

Learning from the writer Mark Twain

Applying his writing advice today



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Louise Law's busy but productive day

Mercredi. Mittwoch. Miércoles. Jumatano. Keskiviikko. 星期三. Whatever language you say it in, Wednesday will always be the busiest day of my week. Although I sit on the global Welocalize marketing team, I'm based at Welocalize's UK office, which is located in Cheshire. From 7:30 to 8:30 am, it can be quite frantic in my household. I have to get the kids sorted for school, make myself presentable, engage the brain and say hi to the dog (Lola, miniature dachshund, never surfaces before 10 am). On particularly beautiful days, when we're ready in good time, we'll walk across the fields to school for drop-off, then me to the office.

UK Welocalize Office

I enjoy going into the office. Before I joined Welocalize, I ran my own freelance copywriting business. Working at home 100% and dealing with international clients across many time-zones can be a lonely old business. The simplicity of coming into an office and someone saying "hi" can make a big difference to your day. The Welocalize UK team are a great bunch. They work like Trojans and are as smart as hell. There's always cake in the kitchen and it's a time-honoured tradition that when you travel or go on holiday, you bring back local treats. It's not an uncommon sight to see baklava, käsekuchen or Hershey's kisses nestling together next to the company kettle.

Global teams: crossing time zones

Since Lloyd International Translations merged with Welocalize in November 2010, my working day has a more

global feel. My team sit over in Frederick, Maryland, USA (that's GMT -5). I can speak with clients and business development managers in San Francisco (GMT -8). And sometimes I need to organise things with the China and Japan offices (GMT +8 and +9). The weekly marketing team meeting takes place on Wednesday evening. Me in my kitchen at 8:30 pm, thanks to the wonders of Skype.

Localising for the world

The daily work pattern of a Welocalize employee probably reflects the way the localisation industry has changed. Smart. Always-on. Fast-moving. Online. Digital. Content is constantly being published and translated. Authoring and translation workflows have changed. Multilingual markets accessing content 24x7 through mobile devices have increased the speed (and complexity) at which we need to translate. Blogging and social media has also meant that consumers can feedback immediately and directly influence a business's revenue: bad online product reviews can mean you have to make changes to your product *pronto*.

As a marketing professional, how you market your product and business has also changed. Much of my day is spent writing company PR and marketing communications. I've had to adapt my writing style since I started my career as a marketing graduate at Hewlett Packard 16 years ago. With the rise in social and multi-media, short sound bytes (not always grammatically accurate) can have more impact on today's digital- and device-driven generation. These can be pushed out into Twitter, Facebook, blogs and forums, all of which are effective ways of reaching and influencing your global community. There is more emphasis on visuals rather than heavy copy. Marketing writers have to be a lot more snappy and engaging in the way they write about organisations, products and services. Lengthy, jargon-filled pages don't cut it anymore. (And let's face it, don't look good when displayed on the latest iPhone or iPad, whatever the language). It's more about being captivating not boring, being conversational not causing death by jargon, being entertaining rather than hard selling. Like any profession, you have to evolve and do things differently.

No time for waste. OPEX.

A common theme in my working day is efficiency. What you do has to count. There's no point turning up for work and not making an impact. One constant in our company culture is excellence. Welocalize uses the principles of Operational Excellence (OPEX) as part of its overall business strategy, removing waste and unnecessary workflows to create convenience and value-added tasks. OPEX underpins everything we do as a company and individually, we strive to be efficient and effective in our day-to-day tasks. For translators and localisation vendors, the expectations are higher and demand continues to grow: more productivity, more words per day, higher quality. With budgets staying static, this means we must be more efficient in our work to meet growing demands.

Everyone has more than one role...

I leave the office about 2:45 pm to pick up the kids. For the next couple of hours, I do the best I can in my alternative career(s) as taxi driver, chef, clothes picker-upper, referee, dog walker and sometimes, tooth fairy.

When the kids have quietened down, I log back on to continue the working day, check emails and to get ready for my weekly team meeting. My other half always finds it amusing when, come 8:30 pm, it sounds like I have a load of Americans round for supper: the lively US drawl of my team-mates resonates around the house. Wednesdays are busy but they're good. And you know what they say, if you want something done, ask a busy (but efficient) person. **C**

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