a localization program which would allow it to meet its international communication and quality goals.

Diagnosis

Operating across multiple continents, this medical device manufacturer was authoring content for their products in Japanese at their Japanese HQ. A team of technical writers were creating content for its products which was then sent internally for translation to English before then being translated to other languages.

Argos carried out a process audit together with the client and identified the following key factors which were impacting the program's output quality:

1. Each technical writer used their own tone and style preferences when authoring. Individual writers composed content in such a way that each believed could be easily translated.
2. English translations were done by non-native speakers. The English content was being translated by Japanese natives into English. This meant that the resulting English translations were often long-winded, overly repetitive and would contain linguistic issues which a native English speaker might quickly recognize and fix. This caused a ripple effect; issues in the baseline English content were either mirrored or magnified in the other translated languages.

The Solution



The client set objectives and an overall budget for Argos to remodel its international publishing program. Argos then assumed the role of a corporate match-maker; first helping the client to identify a suitable local technical writing company who team would partner with the authoring team to develop approved writing style standards. Source contents were shortened, polished and unnecessary graphic content was removed. The technical writing team was then trained in the principles of controlled language authoring for Japanese.



Argos now helps the client building baseline English files according to the client's layout instructions as well as translations from English to other languages too.

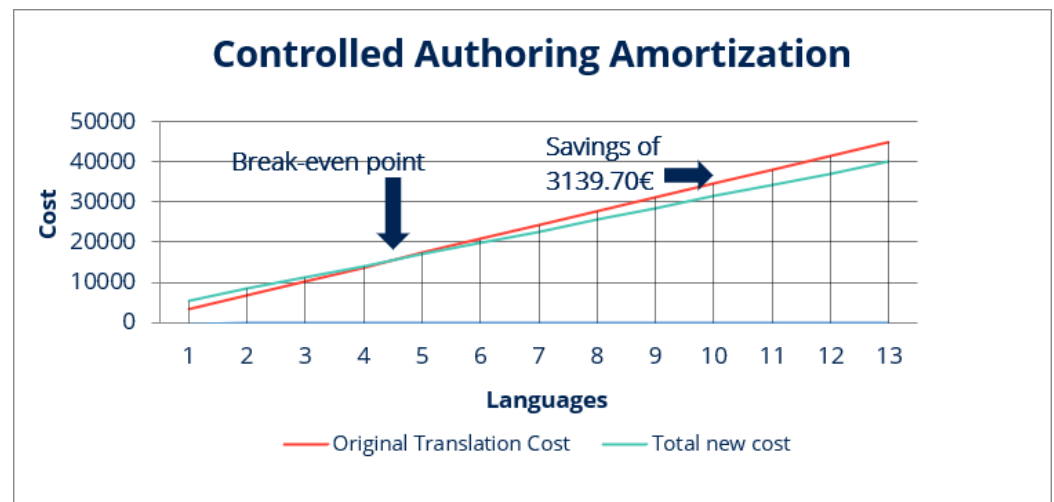
The Result

By building a controlled authoring process, source Japanese content became less expensive to translate; fewer words and fewer graphics meant a reduction in both translation and DTP costs globally.

As shown in the table below, the pilot project's document volume was reduced by approximately 17% after partnering with the technical writing company Argos had introduced to our client.

	No. of Pages	Word Count	Avg. Cost per Language for Localization
Before	93	20,346	€ 3449.70
After	84	16,949	€ 2873.73
Savings	9	3,397	€ 575.97

The cost of implementing controlled authoring on this project was 2620€. What the chart below demonstrates is that the Controlled Authoring process more than paid for itself after being translated to 5 languages, and that the 10th language and every 5th language thereafter effectively became “free of charge”.



Furthermore, by radically changing the structure and content of documents, the client experienced a positive quality trickle-down effect across all languages stating: “...important stylistic and grammatical changes definitely helped to improve the quality, consistency and ‘readability’ of our manuals.”

Of course, the more languages translated, the bigger the savings resulting from Controlled Authoring.

- Simplified contents make translation easier.
 - Fewer linguistic questions mean that the process is speedier and more efficient.
 - Quality and consistency of translations improves.

Now, new contents for either new or existing products follow the same technical writing standards that were established by the technical writing partner. By controlling the source, they are now able to control both the quality of their translations and their costs, and reach more markets for less money than ever before.