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The Daily Star

DHAKA, FRIDAY, MARCH 24, 2017

CHAITRA 10, 1423 BS

e-mail: nextstep@thedailystar.net

# NEXT STEP

## REDEFINING OFFICE CULTURE IN DHAKA

Today's businesses thrive on beating mediocrity with innovations in every aspect of their work. Organisational cultures have thus changed and office spaces have become a lot more enjoyable and a lot less stiff, translating in more motivated employees. Here are five such companies in Bangladesh which have successfully epitomised this practice.

### NEWSCREd

NewsCred is the world's leading content marketing platform. In one place, brands gain exclusive access to the world's largest content marketplace, original content from award-winning freelancers, licensed content from 5,000 leading publishers, and user-generated content from their brand's biggest fans. Funded mostly by venture capitalists based in Silicon Valley and New York, NewsCred's has served global clients like Pepsi, MasterCard, VISA, and lots of other Fortune 500 companies.

Work culture at NewsCred Dhaka is highly collaborative. Even the most junior employees do not have to be coy about bringing fresh ideas to the table. Its flat hierarchy enables all to voice their honest opinions.

Perks includes pool, table tennis, Call of Duty and other video games played during breaks by employees and bosses alike. Unlimited snacks are available any time of the day, while flexible work hours is yet another motivator.

"Our manager is not like 'do this and that', but rather like 'this is my goal, how can you help me?' This practice is followed from the lowest to the highest ranks alike," says Sanchia Reaz, HR Executive at NewsCred.

At NewsCred, you work in your own squad so the workload is never entirely on you. "I am lucky to have found a huge mentors' base here, rather than just newbies all over," says Mifta Sintaha, Software Engineer at NewsCred. They also have scrum masters whose sole job is to remove anything that hinders you from doing your best work.

### MAVERICK STUDIOS

Maverick is an audio-visual production agency which, since its inception in 2010, has created a wide range of corporate videos, promotional videos, animations, charity videos, and training videos for leading clients like Unilever, HSBC, Coca Cola and Citibank. This startup was split into five separate companies, with Maverick focusing strictly on audio-visuals; Strategieek for digital marketing; Ice9 Interactive for IT solutions at home and abroad; Auleek for 3D augmented and virtual reality; and ShopUp for f-commerce.

The heart of Maverick's office culture lies in its visibly friendly and integrated work space. Employees and bosses sit side-by-side and approachability is never an issue. The office spaces of all five companies have full-fledged recreational facilities. "We have the

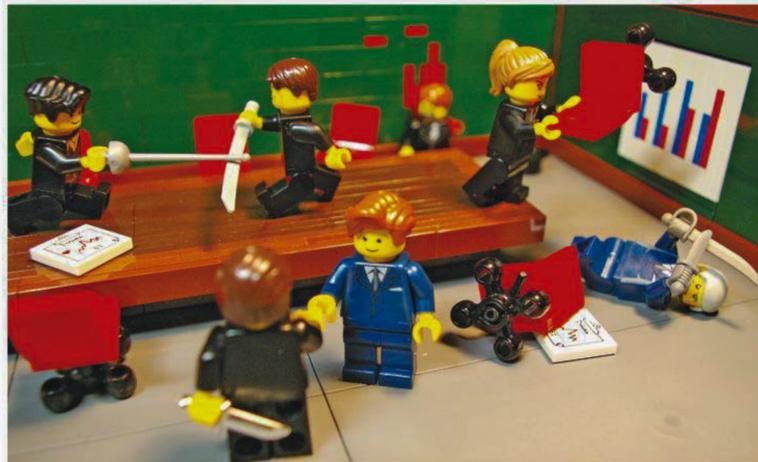
latest version of PS4 and whenever a new game is up, we download it right away whenever in need of a break," says Wasifa Rahnuma, Accounts Executive at Maverick. Sports and annual trips are among other fun practices.

If someone is underperforming in one role, he/she is shifted to another. But get to strike three, and you are out — they make sure only the best people are kept on board.

Work hours are highly flexible. People working late get to stay over at night in separate sleeping rooms and grab dinner and breakfast in the office. Not to mention their cafeteria lunches are highly subsidised.

### GRAMEENPHONE

The leading telecommunications service



provider in Bangladesh, GP is a pioneer in multiple exemplary office infrastructural facilities in the country. All of GP's offices reflect a philosophy of innovation and collaboration.

Walking into the workspace, you find C-suite execs and interns sitting side by side discussing the next Internet of Things innovation. You have meetings relaxing on bean bags and strumming the guitar. In between work, there are PlayStations, table tennis, billiard, mini golf, basketball, foosball and scooters to keep the mind refreshed. No work desk is far from coffee and snacks.

Within the premises, there is a fully equipped gym and a professional trainer, as

well as walking tracks, ensuring that work is not negatively affecting fitness. Day-care centres offer a global curriculum of early childhood care and education. In an attempt to make the offices as inclusive as possible, there are bank kiosks, ATM booths, travel desks, laundry services and health centres within the premises. Moreover, GP today is a collaboration hub of entrepreneurs, developers, and digital natives. Regular outside-in sessions, fairs, learning weeks and hackathons ensure that the organisation is continually learning and innovating.

GP, as they claim, is a strongly value-centric organisation. Cultural and recreational celebrations across all offices allow employees to celebrate as one. The company

to different lounges and workstations, is unmatched by your average financial institution. Makame Mahmud, Investment Bank Analyst at Riverstone Capital, says, "Almost always a new client starts off the discussion lauding the impression our office has made on him/her." Refreshments like coffee and snacks are always available and employees catch up on chatting in small lounges whenever in need of a break.

In contrast to the super serious and highly confidential work done at Riverstone, the environment in the office is chilled-out and encourages fluid interaction among team members. Mid and top tier managers come from backgrounds stemming in extensive exposure to local and global cultures and have fascinating stories to tell, be it work and life related or just fun.

### BEATNIK DESIGNS

Beatnik is a creative consultancy that delivers a wide variety of services to brands, from digital marketing, website administration, IT enabled services and app development, to product and packaging design. It is all about delivering memorable brand experiences.

"We are a very young family that loves to relax in front of video games and have an 'adda' over 'cha'," quips Andalib Kabir, one of the managing partners of Beatnik.

Constructive criticism is one of the core pillars of Beatnik philosophy. "We do not hold back when it comes to bashing each other's ideas. Being a young crowd, we keep our structure flat for better communication. This helps us in being transparent," says Andalib.

Employees possess a strong spirit of ownership because they work together day in and day out to grow themselves, not just the business. The team at Beatnik is a colourful bunch. Creativity, discipline, as well as an eagerness to learn is the norm. Despite long work hours and hard deadlines, their culture of change and facing constant challenges is what makes it a cool place to work. If you are the same person with same set of skills after six months at Beatnik you have not done anything.

HALIMA SADIA

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

## THE BOSSMAN

BY E. RAZA RONNY



TEAM HAS ADJUSTED TO THE INCREASED LOAD. WE'VE ALSO PUT UP MOTIVATIONAL ROCKY POSTERS. BUT MORE PEOPLE ARE NEEDED IF WE WANT TO INCREASE OUTPUT.



OR, WE COULD JUST GIVE THEM MORE TO DO. DOUBLE WHEELS.



## 4 WAYS OPEN OFFICES DO MORE DAMAGE THAN YOU THINK

In 2017, open-plan offices are all the rage. But despite the many benefits they are claimed to accompany, open offices can great more problems than they solve. Here are 7 reasons why you should consider having a more traditional joint:

### 1. They make you miserable

A survey of 10,000 employees funded by office furniture big shot Steelcase revealed that 95 percent of respondents admitted that working privately was important to them, but only 41 percent got the ability to do so, and 31 percent had



to leave the office to get work done.

### 2. They hinder productivity

A study by Exeter University found that open offices created a 32 percent drop in "workers' well-being" and a further 15 percent reduction in productivity.

Steelcase's survey also found that employees in open-plan offices lost an average of 86 minutes per day, leading to "unmotivated, unproductive, and overly stressed" workers.

### 3. They make you sick

Queensland University of

Technology's Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation discovered higher levels of stress, conflict, blood pressure, and staff turnover in workplaces without offices. And according to The New Yorker, open-plan offices can expect employees to take a ginormous 62 percent more sick leave.

### 4. They encourage office politics

In open offices, the handful of glass door, private rooms are a status symbol. The competition to get the real office can get fierce and create bad blood and demoralisation.

## 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.

## STAYING RELEVANT IN THE JOB MARKET

The job market is constantly changing, faster now than ever before. Therefore, in order to remain employable, you have to be adaptable. How do you stay on top of the changing demands of the workplace and ensure you climb up the career ladder? How do you remain relevant?



### Learn

It is as simple as that. Let learning become a part of your lifestyle and always aim to be ahead in your industry. Learn new skills relevant to your field, e.g. mastering new digital art software if you are in the advertisement industry.

But learn with direction. Do not go all over the place stacking up skills and information that you will not possibly need. Know that time is a limited resource and spend it smartly.

Do not stop with just learning though. Implement what you have learnt and experiment with your ideas. Share what you have learnt, teach others in your organisation, and establish a reputation for yourself as a credible person. Maintain an active presence within a circle of like-minded people (or people who work in the same industry as you do), and attend seminars, workshops and events.

### Understand the dynamics of your industry

Stay informed on where the indus-

try you work for is headed and prepare accordingly. Where do you stand and how can you add value to your firm?

### Step up your networking game

'Who' you know is as important as 'what' you know. Make connections - reach out to everyone. Never shy away from meeting new people and maintaining those connections.

Research different networking styles if you do not feel confident reaching out to people. Find one that is suitable for you because regular networking is essential for enhancing your growth and climbing the career ladder.

### Embrace technology

Stay in touch and always within reach. Stay updated not only with your firm's details, but your competitors'. Become adept at using the latest technology and be aware of the advances made in your field.

### Be open-minded and flexible

You cannot let rigidity stand in

your way to growth. The world is changing and it will change with or without you. Step out of your comfort zone and challenge yourself. Be the person in the team who is willing to work, willing to change, and willing to learn. Be the part of the organisation it is willing to work with, as well as the person who is open to opportunities, ideas, and changes.

### Create your personal brand

Make your presence distinguishable amongst circles relevant to your career. Be visible to employers within your organisation and stand out by constantly upgrading your CV and fine-tuning your LinkedIn profile. Make yourself worthy. Know your worth and ensure everyone knows it too.

RAHMA MIRZA

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

## MARKETING WHIZ KIDS FIGHT IT OUT AT TEER BRANDRILL '17



The grand finale of Teer BRANDrill 2017 took place on March 12 at the University of Dhaka. After an extremely close competition among the 10 qualifying teams, Second String from Bangladesh Universities of Professionals became winners of the first ever nationwide branding competition in the country and was awarded with BDT 100,000. Forza

from Institute of Business Administration, University of Dhaka won second place, and Crime Master Gogo from North South University third place. They were awarded BDT 60,000 and BDT 40,000 respectively.

Over 200 teams from 20+ universities spanning seven divisions took part in BRANDrill. The competition consisted of three rounds and a

workshop on the hurdles faced in branding. The competition started with an online case submission round on February 11, where around 700 students participated. Among them, the best 50 teams went through to the second round for their outstanding branding ideas. This was followed by a television commercial making round. The teams presented their commercial in a highly competitive round from which only 10 teams made it to the final.

The judges panel of the final consisted of Shoeb Md. Asaduzzaman, Executive Director of Sales & Marketing, City Group Ltd.; Mohammad K Haque, General Manager of Marketing Communication, bKash Ltd.; and Md. Ismail Hossain, Associate Professor Department of Marketing, Dean of Faculty of Business Studies, University of Dhaka, Shibli Rubayat Ul Islam, was the Chief Guest.