

# The circus trainer's manual

## Steps to develop into an amazing employer

"A good boss? What's that like?", said many of my friends working in the corporate sector. It can get particularly difficult for a boss if he's actively disliked. A lot of your employees quit in the last few months? Maybe they just weren't the perfect fit for your company. Or maybe, you are not the best boss one can have.

Being a good employer is as important as being a good employee. Take a moment and think, when you let go of an employee, you also let go of a huge amount of your invested time. A new employee needs time to be trained and even before you realize, sometimes the organization falls into pieces. Question is how to be a good boss? Here's how.

### Recognize that success is a result of teamwork

Being in-charge doesn't necessarily mean you deserve all the credit of the good work being done. Your staff is undoubtedly responsible for the work too. You lead them to do such a great job? Good for you. Look what it got you, a pat on the back from the bigger boss. Make sure you do the same. "The ability to appreciate comes naturally to some people. I usually feel proud whenever someone from my team does something extra-ordinary. I immediately appreciate their efforts and it later reflects on the future outcomes. My team is motivated and I believe it's mostly because their efforts are always recognized", says Elita Karim, Editor, Positive Bangladesh, The Daily Star.

### Find out what makes your employees tick

Getting to know your team will allow you to understand their characteristics and what mode of communication works with them. Each of them might respond to different methods of communication. One of your employees may respond to a few words of appreciation, whereas others may look for some kind of additional benefit. Kamal Ahammad, a month magazine editor, treats his staff often to keep them motivated. Plus, he makes an effort to make them feel needed and stretches his hand to help his staff whenever needed. The price is varies from person to person. It's your job to figure out what it takes.

### Solve problems right away

Procrastinating problems will never get you and your team anywhere. If your staff has a



problem for which they need your help, try making time as soon as possible. You have other priorities in the office? "later", "I don't have time for this now", "don't waste my time with details, just draw the bottom line" are things you may want to avoid saying. You don't have to be so blunt that you crush them completely. Their self-esteem goes down thinking the work isn't valued. You really don't want to see where it leads to. "I work really hard to get my work done and I love doing what I do. But even then, I have been applying to switch my job. My boss never makes a positive contribution to my

work and barely talks to me regarding the problems I'm facing. I'm new and I need a lot of input in order to improve", quotes a friend of mine who wanted to remain anonymous.

### Be vocal about their value

The success of an organization depends a lot on the boss's skill to motivate. You may not realize it, but sometimes all your employees seek from you is motivation. A simple acknowledgment can do the trick. Compliment them, show gratitude for their excellent service. Half of all employees who say that they do not feel valued at work

report that they intend to look for a new job in the next year according to a survey by the American Psychological Association (APA). That should tell you how important it is to value your employees. Be vocal about it to let them know how valuable they are to you.

### Do things in return

One of the most effective ways to make your staff work is to do things for them in return. If they've worked hard for a project, do something in-return. Invite them over for lunch; tell them what a great job they've done. You'll see magical improvements in their work. "I remember the crisis of last Eid. The vacation started and all our officials and technicians had already left Dhaka. One of our machines stopped working and we had to get them online right away exactly before the night of Eid. The technical team came back within 12 hours and fixed the error. I was so grateful that I took all of them out for lunch the following day and told them how valuable they were. The joy in their faces was priceless. Maybe the money spent on that lunch wasn't a lot. But the fact that I personally took an initiative made them happy and that's what really matters," says Zerif Aftab, Head of Operations, Xerox.

### Say "Thank you"

Yes, it's THE magic word. Try saying it sometime and see how happy your team gets. They'll start working with new energy. It's the least you can do to appreciate the efforts of your subordinates. It doesn't make you small if that's your mindset. Rakshinda Huq, Career Services Officer at BRACU says, "It always feels great when the boss shows his gratitude, even if I didn't deserve it. I recently started working and I have an amazing boss. He often sends "thank you" notes and I can't possibly express how good it feels." You will be loved more as you show your gratitude towards them.

Instead of being the one they hate, be the one they like. Get rid of the negative energy around the office. You want them to become best thing that ever happened to you? It's give and take really. Just be the best boss that ever happened to them. Soon enough, you'll find your organization doing much better than before.

ASIF KAMAL

## EVENTS

### Startup Bash marks the initiation of a growing community of new generation entrepreneurs

Innovation, Endeavor and Restlessness for perfection: these are the three things that kept on coming again and again in the weeklong event 'Startup Bash Bangladesh'. For those of you who don't know what Startup Bash is, let me give a brief intro. Well, Startup Bash was an experience-sharing platform for the 'to-be-entrepreneurs' arranged by some successful local start ups. And to ignite the spirit of Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW) [Nov 18-24] in the local ecosystem, this event was loaded with fun workshops, motivational videos, experience sharing sessions and startup pitches. Forgot to mention the tones of yummy free food! This weeklong event took place at several venues: NewsCred Office, EMK Centre, British High Commissioner's Residence and American Club in Dhaka.

The event kicked off with a formal introduction with the organizers and sponsors followed by some warm pep talk about entrepreneurship, policies to encourage entrepreneurship, vision and investment dilemmas. The second day's event included making the participants acquainted with some startup success tools. The third day's event was the most exciting one. All newbie entrepreneurs got heard by the angel investors about their game-altering startup ideas. The fourth day's event was all about technology and social responsibilities associated with entrepreneurship. The last two days activities involved skill development and entrepreneurial community effect. Due to limitations, the entire event accommodated only a handful of participants who were selected after a careful evaluation. Muztoba Ahmad Khan, a full time Director of J&J Essentials Pvt. Ltd & a part-time Angel Investor, was amongst the lucky few participants. 'Undoubtedly this is an excellent idea to have an entrepreneurial mixer in Bangladesh. We got to know the do's and don'ts for a new start up. Also had a fun time socializing with the budding entrepreneurs' - he exclaimed. 'Connect, share, do'- the tagline of this GEW celebration was certainly worth it.

SHAHRIAR RAHMAN

# Tuning into the future

The great Greek philosopher Socrates is known for his famous statement "The unexamined life is not worth living". By that he meant, if you do not question yourself, challenge yourself and think deeply about whom you are and where you are going, your life is not worth much. He said this 2500 years ago and it remains true to this day.

In order to begin thinking about the best career direction for you, the process must start with asking yourself some difficult questions. "Just what does make you tick?" What are the things you really enjoy doing and what do you tend to avoid. Don't be ashamed by these – or too boastful – everyone is born with natural strengths and every one of us has our weaknesses. The trick in life is to identify these early on and play to ones strengths. Finding a career that fits with our natural abilities and interests life is a pleasure and almost always successful. When we end up in careers that do not suit our natural abilities and interests, life becomes a real bore. Of course, when asking these questions of yourself you cannot accept answers such as "I like eating chocolate and playing video games – and I don't like getting out of bed in the morning"! No, you have to be much more discerning: What issues do you find interesting? What kind of books do you like to read? What kinds of hobbies or

sports do you like and why? What kinds of news events catch your attention? Who do you really admire – and why?

Education plays a vital role in the decision making. The education system is designed to assist this process. Ideally, student is shown a wide range of subjects ranging from math and sciences through to the humanities and on to the fine arts. From there, the student should go on to specific a university degree which launches them in a career direction. So, one way to look at your current education is that it is a process of your learning to identify what you are naturally good at – and what you are not!

One of the biggest challenges students have in selecting career directions is that they are totally unaware of all the thousands of different careers that currently exist. Even more so, there will be thousands more careers created in the coming years that don't even exist now – so how can someone plan for a career that does not even exist? The answer is to go in the right direction. If you are very weak or do not enjoy mathematics and the sciences, do not go in the direction of biosciences or engineering. If you love fashion and design or literature and films or helping people in general then keep working towards those directions.

I can share one example from my



experience. Many years ago there was one student who struggled to find a career direction. He enjoyed Commerce subjects most of all, but was weak in maths and the sciences and was indifferent about most of the other arts and humanities subject. What did this student really like to do? Well, he always rather enjoyed

the current affairs; he would happily watch the evening news, or read magazines.

The interest of current affairs, travel and economic trade led him to become a commodities trader. This was a career direction he had never heard of when he was back in school but by the time he was in his early

20's, the industry was beginning to really develop and his natural interest and abilities made him a perfect candidate for a commodities trading company. He researched the industry, identified some good employers, applied to them all and was eventually hired by one.

So, perhaps your natural interest and abilities lie in, say, biology. That does not mean you have to be a doctor, but the bio-sciences offer a huge array of career opportunities. If you like maths and computing then the whole telecom and communication industry offers infinite career possibilities. Interested in fashion and design? There is an enormous retail and wholes industry set to explode in Bangladesh. How about writing and literature? The publishing industry (both print and online) is rapidly expanding. Computers? Web design, code writing, creating apps or video games has infinite demand for talented young people. Maths? Everything from Finance to Engineering will offer fulfilling and rewarding careers. The provision of infrastructure and energy in Bangladesh will be enormous in the coming years. Do you enjoy travel? Aviation and shipping is a massive growth industry right now. How about celebrities and entertainment? Millions of jobs are set to be created in the cable TV and online video



William Westgate is the Principal of Regent College, Dhaka. Prior to his career in education, William worked for 20 years in London as Senior Vice President at HSBC.

industry in the coming years. Maybe you just like people. Well there is the biggest opportunity of all. Bangladesh needs man-managers and people who are capable of proper customer service! From hotels and tourism through to the HR department in almost any industry, the world needs "people persons" who can motivate and leads others.

While the professions such as Accounting, Engineering, Medicine and the Law are all noble careers, Bangladesh needs to start developing and encouraging its youth to careers of the future. Design, customer service, retail, tourism, the biosciences, the internet, infrastructure and energy; the list is endless. One thing the future demands though is people who have the skill sets to accomplish challenging tasks and the ability to manage and collaborate with others.

WILLIAM WESTGATE