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NEXT STEP

ONLINE FREEBIES TO IMPROVE YOUR DIGITAL SKILLS

Whether or not you prefer talking in person rather than through social media, or using sticky notes instead of Google Keep, we've all had to adapt to life's changes. And honestly, it's made us a lot more productive and efficient in the things we do.

So even if none of the skills below are essential for survival, they're definitely helpful to pick up in your free time. As cross-functionality in organisations increases, understanding what different teams in your office do will let you communicate with them better while collaborating.

And what better way to learn in this day and age than online? These 8 courses are completely free of cost. You can take them wherever, whenever, and however you want. Heck you might even add a few impressive bullet points to your CV.

1. Beginners Adobe Photoshop Tutorials

We've all edited photos and more often than not, poorly. Most of us don't even know the basics and stick to phone or web filters. Fortunately, Adobe itself is offering a free course on everything you need to know about Photoshop. If nothing else, you can get the perfect cover photo.

Length: 13 hours, 31 minutes/26 lectures

2. WordPress for Beginners

Do you want to open your own blog or website, but don't know where to start? Here's your big break. Udemy is teaching you all the basics of Wordpress. So dive right in and get started on advertising your portfolio!

Length: 2 hours/ 19 lectures

3. Programming for Everyone (Getting Started With Python)

You've probably considered taking up programming some time or the other. But either you've never had the time or there was simply no one to teach you.

Coursera's uber simple tutorial teaches you the basics of Python and gives you the basis to move onto the more advanced stuff like Java or C+.

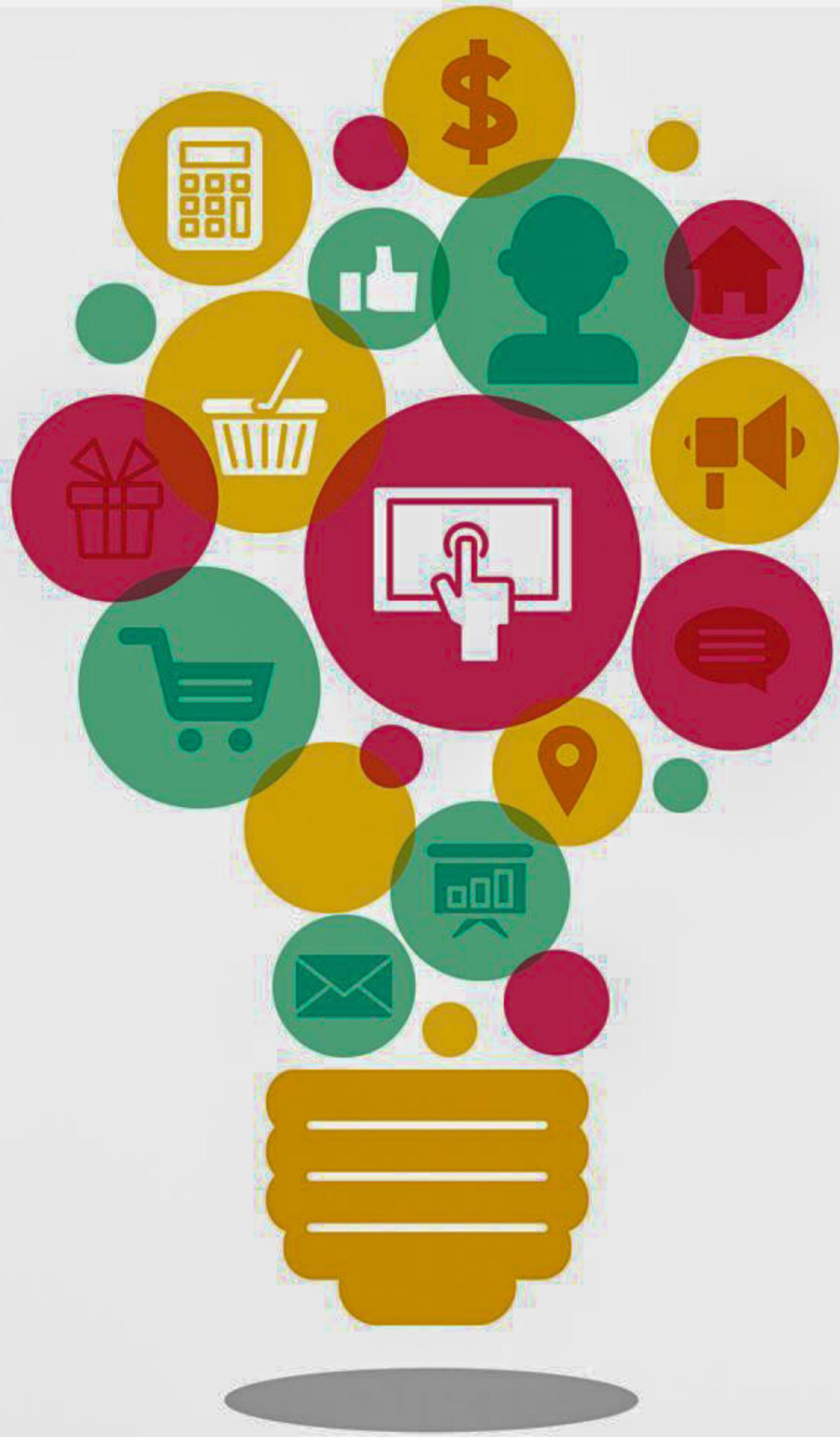
Length: 2-4 hours per week

4. Intro to HTML and CSS

If you want to create your own digital platform instead, then HTML and CSS are the way to go. This course by Udacity

is great for the basics and will get you on the road to becoming a front-end developer.

Length: 6 hours a week/3 lessons



5. The Complete Google Analytics Course for Beginners

Any business worth its salt is moving into analytics these days. But if you don't know a thing about it, this tutorial will walk you through the essentials of Google Analytics. Identify patterns and obtain insight into consumer behaviour with this must-do course.

Length: 3.5 hours/20 lectures

6. LinkedIn Training Course

I, for one, am too intimidated to make proper use of my LinkedIn profile. I hardly know what does what, and I'm guessing there are lots of you out there in the same boat. But this lecture by Social Media Training takes you through all the LinkedIn basics, from connecting with others to joining networking groups. In just under two hours, you'll be a networking pro.

Length: 1 hour, 51 minutes/26 lessons

7. Google Advance Search Search the Web as a Professional

Can't find what you're looking for on Google? No matter how much you tinker with the keywords? It's okay, you're not the only one. Google is a treasure trove of information and this class will teach you the tricks to getting the best results.

Length: 1 hour/9 lectures

8. Writing for the Web

Knowing how to write for the web is not the same as writing in real life. People want short and sweet answers online and on social media. Content has to be engaging and useful at the same time. And don't get me started on optimisation.

Open2Study's lectures will help journalists and developers alike to make the best impact with their content.

Length: 4 lectures

AMIYA HALDER

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

Madviser heading to Switzerland for the Seedstars Summit

Madviser is representing Bangladesh at the Seedstars Summit, where the winner of the global competition for fast growing startups in emerging markets will be named and awarded up to USD 500,000 in equity investment.

Seedstars, the global organisation with the mission of impacting people's lives in emerging markets through entrepreneurship and technology, launched the third Seedstars World competition in April 2015. The international team covered 54 countries, scouting for the best startups around the world. Madviser won Seedstars Dhaka 2015 and has been selected to represent Bangladesh and participate in a two-day boot camp, an Investor Forum, and the Grand Final of Seedstars World. The best startups in other sectors such as travel and space will also be rewarded with equity investments and grants of up to USD 550,000.

Madviser is a mobile application that helps users to find the most suitable mobile plans for them. On March 3rd, the Bangladesh startup will represent the country and compete with other 53 startups from around the world for the title of Seedstars World Global Winner.

More than 3,000 startups from Eastern and Central

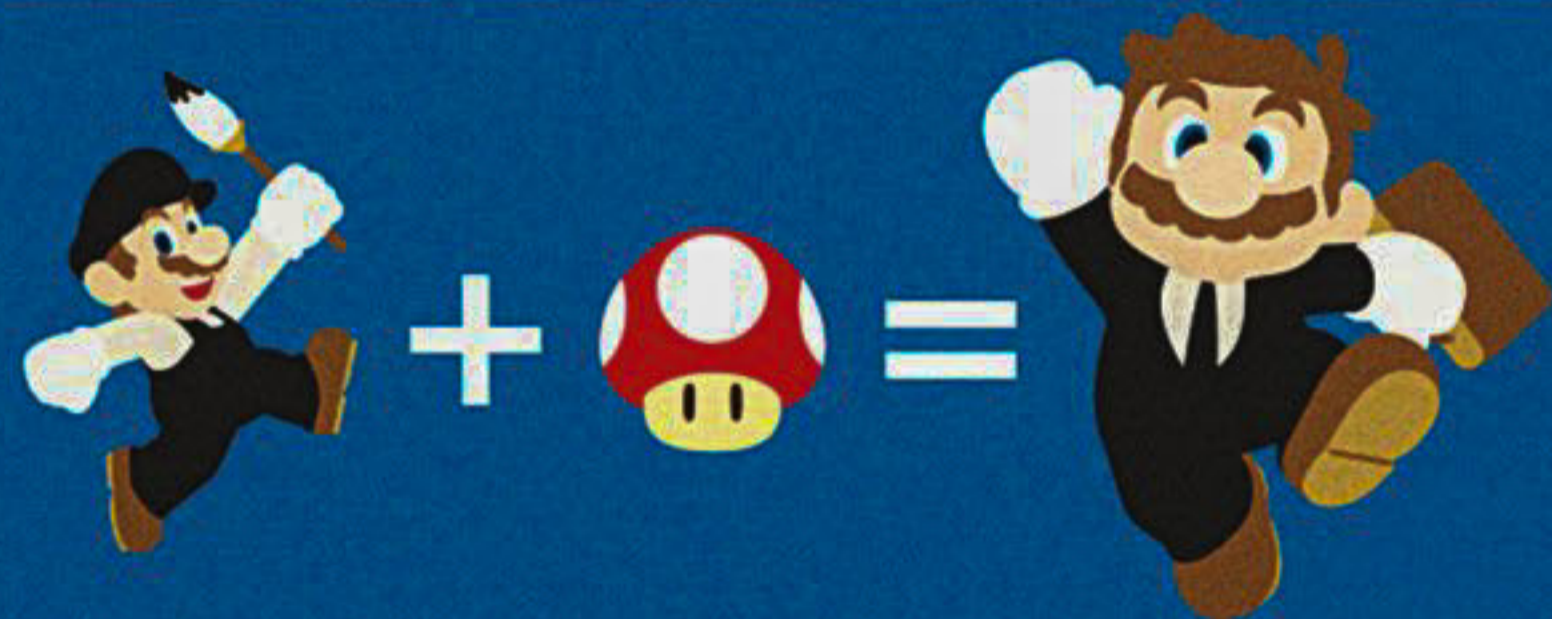
"Most people don't really associate emerging markets to a billion of opportunities and we're here to show them that these markets are already transforming into centres of innovation where talented people and change makers grow," explains Alisée de Tonnac, CEO at Seedstars World.

Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America applied to participate in Seedstars World this year. Since April 2015, four regional teams and expert local juries have selected the most promising startups in 54 cities, from Santiago to Jakarta, passing by Ramallah and Beirut.

The summit will kick off with several workshops covering a wide range of topics, such as "How can governments kickstart an ecosystem?" and "Takeoff: Exploring the next generation of the travel industry". Some of the top speakers include also Federico Lara, CTO of Bongo International, or Fabio Cannavale, CEO of lastminute.com group, who will share their ideas and insights about the latest trends in their respective fields and regions.

Around 1000 entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, corporate executives, business angels, government officials, journalists and startup enthusiasts are expected to join for an amazing experience in Switzerland.

Get to know more about Madviser on its website: www.humalab.com. Final passes and executive passes to the summit are available at: www.seedstarsworld.com/summit/passes



UNUSUAL WAYS TO BOOST EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY

A few days back I met an old friend who is currently the Managing Director of a large shoe factory at Savar where around 550 employees work on a regular basis. He expressed his concerns regarding the shortage of employees as well as another major difficulty he faces all the time. If he tells the employees to focus on quality and productivity, the very next morning they leave the factory without a moment's hesitation. This is because there's huge demand for these workers in the market.

It seemed my friend was suffering considerably and didn't know what to do about it. In fact, this situation is very common in our organisations, especially the manufacturing establishments, which experience rising overhead costs and shrinking profit margins. Big giants with large market shares may not face these sorts of problems, but it is very difficult for small firms to survive.

But creating a workplace filled with happy employees isn't as challenging as we might think. And it isn't about fatter pay checks. In fact, pay is never the primary reason people quit—they leave jobs because they feel unappreciated. They feel that their contribution is not valued. This is not to say that appropriate pay is not an important component of recognition—it is. It's just not the most significant component.

We give you some unusual yet effective ways to boost employee productivity:

FREE BREAKFAST

In recent days, due to the traffic and distance from office, employees

need to set out early, sometimes without grabbing breakfast. To get the best output, around a hundred manufacturing companies in Bangladesh have already adapted this policy; it is reported that their retention rate is noteworthy and in terms of productivity, they are ahead of their competitors.

TRAVEL INCENTIVES

Research indicates that travel incentives are motivating for employees and may also be good for the bottom line. One food and beverage company that has been running their business for the last 50 years in Dhaka sends its employees on paid Hajj trips every year. They select employees on a rotation basis so everyone's happy.

NO FAVOURITES

There is nothing worse than seeing employees not being treated as equals. We've all been in situations where a peer was viewed as the "favourite." We also remember how discouraging it was and how resentful it made us. If you are a boss and you have favourites, you run the risk of having a split workforce.

REDUCE NET RESTRICTIONS

Some organisations fear that the company bandwidth may be misused, especially on social media sites like Facebook. However, with the amount of resources available online, the truth is that most tasks can be completed more efficiently if employees are allowed to browse the net freely.

PLAY SOME MUSIC

Studies show that employees who listen to certain kinds of music while working finished their tasks

more quickly and generated better ideas than those who didn't. It's very common especially in our garments factories.

CELEBRATE NO MATTER HOW SMALL

When an employee sees that every positive contribution to the team is acknowledged and that their actions count, they really feel like what they do is making a difference. Performance awards by department or tier is a great way to achieve this.

SMALL INCENTIVES GO A LONG WAY

As we already mentioned, employees want recognition. It's astonishing how effective a thousand taka gift voucher can be in the workplace. It has nothing to do with the money or the monetary value; rather it sets a goal that all employees want to reach.

It would be nearly impossible to figure out what works best for an organisation. We need to keep in mind, that most of these suggestions are low- or no-cost solutions, meaning there is little risk involved. There are various ways to boost productivity. If the usual methods are exhausted, we can also try out the not-so-usual ways, which ultimately enable the organisation to be competitive and sustainable in the future.

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Making a DIFFERENCE

The right way to answer "TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF"

First impressions last a life time. For this reason, they matter—and while it might not be as important as the impression you make on your in-laws, if you are applying for a job, what comes out of your mouth may play a very big role in the hiring process. So, what seems like a very simple question—Tell me about yourself—is actually a lot difficult to answer.

You can start with telling them that funny anecdote about yourself, but unless the job you are applying for involves stand-up comedy, it might be wise to skip trying to be funny. What they want to find out is how you are suitable for the job. So another way to go about it would be to give them your life story, at which point they might be yawning—they didn't call you over to watch a performance recital of your resume.

What you need to understand is that they are basically asking you to brag about yourself. And bragging about oneself without sounding absolutely cocky is very difficult. So be careful about your first word. No umms and wells. Don't start off flustered. If you are not confident that you should get the job, then neither are they.

It might be helpful to remember a simple formula to guide what you say. Think of three sentences, one

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.

each from the past, present and future. A brief account about what you have done in the past and why it makes you awesome. A one liner summing up what you are doing now and why that's awesome too. End with how you plan to combine those powers together and be Captain Planet.

Here's an example. "Since graduation I have worked as a vet's assistant, volunteered at the local zoo and studied up all I could about giraffes. Currently, I work as the lion tamer at the circus which has given me great insight into animal behaviour. I believe that the medical and behavioural knowledge about animals that I have gained over the years will make me a perfect candidate for the position of zookeeper."

Remember, you are already halfway there when they have called you in for the interview. All you need to do is confirm their budding belief in your awesomeness.

MOYUKH MAHTAB

The writer is a senior at the Institute of Business Administration, University of Dhaka.

