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Is quality in outsourced copyediting a myth?

– A case study in perception management

Business context

Client is a pre-press service major with more than a decade of experience in book and journal production. Despite proven expertise in composition, graphics and production, client had been finding it difficult to venture into the publisher's copyediting department. Publisher's prior experience with other vendors was not satisfactory leading to a notion that copyediting when outsourced was of sub-par quality. Client partnered with SpiralUp to change that perception and build a strong copyediting team.

Challenge

Publisher dreaded outsourcing copyediting services to India, the cause for concern being primarily the overdependence of service providers on automated editing software, rule-based copyediting that is insensitive to the subject being edited and the author's tone and style and a general lack of editorial judgement. Publisher's perception management was SpiralUp's biggest challenge.

Solution

SpiralUp offered a unique solution to its client wherein management best practices and process were coupled with people's expertise to challenge and change the client's perception of outsourcing editorial services. Copyediting being the one department in the pre-press value chain that demands a highly skilled workforce with good fundamentals in English, SpiralUp's core team for the client comprised handpicked copyeditors from premier institutions in the country with years of experience in copyediting and requisite subject matter background. The team was then trained in-house on efficient copyediting while remaining focussed on the finest nuances of language and punctuation. The copyediting team built the publisher's confidence through a step-by-step process by providing a high-quality reliable output that did not diminish with increasing volumes of work.

Management best practices that were employed included sharing of weekly status reports on the volume and editorial quality trend with the publisher, analysis of proof corrections and feedback and timely reporting of anticipated delays and issues.

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Results

SpiralUp's solution offered the following benefits to the client:

✔ Publisher rated the vendor (SpiralUp's client) first among all other vendors for the year 2010.

✔ The volume of copyediting grew by 300% within a period of 6 months.

✔ Client's revenue increased by around 20%.

While the debate continues whether copyeditors need to be part of the local fabric of the community to edit with sensitivity, SpiralUp's editors proved to the publisher that quality and reliable editing out of India in the technical and scientific arena is not a myth but definitely a reality.

About Us

SpiralUp is a leading provider of specialist technical editing services and language solutions. At SpiralUp, we copyedit books, journals, web content and documents in different levels of detail and according to the publishers'/clients' house style ensuring consistency of style, language, structure and logic of content. We establish priorities and balance a desire for perfection within our clients' timeline and budgetary requirements. We offer the following editorial services:

Pre-edit Service
Copyedit Service
Copyedit Service with XML Output

We have the capacity to provide both end-to-end solutions in the pre-press value chain as well as perform services as independent components.