E-NEWSLETTER

THE NEED OF LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY AND GOING DIGITAL FOR NGOS

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Amidst the global pandemic and lockdown, the technology has been the only saviour for all, be it a giant multi-national company, mid-sized business firms, working professionals, schools or even Government organizations. More than a million employees around the globe are working from home and students getting adapted to e-learning technologies, during the lockdown phase. In various studies and researches conducted by renowned institutions and universities, it is being predicted that "Work from home" and "E-Learning" shall now be "A new Normal". The conventional methods will gradually phase out in almost all the sectors of industry and technology is what will redefine the future of global economy. It will emerge as a new king of the era and will bring in revolutionary transformation and development, thus revamping and restructuring the entire economy at a global level.

Historically, NGOs have been always lagging behind their corporate counterparts in adopting IT and have been relatively slow to take advantage of emerging technology. They face some constraints that inhibit them from adopting IT such as lack of budget to invest in latest systems, inability of build needed technical skills, lack of sustainable capital required etc… Although there are various sources of financial support but such funds are mostly dedicated to achieve organization's missions, goals and objectives. Lack of such IT budgetary planning or IT strategy planning impacts the organization's ability to take advantage of the strategic and innovative opportunities provided by technology.

From daily account processes to training volunteers, from updating records to engaging with donors, the potential of technology for NGOs is intense and encompassing. So, its high time people start adapting themselves to the change in order to keep pace and be in the race with others.

AREAS WHERE TECHNOLOGY CAN BE ADOPTED BY NGOS

BANKING TRANSACTIONS

The organizations should move from traditional methods of issuing cheques or sending RTGS/NEFT through banks to adopting netbanking facilities and making online payments directly by ownself. Payment through banking channels are not only secure and reliable but is also considered authentic by the Government departments.

SYSTEMS AND SECURITY

The organizations should ensure that all the systems are password protected & secure to avoid misuse of data and other critical informations. Various tools and applications are available that can secure the access of confidential information.

OPERATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE WORK

Embracing technology in regular operations and administrative work will not only help in automating the activites but also increase the efficiency, effectiveness and productivity of services. With technology in place, NGOs can accelerate humanitarian efforts and deliver with effective aid. It will also enhance internal and external communication with various stakeholders such as volunteers, governement agencies, donors etc..

Enabled by technology, the organizations carrying out field programmes can easily map beneficiaries, link them with volunteers and partners, establish and adopt best practices, and engage with the donors and other stakeholders on real time basis. Thus it plays a role of mulitplier as well as enabler to extend the outreach and impact of the programmes effectively.

With the use of right technology, NGOs can also ensure better resource management by optimizing its resoruces well and reducing cost.

OTHER KEY AREAS WHERE THE NGOS CAN BECOME TECHNO-FRIENDLY AND BE IN THE RACE

ACCOUNTS AND BACKUP

The accounting is an integral part for any organization and maintainng it up-to-date has become extremely important considering the strict and regular amendments in regulations now and then. An accounting software such as Tally Cloud or Quick Books or any other ERP Systems should be next on the agenda to ensure continutiy of work even during such sudden lockdown phases with proper reporting mechanisms in place for the management. This will also enable access of data from remote locations and create backups from time to time as will be scheduled.

MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS

With the move by almost every government department towards online, even the organizations should now take a step forward towards digitizing their records and imbibing technology in maintaining and organizing their data files, documents and other informations. The data so organized can be stored in various online platforms such as Dropbox and Google Drive so that they can be easily accessed from any remote location whenever required. Apart from this, the documents and files can easily be traced, thus finding right information in the right time for the right person. Moreover, once systematized, they can also be used to perform data analytics across years to ensure completeness, accuracy and authenticity.

CONDUCTING MEETINGS

The management should now adopt technology in conducing various meetings be it review meetings with staffs located at various field locations or with other trustees/members incharge of different units. Various video-conferencing tools are now available which can be used for such online meetings without taking efforts of travelling from different locations. The organization will not only save on time, effort and energy but will also be able to reduce the cost of travelling and fooding.

COMMUNICATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND FUNDRAISING FROM DONORS

By imbibing technology, the organization can increase its recognition even globally. It can also provide avenue for safe and secure online financials donations and contributions, thereby increasing the opportunities of fundraising. Through a tech-enabled software application the organization can enhance the transparency of operations that will enable donors and other stakeholders to monitor expenditures and activities on real time basis. Technology is able to change the way NGOs communicate with the outside world – leading to a more efficient and transparent transfer of information. This also helps improve credibility among donors, other stakeholders and society at large.

CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMS TO UPSKILL CAPACITIES

Technology has the capability to train, inform and engage with project partners and volunteers by using virtual simulators. Through programmed simulations, it also ensures that all the participants are being trained in a similar pattern following standard practices and protocols. Moreover, leveraging technology through customized platforms, to keep the volunteers and partners involved during various learning, training and development initiatives, can also help increase the the scope of such programmes in a cost effective manner.

AREAS SPECIFIC TO NGOS RUNNING SCHOOLS FOR ADOPTION OF TECHNOLOGY

COLLECTION OF FEES

Collection of Fees and tracking student wise fees record have always been a challenge for NGOs running school. Purchase of software to monitor the collection of fees from students or collaborating with bank and using their integrated app for facilitating collection of fees should now be given a serious thought. Cash transactions are always looked upon with suspicion and as it is various regulations have a put a bar on the limit of cash payments.

EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The next generation of students should be well versed with the new technological innovations to sustain the competition and have a futuristic growth. The schools should therefore now think of including a technology based subject to enable the students in becoming techno-friendly such as robotics education which gives a hands on experience in the field of technology.

SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

The education sector should now take a paradigmn shift from conventional methodologies of teaching in schools to adopting educational technology. Educating through various e-learning tools and digital platforms will help advance student learning. Technology makes learning more interesting and exciting for students by adding an element of fun through live polls, quizzes and surveys. It also makes teaching more dynamic by encouraging student interaction and maintaining classroom engagement. It not only personalizes the education experience for students but also facilitates collaboration among peers. However, a robust mechanism for implementation of technology with proper systems, procedures and checks in place is required for smooth transition which remains a challlenge for most of the educational institutions. Moreover, the total cost of investment and lack of technical expertise is what restrains most of them from adopting technology. But even if not copletely, they can start adpating gradually such as allowing filling of online application forms, conducting online classes and examinations, taking recourse to online parent teacher meetings, etc... are few basic steps towards ed-tech system.

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