Using the Six Questions by Dr. Goldratt on Riddle no. 3

An article for discussion and debate by Eli Schragenheim

Comment to all readers: Please, read first riddle no. 3 entitled "Who need another word processor?"

Question no. 1: **What is the Power of the Technology**?

The product under review has several new features being combined into a whole word processor. A word processor could be a new product, but it is definitely not a new technology. Even when we judge the product just as a new product there is one feature that is "new" to the extent that it could be treated as a new technology: The ability to translate between four languages into well-written text in the destination language. The characteristics are: the output text has perfect grammar and the structure of the sentence is effective, meaning it can be easily understood.

Question no. 2: **What current limitation or barrier does the new technology (or product) eliminate or vastly reduce**?

Limitation no 1: The ability of many people to quickly produce documents in the required language that conform to good standards of written text, especially regarding using perfect grammar and good structure of sentences.

Comment: Such well-written documents are frequently used to impress the readers and/or deliver a clear message and the inability to quickly produce such documents that conform to the standards is causing damage to writers and possibly also to some readers.

Limitation no. 2: Being able to read and understand documents written in a foreign language.

Optional market segments:

- Almost all organizations with international activity.
- Organizations that frequently require standard documentations (technical documents etc.)
- Newspapers and magazines.
- Various publishers of professional text books.
- Professionals that part of their job is writing documents – especially professionals with international activity (like Israeli TOC consultants).

All those segments could be further defined, especially after the other questions being answered.

Question no. 3: **What usage rules, patterns and behaviors exist today that consider the limitation?**

There are, at least, four types of behaviors that currently used to handle the first limitation:

a. Refrain from writing unless considerable pressure is put on the individual.
b. Spend a lot of time in writing the document in the target language. Read and correct.
c. Ignore the quality of the writing – assume it is good enough.

d. Use of language professionals (translators and/or professional editors) to polish the original documents.

The second limitation is currently handled by organizations by using one of the current translation software, then reading the translated document by an authorized person to decide whether it worth a more thorough translation that would be done by a professional. In many cases documents in foreign language for which their value is not clear upfront are totally discarded.

Individuals use more the current available translation software and live with the often-not-too-good-results.

Certainly too many relevant documents originally written in foreign language are not handled at all.

Question no 4: **What rules, patterns and behaviors need to be changed to get the benefits of the new technology?**

The organization, or the individual, would have a legal access to either SmartWriter or to software function that is capable to convert text between languages and to produce effective text in perfect grammar.

Whenever an individual likes, or is required, to write a document, **he/she would write in the language they feel best**, no matter what is the target language. If the above feature would be part of a full blown word processor then all important writing of documents would be written with SmartWriter. If it'd be possible to still write in MS-Word and from it call the special feature, then most, or all, writing will continue to be done in Word.

At any time during the writing the writer would call the special feature to convert part or the whole write-up to the good-text at the target language. In case the writer knows the target language (certainly when the target language is the one he/she is writing) he/she would go over the revised text to validate that the original intent is kept.

Question no 5 – later version: **What is the application of the new technology that will enable the above change without causing resistance?**

Let's first analyze possible negative branches. I've come with the following:

a. In the case of SmartWriter being a full word processor, then the user has to learn a new word processor, while still own a version of Word, because of its status and being the standard. Many might give up the extra value of SmartWriter even if an import and export mechanism is available.
b. Some potential users might resist a package of software to dictate for them what is "good text" and what is not.
c. One risky aspect of being very successful is the possible attack of the giants (also others), like Microsoft, claiming you stole the algorithm from them.
d. If such a tool would become popular it might harm the tendency of learning foreign languages.

The first negative branch should be eliminated by NOT offering a word processor, but rather a more agile type of a program that can be called from within Word, or even PowerPoint and within internet browsers. This might create another negative branch of Microsoft trying to come up with a version blocking such intervention within the program. However, it is unlikely that Microsoft would truly block all possible transactions of text from and to Word.

The second negative branch simply means giving up users who are too sensitive. After all nothing could prevent the user from changing the perfect text later and give it the style the user likes.

The third one means the algorithm should preferably be protected by patent and good evidence that it was actually developed by Crazy Dan without any "help" or "inspiration" from others.

The cause and effect behind the fourth one should be scrutinized. With more and more international activity the minimum requirements would be to be able speak in English. Actually having this immediate translation mode would make learning more languages easier than today. This is actually a very important positive branch.

The conclusion is: the product application should be a program to be called from Word and other programs to translate/edit marked text and just that. From the analysis so far there is no clear demand to customize the product to specific market segments, but this option should be analyzed in detail and it is well beyond the scope of dealing with a virtual imaginary product.

Question no 6: **How to build, capitalize and sustain the business?**

This question leads us to integrate all the above, plus everything marketing has to do. Decisions about the best way to promote the product, reaching the various market segments and how to demonstrate the unique value for the final user are to be analyzed and decided.

Eventually for Chris having to make up his mind whether to fund the project or not, the decision and the conditions from Crazy Dan, seem to be clear enough.

Dear TOCICO members, friends and readers, the above article certainly calls for more debate. Feel free to argue about it. One interesting question is whether going through the six questions provides us with new insights, or all the insights could have been deduced by intuition and the six questions do not add value. What do you think?