

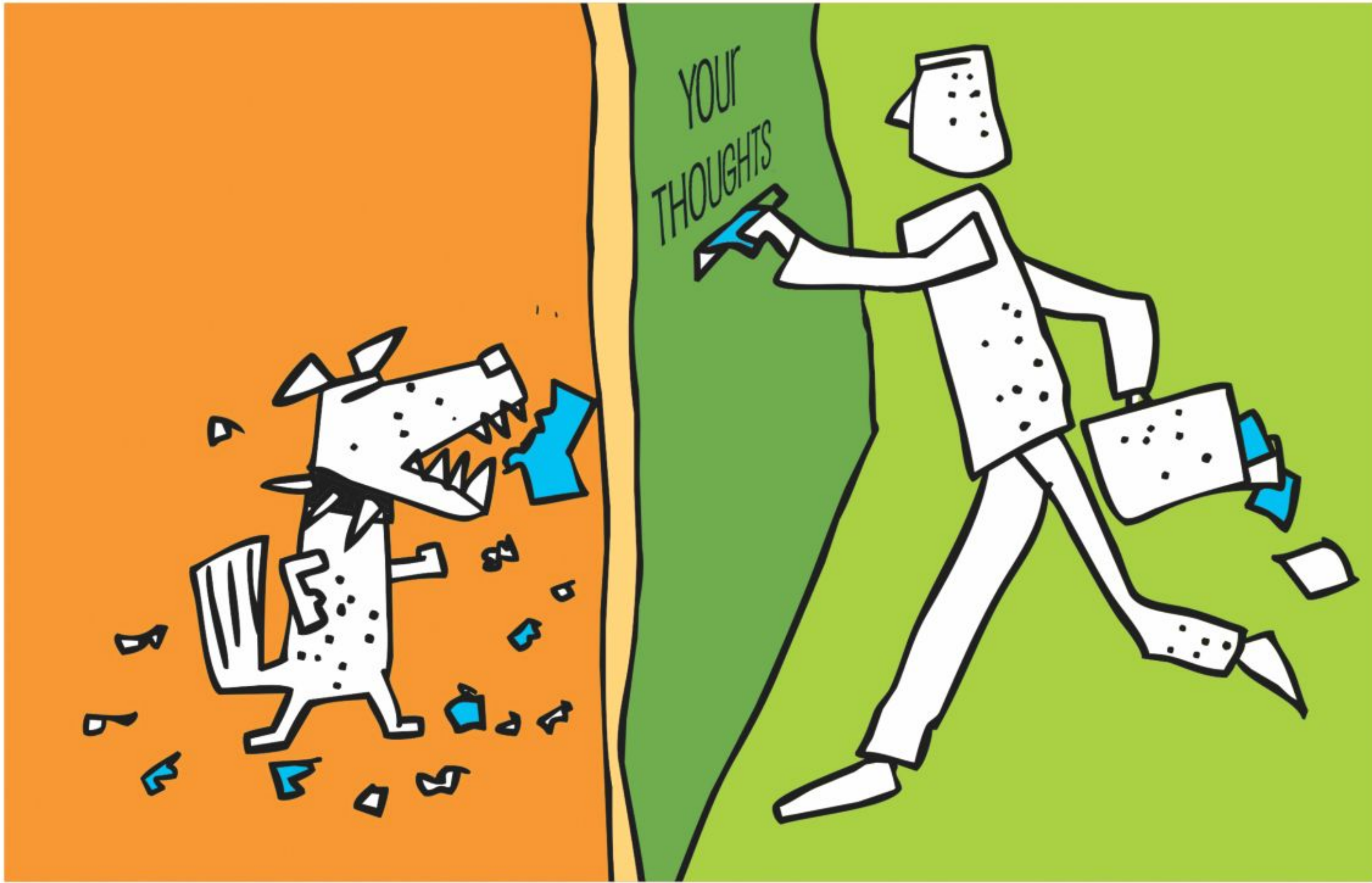
Why employees don't complain

Critics say employees never feel the pulse of an owner. But is it true for everybody? Owners feel that it is their company and they are the mighty owners –their decision is always right and there's no need to consult with anyone. On the other hand, the employees who come to work every day, do their jobs and go home without an unpleasant word. Does it mean they are happy and employer is doing everything perfectly? Not necessarily.

An employee faces some difficulties every day. It may be while following the instruction or while performing job responsibilities. But, is it really easy to explain? They sure feel like talking about such crisis to someone. Then again, is it wise to express their opinion? After a while, doing the same thing repeatedly, employees often generate some ideas to resolve some issues in much more unique ways but they may not express it anyplace or are too afraid to discuss the new method to the right authority. It's true that the less you say, the less trouble you have in the office. Nevertheless, it gives everyone else an opportunity to say what you wanted to say and before you know it, your idea is being said by someone else.

Many organizations, as per compliance guidance, need to put complaint or suggestion boxes. Sometimes these boxes have locks to maintain anonymity and they are religiously maintained. But does a complaint box work? As far as my experience goes, not at all! After a month the respective authorities open the boxes and find tons of unnecessary papers. Why does it happen? Why is it not functioning well? Are they not feeling comfortable to share their feelings with the authority or do they simply think the process is useless? In today's workplace, more people are keeping quiet and are just going with the flow thinking that this is the best way to advance. For others, it is survival mechanism.

Nowadays, owners are desperately trying to



come close to their workers. But they don't know how, because of the long practice of keeping them in distance. Owners mostly depend upon their 2nd line management. When factory workers go down into the open roads, it is very clear that the 2nd line of management policy is not functioning well.

Sometimes we blame outside interference saying that it's unnecessary and respective organizations should deal with their problems themselves. The idea may not be correct in all cases. It is the gap in communication, gap between the owner and the workers that causes the crisis to begin with. Outside help can make

the gaps disappear by discussing the differences.

In most private companies, the decision of the employer is the final decision. Some of them don't even like improvement advices and whenever they get one, the reaction is mostly unreasonable. If the employees are at a risk of losing their jobs, they can't really express their

suggestions to improve their respective organization. Truth is, these employees aren't left with any moral fiber to say something in front of their bosses. If they have invested a fair amount of time in the sector in a small country like Bangladesh, the shifting scopes does not always suffice.

The trick of the multinational companies is fascinating. The jobs look glorifying from the outside with such great salary. In most multinational companies, most employees are engaged 9-12 hours, sometimes more than that. MNC targets our young talents, if a young graduate joins MNC at the age of 26, after 3 years company may provide car loan, after 5 years foreign tour and after 10 years, 0% interest free bank loan for flat or land. You know what they took away from you? Options! What happens after crossing the age of 40? At that stage, there is very less working options, so it is wise to keep shut.

Universally, half of all employees are too scared to openly express their views at work. They don't speak up for more than one reason. Fear of revenge, job safety, lack of responsible management and an uncaring organizational environment are some of the grounds.

Then how do we get rid of this crisis? Prescription is very simple. Get rid of the complaint boxes, Foster courage of openness, and close the gaps between the ladders. Train yourself to listen (regardless of how challenging the task can get). Last but not the least, owners need to pay visit to their establishment at least once in a month. It keeps the employees motivated and gives the owner an idea about what's happening within the organization.

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Negotiate to a higher salary

When it comes to salary, bigger is undoubtedly better. Rising prices of essentials, food, transport and ever increasing flat screen TV sizes that you want, you need those added few digits. Whether you just nailed your new interview or you have been at the job a few years, here's how you increase your odds of getting the added moolah.

Study your options

Realize that companies are not willing to pay more. They might even tell you you're the best they found but they may be limited by company policies. Here's a secret, it's always possible to go beyond the policies a little. You start with a solid preparation and present it brilliantly.

Find out as much as you can about the company payscale and compare it with the industry average. Sometimes, even good university degrees aren't enough because the company prefers hiring from within. This would mean you'd have to settle for an entry level pay unless you're already there. In which case, you have an upperhand over a fresher. But whatever you do, fix on a minimum level. If you're about to take on a new job, set the minimum point so you're not wasting their or your precious time.

Evaluate your worth

Figure out your leverage. If you're in demand elsewhere, you've got leverage. Are you a designer with a few online awards under your belt? You can push. Let them know without being coming off as arrogant. Mention your other interviews casually. If you're trying to get a bump in your current job, and you've got a few offers lined up, don't use that as leverage, not right away. Forward your current employer the request for a raise and wait for them to ask of 'options' you may have. Be frank, tell them there are offers but you'd like to stay here. It's not the deal maker but knowing your value boosts your confidence levels and that always comes across to your HR or interviewers.

Wait for the salary amount

In case of an interview, ask the



interviewer about their salary offer. Never offer yours first. I once needed to hire a fresher who was told what he would be expecting. When the interviewer asked him what his expectations were, instead of asking for their offer, he told them how he expects a minimum 8k, a figure that was less than what was to be offered him. He's now known as Minimum Eight. If you're pushed, mention a figure and say it's up for negotiation because this is what it's all about.

Highlight your skill set

The most important leverage you can have in your arsenal is your skill set. Have you accomplished something others have not? Performance bonus received previously? Bring that up. Can you do multiple tasks that make you a better package? A copywriter who can also design or photograph is an asset. An IT specialist who also designs webpages is a very big asset. When you have added

skills, you are seen as a cost effective recruit. Same goes if you're looking for a raise. If you have skills that increase your productivity laterally as well, you're in demand.

I hired a seamstress for my wife's clothing business because she could not just sew but also knew how to go about gluing accessories such as sequins and belts. It was cost effective to pay her extra cause I didn't need to go elsewhere to get the extra work done.

It's okay to walk away

If your research says you're getting or being offered less, don't confront. In case of a new job interview, walk away as a measure of calculated risk. It could go either way. They could call you back or just give it to someone else. Think of it like buying a shirt at New Market. You make an offer, you leave. You might be called back to the shop.

Unless you really want it

Finding something you really, really want to do is rare. You want to take it, you may have to compromise. I once took on a lower paying job because it offered shorter hours. It gave me time to focus on a business venture and I could give time to my new-born son. So look for extra benefits. Maybe ask for a periodic review with an associated restructuring in salary package. Go through the compensation package. Sometimes those are as beneficial in the long run as an upfront increase in money. Define what you want.

Sometimes, you know you're the best out there, you've got the skill sets but the competition is fierce and the company prefers to save money and take someone lesser qualified than you. These are no surefire ways but these are logical steps that increase your chances. That's what it's all about, increasing your odds.

EHSANUR RAZA RONNY

HOW DID I GET HERE?

From engineer to entrepreneur

Mr. Mallik Samir Tawfik, a EEE graduate from AIUB, is the CEO of Starpoint Rewards Bangladesh Ltd. He is also the National Training Director of Junior Chamber International – Bangladesh.



Growing up as a kid in Africa, I had always wanted to be an Engineer. Many kids keep on having different aims in life and the aims keep changing as they grow older. But my aim however remained firm.

After completing my O Levels in Private and A Levels from Manarat Dhaka International College, I got admitted as a student at AIUB in the department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering, or more popularly known as EEE. Life became quite hectic with all the countless hours of lectures and lab works and I started losing interest. My life rotated in between waking up early in the morning for 8am classes to dozing off at midnight and this continued for 2 years in a row.

However, being connected to an online music community known as Amadergaan, I did get some entertainment from attending underground concerts regularly. Then the moment of change came into my life. It was in December 2006 when one of my friends suddenly told me that Dhaka Sheraton Hotel was hiring part-time tele-sales executives. So I rushed off and got selected for the post and hence my career in sales started.

I was just crazy for my job because I loved the feeling of talking to new customers everyday and every sale I made gave me the confidence of winning a hard-fought battle. Eventually I became the top Tele-Sales executive at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel and broke some records too!

Then one fine day, I got an offer from one of my clients to join his fashion

magazine's event management wing as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). So I jumped at the offer and joined his company as the CEO of Mirror Media and Productions Ltd. I was there for 6 months and during that time span, I organized 4 big trade exhibitions in Dhaka and some fashion shows. But there always remained a certain small pinch in myself of owning a company of my own.

And hence I embarked on that dream and started my company Starpoint Rewards Bangladesh Ltd on 22nd March 2009 and have not looked back since then. My company runs the brand "Starpoint Privilege" which is the first loyalty membership club in Bangladesh and we provide our clients with fantastic savings at worldwide airlines, hotels, resorts, restaurants, airport lounges, hospitals, spas and so on. It's been more than 4 years since I have become an entrepreneur and my business has expanded into Interior Designing, Visa Consulting, Air Ticketing and Work Recruiting. I have also gotten involved in a few social and business chambers and am currently the National Training Director for Junior Chamber International – Bangladesh. In 2012, I was recognized as one of the top under-30 CEOs by the ICE Business Times magazine.

The joy of having 20-30 young and bright employees working under you is limitless and the fact that you as a Entrepreneur are contributing even in a small way to the country's economy is fantastic.

CONNECT TO NEXT STEP

Take your next step to connect to us. Email us if you have an interesting story to share related to career. Tell us if it has been a bumpy ride for your career or has it been the exact opposite. Like us on facebook to stay updated. Mail us if you have any suggestions, feedback, and ideas.

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