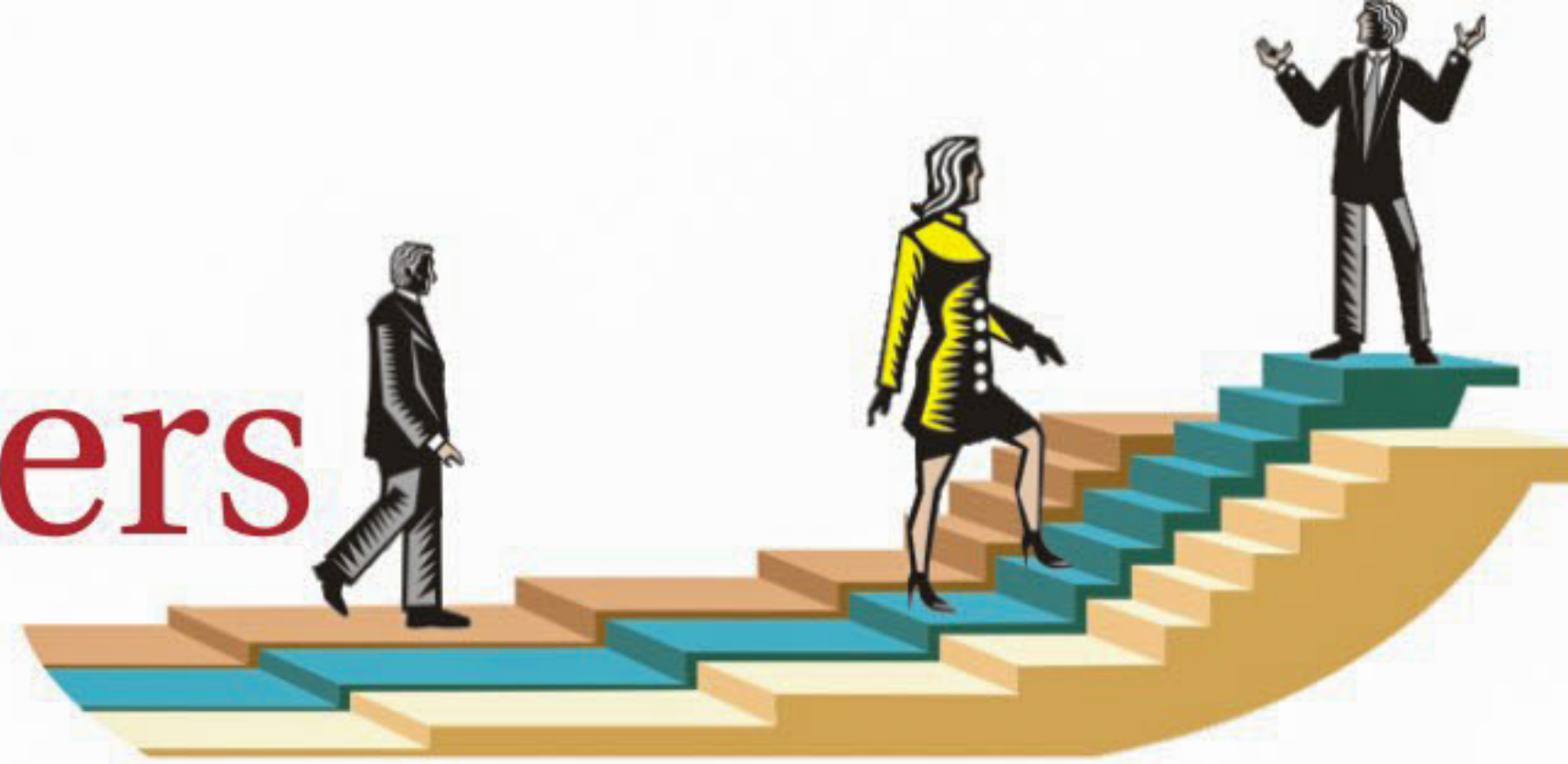


Careers



DHAKA, MONDAY, APRIL 18, 2011, E-MAIL: business@thedailystar.net

Focus on your career, not job

SUMAN SAHA

EVERY job-seeker is frantic in his/her search for the dream job. The lucky few strive to move on clear guidelines in achieving their goals. They look for tips in making the best first impression in encounters with prospective employers too.

Career experts, however, suggest that job-seekers attach more importance to developing their own functional competency and communication skills, as currently, most organisations focus on these attributes in hiring an employee.

"Functional competency, sound communication skills, a positive attitude, analytical ability, capacity as a team member, passion for growth and interest in extracurricular activities are key components to building a successful career," says Tariqul Haque, chief executive of EMC (Enroute Management Consulting), a leading management consulting firm.

An individual who practices the above traits will find his or her own niche among the high achievers, he adds.

Tetrapak Country Director Sayef Nasir says, "We mainly look for functional competency and relevant experience in recruiting employees for various positions."

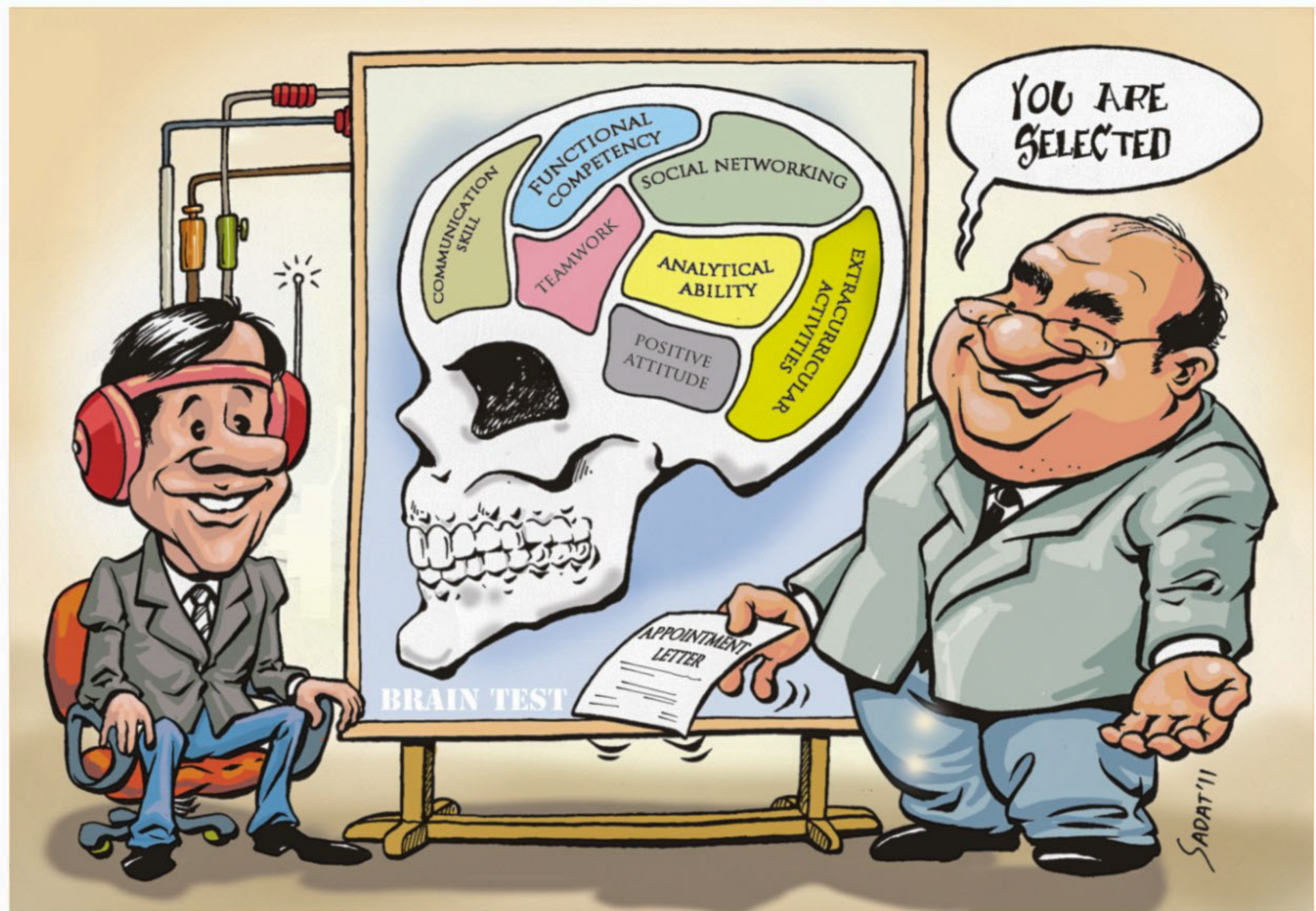
Additionally, employers also attach due importance to communications, structured thought processes, high energy levels and an individual's ability to perform under stress, before picking a suitable candidate, adds Nasir.

Sanzid Ahmed, human resource director of Reckitt Benkiser, says, "We generally make the final decision to hire by assessing the candidate's communication skills. We also look for a proactive attitude, analytical ability, adaptability and ability to work in a team."

Ahmed, therefore, urges fresh graduates to enthusiastically pursue extracurricular activities in their student life and develop a diverse knowledge base about the outside world by reading reputed magazines, journals and relevant business books and almanac to groom themselves as 'ever-ready-can-do' individuals.

Mosabbir Chowdhury, head of human resources at Avery Denison, points at aptitude, attitude towards change and rational self-evaluation as most important criteria to select a candidate for a position.

"We generally look for people who prefer to work hard with a positive attitude towards multi-tasking and are ready to take up chal-



lenges and are not ridiculously over ambitious."

The chief executive of EMC urges fresh graduates to be sincere in writing out their resumes and cover letters. "Always remember, your resume should amply represent you before you have the opportunity to come into the scene."

So, an intelligent job-seeker should customise their resumes and cover letters for different employers, catering to the unique needs of different jobs by paying special attention to the language, spelling, grammar and style, says Haque.

"Your dress, cleanliness and punctuality will tell people how serious you are about the mission."

He says freshers have to put in extra effort to prepare themselves for the interview. They

should be familiar with the organisation website, role profile and other relevant information through reading and browsing required information packets, he adds.

They might as well talk to people, where possible, who are already in that organisation or in similar role to know the organisation values as well as the job requirements, he said.

Career experts also suggest creating a strong network with the industry people and senior peers to learn about newly emerging job opportunities.

"This is the world of networking. It's very important to maintain relationships with senior peers and acquaintances to learn about job openings. Many organisations do not advertise vacancies; they just announce internally," Haque says.

Social networking like LinkedIn and Facebook are becoming extremely helpful tools these days for building and developing networking alliances.

Haque urges young professionals to develop long-term plans for a career -- not to look for just a job to succeed in the long run, as career planning is not like running a 100 metre sprint, it is a life long marathon journey.

"You should focus on and give time to personal development, especially mastering your skills and honing competencies. You must have patience and make use of every opportunity that comes your way to enhance learning," says Haque.

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The right attitude for the right job

Rapport Bangladesh chairman nails down what is needed to land a dream job

SUMAN SAHA

ATTITUDE is a key factor to be successful in working life. So, each job aspirant has to focus on building a positive attitude.

However, a career expert feels that a visionless attitude has developed in the minds of our youngsters as most job aspirants are now interested in getting a job only, rather than pursuing a good career.

"Around 95 percent of students in our country have a mentality to pursue a higher degree to get a good job," says Dr M Mosharraf Hossain, chairman of Rapport Bangladesh Ltd, a reputed firm in management consulting and training in Bangladesh. "But this is a visionless attitude as it is short term oriented."

A job refers to a regular form of work to earn money. On the other hand, a career encompasses a greater dimension of work, a vision for an educated person from a time before getting a job to the day of retirement, says Hossain, who holds a PhD in management from University of New Castle, USA.

So, careerists have to understand the difference between a job and a career, he adds.

Hossain, who has been a management consultant for the last 42 years, says students should not be blamed for their shortsightedness, as they are not counseled appropriately at school and college.

"We are taught in school that 'those who read and write will ride a car or horse'. The old dictum may not be valid now. This brain washing from childhood is also partly responsible for this attitude problem," says Hossain.

Hossain, who is also the managing director of the company, says a career would, among other



Dr M Mosharraf Hossain speaks at a training for professionals in Dhaka.

things, consist of four stages -- thinking and evaluating various career options; selecting one or two career alternatives; collecting information and gathering knowledge of such a career; and finalising the career and enriching knowledge and building skills for the career chosen.

He says one should think about a career with a SWOT analysis to know one's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Every person is blessed with some inherent qualities that are unique to him or her. These qualities have to be discovered through continu-

ous and careful observation of one's self, says Hossain.

Some examples of such qualities are good communication skills, interest in dealing with people, passion for research and comfort in deliberation. These may be the strengths of a person. Similarly, one can find their own weaknesses, like easily irritated and shy of people and public speaking, dislike of overtime, lack of communication skills, or a fear of numerics, he adds.

These qualities or personality traits have significant bindings on the type of career one would

like to choose. For example, if someone enjoys field work but is temperamentally not a people person, he or she should not pursue that career, he says.

However, there are some common elements that are responsible for success in any career, like communication skills.

Communication is basically one's ability to convey the right message to the right person in the right language and must confirm the understandability of the message for whom it is directed.

So, he urges young professionals to develop excellent command over at least two languages, English and Bangla, for our environment.

The Rapport Bangladesh chairman says, "Traditional career options like medical, law, and government jobs are still attractive to many students. However, at present, career options are flooded with many new and challenging subjects, like management, self-employment, sales and marketing, planning, MIS, IT, research and development, customer service, public relations, and finance and accounting."

One can go to the net, collect information and refer to those who were successful in each of the subjects and what life style is attached to those who succeeded. At this stage, he/she should start collecting the names and details of prospective employers, says Hossain.

In order to get valuable information on the subject and employers, one should attend relevant short training programmes and seminars. They should also identify the concerned executives, especially human resource personnel, and if possible, seek personal interviews to make prior acquaintance, he adds.

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