Edit

Promise of MT

The dream of achieving an IT export target of $50 billion by 2008 will remain just that if some quick and concrete steps are not taken in order to ensure the same. If India is to achieve this target, software exports have to grow dramatically. India's software exports mainly comprises IT services that can be broadly categorised into onsite software services (mainly body shopping), offsite software services (programmers working from India in co-ordination with their foreign counterparts via powerful communication networks) and offsite IT enabled services. Of all these services IT enabled services promises to be a high growth area in the coming years. IT enabled services is fast developing into a major industry in India with data entry at its lower-end and medical transcription (MT) and call center services at the higher-end of the spectrum. While both MT and call center services enjoy the same advantages, MT seems to have gained an edge due to its early start and fast acceptance in all major cities and towns of the country.

How far is medical transcription going to alter India's IT export scenario? Varying views are expressed as to what role MT services would play in the overall scheme of things. There are misconceptions aplenty about MT as a profession and as a business option. MT is being viewed as a low skilled labour that involves punching in data by a group of keyboard specialists. The interpretation is not only follied but also nullifies the importance of a profession which forms a vital link in the healthcare chain. MT is an important aspect of medical commuincation (rendered effective by a computer interface) that carries with it a patient's trust and expectations. It is not something of a data entry job where you are more interested in finishing work without any consideration for quality of the output. A medical transcript is a communication instrument for patient care, billing, legal, research and continuing education.

MT as a profession in the US has spread far and wide and medical transcriptionists are an essential part of all hospitals, medical establishments, clinics and health insurance companies. India got exposed to MT only in 1992 when liberalisation process was set in motion. MT quickly made a mark riding on the India's inherent advantages of 12 hour time difference with the US and the large pool of English speaking people in the country. Recognising MT's role in creating jobs for people and earning precious export revenue for the country, GOI extended 100% EOU status to the MT services, while making it easy to set up MT units without getting prior permission from the government. As per NASSCOM estimates, MT is expected to create 3 lakh jobs and earn $50 million in foreign exchange in the next 5 years.

That brings us back to the IT export target of $50 billion by 2008. To achieve such an ambitious target at least 3 to 4 million trained software engineers and IT enabled service professionals are required by 2008. It is important to note that MT today being a $6 billion industry worldwide and growing rapidly would fulfil a significant part of this demand.

There are, of course, discordant voices raised about the longevity of MT services. It is said that with voice recognition software coming into fray, MT would become redundant as it would eliminate the need for human intervention in transcription. While it is true that voice recognition software can do the job of a

transcriptionist, it cannot fulfil the three basic requirements of an effective transcript - correctness, consistency and clarity. So, human intervention becomes all the more important in authenticating an automatic voice-recognised transcript. Another aspect that gives credence to MT is its ability to utilise the medical knowledge of doctors. MT provides an effective alternative for doctors to put to use their medical knowledge effectively while continuing to serve people with their own private practice. This is also the best chance for many medical professionals to get exposed to the computerworld. There is of course the other side to the coin. Many MT institutes are mushrooming all over the country and enrolling students with the promise of a job without fully understanding the real dynamics of the MT business. The law of business survival would however take care of the weak and the also-rans.

For an IT service which promises innumerable jobs, greater forex earnings and faster IT growth in the country, MT definitely needs to be looked at in a different perspective.

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Succeeding on the web

Everyday most of us are bombarded by website addresses. A lot of us aspire to create successful websites. Just some of us however succeed at it. What is it then that separates the men from the boys. While we all know that content is truly the King our definition of content differs and thus what seems to us to be great content does not stand up to the mark.

Let us try to analyze and see what factors contribute to success. No matter what it is about, do not forget that it is used by people. Let us remember that people, no matter how complicated, run on common psychology. This psychological framework is used to do just about everything, including use and buy from your web site. Let us look at seven top psychological factors that influence online sales.

Herd mentality

This is the most common form of influence that needs to be cashed. In simple words it can be described as a person making a judgement believing it to be his own. When in reality it is based on what other people are doing. In real life we see this attribute being used by successful companies. They conduct or sponsor market surveys, and publish their results to derive mileage. How do we implement it on the website. Very simple. It can be done by putting up testimonials. Try to maintain links at relevant pages as also have a consolidated testimonials page. Encourage people to give these testimonials. Add small forms for voting. Display the results and statistics of the various polls.

Obeying authority

It is unquestionable that people listen to authoritative and idolized figures. This is used companies through advertising campaigns. A toothpaste advertisement showing a dentist recommending it is a fine example in question. On the website we need to have someone or some organization of recognized authority in that field saying something positive about the product or service. Please do not confuse between a famous person and an authority. If authority is not available then probably the famous person may be used. A famous authority however is a golden combination.

Creative Advertising.

Most of us do not respond to advertising. We know that commercial breaks are the times we use to do some other work besides watching television. We learn to automatically 'not see' advertising. I am sure that our brain somehow blocks out all those banners and only very rarely do we really notice what is on those banners. Why? Well, because our brain can see the ad coming! It has all the cues that make it look like an ad and it is shut out. Perhaps if the banner looked like content then we would be interested in reading. In fact, nothing should look like advertising.

This means we need to use creative alternatives. Let us look at a couple.

The banners on the site should not look like advertising. How do we go about doing it? Well, an ad is something that screams about the features and screams louder to buy. On the other hand content is a useful information resource. It is calm and gives useful information. Be liberal in giving information. Keep it casual. When the sale seems coming up, be persistent.

Also, try to use something that people have never seen before. This way they will pay attention. Use design tricks that people haven't seen before. One trick that is being used very well is to make the banner look like one of those Windows 95 OK and Cancel buttons in response to a warning message. Challenge the shape and make the banner (with transparent background) to look like a mouse.

Emotion conformance

It is foolish to ignore the importance of environments. Notice the difference in atmosphere of a bar and a pub. Notice how a store is different from a restaurant or from a coffee shop. People conform to the emotions of the environment. Top retail outlets try so hard to create an emotional atmosphere of carefree spending or something that will cause emotions that lead to spending.

Take a hard look at the site. Evaluate the text, colours, graphics, placement and quality. What emotion does it convey. All this can make or break an online business from the emotional angle. Check these things even when you place banners at other sites or advertise in other media.

Needs satisfaction

People always buy to satisfy needs. Examine whatever you are offering on the web. Forget the efforts you put in that feature you built in. Think on the needs level and find out what needs will the product or service fulfil. Needs are the things that should to be highlighted. Features are side items to logically support the decision. The decision will be based only on emotions and needs.

Make 'em thirsty

People usually buy only after the fifth to seventh visit. Thus you need to figure out ways to get people coming back to your site. Getting repeat visitors is the most important thing you can do for your online business.

You can never overdo the number of freebies and technologies that you use towards this end.

Learn from soap operas. They stop in the middle of a juicy plot, only to be continued same time next week? It disturbs your mind and you make it a point to catch the next show. On the next show they do the exact same thing! It is easier

for people to remember and stay focused to incomplete tasks. Apply this to your marketing. Lead people from one page to the next using this phenomenon. Banners could start by talking of a series of 10 tips, only to stop after the third and asking the viewer to click to get the remaining 7.

The Salami principle

This principle is commonly used in negotiations. Getting a conformance to a major issue is tough. It is better and preferred to get conformance to a number of minor issues leading to the major. Simplest way this is used in business is by providing a free trial. It is easy to get someone to try something free. After that, it is easier to get them to purchase. Another effective method is to ask questions (yes or no types) spaced out within the sales pitch. They must be questions related to the product or service. Doing this will make it much easier to get the final yes to buy.

Armed with the basic arsenal to handle the web, you are surely have a higher probability of success. If you already have a website evaluate it. See how you rate vis-à-vis the points discussed above.

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