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The Daily Star

DHAKA, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2019

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NEXT STEP

MAKING PRIVILEGE PROGRAMS ACCESSIBLE

In conversation with Abdullah Chowdhury, the founder of Royalty Bangladesh

Abdullah Chowdhury started Royalty Bangladesh with a simple yet challenging mission to unify privilege programs all over the Bangladeshi market. His journey started in the summer of 2017, and through visionary-thinking and determination, his platform now hosts over 100 partners, offering members the best deals in town.

We caught up with the budding entrepreneur last week and this is what he had to share.

Tell us what exactly Royalty Bangladesh is?

Royalty BD is the first dedicated privilege card platform in the country that allows its users to find offers and discounts from a large selection of lifestyle service providers, be it the hippest new eat-out or the fanciest spa or resort. It helps users discover, experience, and save money at the same time. To find offers and discounts, simply visit our website (royaltybd.com) or download our app (RoyaltyBD) on google play or the app store. You can access all kinds of offers and discounts, all organised under one platform.

What made you bring your platform in Bangladesh?

The offers and deals market is very scattered in our country; we wanted to make it easier for everyone. Our partners receive a boost in marketing and reach, using our tech-enabled platform that allows customers in and around their location to easily discover their businesses. We also become partners for their loyalty program which helps all merchants retain and grow their customer base. Consumers love discounts and rewards, and we want to give them access to these privileges without them having to get an expensive credit card or club membership.

Tell us about Royalty Bangladesh's journey in short?

It all started with a plan on a piece of paper. Without over-thinking about the downside, we started off with two employees in a small office. We set things up and completed our website and expanded our team as we went along.

Confidence and belief are paramount for any startup, but I believe it was helped by continuous support from my parents and peers who gave me the strength to march on. I believe that a company's success is not just about the founder or the CEO; it's always about the team. My team is excellent and



I'm happy to be working with an office full of fresh talents and bright minds.

Along the way, there were several difficulties and challenges, but we hung on as a team. Thanks to our perseverance and grit, today we are a team of 16 and are on stable footing. The vision with Royalty BD is still at its early stages and it's only going to get better with time.

How are the customers and businesses responding to your platform?

In a short span of time, we have managed to get an overwhelming amount of customer responses. Every week, we are signing with new partners, which shows that people had been waiting for a service like ours. We love it when our users tell us that we got them access to deals that saved them lots of money.

How is Royalty Bangladesh different from any other similar platforms?

Firstly, anyone can get our loyalty cards. Like

I said before, you don't have to be a part of a bank or a club to get on our program. You can simply scan our card at a partner outlet or substitute the card with our "RoyaltyBD" app and avail those offers. We allow our customers to track the offers they have utilised and redeem points to avail even more exciting rewards. Our program is aimed at heavy lifestyle spenders and we hope to create concrete relationships along the way.

With the growing competition for loyalty programs, how do you manage to be authentic?

Our main aim is to engage and build a relationship between the customers and merchants while maintaining quality and integrity. To ensure the stability and reputation of our merchants, we follow a rigorous verification process by comprehensively authenticating their profiles and we opt to a similar approach when it comes to our valued users.

We continually moderate the posts to filter out any kinds of scams.

What are your future plans? Where do you see Royalty Bangladesh in the next year or two?

For now, our initial target is to establish ourselves in the market which we have done to a large extent. We have some captivating ideas for Royalty Bangladesh that we hope to launch very soon. We are aiming to be the most prestigious and recurrent privilege service in Bangladesh.

Any advice for new entrepreneurs?

First, figure out the problem and then find the solution. When you have an idea, you must remain focused and be persistent on building what you believe in. And more importantly, never ever compromise on quality and integrity.

MOHAMMAD AKIB NAWAZ

THE BOSSMAN

BY E. RAZA RONNY



How important is it to be 'culture fit'?

Just like people, businesses too have personalities that we call organisational culture. A company's culture can be seen as the values and beliefs of the company's founders through the collective force of employees, interactions between management and subordinates and the work environment. This culture varies from company to company. 'Culture Fit' doesn't imply that companies hire people who are identical; it is essentially about matching people with the said business culture.

The term 'Culture Fit' was initially found in career sites, integrated into interview processes and touted as a competitive advantage for many organisations in the tech community. Now, the term has taken a more tribal meaning. Employees spend a substantial portion of their lives dedicated to working and building a career. If they don't love the work they are doing and the people they are working with, they can quickly spiral into an undesirable work environment which might inevitably lead to employee turnover. This is something that should be extensively thought about by both the employers and the candidates who are applying for the position.

The underlying cultural hallmark of an organisation should be embraced by all the people working in the organisation. The importance of being a culture fit in the business world is exponentially increasing.

People spend about a third of their lives in the workplace. It is important that they feel happy and connected in the place that they work. If that doesn't happen, this might lead to the problem of staff retention. Culture fitness is the most important aspect of retaining employees.

When an employee's beliefs are more tuned to those of the company that they work for, they are more likely to be committed to the company and its work. This level of employee engagement is critical for a business and its sustainable success.

A team that works well together with the same core values, functions better and is aligned more accurately with the same goals than a team with disjointed priorities. Professional and personal differences are much easier

to resolve in teams where employees are committed to similar values.

Organisations with a healthy culture are usually interested in collaborative working processes and open communications. When values are aligned, it is much easier to communicate.

On the contrary, as companies strive for increasing diversity and inclusion, the term 'Culture Fit' is falling out of favor. A hiring process built around an undefined notion of cultural fitness is fraught with bias. Some companies may use this term as a blanket term to reject candidates that don't match the hiring managers' view of the ideal candidate. The term has thus been labelled as a notion of unconscious bias. Some companies are beginning to drop this idea as they are reframing their

thinking to add diverse candidates to their culture. Forbes listed companies such as Facebook, Pandora, Atlassian, etc. are some of the companies that are reframing their views on culture fitness to promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

Despite these dynamic shifts, being culture fit is still perceived to be imperative for both employees and organisations alike. "Being culturally fit is very important to align yourself with a company. If you don't fit in with the culture, all the work will feel like a burden and it becomes

tough to own your work," says Shadman Ul Karim, Assistant Brand Manager at Marico Bangladesh. Naziba Bar Chowdhury, Global Graduate of Operations, British American Tobacco says, "Being culture fit is very, very important, irrespective of whether the fit is between an educational organisation and a student, or a workplace and an employee. Proper cultural alignment is extremely crucial."

NABILA HOSSAIN

Nabila Hossain is a senior at Institute of Business Administration, University of Dhaka. Reach her at nabilaanima@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.

SIGNS YOU HAVE A BAD BOSS

If your higher-up or manager makes you want to have anxiety pills every alternate hour of the day at the office, it might be a good time to have your guards up in dealing with the case of a horrible boss. Additionally, you may see the following signs.

YOUR CONTRIBUTION DOESN'T GET APPRECIATED

When you pulled off an all-nighter to get that presentation ready and exquisitely delivered within deadline, did your hard work earn you a pat on the back? Even a simple constructive feedback from your manager should suffice to indicate that they are a good boss.

THE BOSS IS ALWAYS RIGHT

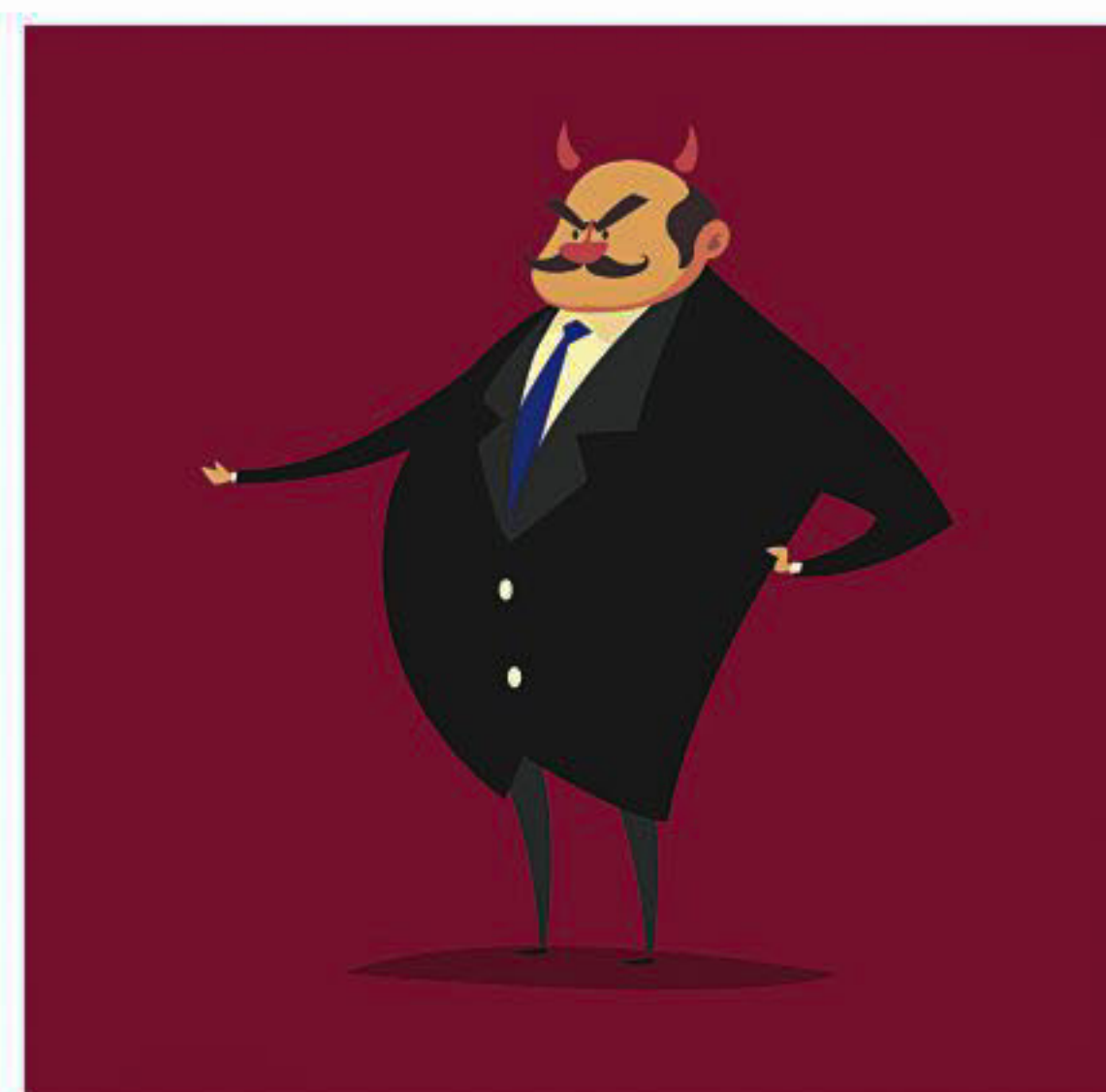
Your manager refusing to own up to their mistakes may be one of the major causes of frustration that can come your way in the workplace. It needs to be remembered that even as a boss, there are tons of gaps they have left out that can be filled up by others, and that chances of being wrong aren't exclusive to the subordinates only.

YOUR MANAGER PICKS FAVOURITES

It's quite natural to get disheartened when a peer earns brownie points just by being on the manager's good books by establishing personal or unprofessional connections with them. Such biased behaviour is unacceptable because a good boss is always neutral and objective.

YOUR MANAGER CONSTANTLY OVERWORKS YOU

Your good performance at work isn't an excuse for your boss to dump you with additional work with no raise, bonus, or rewards given to you. So make sure you're not being taken advantage of under the pretence of the classic 'Let's see if my favourite employee can put in some extra hours and make it happen again!' situation.



THE MANAGER ISN'T LOYAL TO THE TEAM

When the leader isn't dedicated to lead the team or isn't serious enough about work, mismanagement is bound to occur. Shahrin Hossain, a former employee in a local digital agency says, "My department head used to treat his office hours as his extended break-time, and never take his work seriously. Naturally, everyone in the department had their spirits and motivation dipped, and repeatedly failed to hand in the expected output."

ESHANEE SADHUKHAN

Eshanee is currently completing her BBA from IBA, DU. Reach her at eshanee333@gmail.com.