

Tanusree Sharma: Alright, can you please explain all about your organization and work distribution of your organization?

Habibullah Bahar: Okay, I am Habibullah Bahar, Co-founder, Field information solutions limited commonly known as Field Buzz. We are generally known as Field Buzz to everyone, or to at least the softwares engineers, who are our main resource persons.

Habibullah Bahar: We have two branches, one in Frankfurt, Germany and another one is in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The Dhaka office mostly works as an after sales and development hub of our product.

Habibullah Bahar: So basically, Field Buzz is a software company, but we don't develop software as clients want. We only sell licenses of our premade software which has 4 different variants. And that license is followed by regular maintenance, upgradation, improvements etc. Okay, let's not talk about business any more, so if I talk about the employees, 90% of them are from Dhaka. And the rest are from different countries like Kenya, Myanmar, Colombia, Germany etc. But they are not much in number. Most of them are like 2-3 persons group operating different operations in respective countries.

Habibullah Bahar: Well, I generally manage all the work here at Dhaka Branch or you can say, I run this office. But again, since I am one of the Co-founders, I also have to look after our company's many other major things, overall strategies and so on. We are two Co-founders, me and the other one is Alexis Rawlinson who is a French-British. Basically his area of work is to negotiate with the customers. After negotiation, I look into the matter, like deploying the product. By deploying I mean, I assume your background is from Computer Science, right?

Tanusree Sharma: Mm-hmm

Habibullah Bahar: Okay then, I think I don't need to explain this further. So, I deploy the product and then it becomes a recurring license. So, from here on all of our discussion will be about the Dhaka office.

Habibullah Bahar: So, we have a total of 40 employees at the Dhaka office. Most of which are Software Engineers. Then comes Implementation Consultants who are also known as Project Consultant, Project Manager etc. Basically, they act as a bridge between the developers and the customers. Their job is to make sure what customers are asking is being delivered properly. Testing is also a part of their job. Testing means, as it is an enterprise product, they make sure the products are having signature features of the enterprise as well as mitigating the demands of the target customers. Most of our target customers are from emerging economies or you can say third world countries. So we have to keep in mind that people here might not have enough knowledge about technologies or even lack formal education in some cases and build the product accordingly which are made sure by the Project Consultants.

Habibullah Bahar: Then comes the administrative employees. We don't have formal HR. Back in 2018, we hired an HR who lasted for around 8 months. But as a tech company, we didn't see any major role of HR. So, we had to let go of him. And from then I have been managing all the HR related works. Since it is a small company you know, a company of only 40 employees shall not be considered as a big company, we had a culture from the beginning about recruiting. So, there is such seniority or juniority in our company. Like for say, the junior most employee, who just joined yesterday, can discuss any issue with me. We only follow a process for technical development. But for any other topic, any other topic means hypothetically, someone didn't like today's food. As we provide lunch, snacks, etc from the office, we have our own kitchen and chef, so, they can report that straight to me or to the chef. Our philosophy is to introduce transparency as much as possible and giving ownership as much as possible. That actually allows me not to look into every single thing. So, taking these things into consideration we felt that the role of HR is not very important. Ultimately it became just work for keeping track of working hours. But later we found that keeping track of individuals' working hours is also not very important. Because ultimately their works had to be identified or you can say, I had to believe in one. Then we stopped keeping track of the working hours. And now, during this pandemic, there is no necessity of keeping this.

Habibullah Bahar: Then comes the matter of formal complaining. Taking many things into consideration, I always keep myself available. There are a lot of ways to reach me either anonymously or directly. Say for example, any religious issue occurred in my office. Which actually happened around 2018 that I handled a bit rudely. Rudely means, I actually try to stay in a neutral zone always. Wait, I think we are moving away from our formal discussion.

Tanusree Sharma: Ah no, it's totally fine. It's important for us to know the story. We'll have the answers to our formal questions as you say but these stories will help us a lot. So yes, you can say in detail.

Habibullah Bahar: Well, so as I was saying, whenever we hire someone we intentionally try to keep a gender balance. We, both the co-founders, have been trying from the beginning to hire male and female employees simultaneously equally. But unfortunately it never happened. Firstly because we failed to attract female engineers. It's quite surprising you know, it's not like there is any discrimination in our workplace. But yeah, it might be hidden. But as I said, we don't hire from senior levels. We always hire from junior levels like, freshers, or recently graduated like this. Even a few of my key people have been hired from their university. They joined as an intern or part-time and then gradually they were promoted. So, my philosophy is like since we need a cultural field, cultural field means, as I said we don't have any effective tracking system our main focus is trust. I trust you, and as long as you don't break the trust I don't have any reason to investigate.

Habibullah Bahar: So, we check many things during our yearly review. We keep track of everything but we check those neither on a daily or weekly basis. While hiring any employee, you can sometimes understand by attire. For example in Bangladesh you know, you can't tell anyone's religious identity by seeing their attire. Again there are people who by parlance are

expressing that they are sort of religious but nothing can be observed by their attire. And also there are people whom you can tell by attire that they are religious. Because they are wearing panjabi, pajama and have long beards.

Habibullah Bahar: I always make sure that you only bring work to your workplace, nothing religious. Unless you are comfortable enough with it. Comfortable enough means, like you cannot break into one's personal space. Suppose, there is a group of people who are close to themselves. They can discuss it themselves. It's alright. But you cannot say to a random person why he doesn't say his prayers. Or something different like a hindu person is being said, why don't you eat beef? Whatever you do in personal space is not always allowed in the workplace.

Habibullah Bahar: So, while hiring a specific resource person we told him straight that this is going to be an issue. You might have to work with females. Yes, we have a specific place for Namaj. We had to keep that since most of our employees are muslim. Whatever, just to give you some perspective, I am religiously agonistic. Which is why I don't follow religious things that much. But the thing is, everyone has their freedom. You can follow whatever you like without hampering others opinion. This is why we set up a place for prayer. And also I have seen that, the time they spend in prayer, they do make that time up. So, I find no problem with it.

Habibullah Bahar: When told about these things, he said he doesn't have any problems with it. Later on some things have been noticed. When I asked about that, some of them told me about some sort of indirect attack. So, what is that indirect attack like?

Habibullah Bahar: When we brown people go to the first-world countries, I don't know if you faced that, expressional racism, I experienced that a few times. As I frequently had to go to the foreign countries before the pandemic. So, I felt that. This sort of thing was going on in my office. I could've handled that in two ways. If he had a very good performance in the workplace, I could've sat with him and talked things out. But despite his poor performance, he has been creating such issues. Which is why, I gave him a strict 7 days notice that you'll be terminated after 7 days.

Habibullah Bahar: Basically, our termination period is 1 month. If we confirm that the employee has been notified, then we consider the next month as a paid leave. You are no longer required to come to the office, your salary will be sent to your account. One can leave the job for many reasons, either for performance reasons or because we had to let go of people, but usually we try to keep things in an allecable place. There is always a mutual understanding like, this might not be the right place for you, or, the tech standard we work on might not be comfortable for you. We give different feedback depending on the mutual understanding with the employee. But in this case I was like, "You don't need to come to this office from tomorrow. You can leave now and don't expect a good NOC certificate or experience certificate from us. We will just mention that you worked here from this to this date and that's all."

Habibullah Bahar: That was the only time we did something like that. Otherwise the religious factors didn't bother us anytime. As I said, when I started this company I started from the root.

It's not like I joined here and got promoted. So, I set this cultural freedom from the beginning. If I just talk about our cooking for example, you see, there are a lot of companies in Bangladesh that are religious only because their founder is religious.

Tanusree Sharma: Exactly

Habibullah Bahar: Being religious is not the problem. Problem is that you also expect other people you work with to be religious. And from my point of view, religion should be one's personal choice.

Habibullah Bahar: As I was saying, if I say about cooking in our office, when there's beef on the menu, we take into consideration that my Hindu employees won't have beef. Even many Muslims also don't eat beef because of allergies. And taking those into consideration we always keep another option for them. Many other companies might think this to be a hassle but in our company we fixed it from day 1.

Habibullah Bahar: Yes, we might not be able to keep a lot of items but then again, it's nothing like, "I don't feel like eating this today so I'll have that". No, it's nothing like that.

Habibullah Bahar: Again our company is not highly inclusive. Many companies might not think it this way but, we cannot hire someone disable. I am talking from experience. Once we gave an internship to a woman. Yes, her performance was good, she was a nice person indeed and other employees were helpful to her too. Our workplace wasn't inclusive means, suppose the toilet, I haven't built the toilet, no.

Tanusree Sharma: Do you mean infrastructural support?

Habibullah Bahar: Yes, Infrastructural support. Our office was on the 5th floor. So, to reach the 5th floor was kind of a hassle for her. And that was creating a guilty feeling for others. Which is why, as the decision maker I had to make the decision. It was kind of lacking that we couldn't make a friendly infrastructure. And also if I talk about the concept of leave, maternal leave or paternity leave, we have both in our company. In case of maternal leave, it is 4 months paid and 2 more months unpaid. As like, one of our colleagues' leave had to extend for 14 months. If I review that, I don't want that. In the end I am running a business here. The problem with running a business in Bangladesh is that, in foreign countries in case of this kind of inclusive policies they are subsidized. But I know, the government provides a substitute. In my case, since it was just one person I managed somehow. But if it happened for 3 person then it's not possible for a startup to allow a paid leave for 4 months. Again, the leaves can be extended. Though the extended period is unpaid, in the end, I cannot hire a replacement for her or him if he takes a long leave. Like one of our employees had to take unpaid leave for 6 months for health reasons. Here, unpaid leave is not the fact, fact is, I cannot hire a replacement for him. Also I had to ensure his employment after his return.

Habibullah Bahar: You know, in Bangladesh you have enough support for contractual reasons. Law of Bangladesh is not that tough. By the way, I don't know if you know that in the software industry or white collar business we don't fall into the labor act of Bangladesh.

Tanusree Sharma: Oh wow!

Habibullah Bahar: Ah no, it is the same in all the countries. Because blue collar laborers have a completely different definition. They work in fixed hours, in fixed hourly rates etc different matters come into their condition. But in the case of white collar labourers, obviously there is a law, but that's not a labours law, that's called generic law, and companies law which states how the companies shall treat them and finally the agreement between you and your employee set during his/her joining becomes the foundation. I general it ie for everyone, even for you and your university, alright I shall not pass any comment on that. But I know in the case of Bangladesh and this is the same in India as well. Basically when you are joining in any job, then the appointment letter you are being given, the policies mentioned in that letter and some other paper mentioning the company policies if signed by both the parties. We have a long list of various policies like what will be the workplace policies, intellectual property policies, how will your leave policies be etc. Now, while joining, whatever you agree on, you have to follow that. You can not complain later about anything. You can take it to the court but there is a very rare chance of the decision to be in your favour. Because, you have joined by knowing everything. That is why it is said that, before joining one shall read all the contractual policies, employment policies. It is because, let me put it this way, I don't know if you have been following the new policies given by the founders of the Base Camp. Have you seen it?

Tanusree Sharma: I didn't.

Habibullah Bahar: Okay, you will find it by just googling Base Camp. Basically it has been a hot debate for the last one week. So, Base camp has said that, from now on, any sort of political discussion is not allowed in their premises. Now you can say that's not fair. But every organization has the right to set their policies. If you don't agree, you have time and you can leave. But if you agree, then you can't complain. And this is everywhere and this is what white collar industry is. So, here I think many misunderstandings like, are there any labour policies, is there any thi or that but at the end of the day what determines things is the employment contract. And as a company, within my country's infrastructure I can set my own policies. Suppose, in my contract I mentioned that you have to work seven day a week and you are being paid accordingly which you agree. Later, you cannot complain about overtime. Because there is no overtime policy for the white collar industry. Which is why you might have heard that, people working in banks are doing a lot of overtime but they can't complain. They might get a bonus, they might leave the job if they have better opportunities but they can't complain.

Tanusree Sharma: Okay. It's interesting that there is a different policy. Though I don't have that much idea about policies, it can actually be an interesting part. But I think we can move forward to another question.

Habibullah Bahar: Sure! I think I am getting...

Tanusree Sharma: No no no, it's okay. I've got a lot of points from here. Like inclusiveness as you said while talking about job environment or gender bias and also many other topics which I will analyze later on. But the next question is, when you are in a live circle of a software development, I mean when you develop a software, normally which factors do you consider. The factors might be... let's hear it from you, what are the basic factors or what is the whole process? If you may give an example of a recent project where you worked or you have led the team, what is the whole process if you may explain?

Habibullah Bahar: Well, first of all, softwares can be of two types. Either it can be a product or it can be a service. How is that, let me explain Bangladesh's perspective. I think almost 97-98% of the companies don't develop the product. They basically create the product as you demand. Thus they don't have a lot of say in the decision making, actually they don't have any say in the decision making like how will the software be? What will the software look like? Usually the customer defines that. Customers might have analyzed it according to their own sense. As Bangladesh is mostly dependent on the global market, basically outsourcing, so, the customers fix the parameters of the softwares. And if you say like that, those who develop products like for say Bkash, or we the Field Buzz, which is a product. Our product is an iteration. It has started from 2014 and it's constant. We get feedback from the market, we are evaluating competitor products, we are improving by our own analysis. We are always analyzing our own product, customer behaviour on the basis of which a continuous upgradation goes on for the best outcome. In the case of the product, it's a long life cycle. You know there is a thing called a product roadmap. It's like whenever i have an idea, let's say I've got an idea while sleeping or dreaming, in a good company whenever there's an idea, a debate takes place about the feasibility of the product, whether the product will run on the market or not and if the product goes with the long term vision of the company.

Habibullah Bahar: As every product has a vision. Let's say for Bkash, Bkash is basically a payment processing company or mobile financial service. Noe, as it is a mobile financial service, their vision is to encourage people to pay and get payment through mobile devices. Now suppose, mr. Iqbal Kadir had an idea while going to sleep. The idea was from now on, they will get salaries through the Bkash account and it will also have the HR system.

Tanusree Sharma: Accha, so you are saying that feature is a factor whenever someone thinks about product developing or software developing.

Habibullah Bahar: Absolutely. Basically you have to arrange all the features you want and the features should be relevant. For Bkash, the HR feature is not relevant. So, no matter how fine it sounds, it's not relevant, so it shall be excluded.

Habibullah Bahar: So, at first, either the customer or the team decides which features are going to be on the product. Until this, it was a product manager's job. Then the product manager will sit with the team lead. Team lead means debt manager or you can say technical team lead

or whatever, in general they are called team lead. So who is the team lead? Team lead is an experienced software developer who has a structural idea, whole system architectural idea and he knows system architecture and he can design the system architecture, he has the idea about how long every work might take. Then this type of key peoples and product managers creates a timeline about how long every single work might take together. And this timeline defies the whole cost of the product.

Tanusree Sharma: Okay, cost and deadline.

Habibullah Bahar: Yes, time and cost we'd rather say not the deadline. Cause, the time actually defies the costs and many other things. Now let's say, among the main 10 features if you exclude 2 features then the timeline, where the release date also depends on the timeline or when the product is to be delivered to the customer. Then the customer is let known that, if you want these major 7 features then I can deliver the product in 2 phases. Like, your first delivery will have the main feturattes and then at the second delivery all other features will be added and this is the cost. Usually the cost is fixed during the negotiation level. And from the next time, say for me or Alexis we have gone through all sorts of development. Not all sorts actually, but mostly all sorts of development so, we have an idea. Which is why without diving deep we know which work might take how long and how much can that cost. So what we do, we give them an estimated budget. In that budget we leave a buffer. How is that buffer? That is like, from my experience I know that you have asked for 'X'. But in the end, this 'X' will have many variants. Or, you've asked for this feature but this feature has many featurattes. So, I know about these things in general we make a requirement analysis. Requirement analysis is important for another reason. So, firstly demand generated. As a customer you said, Mr Bahar I need this type of software. Then I said that, alright, give me a written demand about all of your requirements. Or if you have any reference software that you'd like to be followed. Then you've given the references. Then I further analyzed that using my own experience and using my team's experience and made a document which is called requirement analysis. Then after I proposed that requirement analysis to you, you have a better picture. Then you can place your demands more accurately. Then basing on your final requirements and demands I will give you a budget. Then after a negotiation the budget is passed. Budget passed means I am doing your work. And while proposing the budget I will also give you an estimation of time.

Habibullah Bahar: Now the thing is, maximum Bangladesi companies fail to deliver the product within deadline. This not only hap[pens in Bangladesh, quite a lot everywhere. And the reason for that is, the customer is also not completely sure about what he exactly wants. But when the customer himself does the requirement analysis along with the mock-up, then there is a good possibility for the budget and the time to be reasonable. It is because you already know what you want. But when you don't exactly know what you want, then the work doesn't match with the timeline.

Habibullah Bahar: So, after the requirement analysis is done, the job is handed over to the Project manager. Project manager then divides the requirement analysis into main features and

their branch features and so on. These steps are generally followed by the companies who follow the project managing system. And it is what we do in Field Buzz.

Habibullah Bahar: There are different project management softwares like Redmine. We use Redmine for our system. This is an open source project management system. We have been using it for the past 6 years. Again many use Trello, Jira etc. There are many project management systems like these. Many use just pure excel or Microsoft projects or whatever they use, the features are written in that software and every feature is noted with the time required for it. Then after accumulating the whole data the Team Lead assigns to the junior developers.

Habibullah Bahar: Again the features have variety among them based on the importance. Some features require to be developed earlier. Then basing on those features and the contract of the customers or demand of the customers featurettes are developed.

Habibullah Bahar: We follow scrum development methodology. Which means, we take the feedback of our client on a regular basis then again show our work to those clients that, this much we've progressed, and take the feedback again. And this is sort of an iterative process which goes on.

Habibullah Bahar: In earlier days, waterfall model or banking softwares, they were developed like a blackbox. Which means, they were developed completely and finally a finalized version was served to the client. And then clients used to point out their dictations. But when working as a service model then that waterfall model doesn't actually work these days. Now-a-days, everybody follows an iterative approach. It's like since I'm developing it feature wise, when one feature is ready, I can take the feedback of my client. So, the clients have the opportunity to give a quick feedback and also if they'd like any small changes in respective features. Like, if they want a single button to look a bit differently, or if the action of that button becomes a bit different then it would look more dynamic etc.

Habibullah Bahar: Now, those who develop products have no chance to go to the customers. Products are being delivered to the customers once it is ready. So, in our case, we internally divide ourselves where the project manager acts like a customer and the software teams act like the developers. And they fix things in a weekly basis meeting. They discuss and sort out things like an actual client and developers discussion. Sometimes the project manager interviews some customers about the upcoming changes and try to find out if they want any changes or upgrades.

Habibullah Bahar: Then after all these hassle, when the product is ready, it's time for the delivery. Basically there are some phases after the delivery. The very first one is called UIT or Usability Interface Testing. And it is expected that customers will have a lot of queries and feedback after the first stage. It's like, based on the agreement, if I have been able to fill all the demands of the customer. If the customers think that they've got what they wanted, then it's time

for things to be pushed to production. Because ultimately, the customer himself doesn't use the product. He releases the product for the use of his users.

Tanusree Sharma: Okay, well all the factors that you've mentioned or the whole process you've explained, how do you prioritize the software security after taking all these into consideration?

Habibullah Bahar: Budget. Actually the budget defies it. Suppose, all the project management or software security that i've mentioned, these require extra time, extra RMP, extra effort, right? Now, if the customer doesn't want to pay for this then why would I throw this? Again the product is for myself and if I know that my users don't care cause in the end, it's all about investment. Suppose I have developed a feature. Now that features security has some standards. Now, will I make it with highest security or just okay security, on what basis shall I take the decision? Basically it depends on the importance of the customer on the product.

Tanusree Sharma: That means, you are prioritizing the audience. And basing on that, you are deciding the level of security.

Habibullah Bahar: And also basing on the types of the features. Let's for say, a software for keeping an account of groceries. You can make it with a high security, but do you really need it? If I want to do that, I have costs, but who'll pay for that? So, we have to take into consideration that if the customer is intended to pay for the grocery software with a security like a bank vault. So, all the security we have been talking about depends on if anyone is really interested in investing. Cause you see, in the end, this is my business and I have costs for this. So, if you want to ensure security then someone needs to pay for that. So, if the users need security then they have to raise their voice that they need security and they are ready to pay for that. Then the customers will contact their developer and ask them to increase more security. Or else, my users won't use it. So, ultimately it is a clear loop you see. When we develop a product, or I'd say it basically also depends on the type of company. Those who are pure freelancers don't actually bother about security that much. Cause, they think that, if the customer needs security then he/she will mention it. Does he want his data 100% encrypted or just a layer of security. So, in the end it depends on the requirement of the customer and if he's willing to pay for that. Again people like us who develop products, what's their target? Suppose the customers of field buzz are mostly like 3 dollars subscriptions. Now, there is no unbreakable system. So we need to take into consideration how motivated are the hackers to break into my system. Now, I know I have enterprise gate security. And I also know that it can be broken down by giving enough effort. But, what will the hacker gain by breaking into my system? I don't store any financial data on my system. So, after a lot of investments someone broke into our system. But what will he get from that? He'll get some inventory information from a random shopkeeper. Or, he'll get the data from some random company. What will he do with that information? Rather he'd manage to manage that information with much less effort. But if we were to maintain financial transactions then by law we had to put enough security on the system. Like in Bangladesh, if you want to do any financial activity you have to follow certain criteria given by Bangladesh Bank. If those are not followed then they will not approve our product and I will not be able to launch my product as well. And if I launch my product without their approval then they'll ask the government. To

ban our product. And eventually our product will be banned. It's like if you want to buy mango juice, then the company's policy is to sell it as much as they can. They really don't look into the health issues. Who creates pressures about health issues? The consumers. Similarly the Bangladesh bank is also bound by the policy makers. So, at the end of the day, the security is defined by the requirement and investment.

Tanusree Sharma: Okay, though you've already mentioned about the collaboration among the team. But is there any incident where things didn't work out as you expected during the software development, collaboration I mean.

Habibullah Bahar: Many times. A lot I'd say.

Tanusree Sharma: If you would share an incident then it'd be really helpful to understand which factors didn't work out in those cases.

Habibullah Bahar: What actually happens, let me explain from our point of view. Usually a major issue for coordination is lack of communication. Now, this lack of communication might be for many reasons. Like if the developer fails to communicate properly. There are also many things. This pandemic has become a challenge for us. Because, not everyone can express themselves by writing. Especially the engineers, they are not motivated to express their opinion by writing. As a matter of fact, they are reluctant to express their opinion. What happens then? For say the project manager or the customer says their requirements. Here two things happen. When the developers tend to develop the product, they don't try to understand the context. Why has the customer given this requirement? So what happens when they don't understand the context, they develop exactly what's said. But the customer is sitting and thinking that the developer should know that this requirement is to solve my users' problem.

Habibullah Bahar: Another thing that happens a lot is lost and translation issues. What is it like? Since we have many international representatives. So, let's say, a Kenyan representative meant something in his native language. And then translated that into English. And our project manager then works whatever he understands. But also some of our native employees have difficulties understanding those types of English you know. Because the English we are taught is grammatical English, not communicative English. Which sometimes creates difficulties understanding the context. And the context is really really really important. Yes, now-a-day, we make fewer mistakes. But in the early days, we used to make huge mistakes for not understanding the context. Once it was like developers were developing something, after months we found out that it is not what the customers demanded. So, that created a dispute among the employees. They started blaming each other. So, you see, in the end the problem arises due to lack of proper communication. So, in software companies like us, due to lack of communication, as they have different parties, the deadlines are missed or after developing the features it is seen that the feature is completely different from what is asked.

Habibullah Bahar: Again, as I said earlier, a customer never knows exactly what he wants. So, he always waits for the feedback sessions. You know, as I said, when we try to follow scrum

development. But that might not be possible all the time. For example, work pressure, a lot of projects etc. What happens then, the customer stays in black box. Then after 3-4 week when a final product is shown to him, he says, No, this is not what I wanted. This happened so many times. So, you see what's the main issue here, lack of communication.

Tanusree Sharma: In this sort of situation, as a leader, how did you actually handle the matters? Or how did you try to avoid the conflicts?

Habibullah Bahar: When I was a child, I used to scream and cry out loud(laughs). But eventually I've grown up and taught myself to learn from the experience and to make sure that everyone else also learns. Try to find out where the fault was actually, where it went wrong and to communicate properly. But nowadays what I do is, the PM's we have, project managers I mean, I always discuss with them that no matter how good we plan, or how perfectly we plan, there might be problems. Because we are humans after all and to err is human. So, whenever anyone is making any decision that has to have a written statement. Why is that? You see when you want to write anything, if you don't understand that clearly, then you wouldn't be able to write that accordingly. You'll face difficulties. And when you'll face difficulties, you'll know I have a lack of information and understanding. So, you'll have to clarify yourself. Again, in case of any project, after a month, when we face a dispute, we don't find out in what context the decision was taken. So, if the decision has a written statement then it increases accountability and transparency.

Habibullah Bahar: But now, let's consider that the problem has occurred. Now what? In that case I sit with everyone involved in the project. And then I try to sort out the problem. Everyone has a say in the process. No matter if he is senior or junior. And then I give them a chance to sort out the problem. And as I am a bit more experienced with them, I try to merge them with the problem like, "do you see the problem?" " Do you see the problem?" and so on. When will someone improve? After making faults right? So, I just assume that the juniors will make mistakes. So, we have a hierarchy in case of development. When the seniors are making mistakes they are learning it from their PR or their seniors. So, knowledge is really important to handle this sort of thing. But even after that the matter is not solved, we all sit together, and try to find out a best outcome all together. There might be two things. Neither there is any good in playing hide and seek nor blaming others. Since our company's philosophy is to trust people and no one sabotages intentionally. So, we're alright. What shall we do next then? Is the problem solvable? How long might it take to solve the problem? In that case I also bring other experienced people to share their experience. Then by a thorough discussion we conclude whether we can solve the problem by time or not. If not, then I tell the project manager to contact the customer right away. And explain the situation to him. From my experience, the customer also knows, because he also has faults. As because he also didn't know everything from the beginning. What the customer expects is that you do not keep him in the dark. You know, in a situation like this, if you go to the customer after one or half a month and say that, tomorrow is the release date but I cannot deliver you the product yet. But he's planned everything keeping the next day as release date into consideration. In that situation, the customer has every situation to be really angry and to sue you. So, what is the solution here?

Habibullah Bahar: Solution is, before the crisis appears whenever you get a cue of any crisis, keep your customer updated. Cause in the end, it's people, it's the system so issues happen. Now the customer can be like me when I was younger. I mean he may get angry, in that case it's your bad luck. Cause he also shall understand that things can go wrong. So, this is one thing, you shall not hide anything from your customer.

Habibullah Bahar: What we don't do is, we don't pressurize our employees to work day and night and complete within the deadline. Because things don't work like this and also humans are not tools. They have their limitations. So, our work culture is to finish the work within the deadline. If not possible then there might be other issues. It's not like we take for granted that he cheated because we trust each other. But most of the companies of Bangladesh don't follow this. They have a lot of communication issues which is why things don't get sorted within the deadline. In the end they pressurize their employees to finish the work within the deadline. Again our developers are also not professional. What do they do, they also procrastinate and try to jump the work at the very late hour. Unfortunately Bangladeshi peoples are not professional at all. Because our institutes don't teach us to be professional. So, we need to spend extra time to make them professional. So, what do we do? We have a 3 months training program where we teach them work policy, project management policy, development policy completely. Which is why I like to recruit people as part time or interns. What do we make them do? We do not give them any customer facing jobs. We just check if they align with our culture or not. If they can work as a future team member of ours or not. It's not like j, we don't pay them well. In Bangladeshi standard an internee is paid 15000 takas. And depending on the situation a part-timer can be given upto 20000 takas.

Habibullah Bahar: It's like I can terminate an internee with a one day notice but I cannot terminate a full time employee in that way. I have to take many things into consideration for that. Though many companies do not follow anything like that. You'll see that in Bangladesh, everyone's complaint is that our employers are bad, they do exploit. But they can exploit it because most of the employees are not professional. They also do not invest for professional development. At the same time, peoples who graduate do not have a skillset. Which is why there is a trust issue in our industry. And taking that chance many companies exploit. Like, hiring as an intern, paying as an intern but making them do many revenue generating jobs. Unfortunately not only in our industry, everywhere you look into Bangladesh you'll see the same picture. Companies like Standard Chartered exploit a lot, employees of GrameenPhone can't leave their office before 8-9 pm. But no one talks about these. Because, you have been given a beautiful office, a beautiful dining room, you are sitting here, drinking coffee. But you are not spending time with your family. You are not spending time out of work. If you talk to any banker, they cannot leave the office before 8. There they are exploiting you, why, because you are being paid around 30000-40000 takas. But that doesn't mean to expect that those who run the software industry are good people. They are Bangladeshi too. But you could say, we don't have that pressure. Let's say, what Free Buzz's doing, I'm proud that, even during this pandemic, when other companies having the chances reduced the salary of their employees, despite having work, we didn't. Not, anyone's salary, not even the increments. So, exploiting nature is

everywhere in Bangladesh. So, if you just expect that things won't happen in this sub-continent then it won't happen.

Tanusree Sharma: Yeah well, these were my questions. But I want to ask one last question, since you have been in this industry for a long time, so from professional experience, what suggestions will you give to the students who are now studying Bachelors' at universities? How should their academic preparations be?

Habibullah Bahar: I don't think I need to say anything different. You just have to stay in touch with the industry. What's going on in the industry, what type of tactics are wanted. You know what, there is no need to advise them. Because you see from my almost a decade of recruitment experience I think that my company's major task is to recruit the right person. And as a leader that's my major job. If I can recruit the right people then I can delegate and I can make myself obsolete. And this is my vision in case of leadership. Which is why I keep myself involved from beginning till end in the recruitment process. In general I've seen 3 types of students, those who pass the exam. They fall in the first category and are most in numbers. They neither study nor learn to work. So, what's good in advising them? His first job is to study, which he doesn't. So, why will you advise him?

Habibullah Bahar: I don't know where you are from, but let's say a boy passed from BUET with a CGPA of 2.8. And in the interview board, he is telling me, Brother, I didn't used to like studying that much. So, I used to roam around. What the hell? You might consider yourself a BUETian, you might consider yourself a brilliant student, but that doesn't give you an excuse.

Tanusree Sharma: Exactly.

Habibullah Bahar: If you haven't studied, you must've done something else, right? Okay, show me that. Like Mahadi, Soyod Istiaq and I, we were in the same class. Both of them had very good results. But my result was not satisfactory. I had a 3.11 CGPA, pretty bad. But, I had been working on many other different projects. I didn't used to like theoretical studies that much, but the subjects I liked, I had good grades. But, the rest of the time when I didn't study, I used to work with technologies. And also I have gained professional experiences. Not just roamed around. Now, it can be a debate or projects. Problem is, in Bangladesh, maximum does nothing. And if you look into the Private universities, their condition is worse. That means, it shows, you are not committed to something.

Tanusree Sharma: That means they don't have that zeal within them.

Habibullah Bahar: So, why will I hire someone like this? Basically, this is my pattern. And I have seen that, low cg, effort chilo na, so called brilliant, they performed really bad. And there is another type, who might have some sort of problems or was sick, or didn't quite like all the subjects, but they worked really hard. And I like this type of people, and they can be hired. But one of the problems of hiring them is their communication problem. In a company like mine, communication is everything. Again I have these few incidents where they are brilliant but not

cooperating. It's okay that you are brilliant. But at the end of the day, a company cannot be run by brilliance. A company runs based on teamwork. Or, during a crisis, a team will help you, not individuals. Which is why, individual valore doesn't have that much significance. So, basically, I had to let him go or even let her go. There were people from both genders. I personally don't like this kind of person. You can be brilliant, but you also should be empathetic. You also have to accept that everyone might not be as brilliant as you, but the other person might be good at communication. So, you better work in a team. So, who's good? The person who uplifts the team who doesn't blame game. That's the worst thing in a team.

Habibullah Bahar: And the other types are those who have good CG. They might haven't worked. But I like to give them opportunities too. Usually I hire those people, because they did what they needed to, study. And if they keep an eye on the industry as well then that's a perfect match.

Habibullah Bahar: Now, if I come back to your point, basically, my advice is, to keep an eye on the industry, try to have some link up, and now-a-days many courses are available on professional development, attend some of those. Then study as well a bit, and if possible try to do any internship or part-time job and try to stay connected aaaand that's all.