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The Daily Star

DHAKA, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2018

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# NEXT STEP

## IS BEING AN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER A BIG DEAL?

Student clubs and forums seem to be a really big deal in universities. Like every other organisation these clubs also have a top management for overseeing activities, managing events, and what not. The top management otherwise known as the executive committee are the ones taking all the decisions. Each member of this committee is a person deemed fit to bear the spectrum of responsibilities that comes with the posts they're promoted to. Many deem being an executive member a sheer waste of time and many emphasise on the opportunities it provides to an individual in the coming stages of life. So today we'll try to figure out if being an executive member of a club actually helps you along the way.

**THE REAL-LIFE WORKING SIMULATION**  
Undoubtedly, this has to be one of the key reasons why one would like to be an executive committee member in the first place. Being an EC member means being responsible for a few things, like member activity and work output, dealing with logistics firsthand, scheduling an event A to Z, dealing with university authority, taking decisions that have real consequences, or the morbid feeling of letting an unproductive member go albeit them being a very positive person to be with. All this is basically a foreshadow of what you may have to deal with when you're in a job. The magnitude obviously varies but the stress and responsibilities have many things in common. So, chances are you'll come out with a hefty amount of experience on managing people, working under steep odds and having to balance personal and work life on a hanging scale. Sounds like a good deal if you're willing to put up a fight in your professional life.

**THE NETWORKING OPPORTUNITY**  
Networking is perhaps the most salient competitive edge one can have over another. Every time there's an event by a club, be it a cultural fest, a debate tournament or a seminar, there are always some big-shot people involved who matter in their respective fields. Executive committee members are tasked to reach out to these high level players. This entails having to spend a considerable amount of interacting with them, and if you're shrewd enough and know how to stir up the right conversation, things may look bright for you if you ever need some sort of push in your professional life. Chances of that happening is low but when it clicks, it skyrockets.

**PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**  
You end up learning a lot about how to increase productivity, because you are in charge of making sure the efforts of you and your team are utilised for each event to be successful. As a consequence, you learn



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the merits of being focused, diplomatic and patient. You learn the importance of scheduling and time management. You start getting accustomed to having people depending on you and being responsible for things. You get to work with teachers and seniors who can act as mentors. Lots of public speaking and social interaction is involved so good practice for that too. Ultimately, the opportunity for skill development and personal growth are the biggest pros of being an EC member.

**GRASPING FOR TIME**  
Here's the thing: university clubs won't pay you, despite you having to dedicate a lot of time and effort behind the work. Some people find it rewarding still, but know that it will be difficult for you to handle a club position, your studies, and a part-time job. I have seen many people sacrificing their EC positions for a job that actually

pays, because they had different priorities. Even if you don't have another job, simply managing time for studying may prove to be a challenge while you're in the middle of organising a huge event. Should you choose to join a club, you must first decide on your priorities and act accordingly.

### POLITICS AND MORE

No matter where you go in the world, if you have to work with people, you have work around the politics that come with them. You will find that there are separate groups inside the same club, each with their own dynamics. You have to tread very carefully, and you will surely meet some dishonest people. Not everyone will be professional and fair, in fact, many people will enable nepotism and fraud. This entire phenomenon is quite stressful, and really not worth it if you're not good at dealing with complex human interactions.

### WEIGHT OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Perhaps the most heavy thing that comes with being an EC member is being accountable to your institution authority at all times. This means you're under strict surveillance, constantly admonished for every little mishap and responsible for every other member and their activities. There are expert ways to deal with teachers, and the sooner you learn the better. You have to know how to handle criticism, and you must look out for the club members who report to you.

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## THE BOSSMAN

BY E. RAZA RONNY



## Are you even a startup anymore?

Have you ever wondered why people suddenly stopped calling their ventures businesses, and started using the term startup? What really is the difference between a business and a startup? Do people just keep using the term startup cause it sounds more trendy and fancy?

Here's the thing, not all small and medium businesses are startups. Say, you start a business where you import things from AliExpress and sell them for a small profit to Bangladeshi customers. That is by no means a startup. Startups are businesses that have high growth potential and scalability. Your business of reselling goods from AliExpress can neither make a global impact, nor is it disruptive and technology-driven in any way. Your aim with that business is to make some profit, whereas a true startup's aim is to scale much higher, and go for a public IPO some day.

Uber in its early days is a prime example of a startup. It ticks all the boxes: technology-driven, disruptive, highly scalable, and globally impactful. But is Uber still a startup, 9 years after its launch? No. That is where Bangladeshi companies go wrong: maybe giving their business this title earns them more funding from the government, or features in random online blogs, or some completely useless awards. Or maybe they use it for some peace of mind, and on top of that, the only way to continue getting funding for an old business that hasn't been able to grow in a decade is to still call it a startup.

The word startup has become more of a cultural phenomenon than a definitive term these days. Telling everyone that you have a



"business" just doesn't cut it anymore. In our minds, startups have cooler, albeit smaller offices, the employees are free to dress however they like, and the bosses aren't strict. The word's just been branded in that way.

But this branding has helped in some ways, as annoying as it may be to see the word being thrown around everywhere. There was a time when doing business was stigmatised in Bangladesh. If you told someone that you've started a business after completing graduation, they'd just look at you with horror and wonder how you will ever be able to support a

family. Now, thanks to startups being a cooler alternative, it's no longer looked down upon. You will still face a thousand roadblocks in your startup journey, but at least your future father-in-law (probably) won't look at you like you're a dirty dung beetle who doesn't deserve his daughter's hand.

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Aanila is the sub-editor of Next Step. In her free time she counts Bangladeshi ride-sharing apps, but it's a never-ending list. You can reach her at [aanila.tarannum@gmail.com](mailto:aanila.tarannum@gmail.com).

## 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.

### What do venture capitalists look for in a startup?



#### THE TEAM

Investing in a business means investing in its team, and VCs want strong, capable, and qualified people handling startups that may one day become a multimillion dollar company. Good management can even make a bad idea work, whereas excellent business ideas will fail in the hands of a weak team.



#### POTENTIAL, PROBABILITY, PERIOD

Startups aren't judged by how much profit they're making, rather their potential of earning a huge revenue. VCs judge the likelihood of a startup's success after considering relevant external and internal factors, and the amount of time it will take for the startup to become valuable.



#### COMPETITIVE EDGE

VCs look for new ideas that are hard to replicate. Your product or service must offer something that others can't, and it must be sustainable. Coming up with obsolete ideas that will soon be replaced by AI or other technology won't help you get funding. You must have a long term, scalable plan.

Design: Aanila Kishwar Tarannum