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Monolingual Websites letting down UK Law firms

Description: UK legal firms are missing out on new clients through the lack of multilingual online exposure say Kwintessential.

London, England, 20th July 2010: The translation and interpreting company Kwintessential has recently conducted a survey of the UK's top 200 legal firms' websites. With more and more clients coming from abroad plus a growing foreign language speaking community closer to home, the survey was conducted to glean the extent to which legal firms are capitalising on such opportunities. Results show that less than 10% have their website in a language other than English.

The UK's legal market is worth billions. Despite the pressures of the recession and global economic slow-down, the industry has managed to not only to stay afloat but in many incidences post positive profit forecasts. In a volatile market and through volatile times, legal firms must look towards alternative routes to market. Current strength is based upon a domestic consumer base as well as international exposure; both of which still hold potential for development and growth.

Kwintessential, who have been educating clients on the benefits of website translation since 2004, conducted a survey of the UK's top 200 legal firms. The survey examined their websites to assess the extent to which thought had been given to either a) the domestic, non-English speaking audience and/or b) the international audience. The results demonstrated a clear gap in their external communications and marketing strategies.

Of the top 200 firms, only 19 (9.5%) firms had their website available in a language other than English. Of these, 7 had it available in more than one foreign language. Coming out on top in terms of languages and effective localization of their websites were Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, Clifford Chance, Allen & Overy, Lovells, Ashurst, Taylor Wessing, Bird & Bird and Stewarts Law.

"Your website is now the face of your company. Having it translated into other languages brings with it numerous benefits," explains Neil Payne, Kwintessential's Managing Director. "For one it says something about your company, i.e. we are internationally minded and 'speak your language'. This builds trust and confidence in a brand. Localization needs to be taken more seriously it seems by legal firms."

"Localization" relates to the act of modifying a product to make it both usable and suitable to a target market. Website localization refers to the process of taking an English, western-orientated, website and moulding it to conform to a foreign audience.

For the legal industry, Kwintessential suggest there are four clear benefits for legal firms in translating and localizing their websites.

1) Captures the International Market

Around 32% of internet users globally are non-native English speakers. With PC ownership and access to the internet most rapidly increasing outside of North America and Europe, this figure will increase even more. English is no longer *the* international language but one of many including French, Spanish, Arabic and Chinese. Having a website accessible in a foreign language attracts visitors and offers them the information they need in the language they are comfortable with.

2) Develops the Domestic Market

Domestically although a high proportion of internet users will read English, for many it is their second language. Having a website in one of the community languages open doors to that audience and sells services directly. It demonstrates that you work with, understand and value a particular community (whether Polish, Somali, Turkish or any other).

3) Builds Credibility

If a company only has a website in English and its competitor has it in all major languages, which one will gain more credibility with foreign language visitors? Localization of a website demonstrates that you are a "next level" firm. It shows that you understand, value, and respect members of those communities who may wish to use your services, which can only positively impact brand credibility.

4) Increases Revenue

Millions of pounds in potential revenue are lost each year due to lack of investment in website localization. Most internet users naturally feel more comfortable and understand a company better if their information, products or services are presented in their native language. By undergoing the website localization process you access potentially thousands of new customers.

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Notes to Editors

More about Kwintessential

Kwintessential was founded by Neil Payne in 2004. The company has become a leading expert in translation and interpreting services. 40% of Kwintessential's come from the UK legal industry. As a company they have long promoted the need for a multilingual web presence which the company offers for as little as £250.

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