

# LESSONS LEARNT FROM MY FIRST CORPORATE JOB

MITHI CHOWDHURY

No matter how much you dread the concept of a 9-to-5 job, the corporate world presents opportunities for you to hone your leadership skills unlike any other.

I did an internship over the winter and here are a few things I've learnt that have helped me grow as an individual:

## To infinity and beyond!

At work, you're in charge of getting work done and delivering the commitments you make to your manager and/or clients, within the time frame you set. You'll rarely find a source of motivation in the corporate world like your best friend who pushed you to study the night before your mock exam.

Thus, to meet (and exceed) expectations, you have to take real ownership of your tasks by delivering beyond what's expected of you. It means being proactive and taking initiative, staying on top of your tasks and deadlines, following up with others to get their input, and implementing that feedback at every stage to really deliver added value. If you want to get noticed for your work, be prepared to do more than the bare minimum.

## Make deadlines your new best friend

Sometimes, the bare minimum is all you can really deliver. As a part-time intern, I often juggled the pressures of academics with my work, and more often than not, there will be a tradeoff. No matter how proactive you are, sometimes you will have to settle for average work. In such instances, what you should focus on, without fail, is meeting the deadline itself. In fact, make it a habit.

By doing so, you may not be hailed as an exceptional employee, but over time, you will be regarded as a consistent and reliable performer - an invaluable quality that will set you apart from your peers.

## Sharpen your business writing skills

Writing has always been my forte (*Shout*, anyone?). So, you can imagine why I was dumbfounded to discover that I was horrible at business writing. That's because such writing is usually targeted for business communities



which include individuals who may or may not speak English fluently. Thus, to enhance ease of communication, business writing must be brief, direct, and have a clear objective - unlike creative writing where you have the freedom to be witty and wordy.

Whether it's a report, a blog or an email, effective business writing will help you present persuasive arguments or massive information in a concise format; this makes nonverbal communication much easier, efficient and hassle-free.

## Record what you do

Make sure you document all the tasks or projects you complete. During my internship, I maintained a Trello (an app that can be downloaded from the App Store or Play Store) board, and it not only helped me keep track of my tasks, deadlines and upcoming projects, but also allowed everyone to see how much I'd accomplished, and the progress status of ongoing tasks. This was so immensely helpful that I've continued to do this post-internship, and my life has never been more organized.

## Take it with a pinch of salt

You're not always going to like who you meet. Some people will be welcoming, whereas others will criticize you and/or your work every time. While some intend this as a learning experience for you, others will do it just because. Learn to filter out the white noise, and retain tangible feedback. At the end of the day, the corporate world is a network of people from different backgrounds, mindsets and personalities. Believe it or not, each individual, no matter how unlikable they are, adds something to the organizational culture, and whether or not that quality teaches you anything, is for you to judge. So don't be so quick to write off somebody who's been unkind to you. Who knows, you might just end up learning something valuable from the most unexpected individual.

*Mithi Chowdhury is a dog-loving-movie-watching-mediocrity-fearing normal person. Either that or a penguin. Find out at mithichy612@gmail.com*

# The Aim of Battling "Presentation Poverty"

SHOUT Desk

To attain the objective of becoming a middle-income country by 2021, we necessitate outshining contemporaries in the field of business and thus require a superbly skilled workforce that can communicate, present, sell, and lead.

However, the inability to give impactful presentations has turned out to be a grave problem among today's Bangladeshi youth in the form of what can be called the "presentation poverty".

Aimed at feeding the crying need and with the vision to create 20,000 world-class presenters by the year 2020, the Presentation Success Movement (PSM) was launched in 2015 to enthuse, train, and assess Bangladeshi students on presentation skills. In continuation to its activities, the country's first Presentation Success Movement was held on January 21, 2017, at the Krishibid Institution Bangladesh. The summit was a day-long event encompassing inspirational and informative workshops on presentations conducted by Bangladesh's leading experts in the field. The attendees received life changing advices, mentoring, coaching, tips and tricks on how to do well in presentation and heal the presentation phobia and also witnessed the best pre-



**Winners with dignitaries: from left, Masum Khan, CBM, Nestle Professionals; S M Ali Mowla, AVP, IBBL; Shahana Sharmin, Country Manager, Paytm; Aftab Mahmud Khurshid, Head of Marketing, SSG; and Saimum Hossain, Founder, Presentation Success Movement.**

senters of Bangladesh fight for championship in the grand finale of PWK Nationals 2016.

PWK Nationals is the flagship annual competition that emphasises on developing presentation skills of the participants with its exclusive format. The competition inaugurated in 2012 and comprises of four rounds, beginning with the online registration and slide submission round. For PWK Nationals 2016, a boot camp session was held in November 2016 with

the top 24 teams at NewsCred in order to upskill the participants. Out of about 100 participating teams, the top 24 competed against each other in the quarterfinals held in NewsCred. It was a test of presentation skills in front of a panel of judges from 9 renowned local and multinational corporations. After a spectacular show of talent and neck-to-neck competition, 12 teams managed to squeeze their way through to the semis, held in December 2016 at the EMK Center in Dhanmondi.

The semi-finals, due to its intriguing and challenging format, are aptly named the "Persuasion Round". In the groundbreaking round, pairs of teams were pitted against each other on a common topic. Both teams would be able to witness the presentation session of the other - observing and noting their points and arguments. After being given some time to regroup and strategise, both teams would present again, with team A's sole purpose being to refute team B's former arguments and vice-versa. Six teams moved forward to the Grand Finale where they competed in the form that's toughest of all: "Instant Presentation". As mentioned earlier, the Grand Finale was held as part of the Presentation Success Summit on January 21, 2017.

Out of about a hundred registered teams, team Last Second from the Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP) clinched the champion's title of PWK Nationals 2016 whereas team Ikigai from North South University and team Brains of Castamere from Institute of Business Administration, University of Dhaka won the first runner up and second runner up titles, respectively.

The event was powered by The Daily Star with strategic partnership from GEEKY Social and PRAN-RFL Group.