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The Daily Star  
DHAKA, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2016  
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# NEXT STEP

## SUCCESSING ACROSS CULTURES

Hae In Kim, Regional Head of HR, Asia Pacific at British American Tobacco, recently visited BAT Bangladesh during 25-26 January. Hae In brings in 18 years of experience in the Human Resources field. She has worked for leading HR consultant firms like PwC and Aon Hewitt before joining British American Tobacco in 2008. Next Step interviewed her to know more about her career and experience in Bangladesh.

### How has your visit to Bangladesh been?

I am very delighted to be here in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is positioned well in the international arena in recent years through its dynamic economic development. I have also worked with Bangladeshi citizens working in different markets of the BAT world. This is a unique experience for me to know more about our Bangladesh business and meet our people.

### Since you mentioned Bangladeshi talent, how are they performing in the global arena as well as BATB?

We have very diverse customers, suppliers and other partners, as well as a diverse workforce to meet their needs. Operating in more than 200 markets globally means that we have a very diverse workforce in terms of nationality. Bangladeshis are holding very critical roles in leading markets, e.g. Japan, Korea, and headquarters in UK.

BAT Group, especially in Asia Pacific, rely a lot on the talent supply coming out of Bangladesh so we have many Bangladeshi talents working in different parts of the world. They're doing a great job, getting great feedback and making great contributions across the different functions. So we are very pleased to see the rate of growth and the quality of the talents coming from Bangladesh.

BAT Bangladesh currently has its first Bangladeshi General Manager. 6 out of 7 leadership team members in Bangladesh are local, developed by BAT's sponsorship and development attachments in various markets. These critical exposures have developed them to take over leadership roles. This also reflects the strong pipeline that BAT Bangladesh has developed to compete with talents globally.

**I never say no to an opportunity. So I was never picky with the locations or the roles. As long as I see a new learning opportunity, I take up the challenge.**



The most common feedback that I hear is that people here are very hard working and resilient. They also have good commercial acumen, thanks to how BAT Bangladesh is grooming their talents.

### Where do you think BAT and BAT Bangladesh stand in terms of female-friendliness?

All across BAT, we always aspire to have diversity, both in terms of gender and nationality. Because we have the value set to get strength from diversity and respect the differences and individuals' contributions, we're very conscious to have the right representation, especially in the Asia Pacific, as well as Bangladesh. I was particularly pleased to see

the increase in the ratio of women managers, and amongst the women managers, the number of high potential employees—around 44% are recognised as 'High Potential'. What I expect to see more is that more seniors come through the pipeline—a lot of them are in what we call junior mid-level managers, I want them to grow into more senior level managers in the top team.

Quite interestingly, we have 30% female main board (BAT plc) representation while globally, we have 32% women in various managerial roles. We're a leading company that's successful worldwide. Bangladesh also has a very positive image in the BAT Group perspective. Here we have won Employer of Choice awards in the FMCG category consec-

utively three years. BAT Bangladesh has also won the most women friendly organisation award in 2015. This reflects our commitment to continuously provide a safe place to work, protecting our employees' wellbeing and listening to their views.

BAT Group also sponsors women leadership development through an integrated "Women in Leadership" program in UK where Bangladeshi female senior managers are regularly participating. I have also met the first female BATB secondary manufacturing manager who is leading the manufacturing floor of 900+ employees. This is very inspiring considering the context of Bangladesh.

### Can you tell us a bit about your career and journey in BAT?

I joined BAT in 2008 from Samsung. Since then I've worked in Korea, Indonesia and Japan, and now in Hong Kong. I enjoyed every assignment I've done and one thing I was looking for when I joined BAT was the career development opportunities and my ownership to design and drive my own career path. In that regard, I never got disappointed. That is the biggest value I got out of BAT. I got different experiences from different markets and I value working with different nationalities. I especially enjoy my current role of overseeing the Asia Pacific markets.

### What would you consider the secret to your success?

To me, the grade or the salary—that part was always secondary. It was more about whether the experience would be an asset or not.

### What's the best advice you could give to a fresh graduate entering a cross-cultural job organisation like BAT?

First, they have to be confident in themselves. I see many hold back their whole potential out of self-doubt. Be courageous because anybody can make mistakes. In my opinion, it's when you play safe that you play most dangerously. When you're younger, you can take more chances because that's the stage in your career you can learn from your mistakes.

Lastly, you have to be aware of the impact you make on other people. People may behave the same way in a foreign market as they would in their local market or home country. But how your behavior is perceived and what impact it creates can be completely different. So you have to be more self-aware and flexible. In Asian countries, you reserve your opinions until you are sure that you know the subject matter. That humility and cautiousness is valuable. But in a different group of people, you have to say things because it's perceived appropriate in, say, a brainstorming session. Knowing the context and being able to quickly flex your style is one of the things that is critical to one's success in a global environment like BAT's.

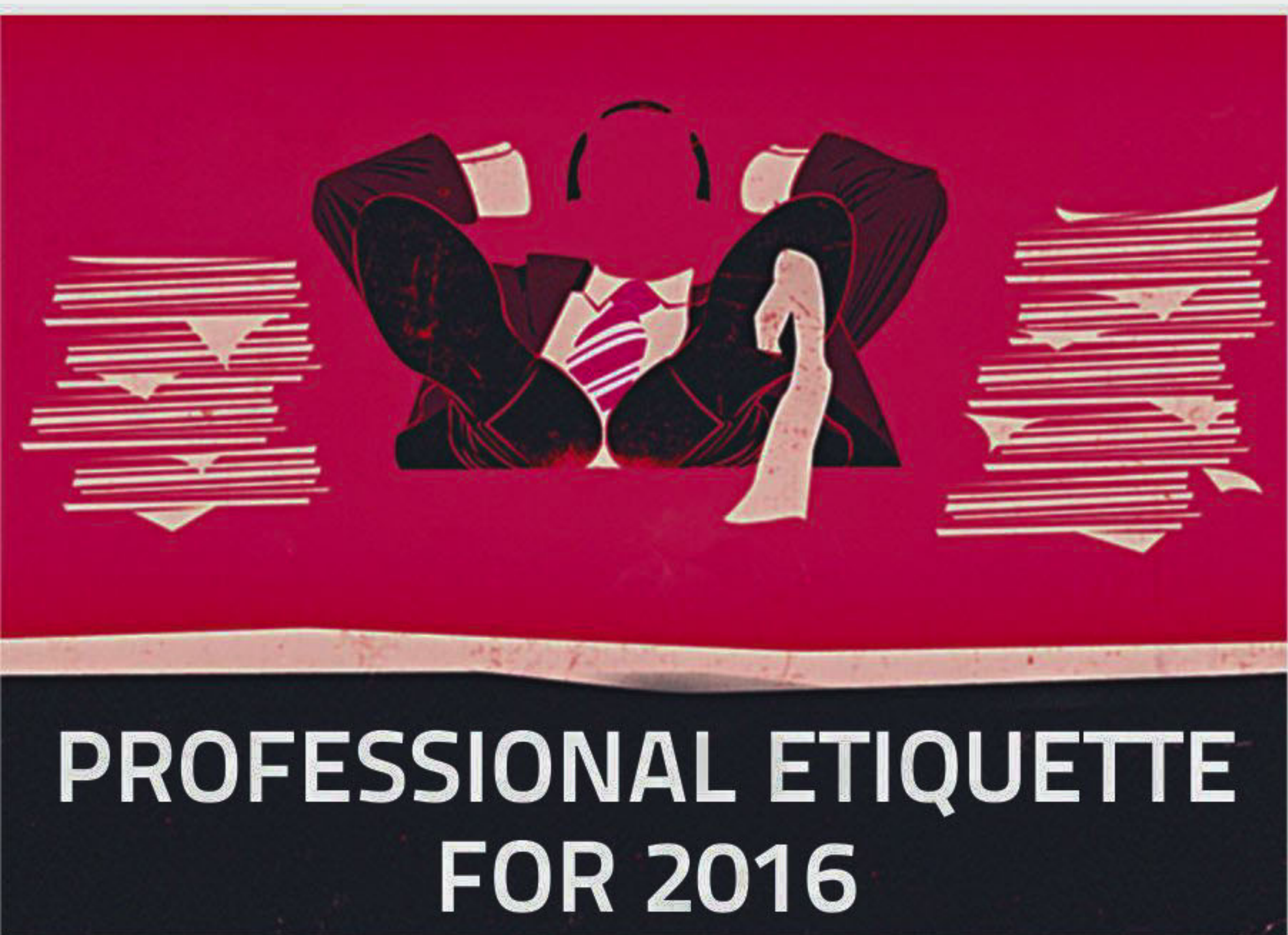
### Being responsible for such a wide region, what do you do to unwind?

Being a complete couch potato is my way of releasing stress. So during the weekends I tend to relax and not do anything at all.

For the full interview, check out the Next Step webpage

INTERVIEWED BY AMIYA HALDER

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



## PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE FOR 2016

Do you schedule back-to-back meetings where you always show up late? Do you show up at work even when you can't stop sneezing all over your co-workers? If this sounds like you, then something has to change. Poor workplace manners can be stressful to those around you. So boost employee morale and productivity this new year with Next Step's guidelines for workplace etiquette:

### 1. If you're sneezing all over your co-workers...

Call in sick. If it's a matter of life or getting laid off, you can always work from home. Call in early or send your boss a text or an email. While no one's encouraging you to make a habit of it, your office probably won't fall apart in your absence. Plus, you don't want to get others infected.

### 2. If you're late and you can't help it...

Call ahead. Especially if you're relieving someone from a shift, be sure to give them a heads-up.

Same applies for meetings and all other work-related engagements. Plus if you have a tendency to show up late to back-to-back meetings, reschedule. Perhaps it's time to rethink your planner. No one likes being detained in a meeting room beyond the allotted amount of time. And you don't want the next group to hover and sigh in the hallway waiting for you and your group to wrap it up.

### 3. Say no to tacky Europop ringtones

Okay it's not the 2000s anymore and

people have probably moved onto trashy dubstep ringtones. But there are better ways to show off your exquisite taste in music than super loud electro-house-trance ringtones. Put your phone on vibrate or pick a tune that's subtle and non-intrusive to prevent disturbing others.

On the topic of phones, be aware of how loud you speak on the telephone. If you get a call on your cell, take it outside the cubicle.

### 4. Aroma awareness

Bustle advises professionals to exercise aroma awareness. Be it food, hygiene, perfume—make sure you're not suffocating your co-workers to death. Avoid excess perfume or cologne or leave it out altogether.

When it comes to co-workers, it's probably best not to say it in the company of colleagues that their food is stinking up the whole office. Take them aside. And if the stench is really not so bad, don't judge, keep that trap shut.

### 5. Brush up on your inter-personal skills

Smile. You'll feel better and so will the other person. Next, look the part—fix your posture. People will see you as more confident and competent.

When you meet someone, offer a handshake. Remember: the higher-up should always extend their hand first. And if you're introducing yourself to someone you haven't met in a while, give them your name. It doesn't hurt.

And never ever yell or scream in

an office setting. Compassion and civility always earn you more respect than asserting your authority with force. (Don't bite your nails in front of your team either.)

### 6. Respect your co-worker's time

First off, respect the weekend. Do your job, but try not to let your work life spill over into your time off or someone else's time off. If it can't wait till Sunday, find a non-imposing way to send a message. Send an email or a text and be sure to mention that the other person can get back to you in the next work week.

Second of all, stop bothering someone while they're at their desk knee-deep in work. If they look like they're absorbed in their work, they probably are—back off! Save the chit-chat for the tea break.

### 7. If you're grateful...

Show it. "Please", "thank you", and "you are welcome" should be part of your regular vocabulary. They make all the difference to the other person.

Write a thank you note when you can. It'll mean way more to the person receiving it than any ordinary email.

Last but not least, respect other people's property as well as the company's. Don't take without asking. Use reply-all sparingly and keep your frustrations off social media, and you're good to go.

AMIYA HALDER

## 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.

## HOW TO BE A BETTER STORYTELLER

YOU DID WHAT?!?!



Stories are captivating when delivered the right way. But there's so much more to storytelling than just sharing an interesting incident. How you tell it is as important as what you're telling. Here are a few tips on improving your storytelling skills:

### USE RELATABLE EXAMPLES

Above everything, you want people to understand all the parts of your story. Even though you might be explaining an incident that's unusual or something your audience doesn't know much about, try to give examples that fall into common ground. That helps everyone connect with your story by putting it in their own perspective.

### PAUSE AND REPEAT

Pausing at the right moment is often emphasised for speeches and presentations. Thing is, they are equally important for small gatherings where you're telling your friends about that funny guy you met the other day. We tend to go full-speed ahead with our stories and reach the end as soon as possible because we're interested

in seeing how people react to it. But that is exactly why we often fail to make our point. Take one or two second breaks and continue. You'll get more through to your audience.

### LEAVE OUT THE BORING BITS

We get it. You think the other side can't understand what you're saying if they don't know all the details. In truth, they don't care. People want to hear the interesting bits. Every boring piece of information you put forward goes right over the head. Drop the bits that are slow and monotonous. Your audience will fill the small empty spaces themselves.

### HIGHLIGHT OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES

What's better than an amazing hero? An amazing comeback and a heartbreaking failure. Either way, highlight the struggles in your story and you'll make it even more exciting. How you talk about the obstacles your characters are facing gives indications to your listeners about how they should be reacting to it. Nail

those parts and you'll keep people on the edges of their seats. Or rolling off them.

### APPEAL TO EMOTIONS

You want what you say to make an impact. How do you do that? By connecting with the audience emotionally. Talk about how you felt when something happened and what overwhelmed the individuals.

### CHANGE YOUR VOICE AND EXPRESSIONS ACCORDINGLY

This is a no-brainer for any good speaker. Your tone should have ups and downs, not follow a single line. It's okay to over-do it a bit. If you're telling an exciting story, look excited, sound excited. If it's funny, bring out a smile, throw a few chuckles in between. You definitely do not want to sound dead when sharing the funniest story ever.

ABHIK HASNAIN

The writer is Sub-Editor of the tech publication of The Daily Star