

Marketing Klinik: Remedy For Your Business Ailments...

Written by Krishnakumar C K, Editor, Small Enterprise India.com
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From the Editor's Desk



It is a known fact that people go to various clinics for diagnosis. Now how about going to a Marketing Clinic, and get some remedies for your ailing business woes? The Marketing Klinik based at Mumbai is a preferred destination for many entrepreneurs and business men alike to seek 'Business Salvation'. And the Marketing Guru you can see there is Mr. Ashwin Merchant, who can heal your business ailments!

In an exclusive online interview with **Krishnakumar C K, Editor, Small Enterprise India.com**, **Mr. Ashwin Merchant** shares his mission and vision on starting the Marketing Klinik.

(In the Pix: Ashwin Merchant)

"Marketing Klinik was founded in mid 2000. The idea was based on niche expertise in business analytics and strategic marketing, over 20 years of experience serving Indian and international clients in different verticals and wide scale exposure with local, national and global market. Marketing Klinik was started for the sole purpose to assist small and medium enterprises, SMEs and SSIs, in the area of business development and marketing their products and services" says Mr. Ashwin. He adds that Marketing Klinik aims to help small and medium size business owners and promoters to plan marketing and solve problems in current marketing.

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To a question on the core inspiration behind Marketing Klinik, he comments: “During the course of time, we noticed one thing, ignorance of value of marketing in business by most of the SMEs in manufacturing and services. Marketing was often misunderstood by the SME owners as media advertisements, salesmen visits, telemarketing, mobile communication for SMS, sending bulk emails and alike. They had no idea about the marketing as business strategy vis-à-vis tools of marketing. They believe marketing is an expense, intangible investment and always escaped from knowing about systematic marketing and its importance in business, more so the impact on business in new economy. Not keen to hire and pay consultants, except in non-compliance areas, SMBs believed the cost of consultancy to be too high and cannot afford luxury like big brothers in corporate world. Marketing Klinik offers economical, time and value based independent advisory and assistance to SME owners”.

At Marketing Klinik, one can find many a services. The expert advises SMBs in the area of marketing, sales and business development. One can come and discuss their plans and problems in marketing, based on marketing scan, diagnosis, the specialist offers marketing prescription(s), the remedy for survival, health and growth of SME business. It is entirely left to SMB for taking further action based on prescription offered. SMB may come again at a later date for more insight and problem solving, if he needs further advice. Only on special request by SMB, Marketing Klinik extends the scope by offering ROAD MAP for 1-3 yrs in marketing and business development strategy.

Some excerpts from the interview

1.How can an entrepreneur approach the Marketing Klinik? Via online/telephone, or by person?

At present, Marketing Klinik is located in Mumbai and offers easy connectivity to SME visitors by road and rail. SME visitors come not just from Mumbai but also from nearby cities in Maharashtra and Gujarat. Marketing Klinik also offers e-Consulting services to outside Mumbai clients wanting to have expert advice from the specialist in modern day marketing. An appointment is necessary for a personal meeting between 3pm to 5pm on weekdays. For e-Consulting date and time is to be predetermined by phone or email.

2.What is the uniqueness of Marketing Klinik?

It is meant only for SMEs and SSIs. It functions only between 3pm to 5pm on weekdays. Only 2 visitors per day are given appointment. Nominal professional fee is charged. It offers no commitment for long term appointment of consultant. Pay only for time and per visit, including flexibility in e-Consulting as alternative. SMBs very often needs limited expert advice to verify their plan, endorse the potentiality before making investments and independent guidance for problem solving – Marketing Klinik offers all.

3.How does this Marketing Klinik function? And how do you provide solutions to the entrepreneurs?

Marketing Klinik is for 1 hour, extendable to 2 hours on the same day, nominal professional fee is charged from SMEs. During this time, SMB discusses the plan or problem in marketing. After careful listening / diagnosing his area of concern, the expert advices and recommends remedy, the action. Lately, if SMB needs further inputs, he can contact via e-Consulting also in Mumbai or come again but only after minimum 3 weeks. Maximum number of times a SMB can take the benefit of concessional Marketing Klinik is for 3 sessions or 6 hours.

4.What kind of edge does Marketing Klinik provide to managers through consultation?

One of the interesting aspects of Marketing Klinik is a corporate version. Only open on Wednesdays between 11am to 1pm, for 2 hours, managers and senior executive can meet the expert and discuss their functional areas in marketing and business planning, before making presentation to higher authorities in their companies. They would like to have a Reality Check on the marketing brief prepared by them. Here, in MARKETING KLINIC they can come and discuss, one to one, in full confidentiality their business and marketing plan. Obviously, professional fees are double for corporate visitors.

5.Can you mention some of the marketing tools developed by you?

Books on Marketing is authored by the founder, specially written for small and medium businessmen, factory owners, technocrats, young entrepreneurs joining family business and alike. 3 books in Gujarati, 1 book in Hindi, Marathi besides Gujarati and English is meant for SMEs in region. Novel ideas are in plan.

6.You have come up with CD for Smart Marketing. What core areas of marketing have been packaged in it? Also how these CDs can be availed, and what is the price for?

Due to non encouraging response in non-print tools by SMEs, currently we are not focusing on these tools.

7.How competitive is the Indian Marketing Scenario as a whole?

In new economy, due to liberalisation, industrialisation and globalisation, the market has become highly competitive. SMEs with local business strategy also find other leading brands and products from national and global players taking share in local market. Also, there is an emerging opportunities for SMEs for exports. Market is growing but unlike earlier days, now there will be a place only for organised companies, branded products, customer centric business policies to name just a few. Local brands can now go national with the successful business model. Increase in production, economy of scale will definitely help to arrive at customer friendly pricing. Market is now for good products only. SME must focus on systematic, organised marketing with the help of professionals.

8.As a Marketing Guru, what is your key advice to the marketing professionals?

Understand client, his needs, his resources, his vision, his attitude towards business and entrepreneurship before giving any solution. Marketing is key function in business now and as such there is going to be increasing need for experienced marketing professionals to guide SMEs for growth.

9.Does the Indian Marketing scene lack any strategically innovative marketing techniques compared to the west?

Unfortunately, now a day, businesses follow more of technology driven marketing because it is easy, convenient and comparatively economical. The lack of understanding customers and more so in SME domain is far too important before deciding marketing. There is a scope of local culture, language, behavior science in marketing to innovate the ways in which market is approached and communicated. Innovation in products, pricing, and promotion are must to invent by local marketers. Copying marketing strategy used and proven overseas may not work in India, more so in rural India. Of course, we do have innovative marketing in use in India, but by FMCG and large corporations.

10.What is your take on the overall entrepreneurial scenario in India?

India is a nation of entrepreneurs. Give them opportunities, facilities, encouragement and you will find hundreds of Indian entrepreneurs emerging successfully to make India a power packed economy by 2020.

11.What message do you have for the entrepreneurs?

Be innovative. Be different. Be practical. Get focused. Have passion. Work hard and take smart decisions. Believe in yourself. Have patience for results and rewards.