Battle of Minds at SUST

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IT was the morning of 23 September and the Business Administration Department of SUST saw an eventful gathering of students, teachers and BATB (British American Tobacco Bangladesh) officials. A contest was arranged in the campus for business students by BATB on that day. It was really a battle of minds - young talents had to prove their potential.

The session started with a lively presentation from Rinath Akhter, an HR official from BATB. From her presentation, students came to know about BAT and its functions and operations all over the world. Moreover, they got a clear view about BATB's recruiting procedure. She then explained what "Battle of minds" is and why they are organizing such an event. Battle of minds, the competition to find out young talents was initiated by BAT Bangladesh and later followed by other countries. Students of SUST also spontaneously joined the session with their queries.

After the inaugural presentation, the main competition started. There were 3 teams (A, B and C), with 3 members in each. Group A had Agnijita (4th Batch), Shiplu (6th Batch), Rana (6th Batch), Group B was joined by Lipton (4th Batch), Himel (7th Batch), Salma (7th Batch) and Group C was made up by Alo (4th Batch), Nahiyan (6th Batch),Arup (7th Batch).

All of them were given a case based on a Theme Park. Each group had to solve the stated problem and prepare presentation slides within an hour. And finally all of the groups had to present their solutions and each of them got 15 minutes for that. After each presentation there was also a Question/Answer session, where they faced different questions from the audience and had to defend them with their logics. The panel of judges assessed the teamwork, group performance and individual performance - and then selected four best performers for the team of SUST who will leap forward to the next round.

The dean of the faculty, the head of the department of business administration and other teachers of the department were also present and took part in the question/answer session. Md. Abdul Hamid, the Assistant professor of Business Administration who supervised the participant students for the last couple of weeks, said, "With all our limitations we tried to do our best. I think these four students will be able to represent SUST out in the world". He also suggested other students to be prepared for such events in future.

The next event-the quarter final of "Battle of Minds", will be held on 23 October, 2008 in Dhaka. Business is a subject that requires conception on how to face real world problems and "Battle of minds" is obviously helpful in that context.

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A Dose of Reality

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And adjoining areas in the capital with the thriving coaching centers that rely on quantity than quality, Mr. Saif underlines the necessity to introduce top-notch training programs for the huge labour force of our country. This will open the door to generating a large number of qualified professionals at salaries that will ensure this country's competitive edge. The government in Bangladesh has already shown its commitment to developing this sector by committing itself to subsidizing internet services and bringing down VOIP tariffs to the levels of the other countries in the region. Mr. Saif believes that the government should also introduce subsidized training programs in order to bring down the initial costs of opening up a call center.

Refuting the assertion that only university graduates are better suited for becoming call center operatives, Mr. Saif states that anyone who has basic inter-personal skills and reasonable command over English have the potential to be successful in this line of work irrespective of his/her educational background.

With the necessary policies in place, it might take at least a year for Bangladesh to become a viable location for call centers. It must be kept in mind that the road to building a successful call center industry in our country is a long and arduous one.

