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ApnaCircle gets sporty

To build its brand and garner fame amongst sports lovers, ApnaCircle has tied up with a social networking site for football aficionados, says **Debasish Roy**

Apnacircle dot com is trying out every trick in the book to build up a strong and un-dethronable brand on the Internet. Recently, it has tied up with a social networking site for football lovers to shore up its popularity with sports aficionados. It has brought out advertisements in various dailies in certain upcoming metros about its association with this online database of football lovers and expectedly the site's members have been going to town forming football associations and clubs on ApnaCircle dot com.

ApnaCircle dot com CEO, Yogesh Bansal was sitting down to protracted parleys with the new owners of his website www.apnacircle.com via www.viaodeo.com

So they hit three hundred thousand users. For one thing, Facebook took time and so will Apnacircle. Next, Facebook is a generic social networking site. Apnacircle dot com, the typical north Indian nomenclature of a social networking site is aiming at one million users by the end of 2009.

How do they do it? "By listening to the customer and his wants," says Yogesh Bansal perched on a outdoorsy stone table at the NOIDA golf club while the temperature is close to freezing near the golf grounds.

Bansal shuns any alcohol as he says he has been converted by the tirelessly working Indian masses who deliver every time

without much of support systems. "Apna Circle is the social networking site for Indians created by Indians, so we are metamorphosing into an Indian team with a global work culture. We get our work done but the employee is free to distribute his time according to his needs."

Come to the think of it, AC.com's employees all live about a maximum distance of five kilometers from the work place. This enables them to drop the kids to school as well as manage the company's affairs. For instance, an employee dropped by at the NOIDA Golf Club's pristine surroundings and bid his CEO a jolly good evening before retiring to the lounge to

have a sumptuous dinner.

Apna Circle has continuously innovated and made itself a more accessible and navigable site to create more interest in the user community; resulting in more users.

This is not to say that AC.com has achieved what it set out to do. It has yet to make bridges between the NRI community and the desi users who can exchange ideas and cultural items and try to create something between them.

Recently, Apnacircle also tied up with Honda and offered its registrants to win a Stunner brand bike. The criteria was to register on AC.com and then sms and vote for a question.

This considerably increased the user base of the website.

Meanwhile, many non-government organizations (NGOs) have logged on to the Apnacircle platform and found that their causes are being addressed in a more wholesome manner.

NGOs, academic institutions, kitty parties, college friends, professional groups, activists, you name it and they are on this site. The only flavour is Indian. Why so? "What is the fun in creating a me too, site" explains Bansal.

They have to be in the public domain as well as score with an USP. Only then will come victory in numbers and in greenbacks.

