

# The costs of EGO

*Everyone has an ego. The overwhelming majority of us don't have overinflated egos, but we're all capable of letting our egos run rampant on occasion. When this happens, personal success and organization's performance pay the price. Colin Luther Powell, a retired four-star general in the US Army says "Don't let your ego get too close to your position, so that if your position gets shot down, your ego doesn't go with it". Ego is the invisible line item on every company's profit and loss statement. In a demanding and competitive work environment, tempers can rise and small issues get blown out of proportion. When ego problems crop up, we cannot focus on the task at hand and this could disrupt the entire functioning of an organisation.*

## Why businesses fail

May be there are hundreds of reasons for business failure, but undoubtedly egoism is one of them. After conducting more than two decades of research, with hundreds of organizations, on why business decisions go awry, Dr. Paul Nutt & a group of researcher of Ohio State University discovered three key reasons why 50 percent of decisions fail:

1. More than one-third of all failed business decisions are driven by ego.
2. Nearly two-thirds of executives never explore alternatives once they make up their minds.
3. Eighty-one percent of managers push their decisions through by persuasion or edict, not by the relevance of their ideas.

In context of Bangladesh, not only the organizations, the whole nation is affected with egocentric conflict. Recent volatile political catastrophe can be a true example of egotism.

## Can we control our ego?

We have prepared simple steps to prevent ego-related tussles. The first thing to remember is that the success of any project we undertake involves team work. In many cases, one sees projects getting delayed because of ego hassles among team members. This can be very detrimental to an organisation. The successful completion of a project should be our only focus. Ultimately, it's up to each of us to manage our egos, conversation by conversation, project by project, meeting by meeting.

## Keys to a healthy ego

The health of a company's culture is a reflection of the health of our conversations. Ego is a continuum, at one extreme, there is too much. When we have a big ego, we are overconfident and arrogant. I know an instance where a retired high official left his corporate job as he couldn't agree to sit in the open office space with other colleagues!

On the other hand, when we have too



little of it, we lack confidence and self-esteem. Humility is the fulcrum that prevents a healthy ego from becoming unhealthy. It has the unique ability to open minds by keeping us curious and interested in others. Unless we're ready to listen and learn, curiosity and veracity won't even have a chance to enter the game. Discussions and debates that facilitate progress require us to temporarily suspend what we think is best for

us so we can consider the best interests of the business.

## How to deal with an ego problem?

Resist the temptation to fight back as this will trigger a defense mode. The other person thinks he is always right, so remain calm and let him state his opinions and thoughts until he runs out of steam. Then, you can address other party's claims and make the points

calmly and in a confident manner. Let the other person believe they do indeed know more by asking questions and consulting them. A big ego is likely to get aggravated if they think we know or have something that they don't and this will trigger them to react. This should relax them and not urge them to try to overpower us. In case the person with a big fat ego is the immediate line manager, doing so is a must. Once we have softened the ego, with the previous steps and left it in a receptive position with its guard slightly down, we speak our mind and present our message. We should clearly state our objective or objection. Do so in a private fashion so that the ego does not feel it is being undermined in public. At the same time, try to be honest with yourself if things go wrong in an assignment due to a mistake you have made.

Don't get obsessed with positive feedback and flattering comments since most of these opinions do not matter. Rather focus on relationships and opinions of people with whom we share mutual respect and friendship. This will enhance efficiency and guide our ego in the right direction. Even if you're an extremely experienced professional in our chosen field, we may not be aware of certain developments. Do not let your ego come in the way of asking a junior colleague for help.

When asked some of the most successful businessmen in the world, they openly admit to hiring people who are better than them and that is the secret of their organisation's success. Hard work, single-minded focus and sincerity can make us a successful professional. Ego affirms one's ability to take charge and keeping a check on it is critical to developing strong organisations, which can achieve sustainable results.

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## NEWS

### Background of Advanced Certificate in Managerial Communication (ACMC) conducted by Institute of Business Administration (IBA), University of Dhaka

Management Development Program (MDP) of Institute of Business Administration (IBA), University of Dhaka launched this innovative course to help individual managers polish their communication, as well as interpersonal skills, to excel in their career. Advanced Certificate in Managerial Communication (ACMC) is a six-week certificate course in managerial communication and interpersonal skill development for professionals working in various sectors. The course is intended to enhance the capability of individual managers for improved communication through heightened awareness, adaptive mindset, and new techniques learnt. The course is thus useful for managers irrespective of discipline, tier or industry.

Interpersonal and communication skills are keys to workplace success and can be the difference between an excellent manager and a poor one. For managers to understand co-workers, train them, direct them, and drive them towards fulfilling organizational goals. Managers themselves need to be equipped with the communication skills and professional attitude which make them effective leaders.

In this course, students will learn the techniques and processes involved in writing and speaking, specially communicating effectively in the real life business world. They will learn to apply the direct pattern to business correspondence; handle negative as well as persuasive situations. Also, they will develop report presentation skills by writing reports and then adapting them for oral presentation. The course will equip the students with the required skills to write effective job application letters & resumes. Competent language usage will be emphasized throughout the course, as will individual and group work. Finally, this course will equip the participants with the essential professional communication skills & the right attitude required to excel in the workplace.

The methods of instruction will include a wide variety of student-friendly, easy-to-learn techniques. Through lecture and example, the instructor will explain and demonstrate concepts which the participants will get to test themselves by performing oral and written exercises in class. Collaborative assignments will be handed out so as to boost team performance of participants, and cases and exercises will be provided to ensure the development of their problem-solving ability in a simulated real world perspective. Starting on September 6th 2013, ACMC classes are held only on weekends to enable working professionals attend classes without disrupting their regular work schedules. Participants will be immersed in assignments, exercises, exams in a rigorous pedagogy and the successful participants will be awarded the advanced certificate.

The Course Coordinator of the ACMC program, Mohammad Saif Noman Khan, Assistant Professor at IBA, University of Dhaka, opined that the course has specifically been adapted for professionals working in both the public as well as private sector. With almost ten years of experience in teaching managerial communication in undergraduate, graduate and executive education programs professor Khan believes this course will help participants develop a receptive mindset and accommodative attitudes for enabling effective and unbiased communication in their everyday workplace.

This first of its kind course on managerial communication ACMC certainly strengthens IBA's pioneering role in providing world class business education in Bangladesh both for the students as well as professionals. MDP envisions is to run this course regularly, going forward to continue its commitment of enhancing the skills of managers in Bangladesh.

For any queries regarding the above please contact at saif.noman@iba-du.edu

## Clubbin' after classes

The University life contains many thrilling experiences. But the current agenda does not include disco or clubs after class hours. It's rather the active student organizations of your respective institution. However, in this competitive job market, what makes a candidate different from others is the knowledge and skills they possess outside their degree. Joining clubs is not only an extra-curricular activity, but rather a co-curricular activity than one should maintain apart from their studies.

The essential terms are motivation and dedication. Any activity that a person gets involved with should not deviate from his or her main goal, which is the degree. One should be able to understand that club activities are a great way to assess and enhance personal development. It teaches a student how to juggle multiple tasks and brings in a sense of organization. It also requires inputs like time management and communicational skills to interact with fellow club members and work in small or large groups. What else can be a great way to exercise these attributes when a candidate is preparing oneself for career?

Organizations or firms evaluate an applicant based on their possible contribution not only to the company but the society as a whole. Let it be volunteer work, being a teacher's assistant, student on duty, social events, fund raising projects or university newspaper - these all add up to skills that can enrich a person's resume. Organizations look for creativity and the ability to build relationship through insight. A recommendation or recognition of hard work done through club activity can convey a lot about a person.

The key skills employers look for



are the proficiency to work under pressure. Club activities require us to be attentive and brain storm to organize events or programs. The agenda requires multi-tasking, problem solving, leadership skills, and time allocation. Through these one can practice personal, professional, and career development. It helps a person to understand and take control of their education prospects along with self-improvement zones.

Students should engage with these activities through a variety of opportunities from thematic practical workshops to online seminars and encourage themselves to portray their potential.

Clubs also discuss modules and resources for study to achieve good academic results. A student studying finance can be a part of the environmental club because he or she is passionate and has the capability to utilize their talent. So club activities should not and is not only a stepping stone to improve a curriculum vitae but a commitment to what an individual strongly believes in. The ideal advice one can remember is to accumulate experience through involvement and try to showcase the best possible outcome.

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