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# NEXT STEP

## I CAME. I SAW. I CONQUERED

Interuniversity business competitions are extremely popular nowadays. Universities and corporations provide a wide array of such competitions, from Battle of Minds to Ad Maker Bangladesh. And an increasing number of undergrads aspire to participate and ace in these business competitions. Here are a few pointers for the aspirants. Welcome to Interuniversity Business Competition 101.



### WHY PARTICIPATE?

For many, it's the thrill of the competition. While for many others, it is the opportunity to do something for their institution – to win one for the university and bring the pride home.

Of course, there are other reasons. "A business competition allows students to apply what we teach in the classroom. It is the perfect training ground where students work either in simulated reality or, sometimes, in the real business world itself," Zulfiquer, a businessman himself, discusses the learning opportunities. "In this sense, it gives you experience and makes you better prepared for what's out there in the world of business and commerce."

Another common reason cited is that it makes your CV more attractive. Being a champion in a competition is not only prestigious, but also a reflection of your capability. And it's not just the technical capability we are talking about: acing competitions require perseverance, strong sportsmanship and being a good team player.

### UNDERSTAND (AND ACCEPT) THE DRAWBACKS

A semester, by itself, is a race for survival. With numerous project assignments, quizzes, exams and so on, you have a lot on your plate. When you add the pressure of a business competition, the stress can become overwhelming.

If you are not good at juggling and still decide to enrol in one of



these competitions, your courses (and your CGPA in the long run) may take the blow. The competitions are very demanding. In one moment, you might be looking forward to a relaxing weekend, and in the next, you will be on your toes planning to spend a couple of nights with your

teammates to turn in a task.

These competitions sometimes throw down seemingly impossible deadlines, and sooner or later, they will cross roads with your quizzes and exams. "Excelling in competitions is no excuse to flunk exams," Zulfiquer declares. "Extracurricular activities are

important; so is your academic performance."

Remember, those who win business competitions are also not free of academic load; they know how to deal with it. Be warned: the combined pressure of studies and competition will take a toll on your mind and make a circus out of your

schedule. Before you sign up, make sure you are confident that you can survive the ride without making a disaster of your grades.

### STILL INTERESTED? DRAW YOUR TEAM

"The most defining step is often the first one: choosing your teammates. Don't blindly go for your friends," Zulfiquer suggests. "Think about joining with those who have the ambition to succeed. Find out the nature of tasks the competition entails and seek out people who are good at it. If team members can complement each other in terms of their strengths and weaknesses, then there will be synergy, which is the whole point of team work."

"These competitions demand strong knowledge on constructing plans, designing campaigns, analysing the business environment and so on. They also require strong presentation skills. These are things taught in the courses. So pay attention in class," Zulfiquer concludes.

A strong team may take several semesters in the making. Strike when you think you're ready. And the first attempt may not work out great. But don't quit.

Eye of the tiger!

ZANE

Special thanks to Zulfiquer Ali Haider, Core Faculty Member, School of Business and Economics, North South University for sharing valuable insights for the write-up.

## TECH-POWERED SOCIETY

The IT Business Idea Challenge was hosted as part of the IUT 7th National ICT Fest on September 4, 2015. As the name suggests, participants were required to come up with business ideas that address problems that society faces by using IT. However, the ideas had to be unique, productive, efficient and economically viable. Proposals were accompanied with detailed information about the target market, revenue, cost structures and scope of implementation.

The Idea Challenge was different from most as it was open to students of both science and business backgrounds, which is rarely the case. In other instances, the complexity of the competition restricts this from happening. The participation of international students also added an extra dimension to the competition. There were a host of nationalities as competitors from Nigeria, Yemen and Afghanistan also participated.

BUET, BRAC University, BUP and KUET were among the entrants, but Dhaka University and IUT came out on top. So let's look at the ideas of the winning teams and what set them apart.



### RUNNERS UP - TEAM CEREAL KILLERS

Team Cereal Killers consisted of members Nafisul Abrar, Mohammed Shariar Sharif and Sameem Shahriyar from IBA, DU.

#### The idea

There was a sharp decline in the number of foreign tourists in Bangladesh from 2008 to 2014. However traveller.com lists Bangladesh in the top 10 hottest tourist destinations. The team attributed the decline of tourists to a lack of information about tourism in Bangladesh and also the unfriendly attitude toward tourists. They also recognised that the tourism sector has the potential to contribute USD 2.5 billion to the economy. The simple solution was to take advantage of this opportunity by bridging the information gap.

Enter Dosh app. An integrated tourism app that helps book hotel rooms, know about places to visit and rent cars. The more unique features included a 360 degree panorama view of the hotels and sites, virtual tours and the giga selfie (an ongoing project of Tourism Australia). However, the major service would be to provide tour guides. Kayak and Expedia were recognised as major potential competitors, but neither had a significant presence in Bangladesh, nor did they provide all the features of Dosh. Not only did the team provide evidence of the proposal's commercial feasibility, but they also stressed the fact that it had social implications as well.

Overall it was a great learning opportunity for the competitors because of the valuable feedback from the judges. The crossover of ideas from business and IT was also something to relish. The judges were of similar opinion. Mohiuddin Khan, a judge and professor at IUT said, "The eclectic mix of business and engineering was stimulating. That is where this particular event is of great importance." In the end, both ideas showed how technology can be used for the betterment of people while doing some good business.

SHARIAR SHARIF

## Making a DIFFERENCE

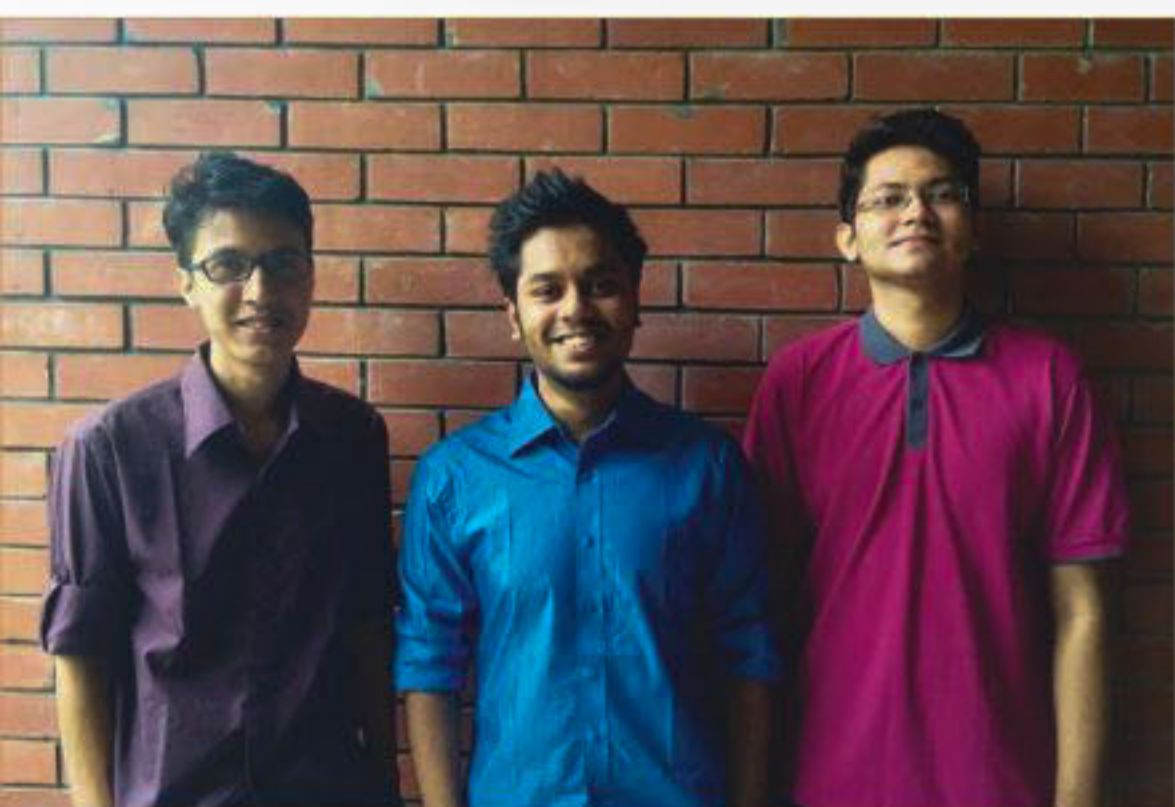
Bangladesh is rapidly moving towards middle income status by 2021. Our businesses definitely offer immense opportunities for the growing economy and this diversity needs a stage for the stories untold. See Bangladesh make its mark on the global map as Making a Difference brings you our proudest success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

### It's desktop cleanup time!

Research says office workers spend 5 years of their lives sitting at a desk! So you might as well make the most of it, right? Except the clutter and paper piles we somehow manage to accumulate in our workspaces prevent us from doing so. Maximise your desktop productivity with these simple steps.



INFOGRAPHIC BY: EHSANUR RAZA RONNY



### WINNERS - TEAM S.O.S.

Samin Yeasar Amob, Riyasat Ohib and Shafayat Naznoor Ahmed from IUT won first place at this year's IT Business Idea Challenge for their app MedHub.

#### The idea

There is no fast response for health emergency due to a lack of prior information about the patient. Often prior knowledge of the patient's as immunisation history, drug reactions and allergies can be the decider between a successful diagnosis and a fatal mistake. Patients also find it hard to access the modern treatment which is already available in our country due to a lack of information. There is no current platform in Bangladesh which connects doctors, patients and other professionals under one umbrella.

The solution is to create a central database that will collect medical information for all clients using both the MedHub app and the hospital's central information system. The features of the app will be to locate nearest hospitals and doctors, an appointment service and an emergency ambulance service. The website will include a medical forum where patients and doctors can connect for free, authenticated doctor profiles and newest treatment information. MedHub looks to save time when it is most crucial.