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NEXT STEP

Road to journalism

"I am Christian Amanpour from London and THIS... is CNN"

As I sit in complete awe of this particular Chief International Correspondent, at least a hundred questions fly through my head: Will I be able to match up to her one day? Am I making the right decision? Will I even survive? Then I slap myself out of my thoughts and focus: She survived... No, she dominated... If she can make it, why can't I?

If you are an aspiring journalist like me, you will be bombarding yourself with questions and self-doubt every step of the way. Moreover, other people will be questioning you too. And things aren't made any easier with the trying situation of our dear nation. So why bother to continue in this field? I did some digging, talked to some people and found a simple answer: For the love of others and the self-satisfaction that this job can give.

So if you're an aspiring journalist looking for some honest advice to fall back on, this article is for you.

First thing's first

Motivation is important. Very important in fact because it's the only thing separating you from giving when the going gets tough (which is more than often in this field). Work may be dry, or unrewarding. While there is no one road to journalism, different people have different reasons that drive them, motivate them. They may have humble beginnings, difficult ones, rebellious ones. One may never realize this is what they'll devote their life to, but are touched by a particular issue. But once you discover your source of motivation, the trick is to constantly remind yourself what's so important, what drives you.

Forbes Magazine's staff reporter Jenna Goudreau says she loved telling stories, and eventually to write, even before she could read.

"When I started asking more practical questions—how do I earn money with my skills?—journalism seemed obvious. You get to learn every day, meet interesting people, write and speak about new ideas, and occasionally get a sweet swag bag. I can never answer for people when they ask 'How do I know I love this?' But if you choose to pursue this field, you'll need to have talent and passion to ride out the hard times" she adds.

However, like always, not everyone is as sure as Jenna was. But in a country like ours where nearly everyone has a political opinion, journalism is a very approachable profession. Many of the renowned journalists of our time are not even full time journalists. Many write for newspapers in

their free time while maintaining their full time careers. For example, renowned writer Assadullah Khan started writing editorials for The Daily Star while he was still a professor at BUET.

The learning curve

I do emphasize on the fact that there is no set formula in journalism and that as a field, it is open, very broad and allows for creativity. It cannot be contained into just one job description either and if you're truly dedicated, you'll enjoy the flexibility. It can be as hard and taxing as it can be fun and educational. The challenges faced in this field can be a learning process in itself as one will need to constantly update oneself on current affairs and absorb a tremendous amount of information.

When entering this field you will not be immediately recognized for your work, adding to the fact that as you build your position over time, your work will be subjected to creative criticism and judgement. As a freelancer myself, I

"With a degree in English Literature coupled with my love for writing, I believe I have been equipped with the most proper analytical skills and have been able to use it to the fullest in this field. This has helped me a lot over the years. The one thing that I have noticed is that, at times people with even a degree in Journalism have had trouble with analytical ability."

mentions Shamim Ashraf, a former journalist of the Asia News Network (ANN) and currently the Online Editor at The Daily Star.

remember my first published work not even being credited as my own.

If you are working in the print media side of journalism, one of the other issues that you will have to deal with is publication

droughts. This can be as frustrating as it tests a journalist's patience and dedication brilliantly. It is considered essential, to handle such situations when it comes to training oneself, particularly since journalism is a doing field. Learn to talk to people, distinguish trends, arrange your research and convey it in an

What you can do right now

- Freelance for newspapers
- Start a blog (e.g. Tumblr, Wordpress, WorldPulse, etc)
- Write for the publication by your School/College/University.
- Take part in campaigns' and competitions (e.g. St Gallen's Youth Institute Essay Competition, Commonwealth Essay competition, Shankar's Essay Competition, Voices of our Future -World Pulse, etc)
- Do an internship for an organization that interests you. Take up a position that's writing-intensive.

appealing manner.

Also, when you're still a student, it is advised to take as varying courses as possible since this allows you to diversify and gives you an edge over others when it comes to in-depth reporting.

"As an Asian Studies major, the only reason I chose this subject is because of its diversity as it helped me to gain a wide range of knowledge. The diverse selection of courses that I could choose from helped me in drastic measures," says Zyma Islam, an alumni of Asian University for Women, and a journalist-reporter.

the end. Some people make mid-career switches to journalism and are successful, but I believe the earlier you start and succeed, the higher you're likely to rise," commented Jenna.

Also, journalism is all about your connections and relationships. Make sure to secure good relationships with your mentors, professors, colleagues, and peers since they can always introduce you to the right people when it comes to work. The relationships you make with people will ensure that they will eventually advocate for you in the future in any work related issue. You must not



underestimate how handy the people you know may prove to be, as I can tell from my own experiences.

Make use of what and who you have

Look around. There are people you know who can offer an their insights, and opportunities to write and get published around. "In terms of the process of getting a job and moving up the ladder, I always advise starting early. By the time I was a university graduate I had internships with major magazines, wrote for my school paper and freelanced. That meant when I started looking for full-time salaried jobs I had a portfolio of work and work experience at big brand names, which definitely paid off in

You'll be relieved to know

The level of competition in this field is sky-high, particularly since it is seen to be a contracting field. However, the need for good, unbiased and accurate reporting of news it seems is more important than ever.

Shamim believes, "The scope in this field is still very big. If equipped with the proper skills and experience, a journalist will always be in demand. I have known journalists from Bangladesh who are now working in esteemed

"For aspiring journalists the scope in this field is endless! Holistic, ethical journalists are very hard to find. A person remaining up-to-date with the latest technology and academia would be of good value," adds Zyma.

news organizations like The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Associate Press (AP) and so on."

The payoff

If the ferocious competition and a (mostly) contrasting salary in this field put most people off, then the serious emotional stability that one needs to face the low lows in this field will completely obliterate them. One has to be really good at what they do and have the ability to adjust to the industry, which is changing by the minute. However, at the end of the day, the experiences that one gets in this field are without a wholly and utterly satisfying. As any journalist will attest, the rewards are boundless – from the first time you see your work in print, or the first time you cover an event of local or national or international importance, the respect you garner and the fulfillment you feel are second to none.

RAISA ASHRAF

Rebranding the biggest online market in Bangladesh

Interview with Arild Klokkehaug, Director of Ekhanei.com

Why did you go after this particular new name?

When you go to buy and sell in a classified ads site, location is the most important thing. Nearness is a must for any business transaction. When you enter our site you see a map of Bangladesh. From there, you select your location and then go in to the product listings. It basically asks you where you live so that you can find the best deal nearest to you. Hence the name: EKHANEI. Meaning not just 'Here' but also 'Right Here'

How did you come up with the tag line and the new logo?

To be honest, we want to take this brand to all the corners of Bangladesh and offer people the freedom of choice like never before. We provide them access to items and goods that they were previously out of their reach – that too at a reasonable price. Thus the tagline: "Becha kena hordom, Ekhanei.com". We wanted to symbolize that freedom with the logo as well. The Ghuri (kite) is in a way the ultimate symbol of freedom in Bangladesh. Openness, passion and joy – all these qualities are reflected in our logo.

So far what response are you getting from the users of the former site?

So far the response has been great. All our users have accepted the revamp gladly. Our TVC is also doing great on social media, blogs and other online platforms. The word on the street is that not seeing our TVC is a 'CHOROM MISS!' We used a different way of telling our story and it was an instant hit.

Functionality-wise, how different is Ekhanei.com than Cellbazaar?

Feature-wise there is no particular change here. But when we were making the change from Cellbazaar to Ekhanei, we altered the entire platform in January. Almost every week we are making small releases and new



features. However, these changes are not noticed that easily.

Do you intend to add more locations in the platform?

As the site grows, so does our content and user base. In order to cater to more users conveniently we intend to add more locations. So far we have added the locations according to thanas.

When does Ekhanei.com plan to charge for the ads?

I believe that classified ads in its basic form will always be free in all the platforms. It does not make any sense to charge money from regular people to put up ads on the site. But as the content on the site and the customer base grows, advertisers who want more visibility are going to spend on ads; this goes for both commercial and regular users. But we are long term investors, our revenue plans are in the future, not the present.

What are the most visited categories on Ekhanei.com?

Since the majority of internet users in Bangladesh right now are male, our visitors are mainly interested in phones, cars, motorcycles, electronic gadgets, etc. But we are also seeing a rising number of users in the household sections as well.

Many are being confused with the new name because it bears some resemblance with that of another site. What is your comment on that? Bangla is one of the most richest and colorful languages on the world. Here, simply adding a vowel to a word can give such a beautiful meaning. Even to me as a foreigner, the word *ekhanei* sounds really intriguing as well as meaningful, especially in context to the work we are doing here. Where you can buy and sell things? EKHANEI!

SHAHRIAR RAHMAN

Social Business Youth Summit held

"Yunus Centre" and "Social Business Youth Network- SBYN" held Social Business Youth Summit on July 2nd. They also announced the winners of Social Business Champ 2014, a social business plan competition designed for university level students to showcase their entrepreneurial skills and creativity to generate solutions for pressing social problems in a business way - the social business way. It challenges university-level students to use business principles to create sustainable, positive solutions to some of the world's most challenging issues—poverty, education, environment, employment, health and development.

As Professor Muhammad Yunus pointed out in his speech, today's generation of young people are



more aware of social problems than ever before. With the power of technology at their fingertips, our young change makers possess all it takes to make an impact on their societies. So here is your chance to come up with ideas and business plans that will help fight a particular social problem.

In addition to the chance to win award from The Noble Laureate and funding to materialize the Social Business idea, SB Champ 2014 provided teams an unparalleled experiential learning opportunity—meeting and competing against top students, coaching and mentoring from the Social Business experts, exposure to an extensive network of professionals and companies, and the chance to present to judges and investors.