



A Website Changes The Life Of A Training Institute

Since its inception in 2004, Cliniminds has evolved into a successful training institute in the field of clinical research. Its swift growth speaks of the smart use of IT tools such as Web-conferencing facilities, an Intranet and above all, its website. The website has attracted students from across India and even abroad.

Cliniminds' success highlights the importance of a website, particularly for a company in the domain of education. This firm's simple, focused but industry-specific website, has been able to attract business not only within India but also from abroad. The institute provides a range of clinical research training solutions to pharmaceutical companies, CROs (contract research organisations), healthcare companies and students. The institute was set up during a period when the healthcare and pharma industry were passing through a growth period and there was a shortage of skilled and trained manpower. This turned out to be a great business opportunity for Cliniminds. Initially, it focused on training professionals, doctors and other employees from

pharmaceutical firms and healthcare organisations. Soon the firm realised that they was an opportunity in training students who had opted for a career in the pharmaceutical field. That's when classroom-based training programmes began in 2006.

“Over these years, the company has successfully moved ahead and been able to impart training in the clinical research education and training domain not only in India but also to students in the USA, UK, Canada, Africa, Asia and the Middle East,” says Kamal Shahani, director, Cliniminds.

The use of IT at Cliniminds

Initially, Cliniminds did not have the budget to set up centres across the country. IT proved to be a key component in solving this problem. The Internet has enabled it to reach out to people living in far-flung areas and more students have been able to enroll with Cliniminds. Though Internet has been central to everything at Cliniminds, there are other effective IT tools that have made work a lot easier.

E-learning training programmes:

Those at Cliniminds realised the value the Internet could add to business operations. The company today runs various online and offline training programmes. To quote Shahani, “As you know India is a vast market. To cater to such a huge market, one



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Cliniminds

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needs to have either a big budget to set up centres everywhere or ensure the smart use of modern technology. We wanted to cover the untouched

parts of India. And the Internet was the only media that could take us to these places.” Besides, it is a medium that takes you worldwide. Shahani narrates, “Apart from India, we wanted to broaden our reach to overseas students, which was possible only through the Internet. Hence we developed online learning systems, keeping in mind the current market needs and started offering online training programmes. We made our printed content available online and so serve a lot of students.”

Cliniminds has been offering these courses in a secured and trustworthy manner. Shahani elaborates on the modalities, “Once students pay online, they get access to the same content, the same books and courseware as those attending classes physically. We have enabled the end-to-end payment system so well that it is easy for students to pay fees online using options such as credit cards, or using electronic payment options through online-banking.”

The institute also claims that it is entirely up to the students as to what course they want to opt for. There are various courses and the information about them is available on the website with the respective fee structures. “We offer them a secure username and password. It allows them the freedom to do the course at their convenience. They can do the course by sitting at home and utilise their free time at their workplaces. Moreover, we allow them to appear for examinations at their own convenience,” adds Shahani.

The company's online system is almost a replica of what it offers at its on-campus module. The academy believes in keeping its online training programme very transparent. Although it allows

Professionals during a training programme at Cliniminds



students to access, study and do the examinations at their own convenience, it also records all the details of the students—the time spent online, the results of period assessment through tests, etc. It leaves no scope for malpractice. “We have an excellent tracking software in place that tells us how many times the student has logged in to the course, how many lessons have been covered, and whether they were completed or not. The students are also kept aware of where they are in terms of covering the online content. They can start from where they had left off. We also come to know if the student has given the test or not,” reveals Shahani.

Cliniminds' website (www.cliniminds.com): The e-learning programmes the institute offers are accessible via its website. The organisation gives a lot of importance to its website and ensures that it attracts the relevant traffic, because that is where its market lies.

“We have a team that ensures our website is optimised for Google Adwords (for online publicity). It remains the first priority of our

online team to ensure our website attracts valuable visitors. Every day, 300-400 visitors on an average come to our site. It may not seem like an impressive number for a typical website or portal, but for a specific site like ours, the numbers are good enough. This is how we get students from overseas,” says Shahani.

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The company regularly updates its website with the latest information on its various courses, industry happenings and other clinical research-related information.

Web-conferencing: Cliniminds also makes use of Web-conferencing tools in order to impart training to its online students or to those located at its other centres. “Web-

conferencing tools are used to organise seminars with visiting faculty and for realtime information sharing. We have tied up with Reliance Web World for this,” informs Shahani. The tool also proves helpful when the institute invites external faculty members to deliver lectures.

Besides, the institute uses video-conferencing during its training programmes aimed at pharma-companies and healthcare organisations. The company also makes use of Skype as and when required, considering it a cheap medium.

In-house Intranet: Cliniminds has four offices—at Delhi, Bangalore, Kerala, and Hyderabad. But to manage its internal communications and share information within the firm, it uses the company Intranet that helps it analyse the performance of its employees, and ensure better enterprise data-sharing.

The road into the future

Currently, Cliniminds' e-learning programmes are used more by those abroad than in India. The organisation is keen to increase its reach in India and cater to more number of professionals and students. It is also in the process of opening more offices in other cities but the real growth will still be powered by the Internet. According to Shahani, Internet penetration is still low in the country. But he concludes optimistically, “It is increasing at a good pace, though the bandwidth is a problem in B and C Level cities, which is a niche market for us. Download speeds of 2 MBps is still considered a luxury in India. We need to go a long way in this area. I am hopeful that these issues will be addressed soon.” ■

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Climinds enables corporate training with IT

