

How to make the most of your internship

Think of yourself as a smug graduate with a fresh degree in hand, ready to tackle the problems of the world, rush up the corporate ladder at breakneck speed and enjoy the good life that is part and parcel of being the bossman. But problem is every future boss, be it a Fortune 500 CEO or a master craftsman, has to start at the bottom as the apprentice – the novice Karate Kid on his way to become the future Mister Miyagi if you will. You learn the tricks of the trade and the ways of the real world that you never knew because you were too busy singing We Don't Need No Education in class. The day arrives for your entry into the real world and with neatly parted hair and a new shiny suit you enter your internship.



“Man who catch fly with chopstick accomplish anything.” If initially you are not given major roles, do not slack off

As Tasnima Haque Orin, an IBA graduate and Management Trainee, HR from BAT sums up neatly, “For a fresh graduate about to finish his studies, internships can mean prospect at jobs, working with experienced professionals or just a look at how the industry they're interested in works.” To make the most out of this opportunity, whether you want to stay back as a regular employee or buff up your CV for bigger prospects, here's a few things to keep in mind.

Do your homework

You do not want to be the new guy in the office who walks in completely clueless, no idea about what it is you are supposed to be doing there. Before your internship, talk to the company – ask questions about the company, what is expected of you, how much you can contribute. This not only gives you a mental preparation of the days ahead, you also come across as someone genuinely interested.

Before your internship begins, spend time knowing more details about the company – on busy days, before your co-workers even know you, it is unlikely they will take the time to explain everything in great detail. Better to be prepared.

To Sajid Ali Khan, an engineering major who interned at a generator assembling company, the proper homework is very important.

“You will be assigned to a particular department in the organisation. When you go home, try to gain some knowledge from books or the internet on your specific internship area, so that you can make the most out of this.”

Yes, you are expected to work

Paid or not, the internship for the most part is an opportunity for you. If you treat it like a play-job, show up whenever and browse Facebook all day, don't expect the company to go out of their way to give you a good recommendation.

You are there to find out how the environment works, to be a helping hand and get to know organisation culture.

“There have been many bright people



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who've come to BAT, liked what they did, got an insight into how the industry works and joined us,” says Orin. If initially you are not given major roles, do not slack off. Show up in time, act professional like a proper employee and show interest in your work. You will learn the most from the experience when you are in a role that resembles what you would hopefully be doing full-time in the future.

Find a mentor

Shadid Rahman, an IBA student and currently an intern for a major telecom company, speaking of his experience says that at first the interns would just go and sit around, waiting for work. When he was assigned to the marketing desk, he managed to develop a good relation with his supervisor.

This is important. When you have your own personal Mister Miyagi, chances are they will take an interest in your work, guide you

and put you in rewarding roles. The effects of this last even after the internship ends – your mentors will be able to guide you throughout your career whether you are in the same organisation or move on.

Take initiative

It does not really matter how big or well-known the organisation you are interning for is – employers will look at what you did and learned in the internship. When looking for new candidates, employers will see if you “were you involved in a new project or just spent the afternoons lazing around,” according to Orin.

Be respectful of the work that you are given and to your supervisors. But at the same time, take initiative and if you have any opinion then share it. Shaer, an economics student from DU while interning for a major think tank, saw the lack of proper PR activities and

suggested they take out a monthly publication that could be shared with clients. His boss loved the idea and soon he was the intern who was given a paid job of bringing out the whole newsletter. His initiative not only led to a paid job, but he was able to make a position for himself in the organisation that was largely unfulfilled.

Don't be the guy who sulks in the corner

You are not there only to learn about the work involved – getting familiar with the work environment is just as important. Interact with the employees, develop connections as you would in any place you work. This will help you to form a better network and chances are your co-workers will be able to teach you a lot more about the industry from their experience.

“Starting from the production manager to diploma engineers, everyone helped and guided me in my work. Each and every day I learned something new from the employees of the company,” says Sajid.

No knowledge is wasted

The concept of an internship is sadly lost on some organisations in Bangladesh. You might be given unnecessary work to keep you busy or random clerical work that makes you question the importance of your degree. Don't. No knowledge is wasted – even if you're not drafting the next quarter's plans, you will still be in the environment. This in itself is a learning experience. Be a good observer and learn all there is to it.

Fahmida, another engineering graduate interning at a telecom company says, “Learn and take in every single thing that you are taught. No knowledge is a waste.” Or as Mister Miyagi would say to the bashful novice that is you: wax on, wax off.

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Learning to be positive about failure

Founder of Future Startup Ruhul Kader discusses his entrepreneurial journey

Tell us about your entrepreneurial pursuits.

While still in university, I started a dry fish business with a few of my friends. I come from Cox's Bazar where there are fishermen who produce dry fish but don't have much access to the market here in Dhaka. So we were trying to solve that problem.

After graduating, I worked for Bangladesh Brand Forum and later New Vision Group. In between everything, I was working on Future Startup. But back then it was only a blog without a business plan that aimed at giving people better information on business and entrepreneurship.

So how successful has Future Startup been?

Future Startup is more of an online media startup and as we didn't have a business plan on it at the start, we are redesigning it with a defined business plan this year. So I would say we still have a long way to go in terms of success. Last year we started to raise funds to take Future Startup to the next level and since the beginning of this year we've been working on it to make it a successful business.

What is your business model to generate revenue?

Firstly, we produce paid content, also called content marketing. We are trying to understand the young people of Bangladesh and their taste for content and give that to them.

In addition, we're looking to generate content for brands and startups. For instance, we are currently working with Ispahani Mirzapore Tea. They support our interview series and are credited on our website.

Other than that we hold events where we connect entrepreneurs, investors and different companies. We are not generating revenue from them at the moment, but we have plans to do so.

You wrote a book named Rethinking Failure, which came out last February. Tell us about it.

It's an anthology of interviews of entrepreneurs of our country. There are 12 interviews and the last part is about failure and understanding. The reason I thought we need a book on failure is because there are lots of book on failure, but there aren't many from the perspective of our country.

We have the perception that once you've failed, you're done for. Failure isn't an essential, but if you're going to start a business, or a company or a non-profit, you're going to fail at different points. So we need to have the mindset to take it as something positive. At the same time, we need to give people role models from our country to look up to and take lessons from. I

wanted to contribute to changing the mindset of this society.

Who are the content writers and contributors in your website and how do you recruit them?

At Future Startup, we always try to put up quality content. So hiring the right people is one of the pains you have to take, especially when you are a startup like us and can't pay employees as much. Right now we have a team of five people who write for us, made up of interns and full-timers. Our internship is open all year. We take in write-ups from a entrepreneurs and contributors as well.

Entrepreneurs have a very busy life. During the growth phase of their startups, they need to put in a lot of time and thought, which makes their relationships suffer. How do you manage these ups and downs?

Well a lot of people think that entrepreneurship is a “cool thing to do”. In reality, it's a tough job. You don't only pay yourself, but others as well. I work almost all the time. So the truth is there is no balance. You need to make it work any way you can. Somehow you need to manage time for your family and time for them and work on your business at the same time.

INTERVIEWED BY: HASIBUL ISLAM



PRESS RELEASE

Toys-R-Urs event by Ex-Cadet Forum at DMCH

The Ex-Cadet Forum (ECF) – a global platform for ex-cadets of Bangladesh – distributed used and underutilised toys to the sick children admitted at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) under the Toys-R-Urs (TRY) project on July 14. The toys were provided to develop a child-friendly toy corner at the hospital. The Director of DMCH Brigadier General Mizanur Rahman, ECF's Social Responsibility Team Captain Fida Haq, doctors of the children's wards and ECF representatives were present during the occasion.

Under the TRY project, ECF's Social Responsibility Team collects toys through campaigns at corporate



offices, educational institutes and individuals and then distributes the toys to underprivileged children through different schools and facilities that work with these children.

The TRY project is also providing educational toys to schools so that teachers can use them to make learning more interesting and effective among children at the pre-primary and

primary levels.

To find out more or donate used toys, please visit TRY's Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Toys-R-Urs/924151804303513/>

Making a DIFFERENCE

Bangladesh is rapidly moving towards middle income status by 2021. Our businesses definitely offer immense opportunities for the growing economy and this diversity needs a stage for the stories untold. See Bangladesh make its mark on the global map as Making a Difference brings you our proudest success stories from across the country.

What to consider before picking your internship



Admit it, the first thing that pops into your head when you think about doing that fancy new internship at that hot shot telco firm is that it will look really sweet on your resume. And the truth of the matter is sometimes that is all there is to it – a summer of pouring out coffee and making small-talk with your fellow interns and the occasional friendly department head. But internships are actually an excellent way to test out your interests, experience different industries and gain critical skills. So instead of taking up the first offer you get from the next smart-sounding company, straighten out your priorities

Think one step ahead

You already know that an internship is after all a means to an end, the end being the dream job you want to land. As a junior, you should aim for a company where you could see yourself working. Find out whether they can off you a full-time position, whether that's in the interview room or from research or talking to employees. Many companies recruit from their intern pool. As a sophomore, you

should select a company that you are passionate about or interested in. Loving your internship will probably be harder if you hate the place you work at.

Am I going to be learning?

While your chances of getting the internship are pinned on your strengths and the unique set of skills that you can offer, you should be looking for a company where you are going to be challenged. Select an internship where you will not only be given responsibility, but where you can gain new knowledge and skills. Does the internship contain an area that you have never worked in? You should probably give it a shot. At the end of the day, you should be looking to broaden your abilities and enhance your competitive edge. Happy interning!

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