

WE DON'T  
TRANSLATE  
WORDS.

WE LOCALISE  
THE  
EXPERIENCE.

This is Layer 1: the global source of truth. It defines *why* we write the way we write, in English, so every language team, PM and stakeholder shares one understanding. Read it the way the app should sound: clear, confident, human. **Learn by living.**

GLOBAL

LAYER 1

10 LANGUAGES

THE BAR FOR EVERY LANGUAGE

# TWO LAYERS. ONE VOICE.

Layer 1 (this document) defines the global principles. Layer 2 is the local one-pager each language builds: the same principles brought to life in the target language, with real before/after examples. Layer 2 never replaces Layer 1, it applies it. A living glossary holds the fixed terms.

## LAYER 1 · WHY

Global principles for language, tone, UX writing and accessibility. In English, for shared understanding across every language and stakeholder.

## LAYER 2 · HOW

Your language's one-pager. The principles in lived language, with native before/after examples. Written in your language, with an EN version for alignment.

## GLOSSARY · LIVING

Fixed terms that never change, plus the recommended equivalent per language. Updated as new features and products launch.

## YOUR TASK · BUILD IT

Create your language's Layer 2. Use the authoring template, study the PT-BR example to see it lived, then recreate it for your language.

# DON'T TRANSLATE THIS GUIDE. **RECREATE IT** IN YOUR LANGUAGE.

A translated guide is worthless: every example has to be born in the target language and culture. The PT-BR one-pager shows what “lived” looks like in one language. Yours should feel just as native, not like a translation of someone else’s.

## 01 · The localization team

# LOCAL BY DESIGN.

The adidas Running Localization Team is a one-of-a-kind in-house team built on the belief that great experiences are local by design.

We make sure that localization is deeply embedded in product, tech, and marketing from the earliest stages of development. This allows us to shape campaigns and features ahead of launch, making sure they connect naturally with runners around the world, not just linguistically, but culturally.

As part of the adidas ecosystem, the adidas Running app acts as a digital coach, supporting health, movement, style, and performance while delivering a personal and inspiring experience that keeps users engaged with the brand across touchpoints.

# GREAT EXPERIENCES ARE LOCAL BY DESIGN.

## 02 · The adidas Running app

# A DIGITAL COACH. A GATEWAY TO THE COMMUNITY.

The adidas Running app is a digital coach at the heart of the adidas sports and adiClub experience. It supports users before, during, and after each workout with personalized guidance, motivation, and meaningful performance data.

Designed to evolve with its users, the app offers adaptive training plans aligned with individual goals and progress. It motivates through virtual challenges and races, and connects users to a global community through friendly competition, leaderboards, and shared experiences.

Integrated opportunities such as raffles, rewards, points, and exclusive adidas benefits make the app an essential gateway into the adidas Runners community and the adiClub loyalty program.

As an integral part of the adidas ecosystem, the adidas Running app serves as a key channel to engage consumers across multiple touchpoints, combining health, movement, and community while keeping them connected to the adidas experience and fostering deeper, ongoing relationships with the brand.

## 03 · Tone of voice

# A COACH WHO SUPPORTS YOU. NOT ONE WHO COMMANDS YOU.

The adidas Running tone reflects adidas brand values and running culture. It should sound like a knowledgeable coach: by your side, never barking orders.

## DO

- + Confident, not arrogant
- + Motivating, not exaggerated
- + Human, not robotic
- + Inclusive, not individualistic

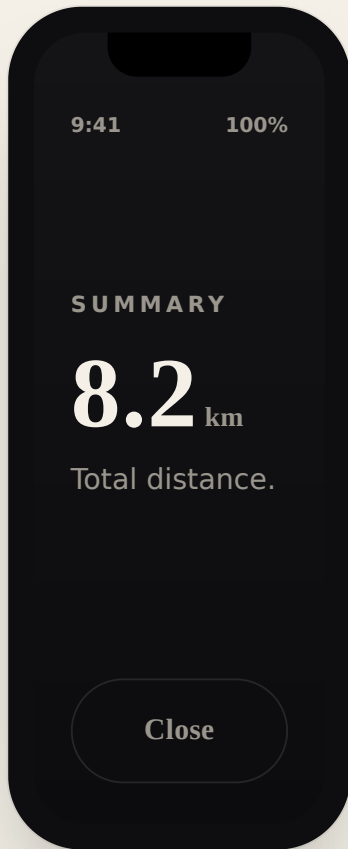
## AVOID

- Aggressive competitive framing
- Pressure-based language
- Judgmental or exclusionary phrasing
- Individualistic messaging

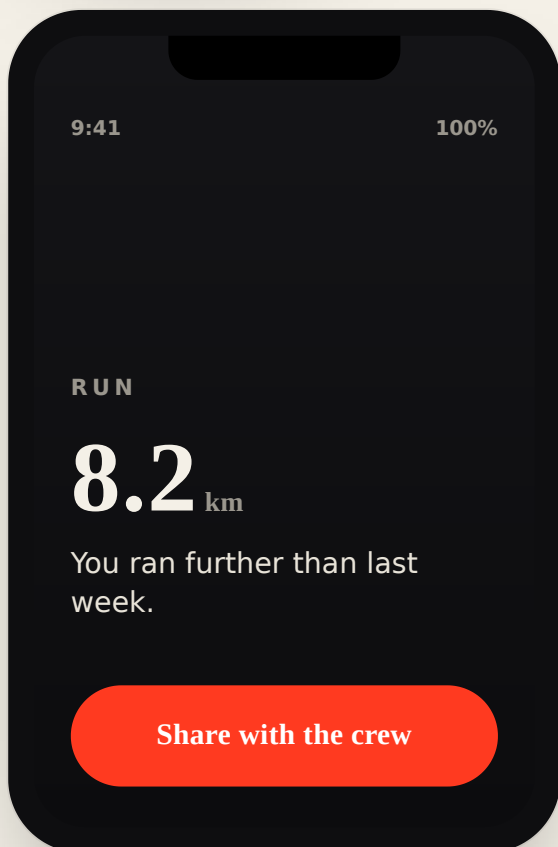
## MOTIVATION THROUGH PROGRESS, NOT PRESSURE

Highlight progress over time. Reinforce consistency. Celebrate effort, not perfection. A number alone motivates no one, interpret it.

● BEFORE · RAW DATA



● AFTER · DATA WITH MEANING



## REWARDS, COMMUNITY & ADICLUB

Rewards and points are part of the adidas Runners community and the adiClub loyalty program, not just gamification. Emphasise access, recognition and belonging.

● BEFORE · CLUB

~~Collect points to get rewards.~~

● AFTER · CLUB

**Collect points and unlock exclusive adidas experiences.**

## COMMUNITY

Challenges, leaderboards and shared goals are core pillars. Competition is always friendly, inclusive and progress-focused. Never aggressive or exclusionary.

● BEFORE · COMMUNITY

~~Beat all the other users.~~

● AFTER · COMMUNITY

**Run with the community.  
Get stronger together.**

### 04 · UX writing principles

# DON'T TRANSLATE WORDS. LOCALISE USABILITY.

These principles set the direction. The linguist applies the judgement, cultural rhythm, register and the context of each string decide how they land in practice.

## CONSISTENCY FIRST

Use consistent terminology across every flow; align with the glossary. Variation reads as an error, not creativity. Aim for recognition, not novelty.

## RIGHT TIME, RIGHT PLACE

The right information, in the right amount, in the right format, at the right moment. Recreate this per language; adapt length to the screen; preserve progressive disclosure.

## LESS IS ALMOST ALWAYS MORE

As short as possible while preserving meaning. Over-shortening loses clarity; over-expanding loses usability. The goal is functional clarity, not literal length.

## FRONT-LOAD MEANING

Users scan, they don't read linearly. Put the key action or result at the very start, critical for SOV languages (TR, KO, JA), where the sentence must be restructured, not just translated.

## RECREATE SIMPLE LANGUAGE

Simple English is not simple globally. Choose natural, common words in the target language. Avoid needless jargon. Adapt idioms; never translate them.

## LOCALISE NUMBERS & UNITS

Always localise dates, time (12h vs 24h), currency placement and units (metric vs imperial). Never rely on the source format. "5K" is fine in running culture; spacing and casing follow the language.

**Front-load is a direction, not a rule.** For SOV languages the verb naturally comes last, so the sentence must be rebuilt to surface the key information early. But cultural rhythm, register and context all shape what front-loading looks like in practice. The guidelines set the direction; the linguist decides.

## DO

- + Sentence case, always
- + Short sentences, active voice
- + One idea per line
- + Adapt punctuation to local norms
- + Spell out acronyms on first use

## AVOID

- ALL CAPS or Title Case for body copy
- Semicolons and nested clauses
- & / + symbols where unnecessary
- Emojis in errors or critical messages
- Directional references (see above / click right)

### ● BEFORE · CTA

~~Click here / More / Learn more~~

### ● AFTER · CTA

**View your runs / Open challenge details**

**Buttons & forms.** Buttons describe their action; links describe their destination. In forms, input fields are unambiguous, instructions explicit, and error messages explain what is wrong, where, and how to fix it.

## 05 · Mobile-first · language reference

# TEN LANGUAGES. TEN DIFFERENT FIGHTS.

The universal rule first: if a message doesn't work on a small screen, it doesn't work. Beyond that, every language has its own primary challenge. Consult this whenever you write or review localised content.

## GERMAN DE

du

### LONG COMPOUND NOUNS

#### WATCH FOR

German builds long compounds (Trainingseinheitsstartknopf). Mobile screens crop or wrap aggressively.

#### TIP

Prefer **Lauf starten** over “Eine neue Lafeinheit starten”. Split compounds where a preposition or shorter word exists.

## FRENCH FR

tu

### LONGER STRUCTURES + MANDATORY SPACING

#### WATCH FOR

~20% longer than English; elaborate structures. Needs a non-breaking space before : ; ? ! (« Bon rythme ! »). Missing spacing breaks screen readers.

#### TIP

Front-load the verb. Cut relative clauses. Rebuild from meaning, never carry over English structure.

## ITALIAN IT

tu

### DESCRIPTIVE PHRASING + SENTENCE RHYTHM

#### WATCH FOR

Expressive and descriptive by nature; tends to over-explain and carry forward the English subject + verb.

#### TIP

Cut ruthlessly. Trust the runner to infer context. Mirror speech: short, direct, energetic.

## DUTCH NL

je / jij

### COMPOUND NOUNS + DIRECT CULTURE

#### WATCH FOR

Long compounds (hardloopschema). Dutch runners expect a direct, no-nonsense tone, overly warm copy feels fake.

#### TIP

Break compounds. **Begin je run**, not “Start een nieuwe hardloopsessie”. When in doubt, go shorter.

## POLISH PL

ty

### 7 GRAMMATICAL CASES + GENDER AGREEMENT

#### WATCH FOR

Every noun, adjective and pronoun inflects by role, one English word maps to many Polish forms. Runs longer after inflection.

#### TIP

Never localise strings in isolation. Check what comes before and after for case agreement. Test in full sentence context.

## TURKISH TR

sen

### AGGLUTINATION + SOV WORD ORDER

#### WATCH FOR

Suffixes stack onto a root (Koşuyormuşsunuzdur = a whole sentence). The verb comes last.

#### TIP

Rewrite, don't translate. Restructure SOV so key info comes early. Test every button at its longest inflected form.

## KOREAN KO

해요체

### HONORIFIC REGISTER + SOV

#### WATCH FOR

Multiple speech levels; use haeyoche (해요체) consistently, polite but approachable. Verb last, so the action is revealed at the end.

#### TIP

Check every string for register consistency. Surface key info early where possible. Follow the glossary for English-term transliteration.

## JAPANESE JA

teineigo

### THREE SCRIPTS + NO SPACES + HONORIFICS

#### WATCH FOR

hiragana, katakana, kanji; no word spaces; foreign terms in katakana. Sentence-final particles (ね/よ/か) shift the tone.

#### TIP

Use kanji where natural (over-hiragana looks childish). Match glossary katakana. Keep particles consistent with the coaching tone (assertive よ / warm ね).

## PORTUGUESE PT-BR

você

### TEXT EXPANSION + BR ≠ PT-PT

#### WATCH FOR

+20-25% vs English; far more informal than European Portuguese. “Você”, not “tu” or “vós”. Exclamation marks are natural.

#### TIP

Never base copy on European Portuguese, it sounds foreign. Embrace warmth and energy. Test push length carefully.

## SPANISH ES

tú

### TEXT EXPANSION + GENDER AGREEMENT

#### WATCH FOR

+15-25%; every noun is gendered, and articles, adjectives and pronouns must agree. “Tú” for app copy (not vosotros/ustedes).

#### TIP

Plan expansion early. Decide gender early and apply consistently. Use split forms (o/a) or restructure to avoid gendered endings.

## RISK SUMMARY BY LANGUAGE GROUP

### TEXT EXPANSION

#### HIGH

FR +20%, IT +15-20%, ES +15-25%, PT-BR +20-25%, PL +15-20%

#### MODERATE

DE, NL, compounds, but shorter alternatives are often available

#### VARIABLE

TR, shorter or much longer depending on suffix load

#### COMPACT

KO, JA, but structural rewriting required

### STRUCTURAL REWRITE (SOV)

**TR:** front-load meaning; restructure every sentence.

**KO:** restructure where possible; check register throughout.

**JA:** sentence-final particles carry tone; restructure for mobile clarity.

Never translate SOV order literally.

### SCRIPTS & SYSTEMS

**JA:** three writing systems; kanji, hiragana, katakana, all used correctly.

**KO:** Hangul only; foreign terms transliterated per glossary.

**All others:** Latin scripts with language-specific diacritics and punctuation.

## 06 · Accessibility & inclusion

# ACCESSIBILITY IS USABILITY, PRESERVED ACROSS LANGUAGES.

It is not about translating content. Linguists are responsible for preserving meaning, clarity, usability and inclusiveness, not just words.

## PLAIN LANGUAGE ACROSS LANGUAGES

Plain language must be re-created in each language, not translated from English simplicity.

### DO

- + Use common vocabulary in the target language
- + Prefer verbs over abstract nouns
- + Break long sentences when needed
- + Adapt expressions, do not translate them

### AVOID

- Literal translation of English simplicity
- Over-long sentences (especially DE, FR, IT, PL)
- Loan words when local equivalents are clearer
- Culture-specific metaphors that don't land locally

**Inclusive language is culturally adapted, not globally copied.** Adapt gender strategies per language and reflect how inclusivity is expressed locally. Don't translate English neutrality when it sounds unnatural, especially in gendered languages (DE, FR, IT, ES, PT-BR, PL).

## AVOID ABILITY-BASED OR JUDGMENTAL LANGUAGE

Don't translate "easy", "simple", "just", "only", "quick". They can exclude users, create pressure, or sound dismissive in any language.

### ● BEFORE · TONE

~~It's easy to update your details.~~

### ● AFTER · TONE

**You can update your details here.**

## VISUAL & DIRECTIONAL INDEPENDENCE

Remove layout references. Copy must make sense without seeing the screen. Prefer action-based instructions.

● BEFORE · NAVIGATION

~~Go to the tab on the right.~~

● AFTER · NAVIGATION

Open your profile.

## PRE-DELIVERY ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLIST

- Is the message easy to understand in this language?

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- Was meaning preserved after shortening?

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- Is the language neutral and respectful?

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- Was inclusivity adapted to local culture?

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- Can the user understand what to do next?

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- Does the text make sense without visuals?

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- Is the tone supportive, not judgmental?

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- Does punctuation work for screen readers?

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- Are symbols (& / + %) safe and understandable in this language?

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**LAYER 1 IS THE  
WHY.  
YOUR LAYER 2 IS  
THE HOW.**

NOW BUILD YOUR  
LANGUAGE'S ONE-  
PAGER. DON'T  
TRANSLATE THIS.  
**RECREATE IT.**

*Read alongside your authoring template and the PT-BR  
example. The principles are global; the voice is yours to bring  
to life.*

ADIDAS RUNNING · LOCALIZATION GUIDELINES · LAYER 1 · GLOBAL SOURCE OF  
TRUTH