

Interview: Margarita M. Paz, Managing Director, Total Transcript Solutions (TTSI), Philippines

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Margarita Paz, Managing Director of Total Transcript Solutions (TTSI) Philippines, talks about the reason behind switching to the medical transcription business, despite her nursing degree, how this has become a common occurrence in the Philippines, and why she feels TTSI has a very bright and successful future ahead.

From an outside viewpoint, the medical transcription business does not seem as an obvious career path for someone who graduated as a nurse. What motivated you to transition into this new medical field?

When I graduated from nursing school, the opportunity to practice in clinical setting was very limited. At that time, the market was oversupplied and finding a spot was nearly impossible. Joining the medical transcription business gave me the chance to widen my options.

Quickly I became aware of the great career path it offered. I escalated the ladder and was already holding the position of assistant manager for operations in the company that I was with prior to TTSI in 2001.

Clearly, my career path is a testimonial of the great career opportunities Health Information Management (HIM) offers to young nursing graduates and medical related professionals; fortunately, I chose the right path considering where I stand today.

What are some of the solutions that TTSI provides both locally and internationally?

TTSI or Total Transcription Solutions Incorporated is a company that is registered in San Francisco, California and in the Philippines. We were established in 2001 and have over 100 employees. We focus primarily on health information management and support services. Our services are divided into three segments: transcription and documentation solutions, local support, and e-learning suite for medical transcription.

Our core expertise and primary business, which started in 2001, falls under the transcription and documentation segment where our medical transcription business is. On average, we are able to produce around 50,000 to 60,000 lines per day or about 1.2 million lines per month. Our client's average turn-around time (TAT) requirement is time elapsing between the reception and delivery of

the final reports back to the client can vary from 12 to 24 hours. However, we are also able to accommodate shorter TAT accounts. In fact, we have a very small urgent account with TAT of between 15 minutes to 1 hour. We are dedicated to consistently providing prompt and accurate service and therefore we operate on a 24-hour shifting schedule (Monday to Saturday, Manila time) and we even extend our services to Sunday for the urgent account. We make it a point to design our work flows and processes based on our clients' needs.

We are also capable of providing different types of transcription such as general transcription (meetings, workshops, conferences, interviews, seminars, etc.). We have Independent Medical Evaluation (IME) processing where we create reports from handwritten notes and filled-out checklists instead of dictated voice files.

Concerning our local support segment, we provide remote case coordination for public health governance. Primarily, we coordinate activities of health leaders, organizing logistics of leadership coaching as well as obtaining required health data like maternal and child health. Collected data are then processed and filed into simple databases to enable administrators to monitor progress of agreed steps or projects.

We have e-learning suite for Medical Transcription (MT) that we offer to schools, MT training institutions, MT practitioners, MT trainees, and would-be MT trainees.

Finally, looking into our documentation segment, we are trying to venture into medical coding for ICD9 and ICD10. We have people trained on both and we hope to grow in this space similar to how we did with our medical transcription business.

Obviously you find yourself with a wide range of business opportunities, like medical coding. How do you believe it is possible to replicate a similar success to your medical transcription business?

Close collaboration with our clients in regards to process analysis and management, coming up with specific solutions to address needs, maintaining prompt and proactive communication, producing high-quality work, and strictly upholding confidentiality at all times are some of our key strengths that our clients appreciate. Clearly, we want to replicate the same set of traits to the other business opportunities.

This business relies on experienced personnel and finding the right talent is key to meeting your clients' wishes. Could you outline the polyvalence of your employees and how do you deal with recruitment?

Our medical transcriptionists adapt to various work types and specialties including discharge summaries, letters, consultation notes, radiology, orthopedics, emergency medicine, to name a few. Basically, our medical transcriptionists are multi-specialty and multi-platform experts.

Our employees receive about a month of intensive in-house customized training for each specific medical specialty. Our strategy is to assign medical transcriptionists and editors in teams that combine various specialties to allow for familiarity and adjustment thereby yielding better quality and productivity output as they get consistent exposure to the same set of accounts.

Our transcriptionists mainly come from a nursing background, primarily because we have a large number of nursing graduates and they are a very good fit because of their background. We also have physical therapists, medical technologists, etc.

Besides the excellence of your human resources, what can TTSI bring to the table?

We are an accredited health information technology provider of Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) for its eClaims project. We provide PhilHealth-accredited healthcare institutions with utility to enable them access to PhilHealth's eClaims system. Modules include claims eligibility verification, electronic claims submission, and claims status verification and payment. After a very stringent accreditation process, we qualified and achieved the status of health information technology provider, a true differentiator.

We are a reseller of workflow solutions for healthcare facilities called AbbaDox. We also offer mobile solutions for health data reporting and social progress monitoring through USSD, or Unstructured Supplementary Service Data, which works like an SMS and equips remote areas where internet connection is scarce allowing them to submit required data in a timely manner.

You have been a pioneer in driving the medical transcription industry. What upcoming trends do you foresee and how will you innovate and drive the industry to the next level?

At TTSI, we have always envisioned our company to be the consistent high quality provider of HIM services both locally and globally. In the coming years, we are looking at maintaining and further developing our medical transcription business, diversifying into the other HIM services such as medical coding, and further expanding our local services. To accomplish these goals, we intend to make sure that our people, our most important asset, remain satisfied with the way we do things such that they will choose to stay and grow with us.

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