

## Case Study

# Leveraging Machine Translation: Lessons from a Top Retailer

## MIGROS

Migros is Switzerland's largest retail company, its largest supermarket chain and largest employer. It is also one of the forty largest retailers in the world with more than 80,000 employees. The Migros Language Services is the central point of contact for all kinds of translations within Migros, handling more than 20 million words every year from and into French, Italian, German and English for a variety of internal customers.

## The Challenge

As one of the largest retailers in the world, Migros is always looking for ways to innovate, modernize and optimize. This culture of innovation inspired Ester Caduff, Head of Language Services at Migros, to explore the idea of machine translation (MT) for optimizing costs and turnaround times – specifically for their product information translations. Migros had already streamlined their translation process by integrating their Product Information Management (PIM) System with a web-based TMS. Incorporating MT was a natural next step.



**We knew there was great potential in embracing MT, but we were initially worried about compromising quality. It was crucial for us to find a translation partner with experience and the right mindset to develop a solution that could help us achieve efficiencies.**

*Ester Caduff,  
Head of Language Services Department, Migros*

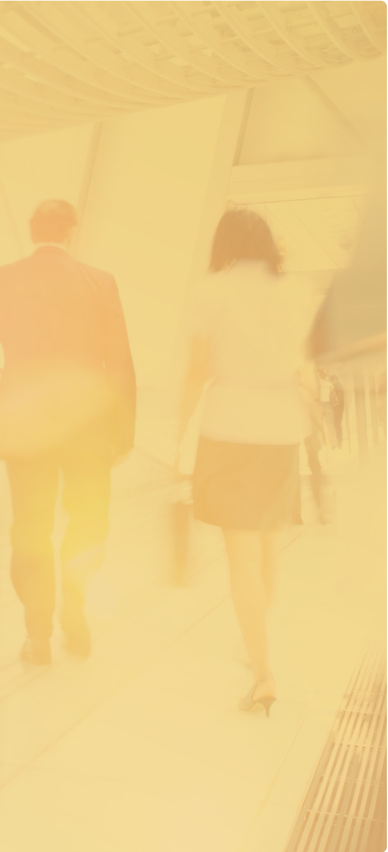
The Migros PIM system generates one million source words requiring translation to French and/or Italian per year. To complicate matters, the content is reused in multiple contexts, therefore requiring high attention to detail to ensure quality. This meant it was necessary to find a solution that would preserve this high quality level, and at the same time, reduce costs.

## The Solution

Acolad has been a reliable partner for Migros' translation needs for nearly four years. Having collaborated on other process improvement initiatives, Migros identified Acolad as a global content expert with not only technological MT experience but also a well-trained translator workforce committed to both efficiency and quality. Acolad's in-depth knowledge of Migros' translation needs and processes meant the expected quality result was already well known.

In order to determine the success rate of MT integration, Acolad's MT team first needed to obtain a quantifiable metric of the effort involved in editing MT. To accomplish this, the team applied its proven post-edit distance measurement during a pilot phase. This measurement calculates the number of changes a translator has applied to machine-translated text in order to produce the quality result expected by the customer. This method is ideal as it takes customer-specific quality requirements into consideration, thus delivering a far more accurate measurement of the value of MT than any other evaluation method.

This transparent approach allows translation customers and service providers to determine MT's degree of usefulness for a given scenario and make data-driven decisions on MT implementation.



**“ For MT to be a success in reducing translation costs, we need a trusting partnership with our customer, a pragmatic approach — and KPIs.**

Björn Döringer,  
*Senior Account Manager, Acolad*

## The Result

The results of Migros' MT pilot phase proved that integration of MT into their translation process would achieve the desired savings without any deterioration to quality. Acolad was then able to establish a cost-optimized pricing model as part of the go-forward process.

Several months into the productive phase of MT integration, Migros confirmed the translation quality had remained completely stable, while average turnaround times had decreased considerably. Moreover, they achieved their cost savings goal already in the first months.

"MT technology has become a real tool for productivity," stated Ester Caduff, "but it's crucial to have the right experts for post-editing behind the wheel to actually leverage the savings. And to ensure there's no damage done to your company's brand image."

Due to the successful implementation of MT for PIM content, Ester is exploring the possibility of applying the same process for other communication types – and Acolad is at the ready.



**Acolad has already been a great partner for translations but has now also become our strategic ally when it comes to implementing innovation at Migros Language Services.**

Ester Caduff,

*Head of Language Services Department, Migros*

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