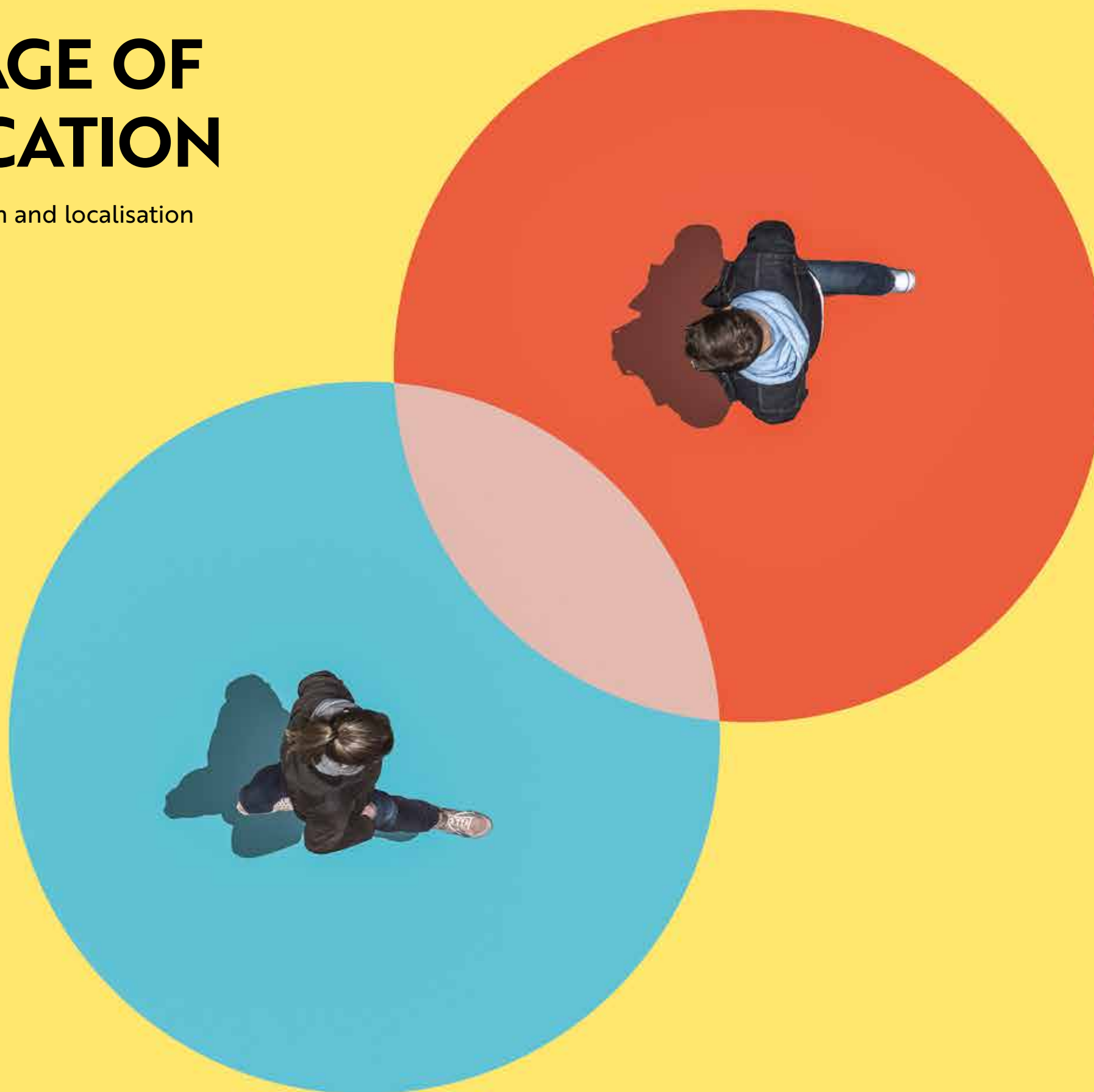


THE NEW AGE OF COMMUNICATION

The challenge of personalisation and localisation



BY MATHIAS WURTH

Through digitalisation, the world has become smaller. The multitude of online distribution channels and social media at our disposal today also means we can communicate in various ways with more people in more time zones simultaneously. For a standard campaign, an average company uses at least eight different distribution channels nowadays. This new age of communication offers the modern marketer diverse options, but poses challenges as well – personalisation and localisation.

Individuality has gained importance today. Consumers expect content that is tailored to their needs and matches the way they communicate. The internet may have created a single, large, global community, but the people, languages, dialects, traditions and social norms continue to differ. This difference makes translations and customer-specific adaptations necessary, so that cultural expectations may be met. This results in several iteration steps for each of the many parts of the content. Not only is it important to be able to personalise one's content and locate each individual asset in order to reach the right audience – it is simply expected. However, many companies do not have the systems fit to do that.

Customers today have access to a wide range of instruments and sources which enable them to learn about products and services on their own. In order to please all personas, not only marketing information should be available via different channels, but personalised content should be offered, too. It can be difficult to meet these requirements while maintaining a brand's integrity.

For marketers, it is a complex and challenging task to manage multiple sales channels, iterations and variants of each media content. In addition, many marketing departments produce content and advertising material for various sales areas. Research shows: localised content generates six times higher customer loyalty than content developed for the global market. In many cases, effective localisation proves more important than personalisation. This is particularly true for multinationals, which are subject to requirements of a number of supervisory authorities in various areas. Effective localisation is therefore essential, but it also increases the complexity of an already complex process. Thus, even within one country, it may need to adapt a message to different laws, cultures and dialects. And all this content and all these variants have to be localised so that a targeted, tailor-made marketing is possible.

Although localisation is a real challenge for marketers, it also holds great opportunity. Any information is available online from anywhere in the world, and the crucial challenge is to manage the localisation process efficiently. However, due to the high complexity, efficient personalisation and localisation are impossible without a software that automates and streamlines the process. To achieve personalisation and localisation objectives, it is essential to have appropriate systems and tools, such as a stable DAM and PIM system. Each project and campaign requires several iterations. This creates countless assets, all of which must be logged, managed and controlled. Content is divided into different texts, headlines, summaries, translations, and edits according to interests, distribution channels, and placements. Images, videos and animated content are used for numerous online and offline channels. Thus, each medium is available in various sizes, ratios, resolutions, and trims. The PIM has to deal with several prices and regional discounts as well as with translations and differing product specifications. Different measurement systems or local and legal information requirements exacerbate the problem.

On top of this, all data and information will be published to an ever-increasing number of channels and touchpoints. It is a task that can only be managed efficiently with an omnichannel approach to content marketing and brand management. Marketing data and information should be available at any time so that it can be published on any channel, whether it is a mobile advertising campaign, social media, or an ad in a print magazine. If the systems cannot manage the numerous relation-

ships and variations of each part of the content, it only leaves a labour-intensive, error-prone process, which slows down time-to-market and makes it almost impossible to deliver a consistent message across all channels.

The central challenge is to use the data productively across many different systems and areas. Analytical reports can be created, but it is likely this will take a long time, or that they will be incomplete, which means the results will be less conclusive and less helpful for the strategic direction of your marketing. What is needed is a real-time presentation of marketing data combined with historical analysis. If decision-making is supported by a real-time overview, marketing can become more agile and more effective.

However, these processes impact both workflow and project management. For team-wide collaboration to work for all stakeholders and service providers, one needs tools that support collaboration and workflows. A system that promotes intelligent and creative work is just as crucial as the ability to manage, track and control marketing budgets, campaigns, resources and tasks.

The solution to problems of personalisation and localisation, if one will, is two-fold and requires both a change in existing software systems and a re-evaluation of marketing functions. In order to meet the challenge effectively, marketing should continue to develop and implement both elements of this dual methodology. Software systems can now be fully integrated and provide most marketing tools on one homogenous platform. This makes it easier to personalise and localise assets by improving connectivity and

dependencies between tasks, assets, and people. This draws an entirely new picture of the relationships and connections between all the individual information and data.

It is important to think holistically, to cross the boundaries between departments, and to work as an organic system. In this way, content marketing can follow an approach that is suitable for multiple channels, characters, and sales areas. Integration helps combine the individual topics and assign each individual customer type to a coherent, sound persona. By making the process more effective, the software takes over a large part of the task that previously frustrated marketers.

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*censhare AG
info@cenhare.com
censhare.com*