

GLOBAL WEBSITE FACTORY PROGRAM

Building a truly global digital enterprise

PHOTON®

© Copyright 2023 Photon Interactive UK Limited. All Rights Reserved.

Overview

Executive summary

What is the Website Factory Program?

Challenges faced by multi-brand companies

- High operational costs
- Multiple vendors and partners fragmented across markets
- Lack of a real centralized system

Website Factory Program: A blueprint for global digital dominance

- Accelerating global digital business expansion
- Ensuring significant cost savings
- Tapping into any foreign market with the Content-as-a-Service layer

How Photon powered L'Oreal's Solidarity Sourcing program

Conclusion: Think beyond

References

© Copyright 2023 Photon Interactive UK Limited. All Rights Reserved.

Executive summary

We are entering an unprecedented time in information technology where new standards of digital experiences continue to accelerate every single day. As a result, enterprises across the globe are increasingly expanding their portfolio of vendors to support local markets, thus creating repetitive digital platforms and vendor relationships. Digital leaders have to consolidate into a new centralized digital ecosystem that redesigns future value chains to support global single-brand or multi-brand enterprises.

With about 5.16 billion[1] active Internet users around the world, enterprises have to support new commerce channels, create personalized experiences—but do so in a manner that provides cost-effective localization while delivering a globally consistent online brand experience across large markets and smaller emerging ones.

Reportedly, 75% of people wish to engage in their native vernacular during the course of their buying journey.[2] This makes localization a crucial CX strategy that is directly related to **personalization**, which ensures that the culture, conventions, and values of the target market are respected—regardless of geographical and cultural boundaries.

However, localization often surfaces a number of challenges from both an operational and an economical standpoint, such as:

- Lack of accuracy and consistency in brand communication across localized websites
- High expenditure while implementing a localization project
- Management of multiple vendors, partners, and teams fragmented across global markets
- Lack of an effective, centralized system for carrying out localization with the promise of significant ROI

© Copyright 2023 Photon Interactive UK Limited. All Rights Reserved.

This whitepaper focuses on the **Website Factory Program** which has been developed to address these very challenges. What does the Website Factory Program apply to?

- Supporting global website instances of single or multi-brand enterprises
- Reducing time and expenditure on content localization, while maintaining brand expression across markets
- Building credibility among audiences in foreign markets by leveraging the Programs **Content-as-a-Service** layer for personalizing communication in the context of language, imagery, and local conventions
- Lowering capital and support costs by consolidating numerous technologies into one customized centralized product

Through this whitepaper, we take an in-depth view of how to harness the power of the Website Factory Program and build a foundation for speed to market and increased efficiency.

© Copyright 2023 Photon Interactive UK Limited. All Rights Reserved.

What is the **Website Factory Program?**

The Website Factory Program is a framework, which serves as a centralized system for enabling website localization and releasing consistent brand experiences for global customers in accordance with their language preference or geographical location. The centralized system allows for the sharing of common technology components across all web properties, thereby resulting in significant cost savings in terms of initial builds, integration, and maintenance.

As for the content localization aspect, the program incorporates a **Content-as-a-Service** layer that helps in tailoring the content in terms of visuals, language, and local conventions such as language, currency, and measurement units. Localization is a critical business strategy, which is not to be mistaken for the mere translation of the text. In reality, localization is about adapting a website or content asset with respect to linguistic context, as well as, the cultural preferences and societal norms of customers.

Global enterprises from any industry—right from retail to finance and technology to healthcare—can implement the Website Factory Model to increase the likelihood of their program visitors converting into buying customers. Interacting with people in their vernacular shows the company is a part of their culture. It instills confidence in people and brand trust while conveying their brand promise.

> "Localization is a crucial, forward-looking business strategy that no global enterprise can afford to disregard or shelve. With digital consumers all over the globe increasingly seeking hyper-personalized content combined with convenient user experience, enterprises need to make greater efforts to delight consumers by communicating in their native language. The good news is that the Website Factory program has made localization incredibly feasible."



Mukund Balasubramanian,
Co-Founder & CTO, Photon

© Copyright 2023 Photon Interactive UK Limited. All Rights Reserved.

Challenges faced by **multi-brand companies**

Large multi-brand companies are comprised of multiple business units, cultures, and management styles—creating disparities which make it extremely difficult to ensure standardized communication across localized websites.

In this scenario, the Website Factory program helps companies address the challenges by establishing clear guidelines for localizing their web

presence on a global scale delivered through an affordable business model. Since governance is centralized, the chances of discrepancies and inconsistencies in brand communication are effectively nullified.

High operational costs

Localization is often an extremely complex, tedious, and expensive process for multi-brand companies. This is primarily due to local markets not being able to support robust enterprise CMS platforms.

Creating multilingual websites involves various processes beyond translation—right from exporting content from back-end systems, to receiving and checking for quality, and copying the translated content onto the website. This process involves more effort and more costs.

Further, coordinating and managing teams with varying skill sets all over the world incur massive capital expenditure for companies. This challenge often leads to companies compromising on the quality of localization, which invariably turns out to be a poor business decision. However, the benefits from a successful localization project expand beyond the sale and deliver consumer comfort, trust, and loyalty.

Multiple vendors and partners fragmented across markets

The involvement of a large number of internal and external stakeholders—fragmented across the global market—often means the proliferation of a repetition of vendors providing similar functions. This increases the expenditure on IT as well as human resources.

The Website Factory program centralizes all aspects of localization—including development, translation, stakeholder and vendor management—enabling the company to focus only on their brand messaging and customer-centric goals.

© Copyright 2023 Photon Interactive UK Limited. All Rights Reserved.



Lack of a real centralized system

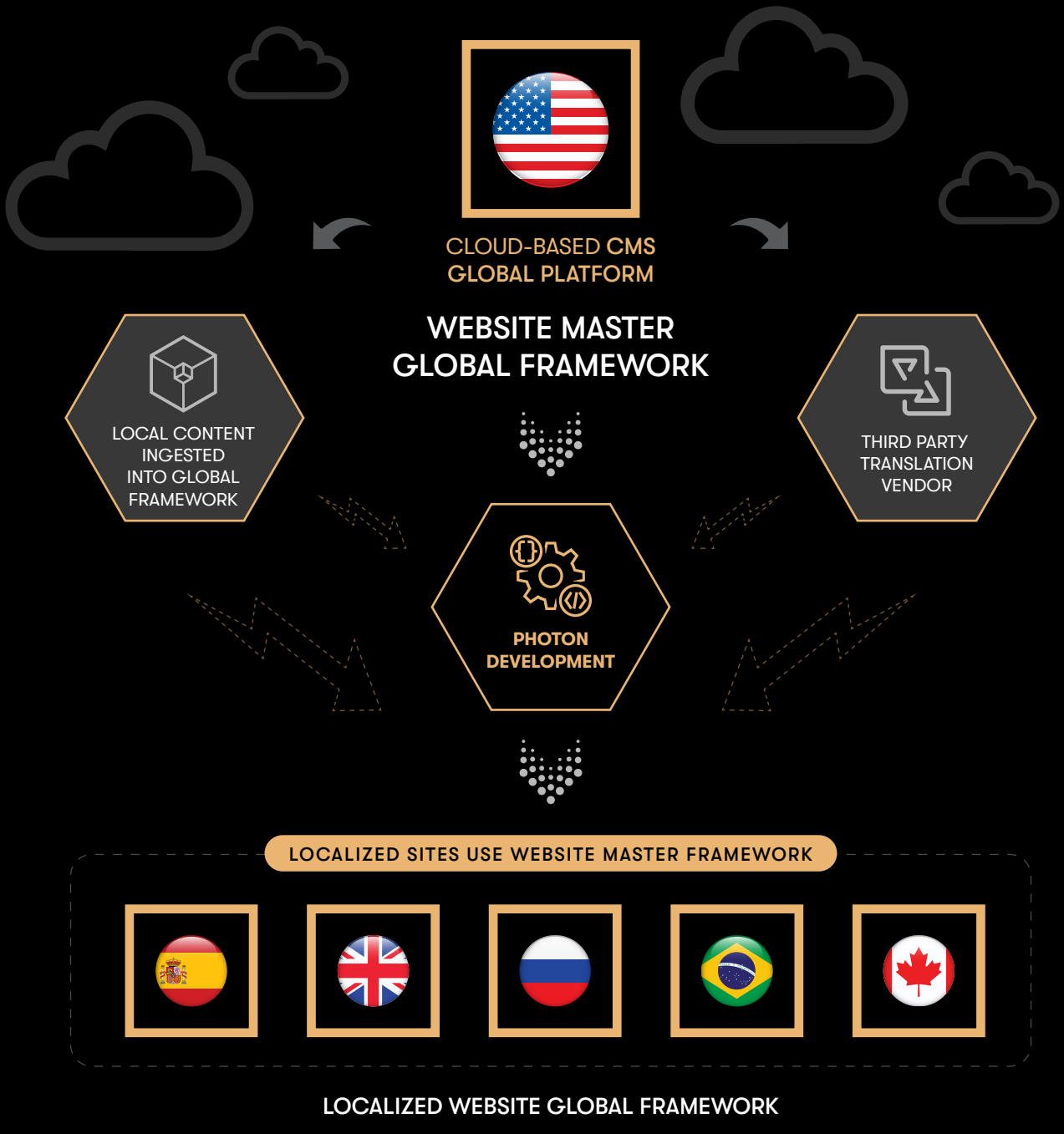
For a website localization project, large companies often tend to hire multiple managers and teams with specific skill sets to carry out the process in various regions worldwide. This makes coordination a nightmare, especially for multi-brand companies. The Website Factory program, however, centralizes the entire localization process, making it faster, seamless, and more efficient.

The program serves as the control center for various aspects of localization, including globalization of the website, creation of designs and imagery, language translation, development, SEO optimization, and quality control testing.

A robust, centralized process helps establish best practices for the design, development, and execution of the localization process. These best practices help companies and their business units align about localization process, roles, and responsibilities while addressing any relevant query or concern regarding the program.

© Copyright 2023 Photon Interactive UK Limited. All Rights Reserved.

Website Factory program: A blueprint for global digital dominance



The Website Factory program enables single and multi-brand companies to leverage a localized marketing strategy for expanding their brand reach and engaging with potential customers in untapped markets. Let us take a look at the major benefits of this forward-looking program.

© Copyright 2023 Photon Interactive UK Limited. All Rights Reserved.



Accelerating global digital business expansion

The Website Factory program gives enterprises the ability to think globally, but act locally, by driving localized strategies that truly deliver personalized customer experiences.

The program allows for common components to be shared across all localized web assets, reducing costs for initial builds, integration, and maintenance. In particular, this benefits large organizations tasked with managing multiple brands and subsidiaries all over the world. The program has emerged as the most practical solution for implementing a successful localization project on a global scale.

Ensuring significant cost savings

Companies can greatly benefit by developing a singular platform—called a Global Reference Application (RefApp)—which serves as a framework for localizing master sites.

Companies can utilize the larger portion of their budget to build a master site for their primary market. Once this is completed, the level of effort to deploy and the cost is reduced significantly to the local markets. All integrations are done at the Reference App level, and all local markets can access and benefit from those integrations. For the local markets, only the run cost is incurred as the build cost is already covered.

Therefore, with a centralized team to build and support the sites and the sharing of IT resources, companies are empowered to scale while realizing significant cost savings.

© Copyright 2023 Photon Interactive UK Limited. All Rights Reserved.



Tapping into any foreign market with the Content-as-a-Service layer

According to a survey by IDG, more than 80% of top marketing decision-makers across the US, the UK, Germany, and France believe that content localization is crucial to entering new markets.[3] There is an increasing need for enterprises to expand to newer markets and localize large volumes of content on a global scale. The Content-as-a-Service (CaaS) layer of the Website Factory program helps companies market their brands, products, and services by disseminating content, globally, through the power of APIs.

CaaS simplifies content management by making the process more flexible instead of relying on a traditional CMS. A traditional CMS usually acts as a single solution software to control how content is managed and displayed. This means the CMS invariably becomes the control center for the creation of all customer experiences. However, a primary website driven by a CMS is not suitable for driving diverse customer experiences across the globe. CaaS, on the other hand, gives other systems the freedom to customize and present content as required across regions.

Leveraging the CaaS layer of the Website Factory program helps enterprises better control and manage their content and brands' presence as new content distribution channels continue to emerge. It allows for a great degree of personalization and helps store content in a single repository, allowing companies to use or shelve content as required.

© Copyright 2023 Photon Interactive UK Limited. All Rights Reserved.

How Photon powered **L'Oréal's Solidarity Sourcing program**

In 2017, L'Oréal launched its first Solidarity Sourcing project called Website Factory, which was created to build and service localized websites, on a global framework, for brands such as L'Oréal Paris, Garnier, and Essie. The project entailed deploying and servicing global flagship websites, localized to each market, for L'Oréal's international portfolio of 34 diverse and complementary brands. The initiative includes 800+ websites localized across the world.

Established in partnership with Photon, the Website Factory team is located in a priority development zone of the Chennai Metropolitan Area. This initiative revolves around three commitments:

1. **Job development and economic revitalization of the region**
2. **Inclusion of vulnerable local communities, skills training for career development**
3. **Equal treatment for women and minorities**

The program has successfully launched over 300 projects across 16 different brands, accelerating the launch of websites across the globe.

- 400+ sites are currently under 24/7 app maintenance, ensuring continued success and optimal performance.
- The program boasts a team of 250+ highly trained and skilled digital engineers, providing unparalleled website development and maintenance expertise.
- With a 96% release compliance KPI for functional enhancements and 99% adherence to content updates, the program has set a new standard for quality assurance in website development.

> "L'Oréal was looking for a partner who understood the enormity of the problem they were trying to solve. As one of L'Oréal's long-standing partners, Photon jumped in and helped solve the business financial modeling and then helped provide the type of collaboration and buy-in needed at the highest management level to make this succeed."



Mukund Balasubramanian,
Co-Founder & CTO, Photon

© Copyright 2023 Photon Interactive UK Limited. All Rights Reserved.



Project background

The vision behind this program was to deliver localized digital experiences while focusing on speed, cost, and quality. To achieve this vision, L'Oréal wanted to rationalize its web presence, standardize the technology stack, and change the operating model. L'Oréal intended to make fundamental changes in the operating model, including leadership from the CDO organization, a move to a lean or an agile digital product development model, and a global platform and factory approach to the operation.

As L'Oréal has a diversified portfolio of sites, Sitecore and Demandware were planned to be utilized as the key platforms to standardize various brand presences. While Sitecore was the chosen platform for the Global Website Factory project, L'Oréal asked Photon to recommend lightweight platforms for faster and efficient execution.

Photon was instrumental in creating the process, right from conceptualization of the idea of building an independent reference application portal to enabling the website creation process using the pre-built code.

© Copyright 2023 Photon Interactive UK Limited. All Rights Reserved.

Our involvement

Photon's work involved every step of the process:

- Assisting in the designing of the program
- Creating the architecture blueprint for a shared global website service
- Implementing and deploying a global framework to create adaptive-responsive designed website presences, localized to the needs of each market
- Providing continued support and maintenance for each digital presence

Key learning

- The Global Website Factory program is one of the landmark moves in the multi-brand CPG manufacturing industry, standardizing a global framework to support a brand's flagship website, which is then localized to each market across the globe.
- The program is expected to **reduce build and run costs by up to 50%** across each website instance

Outcomes

- Provided a unified state-of-the-art CX on their brand sites
- Accelerated time to market
- Added all new functionalities to the core platform, available to all markets and sites
- Fostered best practices in reusing assets and sharing between brands
- Standardized technologies around group solutions
- Successfully adapted the program with both a global pharmacy retailer and a leading pharma CPG company

"L'Oréal is one of the few global companies that not only have to think through different go to market strategies from luxury, to dermatologist, to professional salon, to mass consumer. They face the challenge of doing this at a global scale and as the category leader. Everything has to be done through that lens."



Mukund Balasubramanian,
Co-Founder & CTO, Photon

© Copyright 2023 Photon Interactive UK Limited. All Rights Reserved.

Conclusion: **Think beyond**

The Website Factory program is a forward-looking framework, which centralizes and simplifies the complex website localization process. Photon has extensive experience in developing and implementing customized Website Factory program initiatives and many other digital strategies for companies across various industries. The company delivers compelling digital experiences through a creative front-end integrated into the enterprise digital architecture on the back-end.

At Photon, we take an innovation-led approach to solve critical business challenges by providing unmatched services in strategic consulting, creative design thinking, and digital transformation. In the development of innovative digital solutions, Photon has made substantial investments in staying on the bleeding-edge of new technologies and releases in order to maintain a rigorous approach to develop new emerging experiences.

With a global network comprising more than 6,000 highly skilled web, mobile, and digital-native engineers, Photon is the world's largest and fastest growing provider of hyper-personalized digital experiences. Photon has exceptional experience from working with market leaders and because of this, we help Fortune 500 companies bridge the gap between digital experiences and the physical world.

Connect with Photon today to learn how you can effectively implement a customized Website Factory program and deploy localized websites at a global scale.

References

[1] Statista. April 2023.

[2] Can't Read, Won't Buy: 2014. Common Sense Advisory

[3] Catalyzing Growth and Revenue Opportunities with Content Localization. IDG & Smartling.

© Copyright 2023 Photon Interactive UK Limited. All Rights Reserved.



Connect with Photon now and accelerate your digital transformation journey.

Photon's mission is to help our clients embrace the power of digital technology. We are the digital transformation partner of choice for leading Fortune 500 companies. We offer an integrated approach combining Strategy Consulting, Creative Design, and Technology at scale. Please visit www.photon.com to learn more about us.

Digital transformation starts here
photon.com

Email us at yourdigitalpartner@photon.com

© Copyright 2023 Photon Interactive UK Limited. All Rights Reserved.