

Why being ambitious isn't enough

The key to establishing your own online business

Women may not have populated the industry as much as their male counterparts owing to several structural constraints, but just pause for a moment and take a look at the recent standing of women who are actually joining the online business alliances. It's not solely driven by an indomitable desire to open an apparel store just because they want to prove to spiteful people that they're actually doing something worthwhile. Neither is it borne out of bulletproof certainty regarding style and the need to share that style with the community. It makes more sense to presume that they have an acute business sense, a sincere interest in the clothing business and more than a little cash in the bank.

PAVING THE WAY TOWARDS GROWTH

Last year an analysis by We are Social & Hootsuite published that around 18 per cent of Bangladesh's people are active social media users, which makes 28 million active social media users out of 166 million people. A number that big surpasses the population of many first world countries. Because of this huge online presence, you can reach a much wider audience than you would with any other form of marketing. So, I maintained a calendar to help me plan on how to make schedules for my business throughout the year. You need to have a good network of people to get things done or get yourself introduced to a new skill set. The digital platform helped me outline and create marketing campaigns for occasions and cultural events. As people shop more online today, it's easier to study and target the potential customers. So, in that case it's essential to keep yourself updated with the current digital tools and applications.

ASSESSING CAPITAL REQUIREMENTS

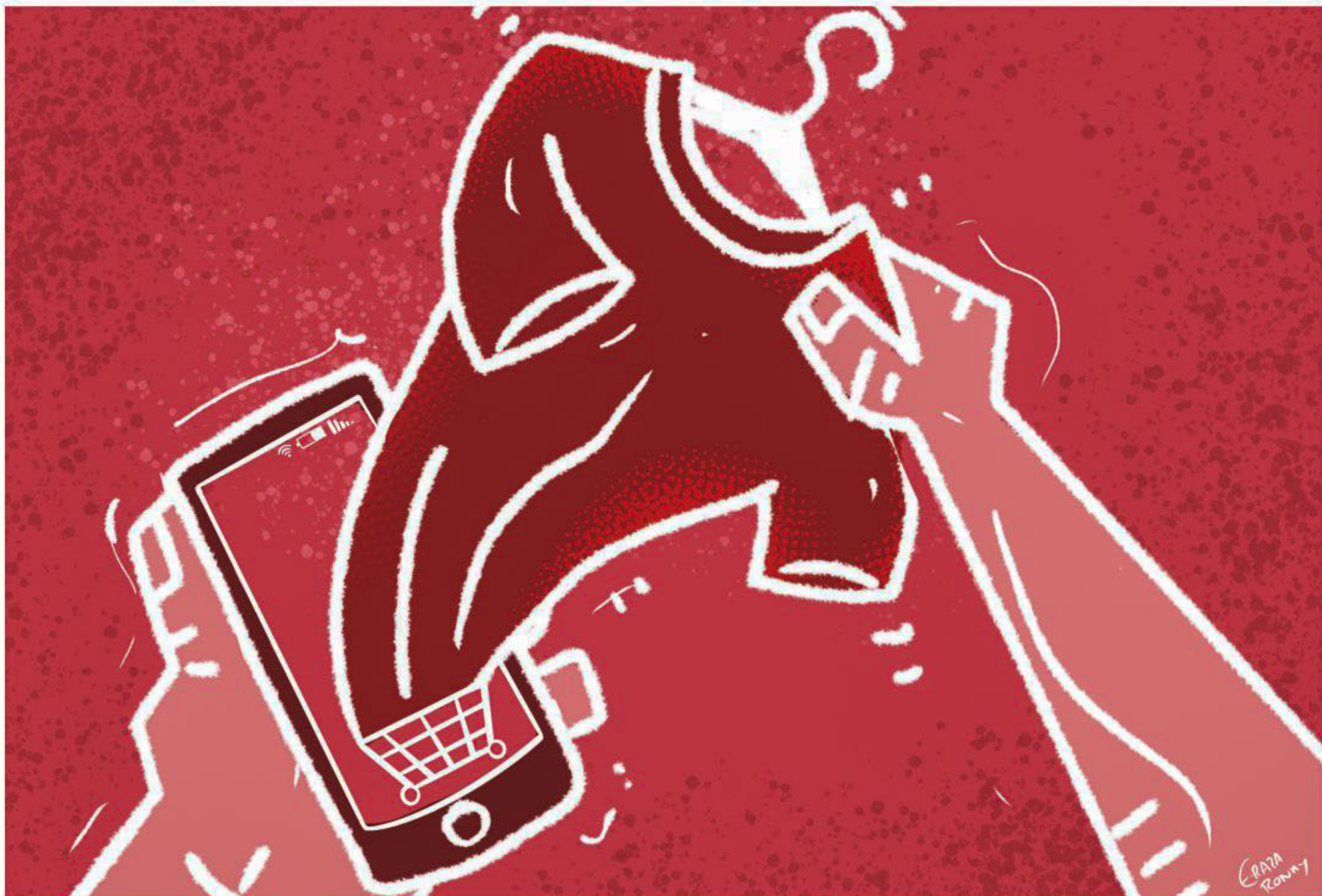
You don't really need a big capital pool to create a startup; you need to have a concrete idea about what you really want to work on. You need to create a perfect business model which demands heavy planning and consideration of the implications for its sustainability and development. But at first, it starts with word of mouth around your network. Personally, I started with only 15 dresses for my online store 'Gracefully Yours'.

BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL CUSTOMER BASE

The quality you provide in terms of every aspect of handling your customer is a game-changer. You have to ensure consistent quality, appropriate customer handling and unwavering communication to make it in the long run. Multinational brands ensure customer satisfaction at every touchpoint throughout their service. Make sure you serve your customers well and meet all their demands.

MARKETING YOUR BUSINESS

Bloggers and social media influencers are quite helpful for getting target-oriented customers as they can be reliable channels to convey your products to the most relevant customers. Photo shoots and thorough



branding are quintessential in this case.

CRACKING WORK HOURS

Working for yourself can be more time-consuming than working full-time for someone else; you have to be very committed in terms of the time and dedication you invest into your operations. You have to research rigorously, set clear goals and craft a plan of action. You also have to allot yourself some free time to balance stress levels and stay rejuvenated.

FACING FEARS

As women, we are deeply affected by our surroundings and the society. The society looks down on many activities women take part in and they end up trying to tell us what to do. Hence, it's really difficult to go past that and focus on our own ambitions, especially since we live in a society that firmly believes women solely belong in the kitchen.

FINDING INSPIRATION

Even though I have worked previously in the media and as a lawyer, I always wished to pursue a venture of my own to make sure I don't always have to work for someone else and can instead own a brand that I can call my own. I wanted to do something I am passionate about and that is how I created my own clothing line.

IDEATING THE BUSINESS

Born out of my passion for fashion, we go with the tagline "Let's redefine your closet". Besides, I am intrigued by the opportunity of being able to share that with my community. My fashion line enables women to feel good about and comfortable with themselves. At the end of the day, I derive fulfillment from being able to play a role in that.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

One of the many challenges is finding the

right customers for your brand. There are countless fake profiles online. In that case, demographics play a huge role as Facebook keeps changing its algorithms. Keeping yourself up-to-date with new strategies and marketing models is the only way to create the right customer base. Maintaining delivery schedule is another difficult task as commuting is very hard.

Being an optimist isn't going to suffice if you aren't a realist. You need to compose yourself and walk through each phase, consistently establishing your goals while thriving through the learning curve. Make your business the center of your system and sprint towards your dream.

TAHSEEN KARINA

THE BOSSMAN

BY E. RAZA RONNY



The myth of self-growth books

Students and professionals are always in the quest to improving their lifestyles. Life coaches have managed to build a million-dollar industry that thrives on this wish of individuals to enhance their individual lifestyles. Self-growth books are tools offered by the industry that guarantees to improve your condition. People suffering from productivity blockades, undisciplined routines and psychological struggles often consume these books with hopes to finding solutions. But is it always an effective effort to expect these books to eliminate your problems for you? Let's bust some myths that float around the concept of self-help books and their magical abilities to help someone in need.

ALL STRUGGLES CAN BE OVERCOME

A general trend by writers of self-help books is to feature stories of personal struggles they faced and how they overcame them. They also feature stories of inspirational figures who survived harsh realities and became successful against all odds. Facing systematic discrimination, overwhelming financial bindings, fighting mental illness and tackling unhealthy family lives are the most common themes of these struggles. The problem is that it gives readers the hope that no matter what their problems are, as long as they manage to work hard, they will be able to rein in the troubles of their life. This is a concept that is not true for everyone. While it might be inspirational for many to find the strength to fight their obstacles, it comes at the cost of potential false hopes regarding guaranteed success that often leads to mental exhaustion for individuals who come out unsuccessful. Optimistic motivation often fails to acknowledge the ultimate reality of life that struggles are a part of the human experience and it might not be possible to overcome them even with the best efforts.

MENTAL ILLNESSES ARE EASILY CURABLE

These books often falsely diagnose symptoms of chronic and medical illnesses as lifestyle choices that can be changed. Sleeping habits, self-doubt, eating disorders, social awkwardness, mood swings, etc. are all possible symptoms of a range of diseases identified by medical professionals. Self-help books quote these characteristics as choices that can be changed with a disciplined routine and guarantee improvement if the mentioned routine is followed. Readers who fail to achieve the promised goal after trying to follow a routine often end up worse than they were before they read the books. Sanjana Huq, a

student of computer science in a public university says, "After my enrollment in university I was struggling with my productivity and sleeping habits due to the stress of a new environment. A friend of mine suggested me to try a book by a well celebrated motivational speaker to overcome my problems. I tried following the suggestions mentioned in the books and ended up blaming myself when I didn't get the promised results. Later, as I consulted a doctor, I was informed that I had chronic depression and bipolar disorder. The book did not help me in any way to diagnose my problems, rather pushed me to believe that I was responsible for my situation."



ONE SOLUTION WORKS FOR ALL

The back covers of these books often promise secret strategies and life hacks that can be employed to achieve a disciplined life. What they fail to engage with is the diversity of the reader base and the unique circumstances demanding different fixations. The readers fall prey to this myth and try to emulate the advice without customising the solutions to their specific need sets. The socioeconomic and geographical conditions of readers often dictate the kind of incentives that can work for them to effectively guide them to a routine lifestyle, but the lack of diversity in these books fail to acknowledge that.

NOSHIN SAIYARA

Noshin Saiyara is an aspiring conservationist who is deluded into thinking that she can save the planet from dying. Reach her at nsaiyara12@gmail.com to bring her back to reality.

Making a DIFFERENCE

Developing your creative confidence

RESIST JUDGING YOURSELF

We often don't realise that self-deprecating behaviour leaves the most harmful impact on our creative thinking. Always worrying, double, or triple checking before doing or saying something lest it should sound stupid – are signs that you're being way too hard on yourself. Failure might have come to you in the past, but you have to come to terms with yourself and internalise that your failures don't define you and that you are worth more than you give yourself credit for.

PUSH YOURSELF OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE

Acing the first two steps is primarily getting half the work done. This step is mostly about quitting the habit of fearing that your thoughts and opinions won't resonate with others. It's taking that first leap of faith. It's about going ahead with the theory that was going through your mind but you were too scared to try out, or that idea you wanted to share with your class that was just at the edge of your lips but you were too nervous to speak up about. You know what they say; you miss 100% of the chances you don't take.

THE SNAKE EXPERIMENT

There's an experiment Albert Bandura, renowned psychologist and Stanford professor, had done in order to help people get past their lifelong snake phobias. He would, through gradual steps with increasing exposure to snakes, make his subjects accustomed to being around them. The people who went through it were not only cured of a crippling fear they had assumed was untreatable, but also had less anxiety and more success in other parts of their lives, like taking up new and potentially frightening activities like public speaking.

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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.

