

Macy's uses accurate and fast translations to unlock opportunities in the global market

How Macy's used Lexy for quick, scalable, and accurate translations of their massive product catalog, removing barriers to global expansion.

Macy's, Inc., is one of America's biggest names in retail. With annual sales topping \$24 billion and roughly 130,000 employees, Macy's brings the latest and greatest in fashion, apparel, and homeware to the masses. In the past year, Macy's identified an opportunity to expand their offerings on a global scale. With the help of Lexy and its revolutionary translation engine, Macy's was able to quickly scale product and catalog translation, unlocking opportunities in a global market.

The Challenge

Macy's is a large company looking to unlock opportunity in today's global market. In order to expand its offering to other countries, in particular China, the retailer needed to translate its offerings accurately, quickly, and on a massive scale.

But the translation solutions available did not meet Macy's requirements. Translating products from English to Chinese took up to two months, by which time items were no longer available, demand had dropped, or the marketing campaign had finished.

Plus, Macy's had too many products needing translation for a traditional agency to be viable. Furthermore, when Macy's was able to get translations, they suffered from errors that could offend consumers and diminish their brand. For example, a product color was once translated into "crap pigeon gray."

"For us to win in this market, we needed to be able to make our products and our brand voice accessible in languages across the globe," said Susan Tang, Head of Marketing & Operations.

"Translation was one of the slowest parts of our business, which affected our ability to execute at scale."

Macy's wanted three things in order to scale in China:

- 1) Accurate translations
- 2) Done quickly and at scale
- 3) Have the integration and implementation be straightforward and easy.

Macy's by the numbers

690

Department stores

+5M

Products available for purchase

\$24B+

Annual sales in 2017



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The Solution

Macy's wasn't starting from nothing– they had a system where they could translate a few thousand products per quarter. But the retailer had millions of products, and they wanted to drive business by making more of these products available to the Chinese market.

In order to reach their goal, they needed to be able to go from the product being available in the US, to the product being translated in the customer's language really quickly. But the translation could not be haphazard. It needed to maintain Macy's brand voice, as well as account for nuances and compliance in the new market.

"We wanted to move from translating 2,000 products per quarter, to doing tens of thousands of products per quarter, and thousands of products per day," said Tang. "But we still needed the translations to be accurate and we still needed turnaround times to be fast."

Macy's turned to Lexy as a solution after a trial translating 1,600 products. "There were a few things Lexy could do that were particularly interesting to us," said Tang. "First, it was clear it was going to be fast– almost real-time– and accurate– even accounting for unit conversion. Even more impressively, the translations were human quality and used Macy's brand voice."



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The Results

Spotlight on Results

35k

Top words / day

60x

Faster turnaround time

20x

Increase in annual catalog size

800+

Top translated products / day

Translations faster than ever

Thanks to Lexy, Macy's was able to get translations faster than ever before, which allowed them to put more products on the market in China. Macy's was able to translate 35,000 words per day and up to 800+ products per day with a turnaround time 60 times faster than their previous solution.

"Thanks to our unified commerce solution, we had more sales in 6 weeks than our prior approach did in 6 months," said Tang.

Automated solutions in real-time

To keep international customers happy, Macy's needed to be able to ship products to them within 3-4 days. But in order to clear Chinese customs, Macy's also needed to translate composition and country of origin information.

Initially, Macy's was pre-registering products prior to them being sold in China, but that led to a delay of up to a month while the registration took place.

As an innovative step, and supported by Lexy’s technology, Macy’s changed their strategy to register products only after they were purchased in that country for the first time. This required product registration to be completed within the 4 days of shipping time - including both the translation work, and the processing with the customs office.

For this translation, Lexy provided a fully-automated translation service that could deliver a turnaround time in <10 minutes, while still maintaining the human quality translations Macy’s needed.

“Lexy’s fully automatic translations enabled us to switch to product registration on-demand, which dramatically improved our time to market for many products,” said Tang. “It was amazing to see their technology progress from human-reviewed to fully-automated, while still maintaining the accuracy and consistency we needed,” she added.

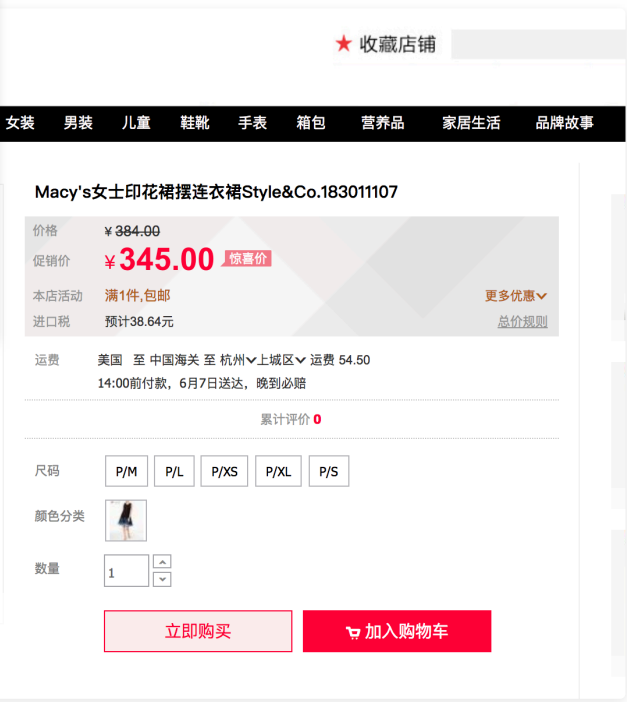
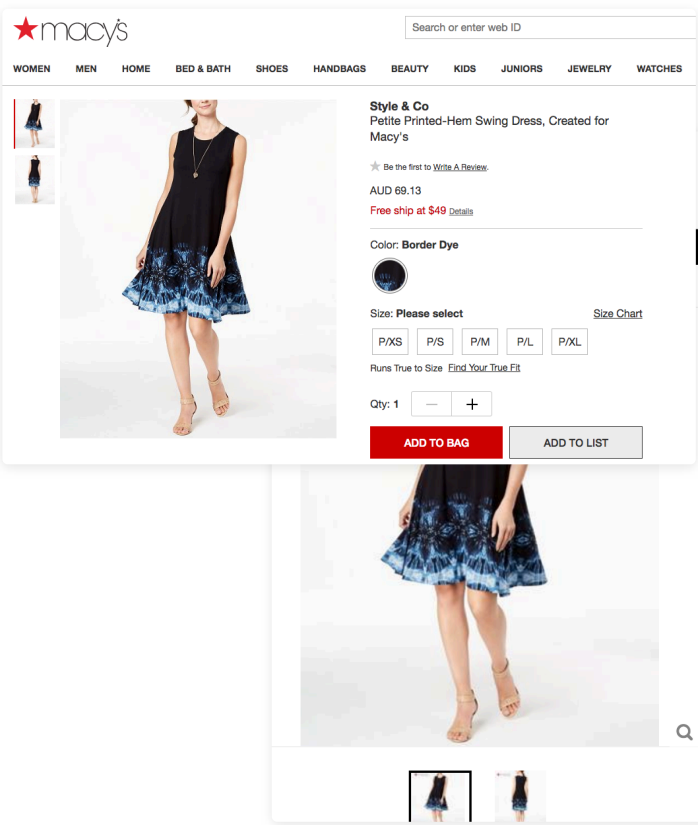
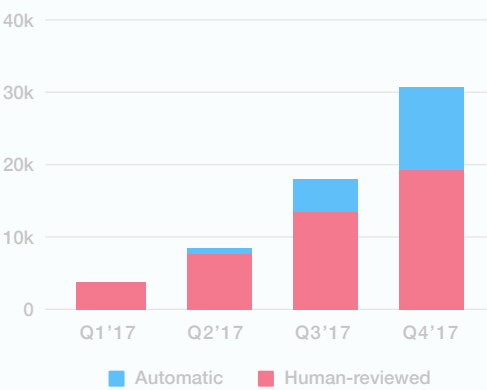
Accuracy that accounts for nuance

It’s not enough for translation to be fast and scalable—it also has to be accurate. Language is nuanced, and so are the requirements across global markets.

For example, in China, there are advertising regulations that prevent brands like Macy’s from using superlatives such as “best” or “greatest” to describe their products. With Lexy, Macy’s could account for this.

One of the biggest areas where accuracy counted was unit conversion. Using Lexy, product measurements in inches or in pounds were automatically and accurately translated into kilograms and milliliters.

Translation per quarter



“With Lexy, we could customize the translation so that it was both accurate and specifically how we wanted to do it,” said Tang. “Translation agencies try to do the same, but there’s a lot of human error.”



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A customizable solution tailored to Macy's

Although implementation required buy-in and cooperation from multiple teams at Macy's, Lexy rose to the occasion and was extremely responsive throughout the integration process.

“Lexy did more than provide a translation engine– they worked hand-in-hand with us to customize the API exactly how we wanted it,” said Tang. “Not only that, but they built a customized automatic Excel generation system that allowed our team to easily review the translations.”



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With the help of Lexy, Macy's was able to scale the translation of their products, expanding their offerings on a global scale. Lexy's translation engine was key to unlocking opportunities in a new market.

Furthermore, Lexy's technology continually improves and more and more types of translation are converting from human-reviewed to fully automated.

Lexy is working on one of the greatest challenges in AI and natural language processing, offering translation at scale. We are combining technology with human knowledge to eliminate fundamental limits to communication and learning.