

WHAT NOT TO DO IN YOUR UNDERGRAD YEARS

A good number of you adrenaline junkies out there doing your undergrads would find the idea of being advised with a "NOT-to-do" list borderline preposterous. After all, these four years encompass the firsts and lasts of a lot of carefree adventures. This is perfectly understandable, as you might have to sacrifice all the good things in life and become a corporate slave as soon as you graduate.

However, those who've been there and done that have some useful pointers for you, as they reflect back on those overriding years of their lives:



ILLUSTRATION: EHSANUR RAZA RONNY

1. Do not spread yourself too thin.

It is of course intriguing to be able to cash in on every new opportunity that comes your way, but overdoing it isn't a good idea. University life is indeed about exploring new horizons but you should not have so much on your plate that it starts spilling over the sides. Many students not only stay engrossed in academics, but are also involved in club work, competitions, ECAs, internships, and community service. Gaining new experiences and building networks in your student life is just as important as having fun. You still haven't graduated, you still don't have a stressful 9-5 work life—so do take a break sometimes. Don't wear yourself out by working too much unless you truly enjoy it. Don't try to explore too many different things—sometimes it's better to be a master of one or two things than to be a jack of all trades. Recruiters look for specialised skills, not a moderate level of expertise in everything.

2. Do not obsess over making money.

Teaching students, doing part-time jobs or helping out with a senior's research are some of the many ways you can earn some quick bucks. There almost seems to be a sweet spot after which you become addicted to the habit of earning and start running after money. You start to think self-sufficiency is too crucial for social validation, even though your family can provide for you fairly well. While it's important to be financially independent, keeping yourself too busy means you'll miss out on hangouts, trips and quality family time. You're going to look back and realise that it was the bonds one makes in their university days that truly matter, rather than earning excess cash. So make sure you've chalked your schedule out well enough to include some time for yourself and your friends.

3. Study hard, party hard—NOT harder.

Nobody likes to hear this, of course.

Partying till late is everything you would be looking forward to amidst your otherwise exhausting life at university. Frequent trips and sleepovers might be getting the better of you. Many of us get a new taste of freedom when we start university, so it's very easy to get carried away. It's easy to tell yourself that you know where to draw the line. But one fine day, you might find yourself actively defending your guilty pleasures or overindulgences against your plummeting grades and worsening relationships. Is it still worth it?

You can pretend that it's harmless to be in probation or to have a low CGPA, but you know you're just lying to yourself. A high CGPA isn't the ultimate benchmark by which your intellect should be judged, but the world isn't always fair. Your transcript acts as a first impression for foreign schools and recruiters, and they will judge you for it. Slack off sometimes, but make sure you're in control of your life. Having too much fun has a price that you don't want to pay.

4. Do not procrastinate.

There are countless motivational speakers on your news feed that are trying to get you to work, and failing. None expects you to see the light because of these videos and suddenly become a driven, hardworking individual. But it is expected you take something away from this article, and make some small changes in your life. Instead of putting off that 1,000-word report, get started on it. Instead of being afraid of rejection, apply for that part-time job. Have some fun with your family and friends—you won't regret it. The point is, do everything you want to do, but maintain a balance.

As long as you check yourself once in a while and hone some strong skills besides holding up decent grades, you are good to go. Do not live your life at university by the standards of the celebrated "heroes" of the class—live by your own means.

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IS YOUR BOSS A MICHAEL SCOTT?

Michael Scott has transcended above mere humankind into a herculean identity that helps me in my troubled times. He is the counsel I seek when work is killing me. He is the one I look up to when I feel down. Are you fortunate enough to have a boss who's as inspirational as Mr Scott?

1| Do you love your boss or fear him?
Both answers are wrong. You have to be afraid of how much you love him.

2| Does your boss prioritise work over everything else?

To be Michael Scott, you have to make friends first and sales second. If your boss tells you to work harder and party less, he is not cool enough to be Mr Scott.

3| Does your boss treat the HR department in a fair manner?
If yes, then your boss is as far from Michael Scott as possible. In order to be as cool as Mr Scott, he'd have to hate HR employees passionately.

QUICK START-UP, QUICK MONEY



these days. Due to the patronage of companies like Made in Bangladesh and Moar, local consumers now value uncommon handmade crafts and are willing to pay a high price for the effort.

4. Pop culture merchandise

Although there is some pop culture merchandise available online, I believe this is still a niche that can be exploited. Merchandise for many fandoms is still very limited. Here lies the opportunity for you to come up with your own unique merchandise, such as posters, printed mugs, notebooks, or even t-shirts.

5. Freelance graphics, logos, slide decks

Some people just have a natural instinct for designs, colours, and fonts. Instead of

just using this skill for free at your school or university, try to pursue it as a profession. Companies are always looking for good designers, and if you're a pro at Illustrator or Photoshop then you can make some considerable income on the side. Prezenta is such a business that makes custom slide decks, logos, and animations for its clients.

6. Things not available online

Much of the urban youth prefer buying some products online rather than actually going to stores for them. A successful trend that I've noticed is selling products on Facebook which are usually not available online. These include sunglasses, greeting cards, computer accessories, and even common stationery like pens.

THE BOSSMAN

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IMAGE: RAHIN SADMAN ISLAM

In the end it must be realised that startups, of all sizes, require some commitment. To ensure it doesn't feel like a burden, choose something that you are genuinely interested in and would like to see it grow big someday. Make sure to keep your costs low, and in turn, your prices low. Or else you'll never make it in this competitive market. Put more effort into the quality of the product than you do in your marketing content. At the end of the day, quality matters, not flashy sponsored posts.

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If you have a good fashion sense and can mix and match apparel to come up with unique designs, then this is the business for you. Many people don't have the time to buy fabrics and go to the tailor to have them made, and you can provide them with a solution to this. Let people customise colours, fabrics and designs and you'll have a loyal customer base in no time.

3. Handicrafts

Paper crafts, art prints, candles, notebooks, and handmade jewellery are appreciated by increasingly more people