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NEXT STEP

MYTHS ABOUT THE STATE-OWNED BANK DEBUNKED

If you were asked to close your eyes and picture a government institution, shabby buildings, long lines, and slow service are probably the things that come to mind. And although that's not entirely true, most of us try to steer clear of public organisations. Today's story is about a state-owned institution. We caught up with Md. Abdus Salam Azad, General Manager, Human Resources of Janata Bank in the hopes of debunking some of the deep-rooted stereotypes we hold.

TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT JANATA BANK. WHAT IS THE CULTURE LIKE?

Janata Bank is a state-owned commercial bank. It was founded in 1972 and has 906 branches in Bangladesh and 4 abroad. It also has 3 exchange houses.

As for culture, we are strictly customer-oriented because we are here to provide a quality service. We also encourage employees to be innovative and let them contribute by giving them some discretion in their jobs. Overall it's a culture promoting hard work and success.

HOW DO YOU MANAGE DIVERSITY?

We apply a quota system in the recruitment process. Some of the categories are female quotas, minority quotas, and freedom fighter quotas. By doing this we ensure that all kinds of people can work in Janata and contribute to its success.

HOW DO YOU RETAIN AND MOTIVATE STAFF?

There are quite a few activities to motivate staff. The initial orientation program is aimed to assimilate employees into the culture. Once that is done, we keep them busy with training programmes and skill development courses to enhance their skills. We also post them in remote places so that they learn to work in different conditions.

Mr Abdus Salam's day starts with the thought of getting to work on time and sorting what he'll do once he gets there. His job is very demanding and he looks to escape the stress with a cup of tea or chatting over lunch with friends and colleagues. His biggest concern is developing quality officers who can be the leaders of tomorrow.



WHAT DO YOU EXPECT FROM NEW RECRUITS?

In today's business environment you must definitely be innovative. But you must also have the competencies to back it up. When you actually work for a company it's often about the will and preparedness

to tackle day to day challenges. So innovative, talented, and resilient are the qualities I look for.

SOME PEOPLE THINK THAT STATE-OWNED BANKS AREN'T AS GOOD AS PRIVATE ONES WHEN IT COMES TO PROVIDING SERVICE. WHAT DO

YOU THINK?

I disagree. I have accounts in private banks but the service is not always top quality. On the other hand a few branches of public banks might be underperforming but you can't label all branches because of that. You see our branch managers play a key role in the operations of each individual branch, they have some discretion on how tasks are being carried out and some managers perform beyond expectations. You can expect international quality service at these branches.

WHAT WAS YOUR MOTIVATION FOR GETTING INTO THIS FIELD?

Back in our day we had limited career options compared to today. These days there are many startups and endless opportunities to explore. Janata Bank was (and is) a huge organisation is a truly global industry. It's also a vital part of the economy; we sanction some of the biggest loans. There's also the chance to meet people from all walks of life in this job. All this was enough to convince me to join the banking sector.

INTERVIEWED BY SHAHRIAR SHARIF

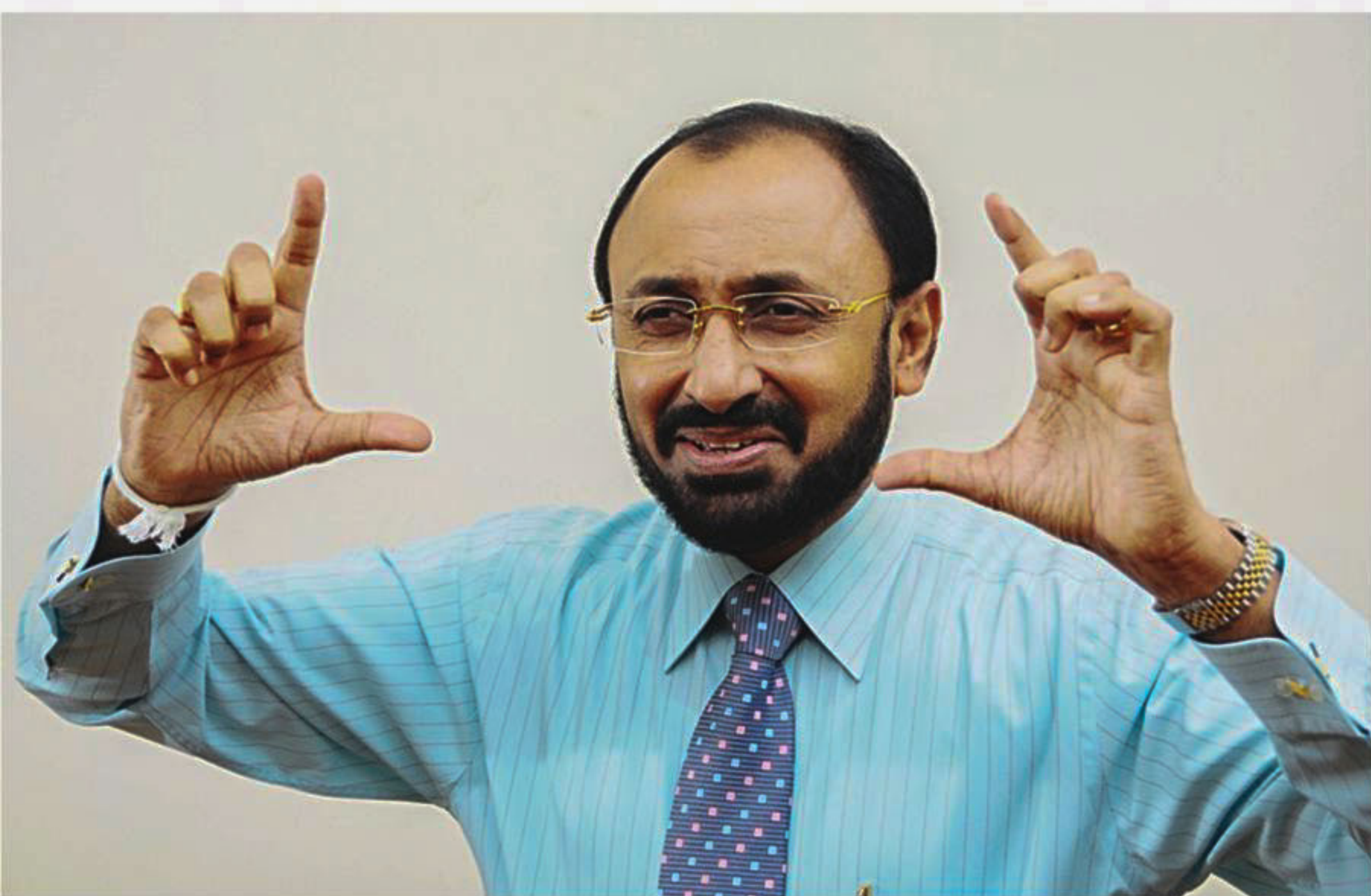
The interviewer is a freshman at the Institute of Business Administration, University of Dhaka



Better Bangladesh holds workshop on career development

In this competitive era, academic education alone will not take you very far in your professional life until and unless you acquire the required knowledge-based skills. And these skills can be obtained through both education and training. In that spirit, Better Bangladesh, a youth development organisation launched their first workshop on career development on November 14th.

Md. Tajdin Hassan from The Daily Star was the Chief Trainer of the workshop. Md. Adnan Hossain, founder & CEO of It's Humanity Foundation and recipient of the 'Most Promising Social Entrepreneur' title from the US Department of State, talked to the participants about how they can transform their passion into a career. Stawb Peter Halder, Supervisor of Compensation, Benefits and Payroll at Chevron Bangladesh, shared his experiences on developing a skill and competency portfolio in order to flourish in the corporate world.



SERVICE MANTRAS WAYS TO EXCEL IN THE SERVICE INDUSTRY

Some say it's easier to get new customers than retain old ones. Because retaining a customer requires work. To reduce the churn rate every organisation requires an elaborate action plan and a customer centric mindset. And part of it might include hammering 'customer service excellence culture' into the minds of every front line manager. These are not my words. These are the wise words of renowned corporate coach Dhammika Kalapuge.

At the training session Service Mantra, Dhammika Kalapuge introduced a ballroom full of people to the 16 customer loyalty assuring service mantras. The service mantras, which were interesting and intentionally rhyming, were easy to grasp. Most of the mantras were prepared with the use of common sense and by following basic principles in human behaviour with the aim of building customer loyalty. The first level focused on the five service mantras to be followed in making a customer happy. The second level focused on five more service mantras to achieve customer. Thirdly, another five mantras were introduced with the aim of wowing the customers. The final mantra, 'Insist to be consistent', dealt at length with the importance of maintaining consistency at every level and customer contact point to build customer loyalty.

During the training session at Lakeshore on November 13th, Dhammika, who held the position of Vice President-Marketing at DFCC Bank prior to becoming a professional trainer, said that creating a customer service excellence culture is something that has to be done using common sense. He also said that recently many local organisations have started to understand the importance of this kind of programmes in order to enhance the level of service.

SHAHRIAR RAHMAN

Engineer-turned-writer, Shahriar Rahman is Sub-Editor of the tech publication of The Daily Star. He is also Head of Operations at HiFi Public.

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.

EASY MOTIVATION TIPS TO GET MORE DONE

Feeling sluggish? Can't do much of anything other than scroll through your news feed hours on end? Try these simple tricks to get moving again.

Trick your brain

According to social psychologist Amy Cuddy, adjusting your physiology tricks your brain into buckling down and getting things done. Quit slouching and stop squinting your eyes at the monitor. Do some stretches or turn the music up and play some air guitar. Music also pumps you up and puts you in a better mood. Can't be worse than sitting in your chair and getting nothing done.

Plan ahead

Instead of dreading the heaps of stuff waiting for you tomorrow, make a list of things to do the night before. This will mentally prepare you for what's ahead and chances are that establishing momentum earlier will carry you through the rest of the workday.

Choose your weapon

If the tools you use on a daily basis are not working for you, it's time to make a change. If Powerpoint doesn't cut it for you, try slides.com or make a Prezi. Switch up your clunky word processor for something with a cleaner interface like Calmy Writer. Sometimes, it's not even your motivation that's hindering you—your process is flawed. Find a simple, flexible tool that is easy to use and makes you more efficient, and reevaluate your process. If you don't have to do something a particular way, don't.

Remind yourself of your vision

Take a minute to ask yourself why you're working on this particular task in the first place. How does it align with your ultimate goal? If you can't seem to answer the

question, perhaps you should ditch the task completely. If not, set your desktop wallpaper with a picture of your dream vacation destination or a quotation that inspires you. Reminding yourself of what's important will renew your resolve to power on.

Say no to the inner perfectionist

We all want to impress our bosses and be the envy of our co-workers.

Nandos you can enjoy with your colleagues once you're done with the work at hand. Similarly, think back to a success you've had in the past—you'll get a rush of dopamine, a neurotransmitter linked to motivation.

Bring out the champagne

Or at least celebrate what you've achieved at the end of the day. If you keep a to-do list, tick off everything you managed to get done in the past 24 hours, and



But don't intimidate yourself by setting impossible standards. Don't agonise over every single minute detail and don't stress yourself out before you've even begun. Remember, it's easier to improve on what you already have than to spin gold out of thin air.

Visualise the finish line

Associating positive thoughts with completing a task can make it less daunting. Think about the nap you can take or that lunch break at

treat yourself to something nice, like that 70% dark chocolate you've been saving at the back of your refrigerator or a nice steaming mug of mocha.

AMIYA HALDER

The writer is Sub-Editor of the career publication of The Daily Star. She is also a junior at the Institute of Business Administration, University of Dhaka