

TRANSCENDING BOUNDARIES

In conversation with Dotlines President Mahbubul Matin

Mahbubul Matin is a seasoned Bangladeshi tech entrepreneur and the founder of Dotlines, a technology-powered service and business solution group, working across 12 countries with its headquarters in Singapore. In a candid interview, Matin shared his entrepreneurial journey and mentioned how Dotlines is shaping the robust tech ecosystem of not just Bangladesh but also the world. You are better described as an investment banker from your early career. From there, you went to an entrepreneurial pursuit.

What was the motivation and aspiration behind it?

When I started thinking about being a tech entrepreneur almost 18-19 years back, there was a market opportunity with local talents. My career growth was initially very fast and I had the opportunity to look into a diverse field of business, from textile manufacturing to internet service providing. Such opportunities motivated me to pursue entrepreneurship.

What were the challenges then and what are the challenges that you face now?

Dotlines promotes a different brand of business. It is the result of multiple well-thought-out plans coming to fruition. We have always seen individual-centric organisations being built, but legacies not carried forward by successors. Decisions are taken only by high officials. As a result, we are unable to reach the limitless potential of local businesses. There are a few exceptions that are doing well in Bangladesh, but what I want to build is a business full of professionals that



should discuss and promote new and creative things every day. Ultimately, it has become difficult for me to sum up what Dotlines is. We do not try to inform the public about our business but rather focus on building the business first.

Do you have any regrets in terms of your career?

I feel that I'm still at an early stage in my career. At this point, I haven't even realised 0.5% of my potential. So every day is a regret for me in that sense. On the contrary, every day is an achievement for me as well. I feel a tremendous sense of positivity when I see people working, talking and collaborating. This gives me an immense sense of fulfilment. I still believe that Dotlines can grow much bigger.

How does Dotlines process different businesses?

Dotlines is an investment company. We

believe that you primarily need two types of capitals - financial and intellectual.

We can create multiple businesses by joining the different talented dots in the ecosystem and creating value out of the combination of finance and talents. Dotlines is also a network of talents. The reflection of this can be seen in the form of pickles, pulse, audra, iCarnival, Lattu or Mulamuli, which is a next-level gamified eCommerce platform.

As a student of economics, I look at this business as a combination of assets. You have to ensure optimal utilisation of available resources. As I work in the finance sector, my optimum input is human resources. I need to invest in both R&D and infrastructure. That's why I need a mix of capital and diversified talents, from core marketers to hardcore programmers. You will get a touch of everything here - Accounts, Finance, Legal, Distribution.

Dotlines wants to promote a different brand of entrepreneurship and a different brand of venture capital investments. I believe that budding entrepreneurs need an available ecosystem for monetisation. You can create anything in the world if there's a market for it. The issue is where you will sell your products. Where will you monetise it? Dotlines does just that. It enables an ecosystem for monetisation. It is creating its own startups as well as enabling third-party startups to flourish. Dotlines can create startups faster than any other organisation with its capital and human resources. We strongly believe that you need to have the relevant elements to have a sustainable business running.

What are the most important aspects to take into consideration when building the ecosystem?

For the Bangladeshi aspiration, I wanted to create two verticals - services directly to the consumer such as Carnival, Bangla Cut and eCourier, and pure core technology such as Audra and Pulse. While the service-based businesses are working in the local market, the core technology based-enterprises are working globally.

From our consumer base of 2 lakh families to our future consumers, everyone needs healthcare, education and logistic support. We want to integrate everyone into our ecosystem. Dotlines and Carnival are focusing on building a digital lifestyle towards productivity, prosperity and happiness. With active initiatives from the current government, we are also seeing infrastructure development in rural areas outside Dhaka.

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