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NEXT STEP

A BUSINESS COMPETITION OF A DIFFERENT KIND

The grand finale of IDLC presents Blueprints 2.0 in association with Dhaka Bank Ltd. was held on November 22, 2016 at North South University. A huge crowd of professionals from financial and non-financial institutions witnessed the battle royal between the three winning teams of the second instalment of the sole financial modelling competition in Bangladesh.

A shareholder or an investor, a financial analyst or a business student, whichever one is, if they are to get insight about how a specific company is doing, financial statements like the income statement, balance sheet and cash flow statements are the fundamental financial reports that best represent how the company has been performing over the past few years. Financial modelling is a technique of forecasting future financial statements and projecting a picture of a company or project for the upcoming years. Even though financial modelling is a skill that is a must for any financial analyst, no competitions have been held to encourage undergraduate business students to pick up this skill till Blueprints. Indeed, the competition was initiated with the broad intention of focussing young minds on the potential opportunities in the financial sector of the country.

This year, over 150 teams from 15+ universities spanning five divisions took part in the competition. "The aim is to put business students, and not just finance majors, in real life scenarios and have them implement all the knowledge learnt in classrooms," said Tashrif Ul Islam, President of NSU Finance Club.

The competition started with its first round workshop on October 28, 2016 at the NSU campus, where around 500 students came to participants. Jane Alam Romel, Group CMO of IDLC Finance Ltd., and Management Trainees from the Structured Finance Department conducted the work-



(From left) First runners-up Team Wunderkind, champions Team ICONs and second runners-up Team AllSpark pose with their awards



Champions Team ICONs state their case in the finale



The judges' panel for the evening critique one of the finalists

shop. The workshop was followed by the case solving round. Out of the 152 teams, 32 made it to the second round.

The second round workshop was held on November 4. Once again, Structured Finance experts from IDLC Finance Ltd. conducted the session. For the second round, participants were given a case on the hotel industry in the context of Bangladesh. They had to solve and present the case on November 11 in front of the judges. Nine teams out of 32 went on to the finale. The three winning teams of Blueprints 2.0 were awarded in the presence of their 250+ fellow participants.

The winner of the evening was Team ICONS. Team Wunderkind and Team AllSpark came in second and third respectively. Azim Uddin Ahmed, Chairman of BOT, NSU; Dr. Md. Emdadul Haq, Director of Student Affairs, NSU; and Dr. Md. Mahboob Rahman, NSU SBE gave enlightening speeches addressing the crowd. The event ended with the members of NSU Finance Club congregating on the stage and sending the crowd off.

NSU Finance Club is a newly established co-curricular club under the NSU School of Business and Economics. It aims to help students experience professional development in terms of skills, ethics and personality. IDLC presents Blueprints is the flagship competition of NSU Finance Club that the club has successfully concluded for the second time.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE ASIA'S TOP EMPLOYER BRAND

CMO Asia, an independent non-profit council of global marketing leaders, awards the top brands for exhibiting excellence in various arenas, such as Branding & Marketing, Employer Branding, Women Leadership, CSR Practices, Green Leadership, etc. At its 7th Asia Best Employer Brand Awards held in August this year, internationally renowned organisations such as SAP, IBM, Dell, and BAT Bangladesh were awarded for their outstanding workplace practices.

At this year's awards, BAT Bangladesh (BATB) was recognised for its commitment to organisational culture and diversity, as well the quality of recruitment and differentiated talent management practices. So let's look at what it means to be Asia's top employer brand.

As one of the most preferred employers in Bangladesh, it comes as no surprise that the people in the organisation must come second to none. Its contribution to the national economy aside, what is most notable is the sheer number of people BATB employs, with over 1,400 direct employees and 52,000 more employed indirectly as farmers, sales distributors and local suppliers. It is of the utmost importance for a leading employer to keep generating a competent workforce who will become a valuable asset for both the organisation and the nation as a whole. That is why candidates are put through unique and thorough recruitment processes.

An employer must take it upon itself to effectively inform and identify its future talent. To that end, BATB has been organising Battle of Minds (BoM) for the past 13 years to reach out to the thousands of final year students in the Business, Engineering and Agriculture disciplines. Roadshows and student engagement sessions give candidates a true feel for the rigours of corporate life and allow them to showcase their understanding of real-world business complexities. BATB

also uses interactive and engaging multi-layered recruitment processes as well as campus engagement activities with a view to find the best fit for their organisation.

But the job doesn't end with recruiting the top talent. As a top employer, it is the organisation's duty to acquaint new recruits with their vision, strategy, guiding principles, and what the organisation deems crucial to the way it business. BATB does this with the BAT Way Mastermind, an activity-based playshop for all our newcomers that poses a number of challenging and fun activities to acquaint them with the organisation. Different functions interact and collaborate, giving recruits a unique and memorable experience and a comprehensive insight into the different elements of the business and corporate culture.

Developing your employees into the best they can be is the number one goal for a top employer brand. BATB has retained and fostered 70% of its employees into home-grown leaders—most of whom started as fresh graduates in BATB. An organisation must provide the training and mentoring so that its employees can evolve into world class leaders. At BATB, 18 Bangladeshi managers are stationed in countries all over the world, including the UK, Singapore, Cambodia, Poland and Korea, on international assignments to share their expertise with the rest of the BAT family.

A primary concern of leading employers worldwide is employee motivation. Whether

"We (BATB) will continue to carve the best possible future for our employees and hope to achieve new echelons of excellence in the days to come."
-Shehzad Munim, Managing Director, BAT Bangladesh

it's on-the-job or off-the-job, it is necessary to acknowledge and appreciate the hard work of

your employees. The company hosts a wide array of family events for the managerial employees and staff to re-energise the people behind the brand.

Employee welfare comes second to none. Frequent safety training and health and stress sessions is of paramount importance to BATB in order to mitigate as many risks as possible.

Every organisation has its own set of guiding principles that make up its unique employer brand. Likewise, BATB believes 'Strength from Diversity' is that essential principle that makes them who they are. It celebrates gender diversity and takes profuse measures to ensure that every individual is given a fair shot—inequality in the workplace is unacceptable. In fact, in 2015, BATB received the award for 'The Most Female Friendly Organisation' from Bangladesh Brand Forum (BBF), and is also the first company in Bangladesh to have a female Factory Manager and a number of female executives in the Sales and Marketing functions. BATB's Head of HR, Rumana Rahman, was also awarded BBF's Inspiring Woman Award in March this year, exhibiting how gender equality policies make all the difference in an individual's career.

No top employer brand is complete without sustainable and responsible entrepreneurship practices. BATB's CSR projects 'Probaho' (water purification plant), 'Depto' (solar home system) and 'Bonayan' (affores-

tation programme), make sure that the country is a better place for the people of the nation and those to come. Enterprise Asia has also recognised the organisation for its remarkable efforts, with the AREA Award for Responsible Leadership presented to BATB's Managing Director Shehzad Munim, earlier this year.

Awarded the Best Employer Awarded in 2010, 2012, and 2014 by Bdjobs.com, Bangladesh's largest job portal, as well the Excellence in Corporate Governance Award by the Institute of Chartered Secretaries of Bangladesh, BATB continues to set the bar in employer branding for the country and the continent as a whole. Shehzad Munim, Managing Director of BATB, says, "The CMO Asia Best Employer Award' is truly rewarding for us at BATB because it recognises both our efforts to enrich our employees' lives with a multitude of opportunities and our employees' efforts to consistently add value to the organisation. We will continue to carve the best possible future for our employees and hope to achieve new echelons of excellence in the days to come."

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The writer is In-charge of the career publication of The Daily Star and a senior at the Institute of Business Administration, University of Dhaka



S M Khaled (left), Head of Programme Management, BAT Singapore, received the award for Best Employer Brand on behalf of BAT Bangladesh.