

SHOUT met up with the 1st runner-up of the Unilever Future Leaders' League 2015 – Team Bangladesh – consisting of Nusrat Khondaker, Akib Mashrur and Aftarul Islam, at the Unilever Bangladesh head office on April 9, 2015. We were joined by the mentoring team of Numair Chowdhuri, Senior Brand Manager, Oral Care and Ipshita Fahmin, Leadership Development Manager.

SHOUT: Let's start small. If each of you had to describe the whole experience, from BizMaestros to Future Leaders' League (FLL), in one word, what would it be?

AKIB: It was an eye-opener.

NUSRAT: (after some thinking) Amazing, I would say.

AFTARUL: It was fun.

SHOUT: Going now for a small recap, what was the idea of your team in BizMaestros?

AKIB: The challenge given to us was to develop the marketing plan for face-wash and our idea was to develop the face-wash brand of Unilever, and not only the brand but the whole category, even reaching out to the rural areas of Bangladesh. We came up with the

Firstly, Unilever has always wanted to create new leaders, whether they work for the company or not. And secondly, the projects that are given are all real life cases. We come up with ideas, but giving it to young teams will benefit everyone more because they will pitch ideas that we may never have thought of. Putting these young minds to work has a huge impact because they come up with "out-of-the-box" thoughts and ideas.

SHOUT: Let's lighten up the mood a little. Tell us about your time in London.

AFTARUL: We received a VIP treatment.

NUSRAT: It was great. Everyone was so friendly; we were welcomed, we were showered with free goodies and had access to unlimited ice cream. We truly

had to do a presentation here at Unilever Bangladesh. We got feedback and then required just a few edits here and there, but no major changes to our plans for the finals.

SHOUT: Would you say the team was well prepared for the competition?

NUMAIR: I'll say they worked super hard. They studied deep into the matters of how the brand worked and all I had to do was tell them how Unilever worked to a certain extent. I told them to put the people first, as it is all around the world when it comes to consumer goods. They did a lovely job of going out there and getting to know how teenagers and their ever-changing mindsets work.

NUSRAT: There's always that tension when a person proposes, but we thought how can one say "no" to ice cream? So we decided to make it positive and celebrate the awkwardness, rather than remove it. And we decided to use social media and viral videos for this campaign.

SHOUT: Why do you think a student should participate in such a competition?

NUSRAT: In short, as our mentors say, these are real life cases that we deal with. This opportunity gives us an in-depth insight into the business world, providing proper knowledge and exposure, especially for business graduates.

IPSHITA: One can relate to experiences from such competitions and use them to create positive social impacts. They can groom and motivate people. We provided them that experience, and they have made the best use of it. The winners of BizMaestros receive this unique opportunity to compete on the global platform which is designed to give such talented graduates the chance to experience life at Unilever, to meet the leadership, and to feel what it is like to work with us, and in return it also gives us the chance to learn from them. It is more than just a competition – it is a once-in-a-lifetime leadership and business experience.



AKIB MASHRUR

tagline "mukher shaban".

NUSRAT: The concept of "mukher shaban", which was convenient to comprehend, actually won it for us. The ideology of separating body soap and face-wash was unique in this approach.

SHOUT: The next question is for the mentors. You organise such competitions, both at national and international levels. So, what's in it for Unilever?

NUMAIR: There are two sides to this.



NUSRAT KHONDAKER

were treated like VIPs, like you see in a movie.

SHOUT: How did you prepare for the case?

AFTARUL: We received the case to be presented about a month before heading to London. We had our slides ready and submitted, our speeches prepared – all that was needed was a few touch ups and we did that during the two days before the main event.

AKIB: Before leaving for London, we



AFTARUL ISLAM

SHOUT: Now for the most important question – what was the million dollar idea?

AFTARUL: The task was to establish Cornetto as an "ice breaker" among teenagers. We called our campaign the "Summer of Awesome Awkwardness", which asked people to cherish the first awkwardness that teens experience when they meet. We even did a skit where both of us guys had to propose to the girl, one with a chocolate bar and another with a Cornetto.

SHOUT: Lastly, apart from the winning moment, what was the most amazing memory from the whole trip?

AKIB: We took part in a game called "Cupidity" where we were given bows and arrows to target people, all in the name of fun. It was super cool and I guess Aftarul made the most of it. Apart from this there are so many memories but I suppose what happens in London stays in London. Haha!

PHOTOS: **DARSHAN CHAKMA**

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