

Q AND A

Building Community with GlobalSaké: An Interview with Co-founder Talia Baruch

Talia Baruch is an international product and growth marketing consultant helping companies adopt global readiness and geo-fit strategies to expand in new markets. She's also the co-founder of the nonprofit GlobalSaké. Talia has 20+ years of experience leading international expansion in product and growth marketing at Google, LinkedIn, and SurveyMonkey, and is a localization and internationalization expert. She's also an adjunct professor at both the Hult International Business School, where she teaches design thinking, international digital marketing, and global-ready product strategy for the Executive MBA Program, and at the Centro de Estudios Superiores de Diseño de Monterrey in Mexico City and Monterrey, Mexico. (More information is available on her website: www.taliabaruch.com.)

I recently had the opportunity to speak with Talia about The ParlamINT, GlobalSaké's monthly virtual events series that she developed for sharing well-rounded perspective localization insights and connecting industry professionals across borders, cultures, and continents. This highly engaged, interactive virtual program is a great fit for linguists, translators, and interpreters working in localization and global expansion.

JOST ZETZSCHE: Talia, would you mind introducing yourself? What's your professional background, and what was your initial reason to join the world of translation?

TALIA BARUCH: I've always been fascinated about understanding people within the cultural context of their regional environments. I'm a product of cross-cultural fusion, where East meets West. My father was from Samarkand, the exotic epicenter of the Silk Road. My mother was from England, with deep family roots in Vienna and Brno. I grew up in Israel's multicultural melting pot, went to a French high school, and spent all my summers growing up at Yewdene, the house of the Yew Tree (aka "The Ark") built by my grandparents. Yewdene was the haven "Paradise on Planet Earth," where World War II survivors and immigrants from across the globe came together,

fleeing a dark time to feel human again. Yewdene is where I soaked in the babel of multiple languages, cultures, perspectives, and mentalities. It's where I learned to open my prism wide, observe rounded views from multiple angles, and adopt tolerance.

My BA was in English and French linguistics and literature, and my MA was in translation and interpreting. My entry into the localization industry was, initially, as a literary transcreator—adapting creative content (e.g., poetry, off-Broadway shows, and marketing assets) to resonate with international segments. I then transitioned into localization management on both the language services provider and client-side for the next decade (Lionbridge, Translated.com, and Google—Maps and Earth products), eventually pivoting to head international product and growth at LinkedIn and SurveyMonkey.

In 2017, I created a new curriculum for applied learning, bringing high-tech into higher-ed and training the next generation of global leaders to effectively design a "global-ready-from-the-get-go" product strategy, building the right local experiences on a global scale. I've been teaching this program at the executive MBA programs at Hult International Business School, the Centro de Estudios Superiores de Diseño de Monterrey, and San Francisco State University.

JOST: Thanks for sharing that! Let's talk about

GlobalSaké. How did you come up with it, who else is involved, and, well, what is it? And how is it different from other organizations that organize meetings and networking?

TALIA: GlobalSaké is about making products make sense in the global marketplace. It's a collective community of cross-functional global leaders interested in driving international expansion. Its mission is to bring people together for content and connections, sharing rounded open-minded industry expertise across functions, cultures, and borders. I designed GlobalSaké's ParlamINT program as an interactive monthly events series for applied industry insights on how to effectively drive adoption in new markets. The program holistically covers the core cross-functional challenges and solutions for building a global-ready and geo-fit product strategy, integrating the right regional and cultural factors to land and grow in new markets on a global scale.

GlobalSaké's differentiator edge in the landscape is approaching localization with a broader, more holistic, strategic, horizontal, and cross-functional effort, driving impact to the business bottom line. Our goal is to invite to the discussion table the stakeholder leads across the organization to align on international efforts. This is reflective in our audience: 85% of our event attendees are client-side, and over 75% are executive and senior

management level (= buyers of international solutions). This is a huge differentiator from many other industry localization events, where language services providers make up a larger portion of the audience.

When people come together across cultures and complementing skillsets with an open mindset for collaboration and open heart for learning from each other, that's when meaningful innovation happens, right at the cross-pollination junction. And that's the framework we offer at GlobalSaké's events.

I founded this venture back in 2017 with John Hayato Branderhorst, a senior strategist at btrax, a design and marketing agency specializing in Japan and U.S. market entry and growth. Since then, our global community has grown immensely. We now have almost 1,000 active members, most of whom are regular attendees in our monthly series!


JOST: And what about translators? I've said many times that we're a super-diverse industry (if, in fact, we are an industry), but that doesn't mean that the different stakeholders are not connected in some way. So, does it make sense for translators to get involved with GlobalSaké? And, if so, would they join to learn, network, or why else?

TALIA: The program is a perfect fit for translators! I'm still a translator/transcreator at heart, and that skillset is in the

DNA of any passionate linguist. At the end of the day, our goal is to create the right-fit experiences for people around the globe. That human factor is critical to get right. The spectrum of translation, localization, transcreation, transadaptation, and local content origination is, on a fundamental level, about understanding people within the cultural context of the regional environment. Being a great translator/transcreator isn't just about understanding language. It's also about understanding the cultural nuance of the customer's expected behavior, their perspective, what they truly care about, and what triggers their actions.

Another value-add for translators to attend GlobalSaké's events is industry networking and job opportunities. Being a part of the GlobalSaké ParlamINT community of global tech leads in some of the world's top innovation companies (e.g., startups, scale-ups, and multinational corporations) is an incredible opportunity to find the right talent, job, content, and connections. Each event kickstarts with interactive audience engagement, then a series of TedTalk format presentations showcasing applied insights through different case studies, then Q&A, followed by 30 minutes of breakout room roundtable discussion digests with networking. We conclude with a one-minute meditation wrap-up.

Topics have included international user experience research, multilingual content strategy, transcreation, product localization, multilingual artificial intelligence, natural language processing, and applied machine learning. I hope you'll be able to join one of our events via Zoom. You can find the full program for The ParlamINT series at www.globalsakegrowth.com/the-parlamint, where you can watch the highlights recap videos of our past 2021 monthly events at the bottom of that page.

JOST: Thanks for talking with me today and sharing the vibrant community you've helped create! 



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Remember, if you have any ideas and/or suggestions regarding helpful resources or tools you would like to see featured, please e-mail Jost Zetsche at jzetsche@internationalwriters.com.