

The New Way To Design Your Own Website (2024)

by Narayan Kumar

Sample content for Blog page

Blog #1

Headline

Reconciling differences

Subhead

Where the industry is heading with contrary opinions

Background image

efectal.jpg

Body text

We feel a certain way. Our clients feel it another way.

Tension. Conflict.

Everyone knows the theory. Stay logical, breathe deeply, be diplomatic. All of which is tough to do in the real world outside of LinkedIn posts.

I wasn't good at reconciling creative differences. Till I learnt it from a master or two.

Years ago, a senior client decided to share his strong opinion in the middle of an expensive TV commercial shoot. It was a setup involving fifty artists on platforms at various heights (it was for a famous sports shoe/apparel brand - more of visual drama than storytelling).

In the foreground were two star cricketers doing their thing.

It took 3 hours to set up

As the cameras were about to roll, the client piped up. He asked me if the whole front row of artists at the ground level could be dispensed with.

It didn't make sense. It would leave a big gap and upset the visual balance carefully set up in the last few hours. He evidently wanted a say in the aesthetics of the scene. Maybe he was tense. Or overthinking. Or feeling the disruptive energy of the steady stream of coconut pieces and almonds he was hogging.

A brief lecture

I was about to spout a brief lecture to dissuade him. The director of the film—let's call him the Master—sitting ahead of us turned around. He was an award-winning, much respected, big gun.

The Master had heard the client's whispered suggestion. "You think the front line should disappear?"

"Just wondering. Do we need it really?" The client spoke softly but firmly.

What did the Master do? He said nothing. He walked up to the main stage and cleared out the front row. His team shifted sundry props around to make sure the gap left behind was taken care of nicely.

Conclusion

In 15 minutes, he rejoined us. We stared intently at the new setup on the monitor. The Master shook his head, unconvinced. "Not working, no? You guys think this works?" he asked.

The client spoke. "Nah, it doesn't work. I like the original setup. The front row came back. Problem solved.

Blog #2

Headline

Our founder's vision

Subhead

Improving lives has always been our guiding principle

Background image

duovent.jpg

Body text

Neighbouring states share common words.

In both France and Germany, for instance, 'bonbon' means a sweet and 'champignon' means mushroom. If you share a common border, some words will travel back and forth with ease. It's understandable.

Closer home, an elephant is 'aana' in Malayalam and pretty much the same thing in Tamil – 'aanai' or 'yaanai'. An egg is 'mutta' in Malayalam, 'muttai' in Tamil.

Rice is 'ari' in Malayalam and 'arisi' in Tamil. Pain is 'vedana' in Malayalam, 'vedanai' in Tamil. All pretty close in sound to be the same word.

There are many such common words. Like I said, this sort of equivalence is only to be expected between neighbours. It's natural.

Yet.

The surprising bit

There are some words that sound exactly the same in the two languages but mean different things. Sometimes slightly different, sometimes drastically different. 'Vellam' in Malayalam means water. The familiar liquid you ingest every day.

In Tamil, 'vellam' means a flood. What is pedestrian in one language is disastrous in another. To Tamil ears, someone across the border asking for 'vellam' brings forth images of acres of agri land destroyed and farmers' homes submerged under nature's fury.

The same meaning

You can rightly argue the word still means water in both the states. True, the difference is of degree, not kind. It is an everyday drink in one state and breaking news in another.

Yet.

The difference can be noteworthy with other words. The word 'kondattam' in Tamil, for instance, means celebration of a boisterous kind. Dancing may be involved.

Whereas, across the border, an elderly gent of 70-plus years is likely to ask his long-suffering wife to bring on some 'kondattam' in the house to go with the evening tea.

Blog #3

Headline

Shiny objects syndrome

Subhead

Is the pharma industry caught up in empty displays?

Background image

icyflam.jpg

Body text

Experts on LinkedIn warn us about going after shiny objects. Beware the seductive stuff that takes you off track. Stick to the straight and narrow.

It's not easy, though.

My wife used to tell everyone that she learnt early in life to never send 'this man' to buy butter. You know your actions are not appreciated when your wife refers to you as 'this man.'

It was a Sunday morning, we were recently married and I was despatched to the market. I drove to the regular shop in IV Block Koramangala but stopped to look at the notice board near the entrance.

Information exchange

I didn't know who started it but it was a nice information exchange. People put up little stickers on the board asking for a maid, selling a house or pet, announcing a garage sale, etc. It was always interesting to find out what was going on in the community.

Someone was selling a pair of Bose speakers with a Nakamichi cassette deck – high-end stuff at a damn good price. Names worthy of worship in my college days. Could they be entering my life now and replace my humble Philips two-in-one?

Instinct told me that I if didn't act with alacrity, they wouldn't enter my life. His house was one lane behind the shop. I was there in two minutes.

An audiophile like me

He was moving on to the next big thing and wanted to junk this. He gave me a demo. We listened to Cream and Grateful Dead. We discussed the merits of the Bose 302 vs the 902. It was magical.

He had maintained the equipment like Parsis maintained motorcycles – meticulously. He wound up the connecting wires with nothing short of reverence. It was always good buying stuff from fellow worshippers.

An hour and a half later, he helped me pack the speakers and the deck—plus a solid low, wooden table (with open shelves) that he threw in for good measure—into my Maruti 800.

Blog #4

Headline

Effective communication

Subhead

Internal talk should be free of jargon

Background image

decolic.jpg

Body text

It's called a valediction. The way you close a letter or e-mail. As a mark of appreciation, you could end your mail with 'Thanks' or 'Many thanks' or a simple 'Thank you.'

You could have a professional closing with 'Best regards' or 'Warm regards' or, even simply, 'Best.'

If you wish to be formal to someone in power or is senior to you, you write 'Respectfully', 'Sincerely' or 'Sincerely yours.'

To close in a friendly manner, you write 'Cheers', 'All my best' or 'Keep in touch.'

Valedictions and mood

Like with any form of writing, valedictions give a clue to the mood of the writer. If you use a plain and simple 'Best' as part of your signature, that too is a decision to be neutral and faceless.

If someone you just got to know moves from 'Yours sincerely' to 'Best regards' to 'Cheers' inside of a week, you must be doing something right. They are obviously warming up to you. Valedictions, of course, come from the earlier world of hand-written letters and formal relationships. Thanks to the British civil service, the phrase 'I

remain, sir, your most humble and obedient servant' was a familiar closing.

An arrogant and irreverent (though loveable) character like Samuel Johnson wrote this in closing to a Lord Chesterfield: 'Your lordship's most humble, most obedient servant, Samuel Johnson.' It was a formality. Not a sucking up.

Royal etiquette

According to royal etiquette today, if you are a government boffin in the UK writing to King Charles, you are expected to close with 'Your Royal Highness's most humble and obedient servant. Regards.'

All this business about servility and obedience of the 18th century got abbreviated to 'Yours faithfully' in later times. And, as a less boot-licking variation, 'Yours sincerely.'

In today's world of haste, emojis and who-cares-for-niceties aggression, there is no place for implied subservience even. Which is why the neutral 'Best' is popular. It says nothing much, asks for nothing much and merely marks the ending of an e-mail.

Homilies and morals

In the early days of e-mail, we had homilies that put out a moral or some uplifting thought (like many a LinkedIn post today.) A clever signature line, you hoped, put out a pretty picture of your soul. I myself used to use as a signature, 'It's all good in the end. If it's not good, it's not the end.'

There are wacky ones being used today occasionally. Like, 'Stay luminous, stay hydrated.'

Blog #5

Headline

Domain expertise

Subhead

How to develop your skills every day

Background image

apitone.jpg

Body text

There are experts and then there are experts.

There are those who ask questions and gauge what it is you might like to hear. They offer knowledge, discussion and want to be friends with you.

And then there are those who actually solve your problem.

Our family GP, for one, is someone I have known who diagnoses accurately. I have observed his methods on patients over so many years—he is more of a friend now—and he shares the hallmarks of genuine experts in all fields.

Experience and theory

A combination of loads of experience and a lot of thought. Not one or the other. Both.

Solving a lot and reflecting a lot. Real achievements, real learnings. It cuts across domains.

A couple of days ago, a swarm of bees took over the roof of my homestay in the Nilgiris. They entered the master bedroom. This had happened a year ago. And the local ‘experts’ increased my knowledge without solving the problem.

I learnt that fire could smoke out bees. I learnt that a local tribe—the Irulas—were experts and the best bet.

Problem of wooden houses

I learnt that wooden houses faced this problem because of little gaps in the roofing girders.

I learnt that kerosene could work. And a lot else.

But no one did anything concrete. Until our caretaker, while out shopping for groceries , asked a couple of boys to remove the hive. They climbed a ladder, put their spindly hands into crevices and pulled out a hive while being stung on their forearms and faces.

They took a hundred bucks and waltzed away happily.

Blog #6

Headline

Imposter syndrome

Subhead

Can pharma drugs treat the ailment?

Background image

sneess.jpg

Body text

Experts on LinkedIn say we all go through the imposter syndrome at some point. But what about actually being an imposter?

A few days ago, preceding a Great Big Indian wedding in the UK, I got mistaken for a poet. By the elderly grandmother of the groom. It was a pre-wedding meeting between the families. My wife and me were on the bride's side. I was placed next to the groom, while my wife was assigned to chat with the said grandmother of the groom.

She was a gentle, frail and gracious lady, full of life and loved by all.

Easy conversationalist

The groom was an easy conversationalist, the kind who took the pressure off you and knew what to talk about. I noticed my wife and *Dadiji* across the room chatting pleasantly. All seemed well.

From the way the grandmother glanced at me often, I knew they were talking about me. As they were about to leave, she approached me and said, "I respect poets." Turning to her grandson, the groom, she said, "He writes poetry. Do you know how much brains it takes?"

The groom looked at me surprised. "You are a poet? Wow, I didn't know that."

I was simultaneously wondering how to refute this while being curious about what exactly my wife had told her. I was about to say I'd written numerous advertising jingles for countless brands but those hardly counted as poetry. But in the hubbub of overlapping goodbyes of a lot of people, the moment just passed.

Being a copywriter

I later checked with my wife. Unsure if the grand old lady would understand what a copywriter was, my wife generalised me as a writer and the lady was promptly impressed. At what point the 'writer' got upgraded into a 'poet' we would never know.

"It must be your long hair," my wife suggested. At the grand reception on wedding day, *Dadiji* walked up to us with her ever-present smile.

She introduced us to someone who was the mayor of a London suburb (or district or whatever.) And she introduced me as a 'director.'
