PLANNING A WINNING GLOBAL SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

AN 8-STEP FRAMEWORK

webcertain®

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INTRODUCTION

With an estimated 2 billion social media users worldwide this year, an ever-growing importance both in search but also in the way consumers make their purchasing decisions, global brands' ability (or inability) to leverage the channel will be the difference between sailing away with the price or struggling to stay afloat.

Faced with such high stakes, it's surprising to still see so many companies jumping straight into the tweeting and facebooking part without a plan or purpose in place. Continue with this approach and you will fail. Make a coordinated, streamlined and well-though-out leap into social that ties into your overall business goals and you will succeed.

This 8-step framework will enable you to deploy a global social strategy which is:

- Locally relevant yet globally consistent
- Tied into overall business goals
- Highly responsive yet controlled

STEP 1
GET THE C-SUITE ONBOARD

Without full support and participation from those holding the purse strings, your enthusiasm for expanding the company's social footprint will only take you so far.

While you would have thought that gaining executive buy-in 1.3 billion Facebook users down the road would be as easy as pie, this remains a significant hindering block to expanding social programs in many organisations today. Yes, there are plenty of corporations whose execs have made great strides in fully embracing social, but there's an at least equal amount of organisations where the task is still relegated to the intern.

A successful global social media deployment is a huge task, one that requires immense planning, long-term dedication, and collaboration across the entire organisation - including, in many cases, collaboration with agencies outside of the organisation. And without commitment from the folks high up, it's an impossible task.

Make it a priority from the outset to convince these decision-makers of how an organised, coordinated and localised effort into social is likely to greatly enhance the company's performance in international markets. If you've got positive results from your domestic market, share them. Show how other international brands have leveraged social across borders. If these brands happen to be direct competitors, even better: There's nothing executes hate more than seeing competitors outperform them.

STEP 2
SELECT YOUR MARKETS WISELY

When the topic arises of transitioning a single-language social presence into one that accounts for multiple languages, it's typically because international markets have begun to generate a somewhat considerable portion of a company's revenues (at which point that business is likely to have already invested in creating local websites for its main target markets and had time to evaluate their performance).

The decision of whether to localise the social media presence for specific markets thus becomes easier as you have tangible metrics to help guide your social expansion. So, in essence, it's about figuring out which countries matter most to your company – both at present and for the long haul. Questions to ask include:

1. Is the current revenue contribution from country 'X' substantial enough to justify this added level of commitment?

2. How important is country 'X' as a strategic future battlefield (irrespective of whether it has yet to contribute any notable value)?

3. How sizeable a share do current fans/followers from country 'X' make up on our global social profiles?

Once having crunched those numbers, you may sit back with several countries which meet these criteria one way or another.

While it's tempting to boil over with enthusiasm and setting out on a quest to conquer the world's social media users with locally relevant content all at once, in most cases it's a much more sensible approach to choose your battles wisely, and in accordance with your resources.

Don't bite off more than you can chew; you'll spare yourself the potentially damaging effects of diluting your social presence to an extent that's completely out of line with the bandwidth at your disposal. It's also much, much easier to get C-suite approval for further expansion and additional budget allocation once you're able to prove the positive business outcomes of a localised social media presence.

> "Don't bite off more than you can chew; you'll spare yourself the potentially damaging effects of diluting your social presence to an extent that's completely out of line with the bandwidth at your disposal.
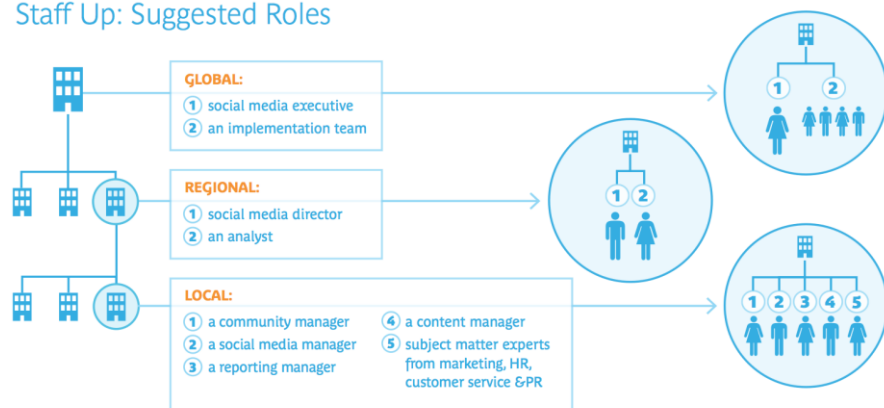
STEP 3
ASSEMBLE A GLOBAL SOCIAL DREAM TEAM

We've already established that social shouldn't be relegated to the intern. The people who are working on and are engaged in your global social programs are the public voices of your brand. So pick them wisely.

This, however, poses some interesting questions: What roles do you need to fill for the markets you set out to localise for? Which traits should you look for in prospective and existing employees when assembling a multilingual social dream team? And finally, what responsibilities and processes lie upon you, the Social Media Strategist, to encourage social to spread internally and externally?

As for what roles you'll need to fill, this will yet again depend largely on the scope of your organisation and the resources at hand. If, for example, you represent a huge global enterprise with a footprint in every corner of the globe, you might want to organise your social team using a three-tiered approach – global, regional and local – and staff up as suggested by Sprinklr in the graphic to the right.

Staff Up: Suggested Roles

GLOBAL:
1. social media executive
2. an implementation team

REGIONAL:
1. social media director
2. an analyst

LOCAL:
1. a community manager
2. a social media manager
3. a reporting manager
4. a content manager
5. subject matter experts from marketing, HR, customer service &PR

However, this won't be the case for most companies – even international ones. If you're a mere mortal, don't worry. It doesn't take a Community Manager, Social Media Manager,

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Reporting Manager, Content Manager and subject matter experts from marketing, HR, customer service and PR to be successful at the local level for the vast majority of businesses.

As it happens, much less will often do. With good social media management tools and support from other units in your company (or external resources) in place, a single Social Media Manager for each market will in many cases cut it.

The critical skills of local social team members

When building social teams for your international markets, there are some critical criteria that must be met by any team member involved in those programs.

First of all (it really should go without saying), you need native speakers for the markets you aim to localise for. Obvious right? Well, you'd be amazed just how many companies have attempted to pull off a social presence in foreign countries by relying on automated translation services such as Google Translate. If this approach doesn't work for keyword research, imagine what happens when you use it to engage in colloquial conversations chock-full of slang and cultural undertones.

> "
> Just because Luis from sales speaks Spanish doesn't mean he qualifies to manage your social media.

Now that this is clear (yes, we just needed to get it off our chest), it's worth stressing that appointing local social media managers goes beyond merely being able to speak the language of your target market. As Zach Fisbain puts it: 'Just because Luis from sales speaks Spanish doesn't mean he qualifies to manage your social media.'

His point is that, even within same languages, significant linguistic, cultural and political differences exist. And being completely immersed in that culture is an absolute necessity for building a credible, authentic social media presence.

While cultural immersion is one crucial factor (you have to look no further than to the right for an example), brand immersion is another.

Put in lay terms, your social team members (or the employees of the multilingual agency you may consider contracting) must know your brand inside out. And this is not such an easy thing to achieve when dealing with a team that might reside in local offices far away from the company headquarters.

@StarbucksIE
Starbucks Ireland
Follow @StarbucksIE

Happy hour is on! Show us what makes you proud to be British for a chance to win. Don't forget to tag #MyFrappuccino http://t.co/WaVixnOi

@FergusMcNally
Fergus McNally
Follow @FergusMcNally

@StarbucksIE the ie stands for Ireland, awaiting the apology before I visit your stores again!!

June 5, 2012 1:19 pm via Twitter for iPhone   Reply   Retweet   Favorite

This responsibility - enabling and empowering each team member to communicate in a way that always supports and is consistent with the global brand, irrespective of where in the world or in which language that tweet or Facebook update is being posted – lies upon the global implementation team. More on this under 'Enablement' in step 7.

Think beyond Marketing and PR

Who owns social?

It's a question that gets increasingly asked, and it's an interesting one, mainly because it shows that the default answer may not necessarily be marketing or PR anymore. Ask any forward-thinking social media strategist this same question and she might well answer: 'the company'.

> " Breaking down silos in social is a lot like the much hyped 'Big Data': Everyone talks about it, but few have succeeded in leveraging it.

In present day however, breaking down silos in social is a lot like the much hyped 'Big Data': Everyone talks about it, but few have succeeded in leveraging it.

It doesn't mean you shouldn't try, however. As part of putting together your team, it's important to encourage and establish a culture at the global office where people across different departments – from sales to customer service to HR - all have a stake in social.

If you have everyone based in a single location, pulling this off gets easier. But even if your global organisation is decentralised, you must make it a top priority for that corporate culture to transcend beyond the walls of HQs and into those local offices. Hans in Germany, however talented and hardworking, cannot manage a fully localised social presence all on his own – at least not as successfully as if he was part of an organisation where social extends beyond the marketing department.
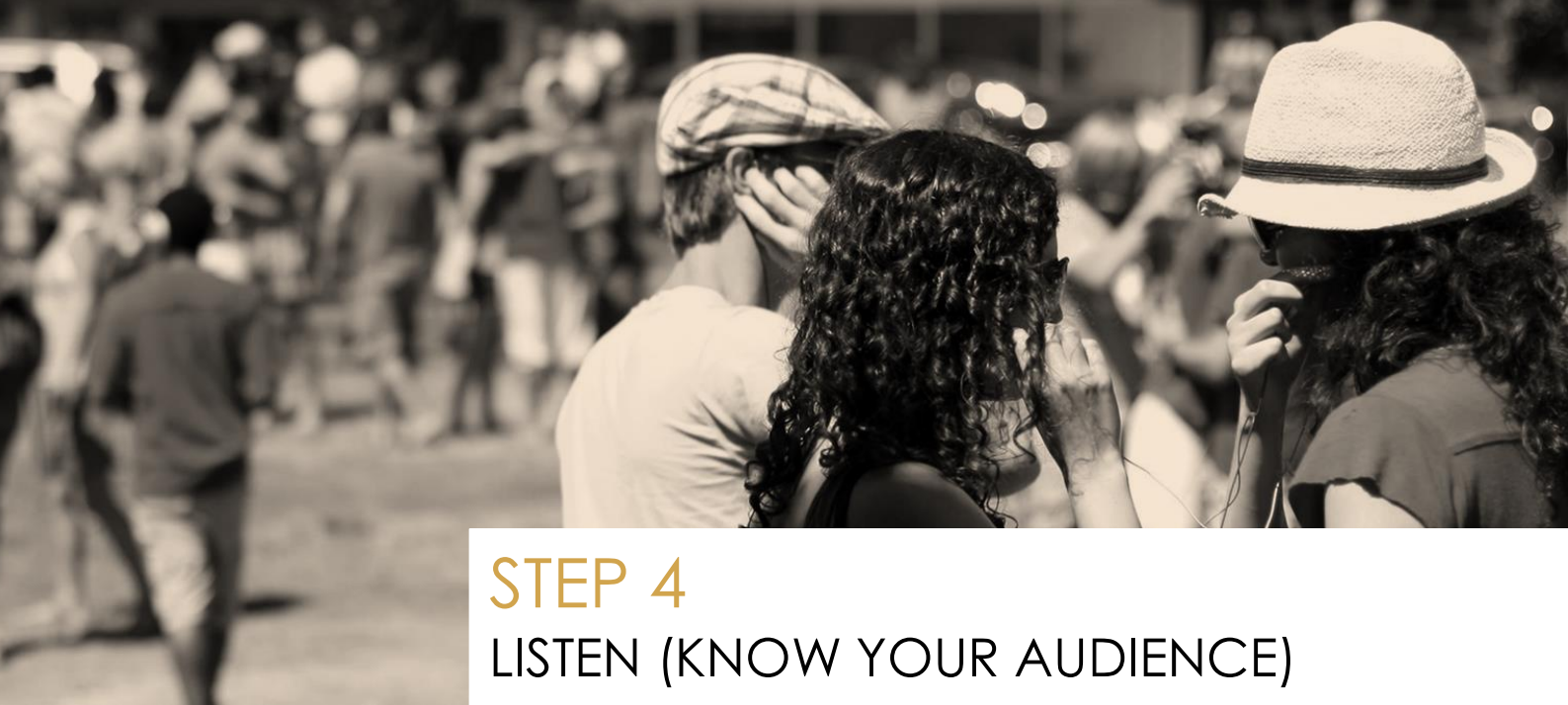
STEP 4
LISTEN (KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE)

Hemingway famously said, 'When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen.'

Simple yet powerful words. And certainly, they seem to suggest why so many corporations neglect this crucial step: We're simply better at talking than listening.

But social media – be it on Sina Weibo in China, Vkontakte in Russia or ubiquitously popular Facebook – all have one overarching trait in common: conversation. In fact, without conversation there is no social. And without paying attention to *what* is being said about you, by *whom* it is being said, and *where* it is being said, how are you supposed to intelligently join in on those conversations in a way that adds value to your audience?

Now if this remains a challenge for businesses that deal with a monolingual audience in a single market, imagine the complexities inherent in monitoring conversations and sentiments across multiple languages (many of which you may not even speak), markets and platforms.

Perhaps this is the reason why so many international businesses dive headfirst into tweeting, facebooking, Gplussing (or whatever that's called) with no real plan or purpose in place.

> " When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen.

But it doesn't change the fact that putting tactics before listening, goal-setting and strategy is like putting the cart before the horse: It won't take you very far.
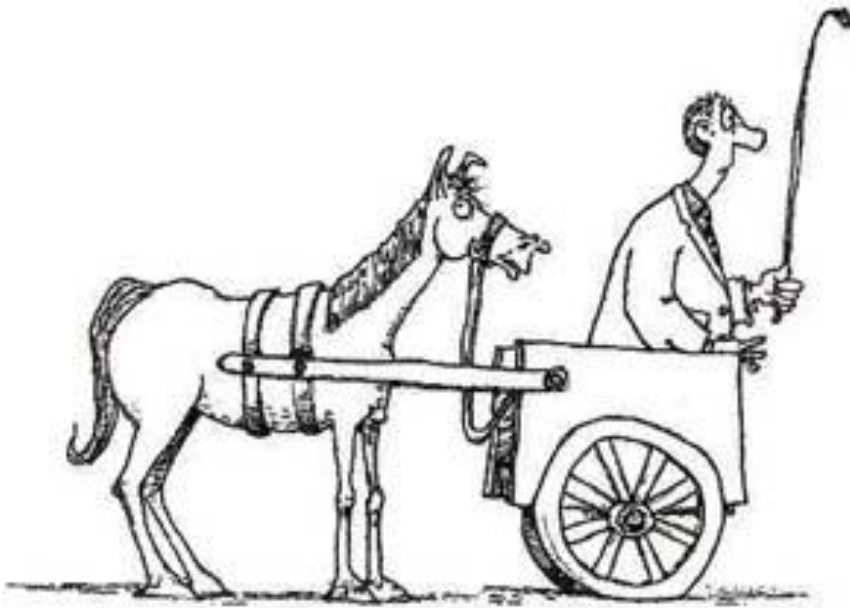
The good news is that, with the right people, tools and workflows in place, listening doesn't have to so damn hard.

Although there are way too many social media monitoring tools out there to mention them all, some of the better free ones for global social professionals include:

- **Social Mention…**
  …which monitors over 100 social media sites and measures influence within four categories: Strength, Sentiment, Passion and Reach. You can filter results by language under Advanced Search Preferences.

- **IceRocket (by Meltwater)…**
  …which is particularly good for blog search, with around 200 million blogs in its database and support for 20 languages.

However, provided you're serious about your global efforts, you really owe it to yourself to either splash out on an enterprise-level tool or have a multilingual digital agency carry out the brand monitoring for you. The sophistication and depth of these tools are generally in a completely different league from any of the free tools, and from our experience, some of the best on the market count Sprout Social, Brandwatch, Radian6 and Meltwater.

Moreover, don't forget to leverage search data as a means to getting a better understanding of your audience:

- Use Google Trends to see how people are searching for things related to your brand. You can break down results by location.

- Google's Keyword Planner is another helpful tool for identifying which terms are most frequently being used as they relate to your products or services. Again, filter results by language and country.

- Make use of your own web analytics for your country-targeted websites to help guide social efforts.

A multilingual listening strategy, when properly managed, is arguably the single most important aspect of planning your global social strategy; it will guide every single step of your journey onwards - from defining objectives to setting strategy to tactics (selecting platforms; organising them and assigning priority to each; content creation).

STEP 5
DEFINE SOCIAL OBJECTIVES – GLOBALLY & LOCALLY

Tying in the insights derived from the preceding listening stage with overall business objectives will help you identify objectives more easily, accurately and, most importantly, in a way that aligns with your company's broader strategy – globally and locally. Setting goals will also help in bringing accountability to your social programs and the teams working on them.

What follows below is a concrete four-step process of how to define your social objectives when dealing with multiple markets. We find it very useful, and we hope you will too.

1. Start with a global social mission – why are you on social media in the first place? What's the overarching purpose?

2. Then get more specific by defining broader global objectives and assigning an importance score to each. For example, this could go from 1-10, with one signalling low importance (see example on the next page, Step 2).

3. Then do it for each market. In this process you may well find that some of your objectives differ substantially from one market to another. This, in turn, will be incredibly helpful in defining your strategy and the tactics most likely to support that strategy (see example on the next page, Step 3).

Step 2 [Example]: Defining Broader Global Social Objectives

Global Social Objectives	Importance Score (1-10)
Increase traffic to website and other off-page platforms	8
Increase brand awareness	5
Increase engagement	6
Improve brand image	4
Increase conversions from social traffic	7

Step 3 [Example]: Scoring Each Market Using Same Objectives

	Importance Score (1-10)					
Objectives	Global	Germany	France	Italy	China	Russia
Increase traffic to website and other off-page platforms	8					
Increase brand awareness	5					
Increase engagement	6					
Improve brand image	4					
Increase conversions from social traffic	7					

4. In this final step, you'll be setting specific targets for each market. For example, if increasing brand awareness is scoring high in France, then growth in the number of fans/followers will be a top metric. Conversely, if you've found that your brand perception in Russia is overwhelmingly negative (which you'll have identified in your sentiment analysis as part of the listening stage), image building tactics to improve this perception will be a top priority.

To improve accountability, be as specific as possible here, e.g.:

- Grow the overall number of social media fans in France by 30% in six months.

- Decrease the percentage of negative brand mentions by 20% in 12 months (yes, with various monitoring tools you can measure the ratio of positive versus negative mentions – cool right?).

STEP 6
CHOOSE CHANNELS & ORGANISE THEM

If you rush into social without first listening and defining objectives, your selection of social networks will be based on mere gut feeling.

This is a poor approach even if you only manage a few social profiles in a single language. But when operating a social program on an international scale, across multiple languages and with a potentially bulging portfolio of social channels, it will be ineffective at best and damaging at worst.

Therefore, if you cannot answer the following question in a comprehensive, well-argued manner for each of the markets for which you plan to expand your social presence, we suggest you take a few steps backwards in this framework:

- Which platforms are most likely to achieve our objectives – and WHY?

As for which platforms are most likely to achieve your objectives, it's crucial that you're selective and don't stretch yourself too thin (much in the same way as when deciding which markets to target). Start out with a few key channels, prove ROI, and then gradually expand in accordance with your resources. In this process you may also want/need to sunset existing social accounts that have been created but cannot be supported.

Another important thing to bear in mind when selecting platforms for international markets is that Facebook, Twitter, G+, LinkedIn and YouTube aren't leading everywhere (although they indeed hold strong positions in most markets globally).

In fact, in some markets they're either severely trailing local players, or worse yet, aren't even accessible for internet users.

Such is the case in **China**, where (with the exception of LinkedIn) these sites are banned. What you have as a result is a burgeoning social media landscape that is dominated almost entirely by Chinese platforms. Some of the most leading platforms include:

> " Another important thing to bear in mind when selecting platforms for international markets is that Facebook, Twitter, G+, LinkedIn and YouTube aren't leading everywhere.

- Sina Weibo (Chinese Twitter)
- Tencent Weibo (another microblogging site)
- RenRen (Facebook-ish)
- WeChat (Instant Messaging)
- Youku (Chinese YouTube)

Russia is another market where, although not banned, the global social giants have failed to get the better of local social networks:

- Widely referred to as a 'Russian Facebook clone', VK (formerly Vkontakte) attracts twice as many visitors as Facebook in Russia and absolutely crushes it in engagement.

- Odnoklassniki is another local player that likewise has an edge on the globally popular competitors.

While China and Russia are the two most prominent examples of markets where local social networks rule the roost, there are several other countries in which homegrown platforms remain a force to be reckoned with. On the following page we've outlined a few of the ones you need to be aware of.

IMPORTANT LOCAL SOCIAL NETWORKS
*excl. China & Russia

- **Xing, Germany:**

  This local professional network ([4.2 million monthly active users](#)) maintains a notable edge on LinkedIn (2.6 million monthly active monthly users).

- **Viadeo and Skyrock, France:**

  Though LinkedIn has overtaken local French professional networking site Viadeo, the race between the two remains close. Skyrock, which predominantly appeals to younger demographics, still packs a punch with more than 8.5 million monthly active users, 1 million of which access the site daily.

- **Tuenti, Spain:**

  With its nearly 10 million monthly active users, according to comScore, Tuenti still has notable appeal in its native Spain. This places it as the second most popular social platform in the country, ahead of Twitter and Linked and trailing only almighty Facebook.

- **NicoNico, Japan**

  While YouTube has an edge on its local video rival when it comes to the number of monthly active users, NicoNico crushes the Google-owned video behemoth in engagement. According to comScore, the average NicoNico visitor spends well above twice as much time on the platform as the average 'YouTuber'.

Organise Your Assets

You've selected the networks to focus on for each market. Great! Now it's time to structure and streamline those channels in a way that maps onto your organisational setup.

Regardless of how your business is organised however, experience suggests that a hub-and-spoke model is best practice. The hub will typically be an owned platform such as a blog, with social networks acting as the spokes; the blog (or other type of owned social hub) feeds the social networks with content and they generate traffic back to the hub in return.

Indeed, it makes sense to turn a platform you own into the social hub, as opposed to a third-party platform which you merely rent. However, while this is all good and sound in theory, the model is not without its challenges from an international perspective.

Here's why.

Solution 1: Full localisation for each market

In a marvellous, (for most companies) rather utopic world with unlimited resources, you'd have a blog or other owned social asset as the hub for each and every country you're targeting; then on top of that, full localisation for all your social networks in each market.

This is ideal from a consumer perspective, but it's also terribly resource demanding and expensive and thus out of the question for most companies.

Solution 1: Full Localisation for Each Market
Ideal from a consumer perspective, but resource demanding and expensive.

Global   France   Italy

Solution 2: Owned social hub in one language 'only'; most important social profiles are fully localised.

The second solution (see below) is a rather trimmed version of the fully localised social presence: It leaves out the time-consuming and expensive undertaking of creating a well-oiled, high quality blog for each market; focuses on fewer channels globally and locally; but does have fully localised, standalone social profiles for the top priority platforms.

Solution 2: Owned Social Hub in One Language 'Only'
Fewer platforms but the most important ones are fully localised.

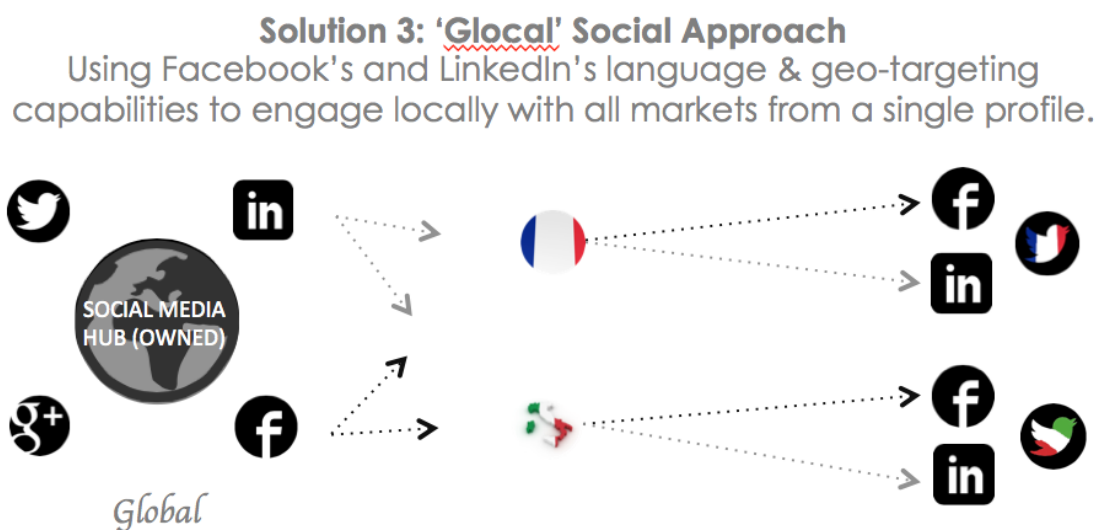Global   France   Italy

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Since in this specific case you don't have owned social hubs that cater specifically to French and Italian speakers, more of the content on Facebook and Twitter will be geared towards driving traffic to the websites for these countries (e.g. www.yoursite.fr; www.yoursite.it). Additionally, it will be more dependent on content curation from local third-party sources to ensure there's enough material to keep these channels running on their own.

Solution 3: 'Glocal' Social

If supporting even a few fully localised, separate social profiles is out of line with your bandwidth, there's a way to make the social journey up Mount Olympus - the one that sets out to achieve local relevancy without compromising brand consistency - shorter.

Facebook's and LinkedIn's built-in language and geo-targeting capabilities allow you to achieve local relevance from a single, consolidated global page. This setup is often referred to as a 'Glocal' approach because it combines global elements (the company profile will be in English) and local elements (it targets posts in the local language of specific countries or regions).

Solution 3: 'Glocal' Social Approach
Using Facebook's and LinkedIn's language & geo-targeting capabilities to engage locally with all markets from a single profile.

Not only does this significantly reduce the brand consistency issues which may arise from managing various individual pages, it also allows you to blend local posts which are relevant to a particular geo with broader appealing content that goes out to all fans/followers. The net result is that you won't have to create as much local content because it's supported by global content in English.

Is this ideal? No. Is it better than merely having a social presence in English? Definitely.

As for Twitter, the site's non-existent geo-targeting options for organic tweets mean you'll need to create separate accounts for each of the markets you target. However, "a new tool offered through Twitter's API, which Twitter calls Tweet Delivery by Country, allows marketers to send targeted tweets to specific geographic locations. For example, a brand could send a tweet to followers in the United States and a separate tweet to users in Japan from the same account. The tweets will not show up to followers in the brand's Twitter timeline unless those followers reside in the country targeted", reports Mashable.

Interlinking your profiles is vital for solution 1 and 2

When you operate various individual profiles, as is the case with the first two solutions, it's fundamental that you interlink these pages to ensure they're connected and easily discoverable for users.

> "
> We would be going soft on Facebook by saying that its search function doesn't always return the most relevant results.
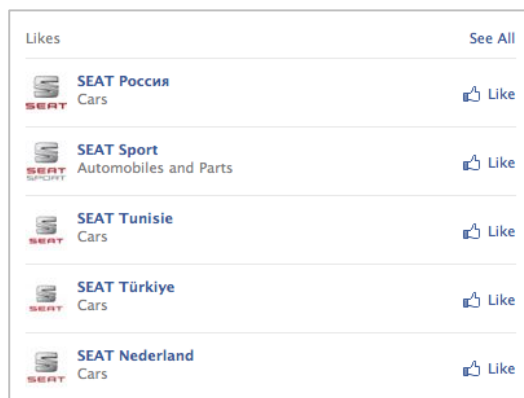
We would be going soft on Facebook by saying that its search function doesn't always return the most relevant results – even for very specific queries. This of course increases the importance of connecting your profiles so that non-native English speakers users don't end up settling for the global English account when there's, in fact, a fully localised version available in their mother tongue.

On Facebook you can achieve this interrelationship in one of three ways:

Featuring page likes

By liking all the country/region pages in your network and then featuring those likes in a prominent position on your pages. Here's how to go about it:

- Step 1: 'Like' all your existing local pages
- Step 2: Click 'Edit page'
- Step 3: Click 'Edit Settings'
- Step 4: Click 'More'
- Step 5: Click 'Featured'
- Step 6: 'Add Featured Likes'

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2. Creating a Facebook 'geo-selector' tab on the global page

In the same way that international businesses often choose to display a geo-selector on their top-level global domain (e.g. .com), this can be done on Facebook too. SEAT and Starbucks do it to name a few.

However, going to this length to direct users to the relevant properties is typically only done by brands that have a raft of local Facebook pages.
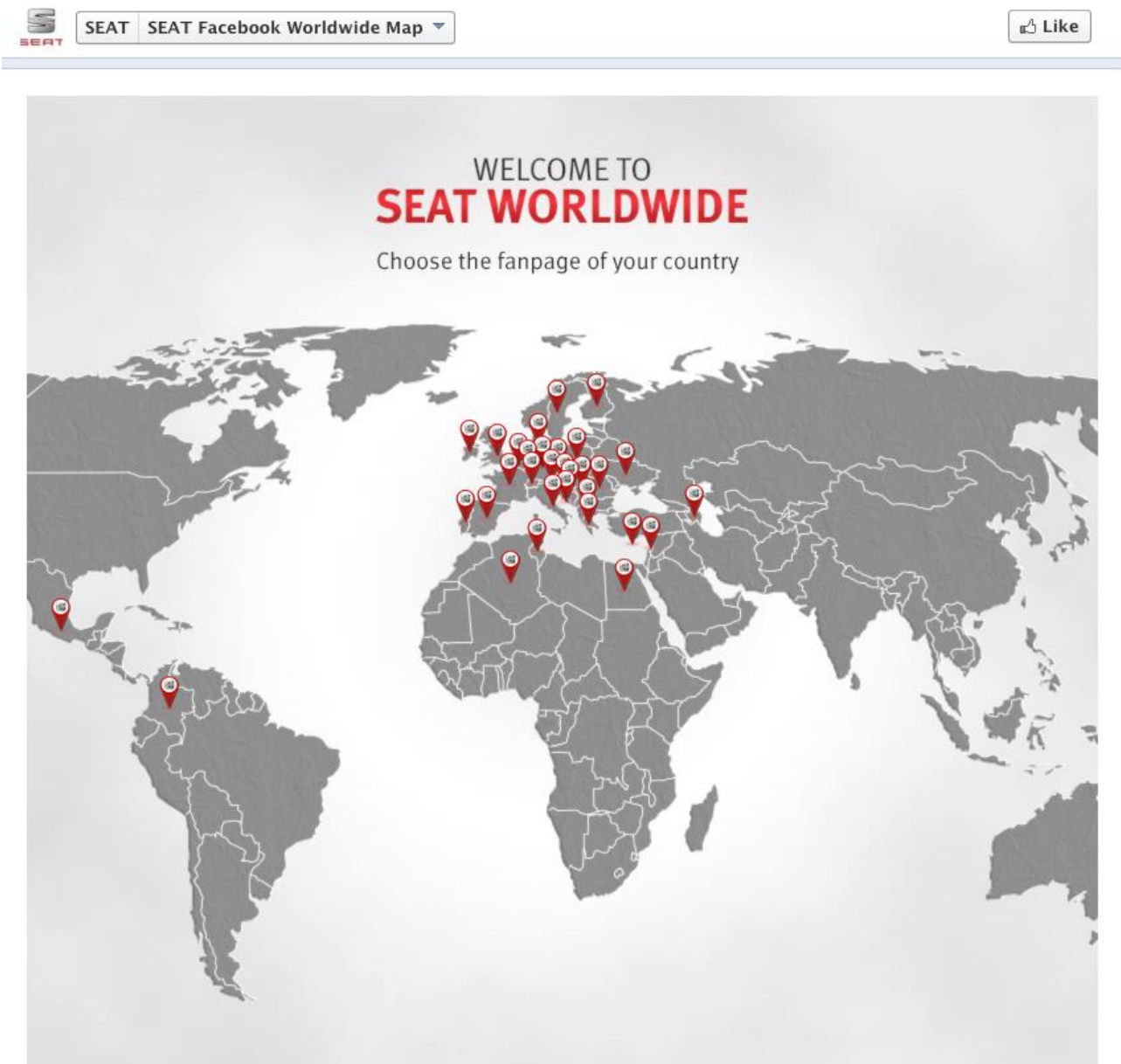
3. Facebook Global Pages Framework

Up until October 2012, the above approaches for interlinking pages were the only ones available for brands with separate local pages. If you wanted a consolidated, single page for all your markets, using the geo-targeting feature (solution 3) was your only option.

Then Facebook launched its Global Pages framework, which has since been adopted by many international companies. The setup allows for:

- Merging of all separate local brand pages under one unified umbrella
- One URL
- One total fan count, number of likes and TAT (talking about this)…

…however, without sacrificing local relevance:
Users are automatically directed to their local page based on IP address (only if local page is available, otherwise they will see the global page). If however the user prefers a different page altogether, she's able to switch region. This is great, because it essentially eliminates the need for creating geo-selectors.

> " If you wanted a consolidated, single page for all your markets, using the geo-targeting feature was your only option. Then Facebook launched its Global Pages framework.

Local pages under the global umbrella have their own:
- Cover photo
- Profile photo
- Page apps
- Wall messages
- Tabs

All sounds good, right? However, here's the catch.

You will only qualify for this setup if you spend enough on advertising to justify a named Account Manager. This amount is currently 10K USDs. If you don't spend anything near that amount and have no intention of doing so in the future, then you won't be eligible for this framework.

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Moreover, you won't be able to publish global content across all your local pages. So if you're now thinking about migrating from the geo-targeted glocal approach to this framework, you must be able to support these profiles with purely local content.

- To see Global Pages in action, check out Dove, Carlsberg or Adidas.
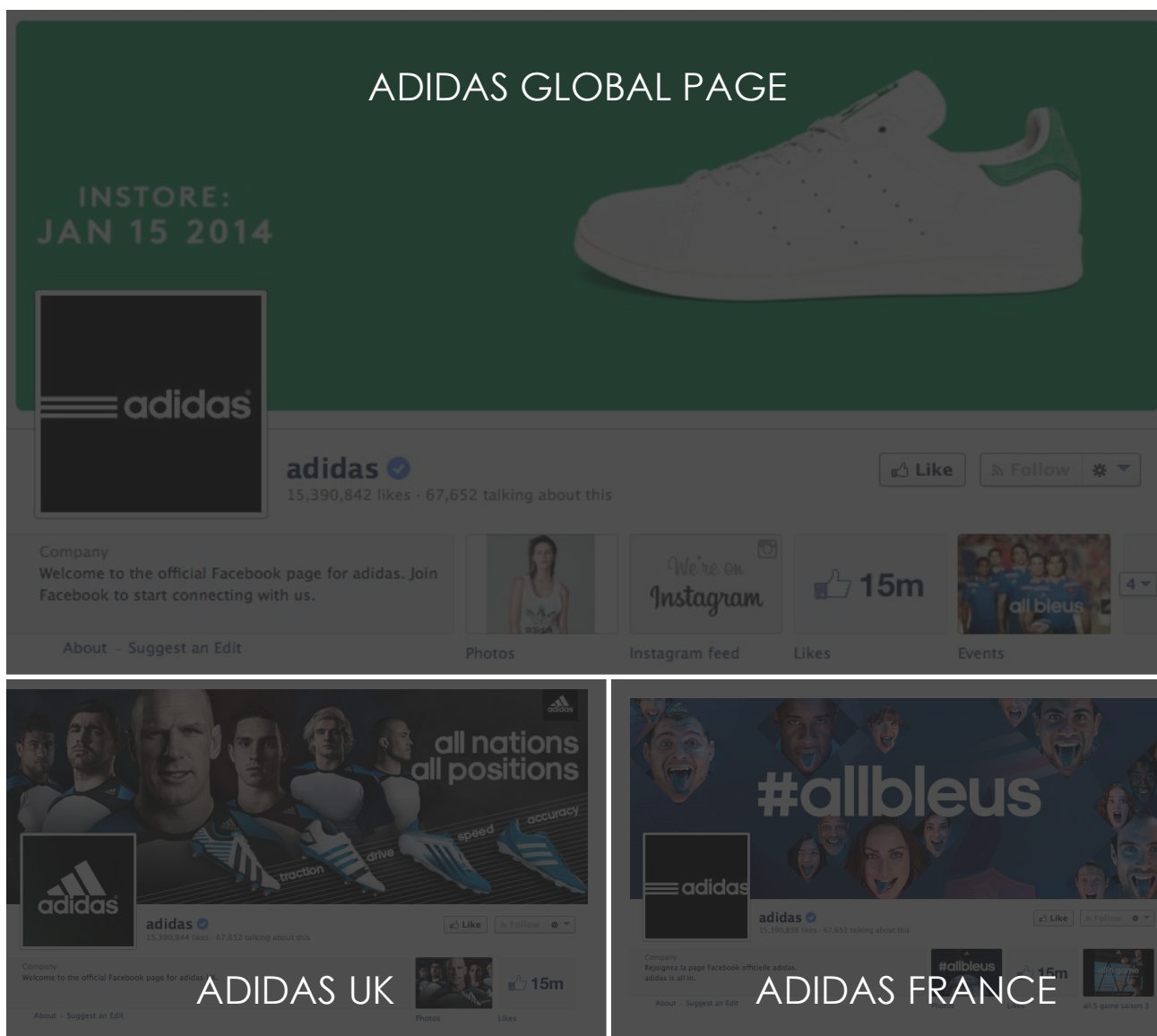
In closing this section, it's important to stress that these different ways of organising your channels aren't written in stone. They aren't some 'either or' approaches to strictly abide by. Rather, they're some of the most common varieties when managing social globally. You may thus decide to take elements of each approach or blend them otherwise in whichever way makes sense for your business.

STEP 7
CREATE A PLAN TO OPERATE

By now you've selected your troops, defined your global and local social media objectives, chosen your social channels and organised them in a way that maps onto your organisation. Ready to start tweeting in multiple languages? Almost.

Before you unleash your teams onto your social channels, you need a plan to operate in order for things to run smoothly. With so many potential stakeholders involved, things can quickly go awry if clear-cut rules, processes and responsibilities aren't established. Several elements fall under this step:

- **Enablement and Governance:** How do we strike a balance between empowering local units to engage and respond in a timely manner while maintaining corporate control to ensure brand consistency? Moreover, what is permissible, and what is not?

- **Assigning Activities to Each Role:** Who is responsible for responding via social channels? How do we ensure that the right people see the right information?

- **Develop a Global/Local Content Plan:** What's the balance between local and global content? What kind of content is likely to meet our objectives and who will be responsible for producing it?

Enablement and Governance

Whether it's social media, your international websites or good old bricks-and-mortar retail stores, being locally relevant without compromising brand consistency is a concern for every global business (or at least should be). In social media, however, maintaining this rather delicate balance is arguably even harder due to its dynamic nature; social is never static and therefore can't be controlled in nearly the same as, say, a website.

How do you cope with this as the person responsible for implementing social globally? Do you merely take a leap of faith in the people managing your social media abroad? Or conversely, does the thought of losing control terrify you so much that you put in place rigorous approval processes for every thinkable scenario?

> **"**
> Do you merely take a leap of faith in the people managing your social media abroad? Or conversely, does the thought of losing control terrify you so much that you put in place rigorous approval processes for every thinkable scenario?

Truth be said, neither approach is doing much good for the companies that employ them: The former often brings with it an inconsistent brand; the latter, paralysed local teams which are unable to take advantage of the real-time nature of social.

Now if only there was a better way.

Luckily there is. Enablement, which implies training and educating your social teams by giving them access to materials such as brand style guides and best practices, effectively moves you away from each extreme of the spectrum and closer to a happy medium. Through education you're no longer merely taking a leap of faith in the people who runs your local social presences; you're empowering them to make the right decisions on their own. As a result, the need for hyper-controlled environments becomes less outspoken. Social media advocate Chris Brogan puts it this way: **"Never invest all of your money in the carpet, invest in the people walking on it."**

What you need then, no matter the size or your organisation, is this:

- **Training (internally and externally):** Set up training programmes for the people who will walk on your carpet. Do this internally if possible, but don't forget to also allocate some budget for sending them on external courses.

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- **A Style Guide:** This document should include elements such as 'tone of voice', visual look and brand feel, among other things.
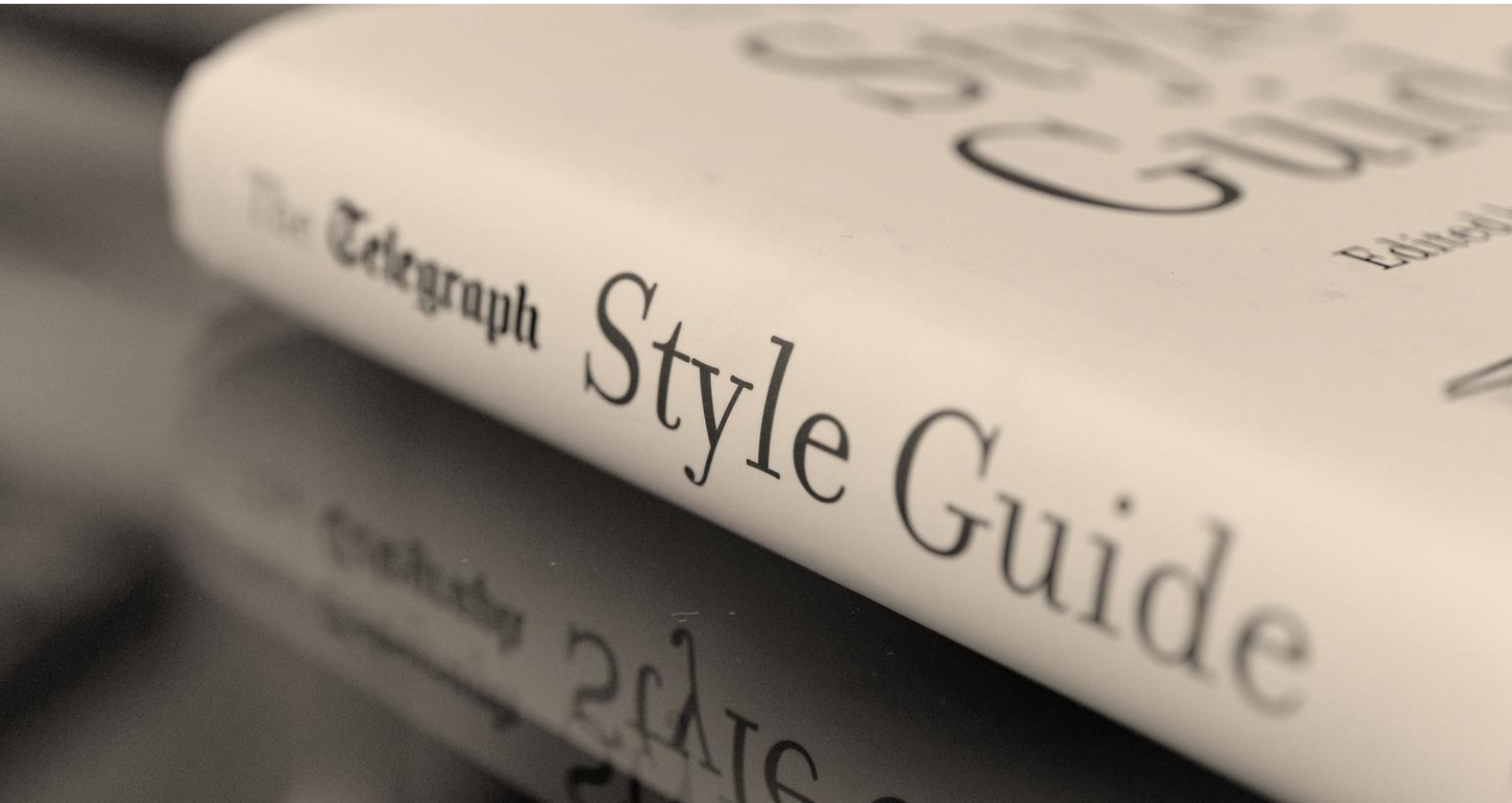
- **A social media policy.** It should leave no doubt as to:
  - What is permissible and what is notWho can and cannot create an social media account on behalf of the company
  - Whether employees are allowed to use their own social profiles to talk about the brand, and if so, what may or may not be said.
  - What the consequences are of breaching the policy

Avoid lawyer lingo here; you want your employees to fully comprehend it. Keep this one policy consistent across all markets but translate it into other languages as you see fit. The same goes for the style guide and other important documents.

If you have the capacity, create a Centre of Excellence on the company intranet and turn it into a one-stop-shop for managing your brand's global social footprint. But whatever you do, make it a top priority to find a balance between no control and too much control: "(…) brands can neither afford to be the next poster child for social PR blunders, nor can they allow a competitive advantage to slip away over fears of social missteps", as Augie Ray wisely frames it.

Assigning Activities to Each Role

You know which channels you'll be prioritising in each market and you have a team of people ready to manage it all. But who will be doing what? Who's going to respond to that customer complaint on Twitter in Japan and put out the spark before it catches fire?

Assigning activities and responsibilities to each role is a critical element when multiple people are involved in your programs – and even more so if you operate in different time zones. Real-time is everything in social. Local teams may benefit from lenient corporate approval processes to improve responsiveness, but in the end it matters very little if the right messages don't reach the right people.

> " Who in your team will be doing what? Who's going to respond to that customer complaint on Twitter in Japan and put out the spark before it catches fire?

Remember, there's no point in getting to the party if everyone's left already; conversely, it's easier to extinguish a fire at the initial stages. If in doubt, go to your search engine of choice and type in 'BP social media management'.

Monitoring is of essence here, and with some of the paid tools, such as Brandwatch, it's possible to combine location data – a method that allows you to track mentions all the way down to city levels - with workflows assigned to the relevant people.

Establish clear-cut ownership, responsibilities and workflows and you'll be infinitely more successful than your competitors who almost certainly aren't doing this.

Develop Global/Local Content Plan

You know how the saying goes: Content is King. As much as it may sicken you to hear it for god knows how many times, killer content is what catapults your strategy into the stratosphere. Without it, your strategy is merely a good framework.

The good news is that, if you've followed all the previous steps outlined in this paper, you have all you need to pull it off: you know **who** is talking about; you know **what** they're talking about; you know **where** they're airing their thoughts; and you've defined your social objectives for each market to make sure the content you produce aligns with your business goals.

So far, so good. But what's the balance between global and local content? Can local units fully support themselves, or do they need support from the global team? If so, how much?

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> Will that healthcare infographic which tells how many people are on medicare work in France? Nope, different system. Germany? Nope, different system. Italy? Sorry no – nor the UK nor just about anywhere actually except the US.

However, while it's tempting to scale content that has been produced for an English-speaking audience and feed it to the local units for translation and further dissemination, this approach is often broken.

"The issues? Let's start with the brainstorming. That's the brainstorming which comes up with all those superduper amazing ideas that are going to stun the audience with their brilliance and bring them in droves to the website. So that's fine for the US? But will that healthcare infographic which tells how many people are on medicare work in France? Nope, different system. Germany? Nope, different system! Italy? Sorry no – nor the UK nor just about anywhere actually except the US", says Andy Atkins-Krueger, CEO of Webcertain.

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The bottom line?

In many cases, content can't and shouldn't be scaled. Consequently, if the far majority of the content you post to your local market channels is, in fact, not local, then you shouldn't set up this structure in the first place. That said, there might of course be some programs that are not restricted by geography and as such allow for scaling across borders.

Now that you have the right approach to balancing local and global content, what you need are editorial calendars to keep everything streamlined and in check.
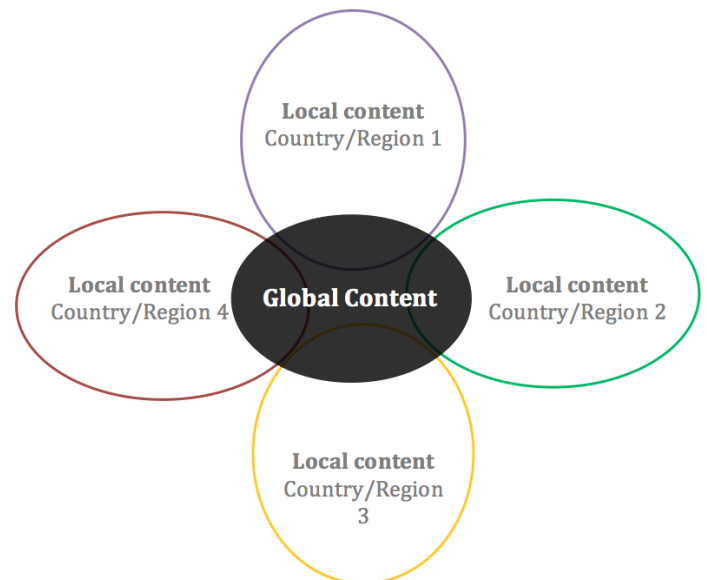
Editorial Calendar Recommendations

- Create a global master calendar that provides a brief overview of the content in the pipeline for each market. Is it a global or purely local piece?

- Then create more detailed editorial calendars for each market which, as a bare minimum, address:
  - Content topic;
  - Who's responsible for producing it;
  - Who's responsible for monitoring it;
  - Where and when it will be published.

Believe it or not, you're now ready to start doing what you set out for in the first place: building and engaging your global social following in a way that is locally relevant yet globally consistent; focused and tightly aligned with overall business goals (locally and globally); and last but not least, highly efficient.

Now isn't that just AMAZING?

STEP 8
MEASURE PERFORMANCE

Because you've set specific targets for social in each of your markets, you know precisely what Key Performance Indicators to measure against to show progress. However, while this is pretty straightforward when your objectives relate to increasing awareness and engagement in isolation, it quickly gets very complicated once you have to tie those metrics back into sales and conversions. Say you've grown your Facebook fan base in India by 5000 and increased engagement by 25% in the past six months - what's the impact on the bottom line of that positive development?

As it happens, the difficulty of proving ROI remains a significant barrier for convincing the C-suite to allocate more budget to social programs. Research third-party analytics vendors to check if any of these meet your specific requirements, or alternatively, consult with an agency to see if they can carry out such reporting for you.

Additionally, what's worth mentioning is that no matter how well prepared you show up, you can't plan for everything. This especially holds true in social, where the biggest wins often are those that leverage the real-time nature of the media, capturing opportunities as they arise. Some of the most notable examples of this count Oreo's 'Dunk In The Dark' tweet during the SuperBowl blackout, and more recently, Arby's tweet during the Grammys.

Finally, from an international perspective, be cautious with quantitative like-for-like comparisons between markets. Each locale will be unique, from the channels you use to how people engage on them to which KPIs you have set. Instead, hone in on which tactics, topics, and content formats bring the best results in each market.

Then iterate and refine in accordance with your specific targets.

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OVERVIEW
PLANNING A WINNING GLOBAL SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY – AN 8-STEP FRAMEWORK

FIND AN ALLY IN THE C-SUITE

1

SELECT YOUR MARKETS WISELY

2

LISTEN (KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE)

4

3

ASSEMBLE A GLOBAL SOCIAL DREAM TEAM

CHOOSE CHANNELS & ORGANISE THEM

5

6

DEFINE SOCIAL OBJECTIVES – GLOBALLY & LOCALLY

8

7

MEASURE – RINSE & REPEAT

CREATE A PLAN TO OPERATE

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