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NEXT STEP

VENTURE INTO YOUR INNER CREATIVE

With the ease of running online businesses and blogs on Facebook, artistic ventures are a new field that is gradually rising in Bangladesh. Here are the stories of three such popular businesses and how they came and the individuals behind them.



Pretty Shitty Art and The Flourist

If someone had to talk about the most multi-talented people leading multiple creative ventures, then painter, pastry chef, and animal rights activist Saria Saguro would definitely be near the top of that list.

However, she is a painter first. Painting ever since her childhood, Saria took a break after the age of 16. Returning to her passion after a decade, she wanted to experiment with different mediums instead of just paper and canvas, leading to the birth of Pretty Shitty Art back in August 2014. She explored printable and wearable mediums including underwear, shoes, and posters for her first exhibit, after which she went on to experiment with aprons and even jewellery.

When she is not painting, she is busy baking her heart out at her cake studio, The Flourist, which reopened in March and is currently occupying a small section at the Gourmet Bazar in Gulshan. Her desserts taste just as amazing as they look, with the signature touch of her artistic persona. She also

started working on her animal shelters and clinics project in Dhaka towards the end of 2016. She does portraits of pets in exchange for donations that go to My Pet Project, which has raised and donated over BDT 120,000 since its initiation.

When asked about her biggest struggle, she confessed about her time management issues: she either has to work around the clock or take months off of one project to work on the other since she is the sole person managing everything. She believes that creative businesses have a lot of scope in niche markets, but perhaps not so much for the masses. Her advice to anyone starting out is, "Grow a thick skin. Put your head down and get at it. Everything else is usually white noise."

Made with Love

Having been fond of painting since childhood, marketing and e-commerce student Humairah Shams started her calligraphy journey by learning to design cards and quotes. As she started to improve, her elder sister Sarah Shams noticed the opportunity and pushed her to share her artwork and designs with the world. After a brief period of planning, they officially launched their creative venture at the Carousel of Chaos, an exhibit held in August 2016. Things have never been the same since then for these sisters.

They have showcased their work at numerous exhibits and have made quite a name for themselves with the exquisite and intricate calligraphy designs and art products. Their range of products varies from art prints to stationery items and even totes and mugs. "We mainly identify as an art



boutique, selling art in different forms", says Humairah. While Sarah handles the operations, Humairah takes care of the product designs. Some of her products allow customisation and she even sells commissioned art pieces through her art page Musings of a Wildflower.

As the owner of a small creative business here in Bangladesh, she



mentions how one of the biggest struggles is to find a supplier who will agree to print her work out in small quantities. "Since we are still such a small business, it is risky to just go and print large quantities of anything", she comments, "So finding the right supplier who is willing to help out small business owners like us is always a challenge."

Stellar

If anyone asks me to recommend a good place for getting amazing laptop sleeves, I start blabbering about Stellar. But that is only one of the "stellar" products that they sell. In case you still have not heard of them, Stellar is an online creative business that sells home



décor and stationery. Sarah Zarrar and her best friend Shafin Babar launched their business back in 2016, and it has grown into quite the success in the last one year.

When asked about how it all started, Sarah talked about her eternal fascination for home décor and stationery. The

fact that the creatively styled items found abroad were scarce here in Bangladesh gave her the idea to set up her business with the help of Shafin. Together, they worked on the website and supply chain to build the foundation of what Stellar is today. Sarah handles the production, design, and social



media marketing, while Shafin looks after the sales, inventory, and logistics. Some of their home décor products include cushions, coasters, dreamcatchers, candles, and jarred plants; they also sell stationery items such as journals, planners, laptop sleeves, pencil bags, and are planning to

launch apparels and accessories soon.

Despite Sarah being a working woman and Shafin a student, they both dedicate at least two to three hours daily to work on Stellar. Whatever free time they have, they dedicate it to Stellar. When asked about the prospects of creative businesses in Bangladesh from their experience, Sarah commented on the massive potential this sector has because of the various talented people in Bangladesh. She believes that with increasing exposure and collective efforts, this sector will get more profitable and soon be competitive on an international scale.

Stellar is also open to any collaborations with other artists, so if you have any ideas you want to bring into an artistic physical form, anyone is welcome to knock on their doors.

SABRINA RAHMAN

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

THE BOSSMAN

BY E. RAZA RONNY



PSST! DID YOU KNOW THE BOSS JUST LOVES THOSE OLD MISSION IMPOSSIBLE MOVIES?



YEAH. ALL THAT SPYING, AND MORE SPYING.

AND THE GADGETS. LOOK, OUR PAYCHECKS JUST ARRIVED OUT OF THIN AIR.



YOUR PAY, IF YOU CHOOSE TO ACCEPT, COMES WITH A BONUS.

IT WILL SELF DESTRUCT IN 10 SECONDS. 10, 3, 2, 1



DO I BRING THE BEGGING BOWL FOR FOOD OR RENT?



JCI Dhaka United and Podium strive to build a skilled Bangladesh with Crash Course Season 4

Crash Course, which has been facilitating skill building workshops since 2015, returned this year with a full-fledged agenda of equipping students with the tools required for a strong corporate career. This year, the event was organised by Podium in collaboration with JCI Dhaka United.

The fourth iteration of Crash Course consisted of three sessions covering slide making, presentation and Microsoft Excel. This season's guest speakers included Sajeed Alam, Champion of the Unilever Future Leaders' League and Bizmaestros 2015; M Murshed Haider, President of Dhaka Toastmaster's Club, Co-Founder of Talent Hub and CEO of

Optima HR Solutions; and Syed Ibrahim Saajid, Pricing Strategy Specialist at GrameenPhone Ltd. and Vice President of JCI Dhaka United.

Sajeed Alam discussed the must-knows of branding competitions and assigned a task to the participants to come up with a branding solution for Bangladeshi street food. In the second session, M Murshed Haider exchanged his views on the education system of the country. Syed Ibrahim Saajid took an interactive session on Excel in which students brought their laptops to gain hands-on experience on the fly. There was also included a two-part segment called 20/20 with R.K.B where Raihan Khandker

imparted tips and tricks on slide design in the first session and focused on competitions in the second.

At Crash Course, participants need to earn their certificates by obtaining a minimum score of 50 percent so it is ensured that the topics are well understood. The trainers moved around the whole auditorium and helped individual students one-on-one. Season 4 also hit a new milestone by being host to the most diverse crowd yet, with over 200 students from different schools, colleges, and universities from all over the country.

RIFA TASFIA KHAN

The writer is a Catalyst at Podium

AIUB Community of Engineers celebrates foundation day

American International University of Bangladesh (AIUB) Community of Engineering Students (ACES) celebrated its third foundation day on April 6, 2017. Starting with only 40 members in 2014, ACES is currently 800-strong.

The programme was graced by the presence of many faculty members and alumni of different batches. A series of events took place to commemorate the day, one of which was a presen-



tation of yearly activities by the research group of ACES. One group of students shared their thoughts on the most anti-

ipated upcoming events, the University Rover Challenge 2017 (URC), a part of AIUB Robotic Crew 2017.

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.

7 THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE STARTING YOUR NEW JOB

First jobs and first experiences can be nerve-racking no matter how many 'firsts' you have. From the first minute you walk into a company to everything that you do within those walls, it all contributes to your professional image. Here are seven things you need to know before you start your new job.

1. Read up

Find out who the top managers are, the organisation's goals, mission, vision, and exactly what your job entails. Keep up-to-date on industry news, and check out the company's workplace policies, e.g. social media policy.

2. Banish any form of self-doubt

Establish that you are indeed fit for the job. Your job now is to carry yourself with confidence and give it your best.

3. Be respectful and friendly

Do not sit in a corner and alienate the people around you. Be nice to all the new faces you meet. Get to know your team members and start forming connections.

4. Leave your ego at the door

Ask for help and instructions. No one expects you to know the finer details of the job and your boss is there to provide guidance. If you find yourself unsure or confused, go ahead and ask your seniors for help. Do not be afraid to ask – you are expected to. Ask your boss about your performance, what is



expected of you, and for tips on how you can improve.

5. Understand that grammar counts

Accuracy of facts counts. Proofread your documents before submission. If you find yourself to be weak in this particular area, work on improving yourself and show results of improvement. Re-check your facts and sources and always question their validity.

6. Plan your arrival

Your job begins even before you set foot in the office. Try arriving early to get extra time to adjust and make a good impression. Plan out things that make you anxious, like how you will greet people, what you will wear, your mode of transportation, etc. This will boost your confidence and help you figure out what to do and what not to.

7. Fine-tune your elevator pitch

You will be asked about who you are and what you do, but might have limited time to introduce yourself. Figure out how you are going to represent yourself in relatable terms and in a way that leaves a great impression.

New experiences might seem daunting, but focus on giving your very best at the job. Learn from your mistakes and your involvement and let it bring growth within you.

RAHMA MIRZA

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