Think like a Futurist

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Amidst the big events, it is not often that people come to realise the significance of smaller, more intimate, and informal events that bring people together and allow for better connection. With just seven attendees, Toru, an Innovation Hub, organised an ambitious workshop to promote future studies on February 6 and 7, at the Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University.

Shakil Ahmed, education researcher, conducted the "Think like a Futurist" programme as the ideal futurist would by ensuring everyone got his/her say. As opposed to a rigidly structured workshop, he used the theme "Exploring the Future of Bangladeshi Cities" to build on his ideas in a way that the attendees could relate to the subject matter and discuss it in their own terms.

By focusing on three key aspects – today's reality, tomorrow's uncertainties, and future possibilities – Ahmed explored what it is to be a "futurist". He went as far as to claim that transformative future thinking is a way of regaining influence and capacity by exploring alternative futures and envisioning the desired. Shadab Mahmud, freelance health development consultant and a

participant at the event

added, "Dhaka's present is not what people of Dhaka's past would have thought it would be."

Asking vital questions, such as "Are citizens and policymakers futureoriented?" the discussion moved to how many people are uncomfortable with uncertainty.

Whenever there is an agent of change that strives to affect the future, there is always a certain percentage of active resistance. These active resistors feel inclined to pursue a "default future" where they surrender themselves to an imminent unchangeable state or a "used future" in which case they simply follow the path others had laid out before them. In striking contrast, Ahmed stated that these are what we must strive to avoid. Instead of



riding a metaphorical merry-go-round, it would be

just

more progressive to explore the fair.

He further discussed the holistic frame of the future where everyone has a crucial part to play. In order to live up to this role, he suggested potential tools that might enhance the outcomes. Of these, he talked about an innovate technique called "back-casting", initially resorting to futuristic visions and then tracing them back to reality. He went on to explain the importance of linking this story, the narrative of the futuristic

thoughts, to the strategy of attaining it to maximise the likelihood of success. Not ending there, he urged the participants to first address the worst-case scenario because it is better to prepare for bad times than to wait for them to happen. Other

than uplifting and spir-

ited conversation, the workshop also included interesting exercises that provoked everyone to become active participants. By contemplating the history and development of Tejgaon, the attendees formed groups that came up with their own perception of a "Triangle Future of Tejgaon" - a future they presume based on three features: the pull of the future, the push of the present and the weight of the past. This activity highlighted the futuristic capabilities of the people present there.

Saif Kamal, Founder of Toru, believed his events "catered for local knowledge and aimed to create an ecosystem for innovation."

A Guide to Social Media Integration and Mobile-based Marketing

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RUHULLAH RAIHAN ALHUSAIN

Do you have a Pinterest account? A Facebook account? Twitter? Do you ever get tired of keeping yourself updated with all these social media sites? Well you may just use 'social media optimisation' (SMO) tactics that I always use to keep myself updated with my followers/ connections all at once.

In this instalment of the series I'll discuss 'social media integration' and 'mobile-based marketing tactics' - two very useful digital marketing tactics.

Social Media Integration

Now that you have accounts with all tan the possible social media sites, you're probably wondering what to do with them. In the recent fav friends message advertise years, we have seen that integrating social media behaviour and data into the rest of the marketing mix, has become more prevalent. In fact, this method has become a key to reach more customers with relevant messages in real time.

Take this write-up, for example: I can share it on Facebook, Twitter and

LinkedIn all at once. The more I share, the more this write-up will be visible on social media. It will have almost a 'word of mouth' effect. That's SMO. Post your content trends follow # post on one platform, share the subscribers content on all possible platforms through roup socialize follow that platform.

notifications chat photos share follow search ravol media subscribers follow search mood follow Same goes for your theme nice digital business. You have

photos work socialize e-commerce page authorization news communicate find

business and want to promote it through digital media? Open a page for it on social media. Share your page, info on every possible social website there is. The more you share the more visibility you'll gain and the best part is....it's free.

Mobile-based Marketing

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Recent buying behaviour shows that more people opted for a smartphone

PC. Clearly, mobile gadgets are comment find chat birthday group where marketers need to be. According to S @ service search create flow fav an IBM study released in June 2014, almost 9 out of 10 global marketers either have a mobile site/ mobile application or plan to employ one in the future. However,

only 1 in 5 currently

runs mobile marketing

or a tab than a

tactics as part of integrated campaigns, with the remainder running

DIGITAL MARKETING

their mobile programmes discretely and on an ad hoc basis.

Take Bangladesh, for example. Did you know that Dhaka Metropolitan Police has its app available now? Did you know that some service industries, hospitals, banks are marketing their products/services through their apps? Did you know that the telecom companies, including Airtel Bangladesh, launched their own apps through which they are not only providing customer service but are also offering great deals to their customers?

There has been continued investment in mobile optimised websites, apps and email, and we have seen mobile devices assuming a more important role in marketing campaigns. Mobile gadgets became a more strategic and must-have channel for many businesses.

Stay tuned for the final instalment of the series, on 'customer service through digital media and visuals' two most useful digital marketing tactics.

The writer is a professional with over 11 years of experience in mobile banking and digital marketing and is currently the Head of mCommerce Operations at Airtel Bangladesh Ltd.