



# Digital Marketing at Its Best

NAZIBA BASHER

In 2008, a group of students, from Dhaka University, formed a group, who were especially talented in digital marketing. With the help and advice of some seniors, they thought to pursuing such a talent and making something of themselves. Thus, Maverick Studios was formed.

Founders Ami Sayeed, Ahmad Niaz Murshed, Afeef Zubaer Zaman, Azhar Chowdhury, Raquib Chowdhury, Sadman Alvi, Shaheen Siam and Sidrat Talukder went on to forming one of the leading start-ups in Dhaka in recent times.

Since 2010, Maverick Studios has been up and running successfully. They have created a wide range of corporate videos, promotional videos, commercials, animations, charity videos, train-

ing videos and more for some of the leading clients around the globe, like Unilever, HSBC, Nestle, Citi Bank, Grameenphone, and more. Maverick then split into three different parts- Maverick Studios itself looks after audiovisuals, while Ice9 Interactive researches and develops cutting edge marketing solutions that involve mobile apps, augmented reality, gesture tracking etc. Stratageek helps clients navigate Social and Digital media marketing, by managing online strategy, content creation, advertising and customer service. Together, the three companies are able to offer best-in-class solutions across multiple digital marketing disciplines-- all under one roof.

One of the most attention-grabbing videos from Maverick was of the national cricket team, during the 2011

ICC World Cup. "When we had released the video, we got a phenomenal response from the general public. What surprised us most was when Ian Pont, the then bowling coach of the national team, noticed the video and not only appreciated our work, but showed the video to the entire team for inspiration," says Sidrat. He adds, "In the press conference after a certain victory, the captain had even mentioned how the video had motivated them to play as well as they did."

Despite the fact that they don't market themselves too often, Maverick Studios has still gone on to make a name for themselves through their brilliant works. They have been selected as one of the 6

top start-ups in Dhaka this year, as an upcoming Digital Marketing Firm. They have also won the Silver Award for Online Advertising at the Bangladesh Brand Forum, Commward, 2012, and the Silver Awards for Social Media Campaign and

Integrated Digital Campaign at the Bangladesh Brand Forum, Commward 2013, along with other recognitions.

"The vision we agreed on was to create a culture of positive thinking

among the youth of our country. I think that the areas we have ventured into have left us better equipped to fulfill that vision. I hope we can gear up and utilize the resources that we have been fortunate enough to harness to create meaningful, positive impact on our community," says Azhar Choudhary.



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## PIONEERING BAND MUSIC



PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

ANIKI HOSSAIN

Fuad Naser Babu is a legendary name in the Bangladeshi music industry. Widely known as the music composer and keyboardist of the renowned band Feedback, Naser is also a pioneer in the organised band music movement of Bangladesh.

"I started my music back in 1972-73," says Naser. "I would listen to all kinds of music, from The Beatles, Denver, Rolling Stones, Elton John to classical music, growing up," he tells us. In 1975, Naser and his friends formed a band called Ostheer. "There was a restaurant in Dhanmondi called 'Dimple' where we were asked to play on Saturdays. There were few places in Dhaka back then that had live music, so this was a good opportunity for us." In 1976, Feedback 20th Century, came into being. Feedback released several popular albums such as Ullash, Mela, Choddosho, Baulina, Feedback, and Bangabdo.

"In 2000, I created a studio, 'Art of Noise' and many big bands recorded here," says Naser, who still runs this studio. "Among these bands were Bangla, Renaissance, Cryptic Fate and many others so it was quite a busy studio. Now, the studio situation in Bangladesh has changed. All the musicians have their own work stations; some even record their music in their own bedrooms, so there is no demand for big studios now," Naser tells us.

Through his 36 year long music career, Naser has seen many changes in the music industry. "The good things are that technology has changed, music style has changed, many new and fresh ideas have emerged. In past we used to record on a single track, it was called a monotrack, and all the musicians in a band had to play together, so it was quite difficult," he explains. "The bands had to practice very hard to make a perfect recording. Nowadays we

do vocals one day, guitar the next and so on. In a way it is easier but it also takes away from the team experience because the interaction is lacking and playing together is very important, I believe, in music."

Naser believes that piracy has affected music drastically. "Our revenues and pay have gone down. Radio stations no longer respect the artists because sometimes they play our songs and fail to mention our names. There is copyright infringement everywhere," he says. "Back in the day when HMV recorded in Kolkata, they had a system of paying royalties to the artists, based on the sales of their records. I don't know what went wrong with this system, but that no longer exists and artists are getting deprived of their rights to revenues," he continues. "The fact of the matter is, a musician needs to make a living. This is happening all over the world. The sales of CDs have gone down because music is available for free all over the web. Developed nations have found a way to earn from that, but we have not."

Fortunately, the situation is slowly improving. "Bangladesh has recently formed a CMO (Collective Management Organisation), which is a system that ensures royalties to authors, musicians, artists etc," Naser explains. "It was started by WIPO, the World Intellectual Property Organisation, which is also a part of the UN. They have set up CMOs in 38 countries all over the world, and this keeps a record of all the trading so that the artists receive their dues," he says. "Bangladeshi government has recently approved of the CMO here, and they issue licences for traders, labels, radio stations, television channels, even restaurants and hotels that play our music. So things are slowly improving but I think by the end of 2016, we will have a proper CMO to protect our rights."

## From the Pages of Life

ELITA KARIM

The world of literature has always been filled with unique storytellers, those with the extraordinary ability to imagine and take chances. Professor Deena Forkan believes that she has, unknowingly, been a part of such a world from a very young age. "I have been a story teller since I was a child," she says. "I remember making my cousins and the slum kids I used to run around with, listen to me mesmerized, awestruck at the stories I made up to tell them. Some true, some fabricated. They were fascinated at the way I used to tell the stories."

Popularly known as DF by her students, Forkan is an established writer and has published a book of short stories 'The Fire in the Hills' in 2013. "The book can be found at Bookworm," she informs. The stories have been an inspiration and a source of strength for many, especially young women trying to figure out a balance between the do's and don'ts in contemporary Bangladeshi society.

Deena Forkan won the second prize in the all state story writing composition while studying at the Toledo University, in Ohio, USA, where she did a second Master's and eventually a PhD. "My story was about the tidal storm that occurred in Sandeep and other coastal areas of Chittagong in 1988 where a school teacher let go of his daughter to save his son," she says. "All the stories in 'The Fire in the Hills' are true stories, which had touched my life and left me disturbed."

As a child, Forkan was a tomboy, playing with the slum boys rather than girls of her community. "I would regularly collect leaves with all the 'tokais' of my area," she remembers. "My father was a high government officer then who saw his daughter happily collecting rubbish with a bunch of slum kids and freaked out! He gravely told me to sit in his office which I did, afraid of what he might do, though I did not know what crime I had committed. He got some rasgollas and told me to eat some. I learned later that my mother had to listen to his tirade for not being a more careful mother."

Born in Jamalpur, in a family who valued education much, Dr Deena Forkan is Associate Professor, English Department at the North South University. In fact, she has been teaching English literature for over two decades now, and many of her students are pursuing careers in different parts of the world. She attended the Holy Cross High School and College and then Dhaka University,

followed by Toledo University. "My PhD was in Comparative Literature and my subjects were Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hussain and Charlotte Perkins Gilman and their feminist philosophy which they depicted in their utopian novels-- 'Sultana's Dream' and 'Herland'," she says. "Both writers claimed that economic independence of women was the only way to liberation and emancipation of any kind."

"The inspiration to do my PhD was first my late Uncle who inspired in me the love for literature and reading. Also my husband, who believed in me," she says. Because of her full time teaching job,



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writing and taking care of a family, Deena had to take a break from her PhD. "A comment made by one of my colleagues at NSU, who said that it was too late and I would not be able to finish my PhD studies any more, made me think," she says. "I took that as a challenge. I was not one to let a challenge go by, be it to play 'dunguli' with the toughest boy in the slum or a revered senior colleague. That is who I am."

Forkan's next publication will be a collection of all the articles she has written on social problems, looking at them from a feminist point of view. "I am at present working on a novel, also touching on my life experience," she says. "I hardly find time with the hectic schedule at NSU, but if I don't write I might go crazy! So I write between classes, when ever I am upset, whenever I am sad, whenever I am disturbed by anything. Therefore my writings are not sporadic but in ragged random pieces. Ideas come out of me when I have the least time."