

ClinPhone – reporting results in Cebuano, Tagalog, and Telugu



Double Queen's Award winner ClinPhone has languages at the very heart of its business, providing an international telephone and Internet reporting system for clinical drug trials. Through the use of native speakers and specialist software, the Nottingham company can currently offer its services in over 70 languages.

Getting a drug from the research stage to a licensed product is a long and complicated procedure for pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. One of the key steps in the process for these organisations is the clinical trial, where typically up to 5,000 patients and 500 doctors may be involved.

Languages at the core

When doctors in many different countries, speaking up to ten different languages, are involved in the same trial, it's evident that any company offering services in this field will have to have language at the core of its activities. ClinPhone's success has been based on their ability to deal with both doctors and patients in a wide variety of languages, including some – like Cebuano, Tagalog and Telugu – that even professional linguists might struggle to place on the map.

The company has developed an ingenious telephone response system for reporting the results of clinical trials with new drugs. Using Interactive Voice Response (IVR) technology, it allows doctors, and in some cases patients, to input information which will ultimately be used to determine the treatment's efficacy, and any adverse or unforeseen reactions to the medication. Currently the company is handling 100,000 calls per month with the system. In addition to IVR, ClinPhone has also

developed the facility for web-based collection of clinical trial data by medical professionals.

“Languages are integral to our business,” says Dr Neil Rotherham, joint Managing Director and one of the founders of the company. “We have invested heavily in translation technology, whilst also actively recruiting staff with language skills. One of our French speakers, for example, has recently been involved in a project to co-ordinate the recording of voice files by native speakers.”

Effective use of outside resources

Having to deal with so many languages has meant that ClinPhone has had to look for resources outside the organisation. When the company was first set up, it worked with local translation agencies to translate and then record voice files into the languages needed for the reporting of the clinical trials. As the company grew ClinPhone acquired one of these agencies, which now allows them to work directly with the translators; this has led to improved quality assurance and to a reduction in the time taken to produce voice files in the relevant language.

“Our plan to develop the business further has led us to look for other partnerships in the field of languages,” explains Dr. Rotherham. “We have begun a venture with a Leeds-based translation agency, TheBigWord, which has allowed us to source translations in less common languages. A number of software developments by both companies have also allowed us to speed up the process of providing the necessary sound files and thus respond more efficiently to our customers’ needs around the world.”

Languages will remain important

As a winner of two Queen’s Awards (for Innovation and International Trade), and of the 2003 Languages for Exports Award for large companies, ClinPhone is no stranger to success on the international stage. But it continues to innovate, and to place languages at the centre of its activities. The Company has a 24/7 English-language helpdesk at its Nottingham headquarters to support doctors and patients using its IVR system.

“When a need arises on our helpdesk for a local language other than English, we are currently relying on an instant, telephone interpreting service offered by a US company.” says Neil Rotherham. “We do however have plans to offer some basic training in our most common languages to helpdesk staff, to enable them to deal directly with simple

enquiries. There is no doubt that languages will continue to have a central role in enabling us to meet customer needs around the world."

<p>Contacts</p> <p>ClinPhone www.clinphone.com</p> <p>TheBigWord www.thebigword.com</p>	<p>Regional Language Network East Midlands helps East Midlands companies access more international trade opportunities by breaking down language and cultural barriers. The RLN offers a central point of contact for information and support on international communications, and provides valuable commercial information through events, newsletters and briefings.</p> <p>RLN East Midlands, UK Trade and Investment, International Trade Centre, Innovation House, Riverside Park, Raynesway, Derby, DE21 7BF.</p> <p>Tel: 01332 826432 www.rln-eastmidlands.com</p>
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