



The client

Honda Motor Europe Ltd. is the European subsidiary of the Japanese multinational business, one of the world's largest manufacturers of automobiles, motorcycles and other power equipment.

Industry: Automotive manufacturing and distribution

Established: 1948

Headquarters: Minato City, Tokyo, Japan

Operating in: 140 countries worldwide

Size: 204,000 employees (2022)

Solution elements

Terminology management

Human translation /
Machine translation
post-editing

Client review management

eLearning course rebuild

Voiceover and subtitling

Desktop publishing

Linguistic and
functional testing

Honda Motor Europe provides essential support for its dealer network with training and eLearning content in 18 languages.

A wide range of people in the auto industry are facing great changes. From dealer principals to front of house teams, sales management to service specialists, almost everyone in customer-facing roles are all now working in an incredible time of transformation as the technologies used in cars, trucks, motorcycles and other power products shift from internal combustion engines to electric or hydrogen power.

Regular maintenance for today's vehicles will evolve as we transition to alternative energy vehicles and things such as oil changes and spark plug replacements become a thing of the past. As vehicular transport changes so will the roles of the technicians, service specialists and sales associates, who are supported by comprehensive ongoing training to keep up with changes in the model ranges, the markets served and, of course, with advances in technology.

The team at Honda Motor Europe is adapting to and enabling these transitional changes head-on. By providing online training in up to 18 languages, to over 30,000 staff throughout their franchised dealer network, Honda is preparing its extended teams across Europe to work with the technologies of both today and tomorrow.

Multilingual blended learning at Honda Motor Europe

Oliver Gassner, Head of European Training at Honda, together with his team, manage training across Europe. Collectively they provide and support a centralized focal point for training and learning, including specialist training centres such as the Honda Academy and the Honda Institutes, plus a wealth of multilingual eLearning content that's delivered digitally.

A blended approach has been adopted to facilitate learning. In many cases, base knowledge is built with eLearning courses, which are then supplemented and enhanced by hands-on training. The curriculum covers a wide range of topics, such as technical training on servicing Honda products, sales training on key product features and selling points, as well as customer engagement training to ensure that customers enjoy a great experience whenever they interact with the Honda brand. All course content, including guidelines, presentations and other learning materials, are translated in up to 18 languages, including bi-directional languages.

Honda strongly believes that well-trained employees help ensure market competitiveness and that an investment in training is an investment in the organization's future. Technicians take part in regular competitions, with the highest-ranking from each country qualifying for the European regional final at the Honda Academy in Germany. Those who reach the next level travel to Japan for the prestigious global final, where they visit Honda's main development centre, meet the President of Honda and network with peers from around the world.



Centralized translations improved by local voices

Originally, the translation of eLearning content for Honda's European teams was managed locally. Each country decided which materials to localize and worked with local partners to translate the content. While this system provided culturally nuanced translations, it wasn't scalable and there were branding and terminology inconsistencies.

In 2015, the decision was taken to centralize localization operations. Local teams, who had previously managed all aspects of the process, transitioned to focusing on reviewing translations. Expectations were (and remain) high, especially those about maintaining high quality linguistic standards across all countries and languages. It's worth noting that engineers and technicians are notoriously hard to please when it comes to the translation of technical materials and documentation.

And, of course, Honda is dedicated to providing customers with an exceptional experience in every country, irrespective of the language used.

The application of technologies such as Translation Memory (TM) as well as processes such as regular terminology checks by in-country partners, are distinct but equally fundamental aspects of this centralized approach. The feedback from local teams enhances the terminology in the TM, which benefits from both accuracy, consistency and cultural enrichment.

"We have very high expectations. The reason why we appreciate working with you is because RWS has the flexibility, competency and quality that we need. Your team is very proactive on making improvements and providing more services."

Oliver Gassner
Head of European Training
Honda Motor Europe



A reliable partner now, and for the future

Since Honda's standards for quality are extremely rigorous, they regularly evaluate their relationships with business partners to ensure their needs are being met.

"We have very high expectations," Oliver says. "The reason why we appreciate working with you is because RWS has the flexibility, competency and quality that we need. Your team is very proactive on making improvements and providing more services."

An example of this can be seen in a process improvement that came about when considering how to best manage the scalability of services to meet peaks and troughs in demand. RWS has the capacity to cope with these variations, which, for instance, occur when multiple new automotive models are launched over a relatively short timeframe.

Whilst examining the handoffs that occur as a part of the normal process, it became clear that there was room for improvement. Specifically, translated course content needs to be reworked and integrated into the original eLearning course format – a process referred to as 'rebuilding'. That 'rebuilding' work was originally supported by a third-party, with RWS acting as a backup provider, but on examination, it was found that the transfer of data to the other party took additional time and wasn't ideal from a process and quality management perspective.

"RWS offered to support us by rebuilding the courses, which worked very smoothly," Oliver says. "Having RWS take over this step fit into the process quite well, and we realized it works too well to just be a backup solution. The process is now actually faster and more efficient than before."



Responsive and dependable: The RWS team makes a difference

The RWS team working with Honda is also a big differentiator for Oliver, who appreciates that the cooperative approach adopted is always very open and productive.

“Whenever we are looking for solutions, we simply ask, and RWS provides feedback and ideas, which is very helpful for us,” Oliver says. “We are glad to have a partner who is reliable and has capabilities that we might not need now but could possibly use sometime in the future.”

Oliver is especially grateful for the support of their RWS Account Manager when discussing translation changes with Honda’s branches. When managing potentially sensitive changes to terminology, RWS’s Account Manager sets the tone of the discussions, which Oliver feels are consistently cooperative, efficient, and friendly. He says that the high level of communication and cooperation have been maintained in no small part due to the input of their Account Manager.

RWS’s reliability and responsiveness is also greatly appreciated by Oliver and his team. Once, the night before a major competition, Oliver’s team discovered an incorrect answer in the source script and a quick change was needed. The team contacted RWS, who translated the right answer into 14 languages and updated the script overnight.

When things do go awry, the speed with which issues are resolved makes all the difference.

“We know that we are not always an easy partner because we want high quality, but we are always short on time,” Oliver says. “It really makes a difference to know that we have a partner if we get in trouble. Your team is always there to support us, and we’ve never been disappointed.”



“A big difference is the areas where RWS can support us. It’s not just translation, it’s so much more. I always say it’s worth getting in touch with RWS if we need something to check if you can support us, even if it’s not directly language related.”

Oliver Gassner
Head of European Training
Honda Motor Europe

Preparing for a new generation of vehicles

As the automotive industry moves rapidly toward electric and hydrogen powered vehicles, Honda is leading with the adoption of new technologies that embrace this transformation. New processes and different maintenance needs will require the integration of new terminology into training content, which will need to be translated for Honda’s global markets, so Oliver expects the demand for training to continue.

“The whole industry is changing and transforming,” Oliver says. “It’s exciting. As the technology changes, terminology will also have to change for cars, or bikes, or lawnmowers – Honda makes all of these. The skill set required to service electric products is different from those needed for traditional combustion engine products, so we will need to have a lot of new training content to be translated.”

Over time the partnership between Honda and RWS has grown stronger, and Oliver sees only more teamwork ahead.

“When I think of our collaboration, I don’t see any reason why our partnership should end. I look forward to continuing our cooperation and improving together, the way we have been over the years.”





Language Services benefits

- High quality translations that meet or exceed the expectations of an exacting client audience
- A proactive and responsive team that works collaboratively and flexibly
- A thorough understanding of Honda's subject matter and linguistic needs
- The scalability to cope with fluctuations in demand
- An ability to work effectively with both local and central localization teams
- Expertise to develop new and customized solutions

Key benefits for Honda

Speed to market

- Faster localization of eLearning courses and content
- Ability to meet tight deadlines

Adaptability

- Multiple services to help Honda scale

Quality, reliability and trust

- Meeting and exceeding high quality standards
- Translation memory and terminology management that supports quality and consistency
- Strong communication between RWS and Honda teams

Continued focus on process and cost efficiencies

- A proactive and collaborative approach at all times

Discover how our Language Services teams help our clients meet their business goals

rws.com/customers

About RWS

RWS Holdings plc is a unique, world-leading provider of technology-enabled language, content and intellectual property services. Through content transformation and multilingual data analysis, our unique combination of technology and cultural expertise helps our clients to grow by ensuring they are understood anywhere, in any language.

Our purpose is unlocking global understanding. By combining cultural understanding, client understanding and technical understanding, our services and technology assist our clients to acquire and retain customers, deliver engaging user experiences, maintain compliance and gain actionable insights into their data and content.

We work with over 80% of the world's top 100 brands, more than three-quarters of Fortune's 20 'Most Admired Companies' and almost all of the top pharmaceutical companies, investment banks, law firms and patent filers. Our client base spans Europe, Asia Pacific and North and South America. Our 65+ global locations across five continents service clients in the automotive, chemical, financial, legal, medical, pharmaceutical, technology and telecommunications sectors.

Founded in 1958, RWS is headquartered in the UK and publicly listed on AIM, the London Stock Exchange regulated market (RWS.L).

For further information, please visit: www.rws.com

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