



Navigating the big, scary world of your first career break

Use your career break as an opportunity to expand your knowledge and skills, whether it's through online courses, workshops, or self-study. Investing in relevant skill development will always enhance your value as a candidate when you re-enter the workforce.

SHAMS RASHID TONMOY

Soon into the second year of my first full-time job after graduation, I started to get the itch to learn more - a burning desire to pursue a Master's degree, especially one in a foreign country. While the decision wasn't an easy one to make, it ultimately felt like the right move, as it provided me the chance to explore my academic interests and see more of the world. Of course, this meant leaving the familiar routine of my workplace and the steady paycheck that came with it. It also meant, for the first time in my life, I had to take a career break.

A break for a reason

Whether it's for studies or personal development, stepping away from work can be scary, especially when you're new to the full-time world. In our world of constant hustle, taking a break to recharge and refocus takes guts. But, if you're up for it, the rewards can be worthwhile.

First things first: be clear on why you're taking a break and what you want to achieve. Are you pursuing a postgraduate degree, looking to gain new skills or certifications, or just simply hitting the pause button to reset? Each reason comes with its own set of priorities to reassess, so having a clear goal in mind will help you make the most of your break.

Next, think about the practicalities. How long will you be out? Full-time studies, or will

you have other commitments? When I applied for my two-year Master's degree, experienced well-wishers advised me to take at least two months of break before my classes started. That way, not only was I able to wrap up professional formalities in my workplace, but I had enough time for myself to mentally and physically prepare for my two-year stay at the foreign wonderland.

Utilise this free time

At times, while the burnout from your first full-time job will make a career break very alluring to pursue, it might not be a smart decision in the long run. Not only are you potentially losing a regular source of income, but you will eventually be subject again to the ever-demanding modern job market, potentially falling behind competing applicants.

The key is to stay engaged and proactive while you're off. Use your career break as an opportunity to expand your knowledge and skills, whether it's through online courses, workshops, or self-study. Investing in relevant skill development will always enhance your value as a candidate when you re-enter the workforce.

Without the worry of a full-time job hanging on your shoulder, take the time to reach out to professionals in your field through networking events, industry conferences, and online communities. You can build meaningful relationships with mentors and experts even while you're enjoying your well-deserved break.

Readjusting yourself

When it's time to rejoin the job market after a career break, it's important to approach the process with a healthy dose of realism and resilience. Depending on the length of your hiatus and the nature of your field, you may encounter some challenges along the way, but they are nothing you can't overcome.

Nonetheless, be prepared for the possibility of facing rejection or encountering longer-than-expected job search timelines. Coming back to the job market after finishing my Masters meant I was subject to regular applications and interviews in hopes of landing a satisfactory job. However, during interviews, being honest about the gap in my employment history helped tremendously, as I was able to explain what kind of skills and experiences I had gained during my career break. Doing so ultimately played a part in solidifying a positive first impression to the prospective employers.

In the end, a career break can be an amazing opportunity for personal and professional growth. By planning carefully, staying engaged, and being clear on your goals, you can set yourself up for success when you get back to work. So take that leap and embrace the adventure. Your future self will thank you for it. I know mine did.

Shams Rashid Tonmoy is a sub-editor at the Features desk of The Daily Star

JOBS SPOTLIGHT

act:onaid

ActionAid Bangladesh

Programme Officer - Knowledge Management, Outreach and Media Engagement

Deadline: April 27

Eligibility:

Postgraduate degree in relevant subjects such as International Relations/ Public Administration/Development Studies/Women and Gender Studies/Media and Journalism.

Minimum experience: 2-3 years

Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS)

Senior Officer (Programme), Human Rights Due Diligence

Deadline: April 28

Eligibility:

Master's degree preferably in Development Studies, Economics, Political Science, Public Administration, Law, International Relations, Journalism/Media, English, or any other relevant subject in Social Sciences.

Minimum experience: 5 years

Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited

Territory Manager

Deadline: April 30

Eligibility:

BBA/MBA from any well-reputed university.

Minimum experience: 2 years

Eskayef Pharmaceuticals Ltd.

Engineering Executive

Deadline: April 25

Eligibility:

BSC in Engineering (EEE/ME) from a reputed university.

Minimum experience: 1-2 years

FOR MORE DETAILS AND THE APPLICATION LINKS, SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW.

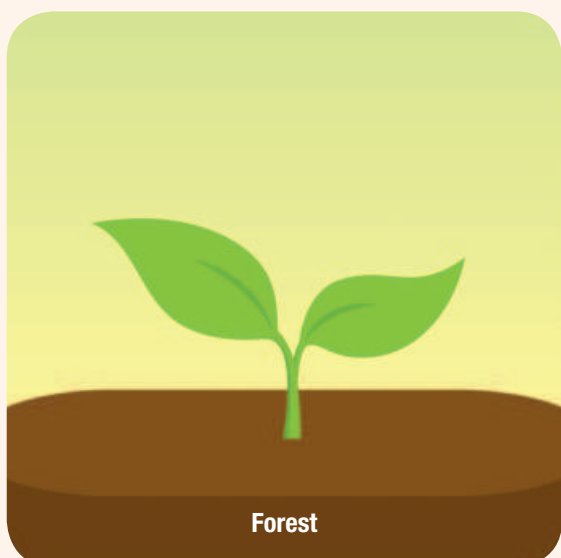


QUOTE OF THE DAY



The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.

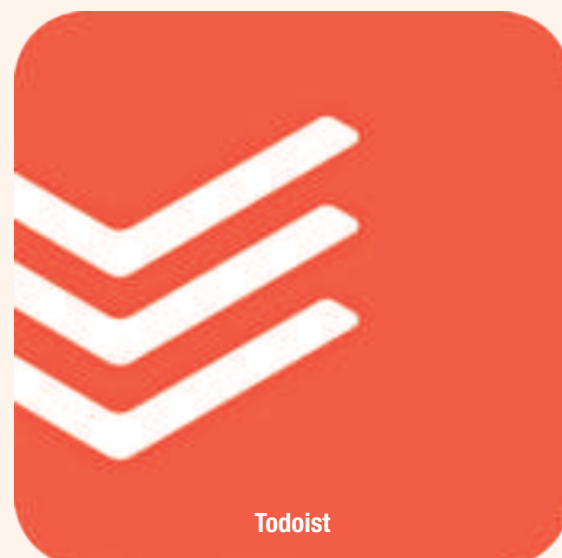
Nelson Mandela



Forest



Habitica



Todoist



Trello

Five apps to make your everyday work easier

Do you struggle to manage a heavy workload? Are you finding it difficult to prioritise tasks amidst overflowing calendars and scattered notes? If you're looking to optimise your workflow and maintain focus throughout the workday, consider incorporating these five helpful productivity apps into your routine.

Todoist

A comprehensive task management tool featuring an intuitive interface and robust features. Users can create detailed to-do lists, categorise tasks, set deadlines and reminders, and prioritise tasks based on importance. Todoist offers integrations with various project management tools and calendar apps, making it versatile for individual productivity.

Trello

Ideal for collaborative project management, Trello utilises visual boards, lists, and cards to represent project stages and tasks. Users can assign tasks, track progress with drag-and-drop functionality, and collaborate

through comments and file attachments. The app will also help you track real-time updates to ensure your whole team stays on schedule.

Forest

A unique tool for promoting focus and time management by 'gamifying' work sessions. With Forest, users plant a virtual tree when focusing on a task, which thrives as long as they stay off their phones. Spending time on the phone will, instead, cause the tree to wither and eventually die. The visual incentive should encourage you to focus on work while staying away from distractions.

Microsoft OneNote

While a basic app on many phones, this tool



OneNote

from the reputed tech giant offers more than just basic note-taking, providing a comprehensive interface for organising all types of information. Users can compile text notes, research articles, to-do lists, web clippings, and drawings within a single digital notebook. Search functions and categorisation options make information retrieval easy as well.

Habitica

An app that makes staying productive fun by breaking down your tasks in a video game-like scenario. Each daily task and to-do that you complete will net you a reward, as well as contribute towards your virtual character's level-up progression.