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By [Erik Qualman](http://www.socialnomics.net/author/equalman/) | 100 days ago

With advances in technology and social media, Word of Mouth has truly gone to World of Mouth.  Many companies centralize their global Facebook and Twitter efforts.  This has huge advantages, but it’s also imperative to

[](http://cdn.socialnomics.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/lauren-conrad-ad.jpg)

Got Milk translated into Are You Lactating?

have involvement at the local level; from people who truly understand the market nuances and language. We live in a global economy and so it’s imperative that we understand our world. Below are thirteen (an unlucky number in some countries) examples of marketing translations gone wrong:

1.    The wildly successful “Got Milk” campaign from The Dairy Association when used in Mexico brought a lot of attention also: “Are You Lactating?”

2.    Coors Brewing slogan “Turn it loose” when converted to Spanish means “Suffer from diarrhea” — uh…I think I’ll just have an orange juice please.

3.    Clairol launched a curling iron called “Mist Stick” in Germany.  Mist in German is slang for manure. It turns out manure sticks aren’t very popular in Germany.

4.    Matsushita and Panasonic were to launch a computer with an Internet browser in Japan.  They were going to run a large marketing campaign using the cartoon character Woody Woodpecker.  The campaign was put on hold when an American employee realized the translation was “Touch Woody – The Internet Pecker.” This is very bad in American slang.

5.    Gerber kept the image of its smiley baby on their jars and packages when they entered the African market.  Only later did they realize, as a result of the low African literacy rate, many companies in Africa used pictures on labels to denote what’s inside.

6.    Pepsi in China translated their slogan, “Pepsi Brings You Back to Life.” The slogan in Chinese literally means, “Pepsi Brings Your Ancestors Back from the Grave.”

7.    Colgate launched toothpaste in France under the brand name Cue, unfortunately that is the same name as an ill-famed pornographic magazine.

8.    Parker Pen in Mexico wanted its advertisements to parlay “It won’t leak in your pocket and embarrass you.” Instead, the company thought that the word “embarazar” (to impregnate) meant to embarrass, so the ad read: “It won’t leak in your pocket and make you pregnant.” I guess it all depends on what you want out of a pen.

9.    Frank Perdue’s line, “It takes a tough man to make a tender chicken,” is a bit different in Spanish — “It takes a sexually stimulated man to make a chicken affectionate.”

10. Latte means Milk in Italy.  In English Latte is a coffee-drink and it’s popularity increased with the growth of Starbucks.  However if you are in Germany you may be careful what you order with your breakfast. A “morning latte” in German slang is when you wake up in the morning with an erection.

11.  Braniff International Airways wanted to highlight “Fly in Leather” but instead in Spanish came out as “Fly Naked.”

12.  Electrolux, a Scandinavian vacuum cleaner, used the following in the U.S.: “Nothing sucks like an Electrolux.”

13.  Pepsi lost market share in Southeast Asia when it change its vending machines from deep blue to light blue.  Light blue is a symbol of death and mourning in Southeast Asia. I guess soda is worse than we thought for you.

Any that we missed?  Please let us know your favorites.