

1) Trail of words, numbers

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Council's Tech 50 Awards

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Acusis Voted Finalist in Pittsburgh Technology Council's Tech 50 Awards for
Second Consecutive Year

Dear Friends,

Acusis(R), a leading provider of outsourced medical transcription services, was honored by the Pittsburgh Technology Council as a top ten finalist in the Service Provider category of the Tech 50 Awards. This is the second consecutive year Acusis has been acknowledged for their success. Last year they were awarded in the category of Rising Star.

Finalists of the Tech 50 awards are recognized for being Pittsburgh's fastest growing and most innovative companies in the technology sector, representing the future economic base of Southwestern Pennsylvania. The Pittsburgh Technology Council is one of the largest regional trade associations in the nation with a membership of over 1400 companies from 13 counties.

The companies are evaluated by PriceWaterhouseCoopers based on factors such as financial strength, job growth and retention, product and sales success, innovation and corporate citizenship.

<http://www.tmcnet.com/usubmit/2004/Oct/1083418.htm>

On another front, the coffee-break quiz and the jobs newsletter will be back this Friday... Enjoy!!

Regards,

Maj (Dr.) Amit Chatterjee, SM
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NEWS AND VIEWS :

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The nation's largest medical transcription company said last week that it plans to review its billing claims with as many as 3,000 hospital clients after a class-action lawsuit alleged the company engaged in widespread billing fraud. Memorial Healthcare System, a 1,111-bed, three-hospital public system owned by the South Broward Hospital District in Hollywood, Fla., alleged in its 34-page lawsuit against MedQuist, Mount Laurel, N.J., that the company systematically overbilled it and several thousand other hospitals by millions of dollars for decades.

Washington lawyer Mark Hogge of Greenberg Traurig, who is leading the class-action litigation against MedQuist and four of its current and former officers, said his firm believes that at least 25% and as much as half of Memorial's payments to MedQuist may have been based on fraudulent billing. Hogge said the plaintiffs would seek triple the amount of alleged damages under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, or RICO, and state fraud laws, as well as punitive damages.

"The fraudulent practices date back to the beginning of the company," he said. "We've found one large health system alone that has paid MedQuist more than \$80 million over the years and believes it was overbilled by more than \$20 million."

He said other hospitals would be added to the plaintiff list. Hogge said he could not comment on whether a whistle-blower lawsuit has been filed against MedQuist. Those lawsuits are filed under seal in federal court. However, he confirmed that MedQuist offers transcription services to U.S. Army and Navy hospitals and to veterans' hospitals and clinics, which, because federal money is involved, could trigger the federal False Claims Act.

The class-action lawsuit is the latest in a series of scandals facing the 30-year-old company, which controls about 20% of the country's medical transcription services market. In April, the Nasdaq exchange delisted the company for failure to file appropriate financial forms. In March, the company ordered outside reviews by law firm Debevoise & Plimpton and accounting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers, whose reports MedQuist's board released in July. The reviews found that MedQuist may have wrongfully billed transcription clients. The firms found that instead of billing based on the number of characters transcribed, MedQuist employed ratios and formulas that may have pumped up the amount of actual work performed to inflate billings, in essence, charging for work not performed, without disclosing that billing formula to clients.

Earlier this year, MedQuist disclosed that the Securities and Exchange Commission also had launched an investigation into the company. In its promotional materials MedQuist says it services 3,000 clients with a network of more than 10,000 transcriptionists. That could change, according to stock analyst Paul Meeks of the firm of Meeks & York, who tracks MedQuist. Meeks said the transcription business, while profitable now, is changing. "The industry is maturing and margins are compressing," Meeks said. He said MedQuist plans to announce a joint venture deal in the coming months with an Indian partner to outsource much of its U.S. business, laying off employees and cutting costs, as well as a large acquisition to diversify its business.

<http://www.modernhealthcare.com/article.cms?articleId=33975>

2) US cannot stop offshore outsourcing, says Karnik

United States of America cannot stay away from outsourcing, especially to India, as it has not only helped them increase revenues, but also cut costs, according to Nasscom president Kiran Karnik.

Addressing a session on 'Exploding the Myths of BPO', in Bangalore, Karnik said, "Technically, US is out of the recession phase. During recession, when their (US companies') topline were not growing, they looked at cutting costs and one of the best ways to continue doing that is by outsourcing them. In fact, by outsourcing to India, they are realising that they can not only increase revenues but also cut costs." Karnik said that since the US is bound to face a shortage of manpower, it must either import labour or export

work.

Replying to a query on the impact of US elections on Indian outsourcing, Karnik said, "India has taken more column inches in the US presidential elections (referring to the media reports on outsourcing). The debate on outsourcing is mostly a rhetoric. In the US, economics have always predominated politics. As they are aware of this, they are not going to stop outsourcing. Besides, the West also faces the problem of an aging population. We have examined the supply and demand side and even in the long-term, I assure you that outsourcing is sustainable."

http://www.nasscom.org/artdisplay.asp?Art_id=3284

3) Transcription costly and slow? Try offshore online dictation

Internist and gastroenterologist Anil R. Garde, MD, used to get his transcriptions the traditional way. After he dictated notes into a tape recorder, a transcriptionist would pick up the tape and return the typed notes to his practice, Riverside Medical Clinic, the following day.

Late last year, however, the Riverside, Calif.-based multispecialty clinic began to experiment with Internet transcription. Dr. Garde now dictates his notes into a digital tape recorder and transmits the contents to a transcriptionist via the Web. Once the notes have been transcribed, he gets them back electronically.

That makes a big difference in a clinic like Riverside, where two or three of its 90-plus physicians might see the same patient during a single day, and tracking down a patient's paper chart can be impossible. Now, Dr. Garde said, if another physician has his patient's chart, he simply goes online and views the transcribed electronic notes from the patient's last visit. While he can't access notes from that day's exams, he said, he still gets detailed information on the patient.

To speed up their turnaround time, many digital transcription vendors use transcriptionists in other time zones, sometimes on the other side of the globe. A number of firms send physician notes to transcriptionists in India, who start work when most American physicians are eating dinner or going to bed. Vendors say that because many Indians are fluent in English, the quality of their transcribing is excellent.

Some vendors say that the use of offshore transcription helps lower their per-line fees. Global MedData's general manager Anand Patel, for example, said that offshore transcription produces a 30% to 40% savings over traditional services because labor is less expensive. He said his company tends to charge physicians 8 cents to 10 cents per line, depending on volume and turnaround requirements.

Raul Kivatnetz, president and CEO of AssistMed, said that physicians using his service can expect to pay 11 cents to 11.5 cents per line for India-based transcription. (He said his company uses quality controls to

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guarantee the quality of transcriptions.) Riverside, which uses AssistMed and its transcriptionists in India, has saved more than 20% over traditional transcription fees, said Ravi Berry, MD, a pediatric gastroenterologist who is spearheading the clinic's online transcription effort.

http://www.acponline.org/journals/news/dec01/online_transcript.htm

4) Award for virtual secretary firm

A Norfolk company that is bucking the offshoring trend has picked up an award for its use of the internet.

OutSec is one of the largest providers of online secretarial services in the UK, providing typing services to more than 100 companies.

It was set up five years ago by husband-and-wife team Richard and Vanessa Phillips who run the business from their farmhouse in Stradsett, near Downham Market.

OutSec has a team of more than 60 British secretaries based in the UK and other parts of the world including Australia, New Zealand and the United States.

The company covers the medical, legal, property and commercial sectors which specialise in the transcription of more complicated styles of dictation.

OutSec has now won an award in the Eastern Region E-Commerce Awards for 2004. The awards, run by the Department of Trade and Industry, celebrate businesses making effective use of the internet and e-trading.

"It is a great achievement to gain such a prize and has given a tremendous boost to all the staff here. Technology now means an office without walls is a practical option for any company." Mrs Phillips said.

On cost grounds alone there is nowhere to beat India. Outsec has demonstrated that there is also a demand for UK typists and secretaries who have the old-fashioned skill to turn raw pieces of information into polished perfection."

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/2004/20041012/jobs/main1.htm>

5) Pakistan PM For Setting Up IT Based Business

Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has asked the Ministry of Information Technology to set up a task force for I.T. enabled services to prepare a strategy and action plan for business process out sourcing, call centers, Insurance claim processing, medical transcription, legal transcriptions etc. The task force headed by Minister for I.T. Mr. Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari will submit a comprehensive action plan within three months. The task force will also induct enterprising private sector experts to benefit from their expertise in this regard.

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The Minister should focus on creating enabling environment for software export. The I.T. marketing Board should focus on software development and export. It was also decided to accelerate the process of privatization of Pakistan Telecom Company. The Ministry was also asked to speed up the e-government programme and automation of government departments and organizations.

<http://www.paknews.com/business.php?id=1&date1=2004-10-13>

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