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NEXT STEP

EAT. SLEEP. DO BUSINESS COMPETITIONS. REPEAT.

It's about carrying your institution's reputation on your shoulders. It's about keeping the legacy going. It's something every first year BBA student dreams of. Business competition: the biggest buzzword in the life of a business student that somehow convinces us to voluntarily prepare slides and practice presentations, despite knowing very well the verbal assault from judges that awaits us.



With thousands of students investing countless hours into these competitions, the question arises: Are local business competitions really worth doing? Here's a brief analysis.

THE PROS

1. Time management

These competitions are designed to test your grit under pressure. More often than not, you will find yourself working deep into the night to meet impossible deadlines (let's just ignore the part where we procrastinate). However, after a couple of attempts, you get a good understanding of how you react under the pump, which will eventually help you go a long way when facing tougher challenges in life.

2. Presentation skills

Local competitions give you multiple opportunities to present in front of

large audiences, which play a crucial role in increasing confidence and overcoming fear of public speaking. Kazi Raihan Absar, a sophomore at IBA-DU says "We only got two opportunities to present in class during our first year. These competitions provided an additional platform to practice and develop our on-stage skills."

3. Money, fame (and swag?)

If you manage to win a major business competition in Bangladesh, you will become a local sensation, even if it's just for a week. You will see your proud face in social media, local newspapers and even television. Your Facebook timeline will be filled with wishes and demands for treats from seniors and juniors alike. Apart from all the fame, business competitions are definitely a good platform to represent your institu-

tion in a positive way.

4. CV content

At the end of the day, winning business competitions does not guarantee a job. But it will add a lot of weight to your CV. Akib Moin Arka, senior at IBA-DU and winner of Brandwitz 2014 says, "It shows that you were proactive, and utilised your time doing something productive. It also shows that you are a team player and have the ability to convince people—two valuable skills most companies want in their employees."

THE CONS

1. Lack of practical learning

In most local business competitions, we have no other option but to assume a lot of things. For example, how logical or realistic is it really for a second year student to estimate a detailed financial plan for a

"Re-branding Bangladesh Biman" campaign? And it's not only a matter of whether all of it's theoretical or not. What's worse is, most of the innovative ideas that are presented during the competition will end up in the shelves, only to be used again in a similar competition. We learn how to ideate in a virtual world, with little concern over practical implementation. When research shows that implementation is 90% of the work, from a strategic point of view, are we learning much at all? This brings

2. Lack of transparency

We all have that friend who gives a stellar presentation and receives the best feedback from the judges, but ends up getting knocked out of the competition. Parashar Saha, senior at IBA-DU and winner of HSBC Business Case Competition 2014 says, "The organisers are often biased

towards teams from the host institute. Sometimes, the judges are from completely different sectors and they don't even read the case or brief that they are supposed to judge the teams on." This not only puts the credibility of the competition under scrutiny, it also has negative impacts on the confidence of the participants. After working so hard, a deserving team often ends up feeling below-par.

3. Lack of variety

Most business competitions in Bangladesh are pretty similar in terms of expected content and judging criteria. Target market, a big idea, an alternative solution, feasibility, financials—the structure is always the same. While a lot of universities are adding new twists to the format, the eventual expectation in terms of content structure is still no different.

MORALE OF THE STORY

As it currently stands, business competitions are one of the best ways to utilise time for a BBA student, particularly in the early phase of one's university life. After a certain point (third year perhaps) these competitions will teach you very little in terms of skills.

The exposure and experiences you gain will help you grow in confidence and motivate you to do better things. However, it's time we use those learnings, skills and motivation to do something significant for ourselves, and for our society. Performing well in business competitions reflects that we have the potential. It's time we use that potential to make our country proud.

SYED SAMEEM SHAHRIYAR

PROCRASTINATION Bane or boon?

When I was assigned this article I planned to break it down into sizeable bits and work through it at a steady pace. But that didn't quite happen. I ended up putting it off until the last moment and missed my deadline. University seems to have turned me into a seasoned procrastinator. But that's the case for most of us these days.



Even after the guilt, sufferings, and self-loathing we go through every time, we end up procrastinating nonetheless.

The process can be understood by thinking of two processes of the brain, instant gratification and rational decision making. As the name suggests, rational decision making helps us make smart choices as it forces us to look at the bigger picture. If our thought process were to be dominated by this part alone, we would follow deadlines, even do unpleasant tasks if it was in our best interest. But instant gratification comes along and distracts us toward immediate fun and recreation.

But can procrastination be good? Some studies have shown that procrastinating moderately can actually generate more creative

ideas. Employees were asked to fill up surveys asking if they procrastinated in their jobs, and their supervisors were asked to rate them based on levels of creativity. The results showed that employees who procrastinated mildly were deemed more creative by their supervisors than chronic procrastinators and employees who jumped right into the task. Another study grouped employees into two groups and asked them to generate ideas. One group was asked to start right away and the other was made to put it off for a while. Surprisingly the latter group was the one with more creative ideas.

Procrastination gives you time to consider disparate ideas and to think in nonlinear ways. The famous screenwriter Aaron Sorkin puts it as "you call it procrastina-

tion, I call it thinking." By delaying, you can leave yourself open to a wide range of ideas. But there are certain pitfalls as well.

Procrastination is still bad. It's vice to productivity but virtue to creativity. Also such an approach could work for tasks that have deadlines as panic may act as a mechanism to compel you to start working before it's too late. However panic does not work for tasks which have no deadlines so you may end up never doing the job. It's also about finding that sweet spot. In the end the study doesn't imply you should start procrastinating, especially if things already work out for you the way they are.

SHAHRIAR 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.

10 WAYS TO SLIP IN EXERCISE INTO YOUR DAILY ROUTINE



In today's hectic life, time is of the essence. Our most common excuse for not exercising is, "we have no time". And it is a legit issue.

But fear not, I have mastered 10 ways to slip in exercise in ways you won't even realise it's possible.

1. WAKE-ME-UP 50S

Wake up 30 minutes earlier than your scheduled time, and do 50 crunches and 50 push ups. This will do wonders for your abs (you know you want those sculpted abs) and aid to kick start your metabolism for the day. Switch up your morning routine and make it more interesting.

2. TAKE THE LONG WAY

Include small activities resembling exercise in your life. Take the stairs instead of an elevator. Walk up to a co-worker instead of email to relay/discuss information. If any distance is travelable by rickshaw, ditch the rickshaw and walk. Honestly, these will not even feel like exercise when they become a habit.

3. STAND AND FLEX

While waiting in queues in supermarket and banks (we know how

dreary it can be), flex your abs 10-20 times, for 10 seconds. Time will fly faster and you will feel those abs growing stronger.

4. WORK, WORK, WORK YOUR ARMS

When shopping at supermarket, unless you are doing a month's worth of shopping, use the baskets to carry your groceries. Turn your supermarket trip into a workout session. Believe me, your arms will thank you for it.

5. 10 MINUTES IS ENOUGH

Take a 10 minute break ever 3-4 hours to stretch your legs and walk around the office. This will not only sneak in the exercise you need, it will also help you feel more energised as continuous work can get monotonous and cause fatigue.

6. PLAY TO EXERCISE

If you have kids, great! Play with them. Hide and seek, running races, cricket, football, basically anything they are up to. Not only is this a great exercise, this is a great for bonding between you and your kids.

7. DO SOME HOUSE-

WORK

Walk, jog, stretch while waiting for your food to heat up, your child to finish homework, and so on. Use all these little wait times to slip in a bit of stretch, or a bit of walking and jogging.

8. ENTERTAIN & EXERCISE

While watching the latest episode of The Flash, don't just be a couch potato and watch. Get off your bum and be active. Lift weights. A bit of jumping jack here and there. A few crunches and push ups. Edge in a few lifts while browsing your Facebook newsfeed. The combinations are endless, and you get your package of entertainment and exercise.

9. CRANK UP THE DIAL

Turn up the volume on your phone/iPod and bring out all your best dance moves. You know you want to. This rocking your body will help you feel more energised, in your heart, body and soul.

10. STICK TO A ROUTINE

Fix a period of your day and time for workout. This doesn't have to be a long, 20-30 minutes will do.