

CHAIN REACTION: CONQUERING TRANSLATION CHALLENGES IN THE FOOD INDUSTRY

WORD360

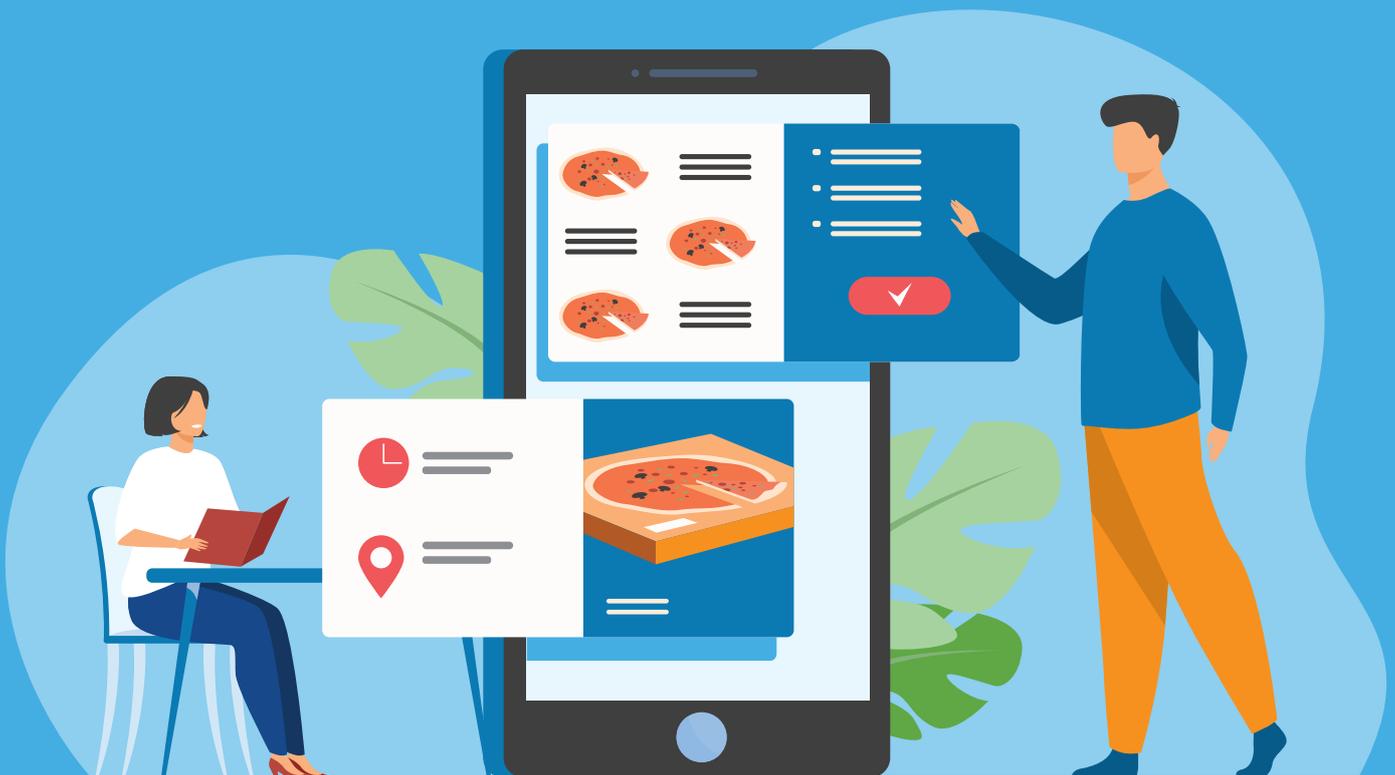


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INTRODUCTION

In 2019, the UK's food and drink exports totalled a value of **£23.7 billion**, which was a **4.9%** increase on 2018, despite the Brexit transition period. With such vast export figures, this huge market reaches all over the globe selling key products such as salmon, cheese, wine, and lamb.

This whitepaper will examine new trends and challenges facing the food industry, what the food industry needs to be translating for success and why, the benefits of being a first mover in new markets, as well as what to look for and what to avoid when choosing your perfect translation partner.

Finally, we'll reveal how Word360 can be your ideal linguistics partner and how we can provide with all the tools you need to ensure growth overseas.

2019: The UK's food & drink exports totalled

£23.7 billion –
an increase of almost
5% over 2018



TACKLING TRENDS IN THE FOOD INDUSTRY

The food industry, like any other, is subject to rapid evolution, and at no point has this been more apparent than during the COVID-19 crisis.

THE EVOLVING CONSUMER

One of the largest trends and perhaps challenges currently facing the food industry is the evolving wants and concerns of the consumer. Consumers are increasingly concerned about where their food has come from and what exactly is in it. This can be linked to the increasing prevalence or at least awareness of food-related disorders, as well as expanding education surrounding obesity and the causes of it. This is in turn linked to the rapid expansion of the supplements market in recent years, which is **slated to be worth** in excess of **\$115 billion by 2024**.

Supplements market slated to be worth more than
\$115 billion by 2024.

Consumers are also increasingly opting for meat-free and vegan products, shying away from meat and dairy as a result of health and environmental concerns. What this culminates in is a decrease in demand for processed food, as well as consumers who are now paying more attention than ever to the fine print of your packaging, putting your products' contents and how you present them under the microscope.



THE CLIMATE ZEITGEIST

Twinned with changing consumer trends towards meat-free and vegan products is increasing awareness over product sustainability. Whilst the COVID-19 crisis will hopefully be drawing to a close throughout 2021, the climate emergency has gone nowhere.

Consumers are ever-more selective about the products they choose based on packaging, with food clad in plastic being a particular focal point for criticism. Pressure is added on this particular issue by impending plastic bans across various segments of the food and drink industry as well as action by major players to commit to recyclable or reusable packaging.

Nestlé, for example, has declared that by 2025 it will use only recyclable or reusable packaging, and others such as Asda and McDonald's have also pledged to remove plastic from their food.

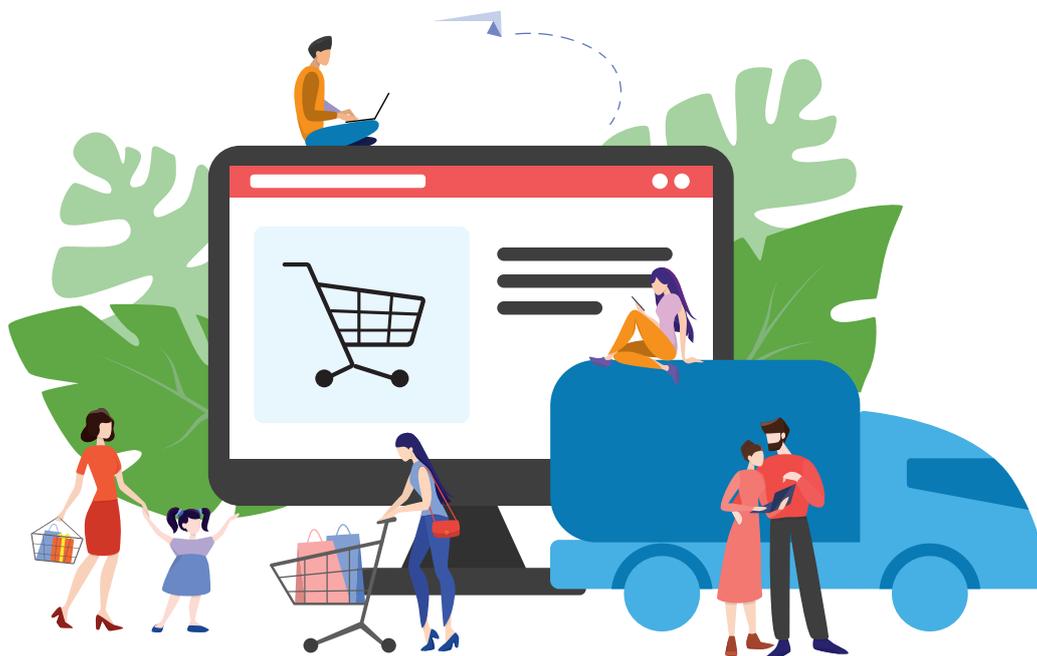
THE OVERNIGHT DIGITAL REVOLUTION

One of the most profound long-term effects that the COVID-19 crisis has had on the world of food and drink is the rapid acceleration of digitisation. This was a process that was well on its way before the pandemic, but in nearly every industry, it has expanded from being an investment in futureproofing to being a necessary means of survival.

For the food industry in particular, this means the adaptation of advanced production technologies such as IoT, AI, and blockchain for tasks such as supply chain analysis, weight measurement, and temperature monitoring.

At the consumer-facing retail end of the spectrum, a major shift online has occurred, and while supermarkets have remained open as a necessity throughout subsequent lockdowns the world over, more consumers than ever before have turned to online shopping.

These are changes that will likely not simply undo themselves the minute the pandemic is over, they are paradigm shifts that are here to stay, and are realistically merely a catalyst for changes that were already ongoing.



ONLY THE AGILE WILL SURVIVE

If the pandemic has taught us anything, it's that the ability to adapt is the ability to survive and thrive. Those with the infrastructure to adapt quickly will be the ones best placed to adapt to whatever comes next.

While we all hope to see the back of COVID-19 this year, it's not unimaginable that it finds a new way to complicate our lives, and indeed the World Health Organisation has been keen to warn us that COVID-19 is 'not necessarily the big one'.

THE FOOD INDUSTRY IN TRANSLATION

There are a few key materials that food industry clients frequently need translating. Translating these materials is vital for effectively reaching your overseas consumers as well as protecting their safety.

YOUR TRANSLATION CHECKLIST

Key materials and consumer touchpoints to consider for translation and localisation:

-  Websites
-  Packaging / Labelling
-  Menus (for restaurant chains)
-  Social media content
-  Operational documents and training manuals
-  Legal documents
-  Customer service information

REACHING OVERSEAS CONSUMERS

Research by the [Harvard Business Review](#) found that 72.4% of consumers were more likely to buy a product with information in their own language, and 56.2% even agreed that having the information in their own language was more important than price.

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Presenting your brand as a whole, from website to packaging, in your customers' own languages is a necessity that cannot be overstated. This goes beyond simple translation, and becomes the process of localisation, which accounts for all the cultural and linguistic contexts of your target market and adapts your brand and marketing to suit.

56.2% say information in their own language is even more important than price

This is especially important in light of the emerging trend for consumer concerns over the origin and constitution of their food.

PROTECTING OVERSEAS CONSUMERS

Food industry translation is about more than selling to consumers, it's about protecting them too. Food packaging in particular contains all of the relevant information a consumer needs about a given product, including ingredients, nutrition, and allergens.

For example, to export food to the EU it is mandatory for your label to indicate:

- The name of the food
- The list of ingredients
- Any ingredient or processing aid derived from a product causing allergies or intolerances used in the manufacture or preparation of a food and still present in the finished product, even if in an altered form
- The quantity of certain ingredients and/or categories of ingredients
- The net quantity of the food
- The date of minimum durability or 'use by date'
- Any special storage conditions and/or the conditions of use
- The name or business name and address of the food business operator
- The country of origin or place of provenance
- Instructions for use where needed
- With respect to beverages containing more than 1.2% by volume of alcohol, the actual alcoholic strength by volume
- A nutrition declaration

If a consumer cannot understand the contents of a product and buys it either blindly or falsely believing that they understand the label, they may be harmed by an ingredient they weren't aware of.

Accurate translation of product labelling thus becomes a matter of consumer safety.

THE THREAT OF RECALLS

Food labelling requires an extra layer of attention, in order to avoid the dreaded recall. If a product is found to be unsafe or in breach of [labelling regulations](#), it's liable to be recalled, at huge cost to the producer.

[According to Allianz](#), the average cost of a recall in the food industry is £312,000 in direct costs alone. This pales in comparison to one of the worst recalls on record, when, in 1982, Johnson and Johnson were forced to spend more than \$100 million (\$260 million today) on recalling 31 million bottles of Tylenol and subsequently re-establishing their brand.

As recently as April 2021, Tees Ltd. was [forced to recall](#) its PRAN Easy Noodles from Poundstretcher because of a labelling error leading to undeclared ingredients.

Recalls are expensive and damaging to your brand. In fact, [in a study into recalls](#) in the food industry, it was found that 21% of consumers would never again buy from a brand that had to recall a product, 50% would switch brands at least temporarily, and 14% would never buy that specific product again.

Avoiding recalls means accuracy, not only in your own tongue but in that of your consumers too.

Average direct cost of a food recall is

£312,000, with further costs associated with loss of consumer trust

21% would never buy from you again

50% would switch brands temporarily

14% would never buy a recalled product again



BEING A FIRST MOVER

First mover advantage is what allows you to dominate a market space and establish your brand before anyone else. Being a first mover is what allowed the Hoover brand to become so synonymous with vacuum cleaners that you, like most, probably refer to a vacuum cleaner as a Hoover.

Being a first mover provides a [number of other benefits too](#). First movers can take advantage of their head start to make their products harder to replicate for those who come next. Furthermore, by ensuring your products are patented, copyrighted and indisputably yours, you remove most of the competition for that product, and is an advantage often only available to first movers.

Additionally, your first mover status might allow you to control a given crucial resource, whether that may be material, logistical or otherwise. Again, this makes it much more difficult for others to compete with your product.

Finally, by establishing a product ecosystem such as subscription services and product-specific accessories, you may be able to make moving away from your products to a competitor's more costly to the consumer than staying with you.

One of the strongest examples of ecosystems in the food sector is in the expanding market of supplements, where consumers can buy complete lines of interconnected products as well as accessories and even training advice from once brand.



TRANSLATION AT SPEED

The translation speed necessary to ensure first mover advantage is offered through professional machine translation. Professional machine translation differs from online translators by offering the level of precision that is necessary for regulatory concerns, as well as involving a crucial human element.

Computer aided translation (CAT) tools use banks of learned words and phrases to conduct the time-consuming leg work, leaving the expert human translator free to focus on the precision and localisation element, meaning that the overall timescale of translation is reduced drastically.

Professional machine translation, therefore, is part of ensuring first mover advantage and beating the competition to market.

THE RIGHT TRANSLATION

There are arguably two key elements to finding the right translation services for you: knowing what to avoid, and knowing what exactly makes a good translation partner.

BEWARE OF ONLINE TRANSLATORS

On the 3rd of September, 2018, the Norwegian news outlet, NRK, reported that highly sensitive corporate information pertaining to the Statoil petroleum company was freely available and searchable on the internet. Shortly after, Slator, the translation industry news body, conducted further investigations, and found that “an astonishing variety” of similar information could be found online from a huge number of other firms.

3rd September, 2018:
sensitive information
pertaining to Statoil is
found scattered across the
internet after they used an
online translator

It transpired that Statoil and other firms had been taking shortcuts with important translations, using sites such as Translate.com in particular to translate sensitive information. This was not necessarily a wrongdoing on Translate.com’s part, as they pointed out [at the time](#), this had all been made clear in the terms and conditions agreed to by Statoil when they began using the online service.

Using an online translator leaves you open to this kind of mishap, and potentially even breaches of legal terms surrounding client data protection, because the AIs that drive them are hosted online and learn from information inputted by users everywhere. It also leaves you at the mercy of the [often comically bad](#) translations offered by online translators.

THE RIGHT TRANSLATION PARTNER

Finding the right translations partner should be a question of matching a potential provider against a number of service and security accreditations and then balancing this against your specific needs.

Your food translations partner checklist:

-  Do they know your industry? Or will you have to explain specific terms to them?
-  Do they employ expert human translators as well as AI?
-  Are they an Association of Translation Companies (ATC) member?
-  Where, geographically, is your translation data stored?
-  Are their translations conducted via a publicly accessible database?
-  Are they ISO 27001 accredited? (ensures data protection)
-  Are they ISO 17100 accredited? (ensures translations quality)
-  Are they ISO 9001 accredited? (ensures standards across the board)
-  Do they offer accessible customer service?
-  Are their linguists subject to NDAs?
-  Can they meet your deadlines?
-  Do they understand your legislative environment? Can they prove it?

CONQUERING YOUR TRANSLATIONS WITH WORD360

Word360 has been providing expert language services in the UK and abroad for 30 years, working with a large number of highly specialised industries to help key players advance their prospects, recognising language as a tool, not a barrier.

Through our experience, we have developed sector-specific tools and service packages to enable our clients to enter new markets with everything they need to ensure they can maximise their international ambitions, ranging from packaging translations to multilingual customer service desks.

We utilise our various industry expertise, and imbue our linguists with all the tools they need to understand the specific terminology and context that make for leading-quality food industry translations through continuous development programmes. We are ISO 9001, 27001, and 17100 accredited and boast a multi award-winning customer service team.

We manage our translations with the use of in-house technology and native data centres, to ensure compliance with data law no matter where in the world you're operating. Furthermore, we employ expert linguists with proven sector knowledge and our teams are subject to NDAs, for complete data privacy.

To learn more about conquering your food industry translations, [contact Word360 today](#).

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Celebrating 30 years in business, Word360 is the Midlands' leading translations and interpreting agency, working with major global clients to help remove language barriers where it matters most. Operational in over 55 countries through a network of more than 9,800 specialised linguists, they enable global conversations and provide award-winning support across multiple industries and sectors.