

Report On
Operations Culture in the Digital Agencies of Bangladesh

By

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An internship report submitted to the Brac Business School in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Business Administration

Brac Business School
Brac University
June, 2021

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The internship report submitted is my/our own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The report does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The report does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Student's Full Name & Signature:



Mohammad Newaz Osman

17104036

Supervisor's Full Name & Signature:

Md. Hasan Maksud Chowdhury

Assistant Professor, Brac Business School

Brac University

Letter of Transmittal

Md. Hasan Maksud Chowdhury
Assistant Professor
Brac Business School
Brac University
66 Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212

Subject: Submission of Internship Report

Dear Sir

To my utter pleasure I, Mohammad Newaz Osman, would like to inform you that I want to submit my internship report on ‘Operations Culture in the Digital Agencies in Bangladesh’. I completed my internship at Spade Digital, a digital marketing agency, and got the privilege of working with their top management of the Operations department and especially under the direct supervision of the CEO as well. In this report, I examined the industry and company’s operations culture and working process and gave my review and feedback on it.

I would like to express my humble gratitude and appreciation towards all the individuals, who have helped me to complete and submit this report.

Sincerely yours,



Mohammad Newaz Osman

17104036

BRAC Business School

BRAC University

Date: May 6th, 2021

Acknowledgement

The completion of this report would not have been possible if the people who have helped me throughout the past 3 months did not guide me like they have. First and foremost, I would like to thank my internship supervisor, Mr. Hasan Maksud Chowdhury, Assistant Professor, Brac Business School, for constantly inspiring me and guiding me throughout all the difficult phases. It was an utter pleasure to be able to do my internship under such a personality, who has so much experience on the Supply Chain Management and Operations Management Industry.

Furthermore, I would like to thank my organizational supervisor, Mr. Mojammal Haque Sihab, Chief Executive Officer of Spade Digital, for giving me the opportunity to work as his intern. It was to my immense pleasure that I got the chance of working under such an enthusiastic and inspiring leader. I got to learn a lot of things from his and it was an honor to work with him.

Finally, I would like to thank and acknowledge all the other individuals I am not mentioning here, since their guidance were vital in me completing this report properly and within the allocated time.

Executive Summary

In this report, I portrayed my experience as an intern at Spade Digital and the contribution I had as an intern at Spade Digital. Apart from the knowledge I gained about the day to day operations of how a digital agency works, this 3 months experience also enabled me to develop myself in a professional environment and most importantly, put the theories we've learned in the past 4 years into practice.

Additionally, I have also given a clear overview of Spade Digital. Finally, I also gave a clear view of the operations culture of Spade Digital, in comparison with the digital industry of Bangladesh, and how it can be made smoother and better.

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Chapter 1: Overview of Internship

1.1 Student Information:

Name: Mohammad Newaz Osman

ID: 17104036

Program: Bachelors of Business Administration

Major: Operations Management and Finance

1.2 Internship Information:

1.2.1 Company Details

Period: 1st February, 2021 – 30th April, 2021

Company Name: Spade Digital

Department/Division: Operations

Address: House #24, Bashundhara Main Road, Block A, Bashundhara R/A, Dhaka,
Bangladesh

1.2.2 Internship Company Supervisor's Information

Name: Mojammal Haque Sihab

Position: Chief Executive Officer

1.2.3 Job Description

I was given the task of overlooking the day to day operations of the organization. Starting from allocating deadlines and making sure all the departments are meeting them, to attending meetings with my supervisor to and sharing the meeting details with the specific departments. Furthermore, on some occasions I was also given the task of brainstorming with the planning and strategy department and analyzing the current market trends.

1.3 Internship Outcomes:

1.3.1 Student's contribution to the company

During my internship tenure at Spade, I had a noteworthy contribution as an Operations Intern. Once we shifted to online platform, I was assigned the task to make sure the daily operations run smoothly, hence to take an initiative and come up with a proper plan. I introduced two new software's, which are "Discord" and "Time Doctor" to the team. While Discord was acting as the main channel for communication for the entire organization, Time Doctor was being used to monitor the works of the employees by the HR department and the management. This enabled the entire operations to run smoothly and has had an exorbitant level of positive impact on their daily operations.

1.3.2 Benefits to the Student

These 3 months experience has taught me many things and helped me to put many things into perspective. I got the opportunity to learn how a digital agency works and how it conducts its day to day operations. I got an in-depth knowledge all the departments of an agency and their responsibilities and workflows. Most importantly, it helped me improve my communication skills and maintain overall professionalism.

Furthermore, I learned to manage various projects of different departments all at once and got great outcomes from those. On top of all these, the best experience was when I was given the opportunity to design the operations structure during the pandemic lockdown. This was a really big and important task and I felt privileged to get the opportunity to design it.

1.3.3 Problems/Difficulties

The only problem that I faced during the internship period is that, since we were in the middle of a pandemic and most importantly a general lockdown start in the middle of my internship period, I felt like I did not get the opportunity to build a strong connection with entire team as much as I would have wanted. As the situation demand everyone to work from home, though I got the opportunity to work with all the departments, but it would have been a more exhilarating experience to work in the office environment.

1.3.4 Recommendations

Considering I have had to work under an unconventional situation, that is during the global pandemic, this in itself had a huge impact on how my internship was conducted. Although, I got the opportunity to work with various departments on many projects, I would rather recommend that the interns of specific departments should get more priority on tasks of his/her own department. Despite this, I have had a great experience of working with Spade and all the senior management and employees were extremely warm and supportive.

Chapter 2: Organization Part

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Objective

The objective of this report is to analyze the operational culture of Spade Digital and the strategies they follow to manage their day to day activities. This report focuses on the business structure and operations of the business. Moreover, it also goes on to point out some problems the organization faces and goes on to provide some viable resolutions to those. Therefore, the core objective of the report is to look for solutions of the following questions

- i) What are the major problems leading to inefficient operations?
- ii) What are the reasons behind these inefficient operations?
- iii) How are other agencies tackling these issues?
- iv) How can proper and structured maintenance of the operations culture aid on better outcomes for the stakeholders.

2.1.2 Methodology

The research method that I will use for this report will include qualitative data collected from various interviews, literature reviews and personal observations that I had, while working at Spade Digital. The report will be useful for operations management graduates, researchers and academicians, who are willing to get an in-depth knowledge on the digital agency industry of Bangladesh, more specifically, their work and operations culture.

Source of Information: External and Internal

2.1.3 Limitation

While conducting this report, I came across some limitations and the most prominent one was that we were in the middle of a pandemic and it was exorbitantly hard to have garnered the true essence of the topic, since most of the work were being done and conducted from home. Furthermore, the time duration was also not adequate enough to gather the experience on how the actual work and operations culture of the organization is like.

2.1.4 Significance

This report portrays the current and precise situation of the operational culture of agencies in Bangladesh and one of the thriving digital agencies, Spade Digital. I tried my best to amalgamate both my educational and internship experience and for anyone wanting to look into the work and operations culture of Spade Digital will find it significant.

2.2 Overview of the Company

2.2.1 History and Services

Spade Digital was founded back in 2015, with an aim to cater to the needs of the thriving digital landscape of Bangladesh.

Spade Digital is a creative digital agency which specializes in digital platforms, offering services like Social Media



Figure 1: Logo of Spade Digital

Management, Content Making, Branding, Media Buying and Online Promotions. For the past 6 years, Spade Digital has been working with some of the top conglomerates of the nation such as BIC Bangladesh, Ahmed Amin Group, Aamra Group and many more. The main differential point of Spade from all other agencies is that they create unique advertising campaigns by adding Bangladeshi tradition and cultural values to it.

2.2.2 Mission of Spade Digital

The mission of Spade Digital is as follows:

“Delivering innovative results with a combination of creative ideas and enhancing human value”

2.3 Management Practices

Spade Digital has a very positive and cohesive environment. One of the core reasons for it is, its strong management practices. They follow an equal opportunity arrangement and does not differentiate based on any racial or gender bias. It has a bottom up teamwork system where anyone from any position can come up with an idea and proudly present it in front of the top management, which are highly supported by the top management. Their high retention rate, high employee satisfaction rate and increased profitability is a true depiction of its strong management practices.

2.4 Marketing Practices

2.4.1 Customer Segmentation and Targeting

Being a creative digital agency, Spade Digital caters to B2B clients only. They only approach and deal with local and international conglomerates with a stronghold on restaurants. Since, they are a B2B service company, they do not differentiate their clients on the basis of demographic, psychographic or behavioral groups, rather they provide services to any and every organization looking to go digital.

2.4.2 Marketing and Promotional Tools

Spade Digital usually does its promotion through digital media and on-field promotions. In the past 5 years, they have participated in many on-campus recruitments, events and has been sponsors of many events as a mean for their promotions. This has helped them to garner a good stronghold within the youth and entice them to join Spade in the future as well. On the other hand, their main promotional tool so far has been the positive word of mouth of their clients, which has helped them garner more and more clients and establish itself as a thriving creative digital agency.

2.5 Financial Performance

For the first 4 years of Spade Digital, it has been a sole proprietorship, hence they were not adamantly sticks to keeping their financial data confidential. Henceforth, I was not privy to get most of their financial information for the first 4 years. Last year they have expand their business and got a huge new investment. From then on, they have turned into a private limited company and some, though not much of their financial data has been made accessible to us.

In the past financial year, Spade Digital has had a total revenue of around BDT 50 lakhs and had a net profit margin of around 18%. As stated by their head of accounts, they are already well past their initial breakeven point. After the last years' investment, they have revamped their financial instruments and are looking forward to get their entire return on the new investment by 2022.

2.6 Operations Management

Spade Digital conducts its day to day operations with the help of their core 5 departments. Each department works in tandem with every other department to run the organization smoothly, with each department having specific roles. The organogram of Spade Digital is as follows:

2.6.1 Organogram

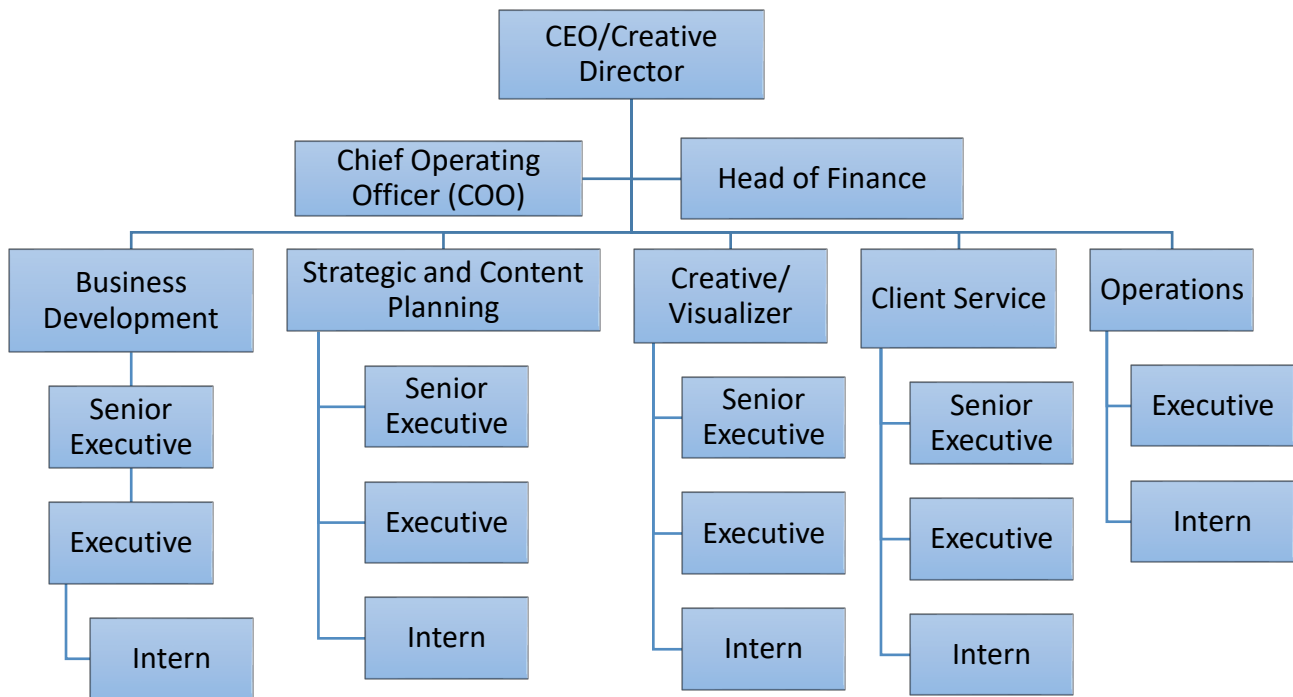


Figure 2. Organogram

2.6.2 Responsibilities of Departments

Business Development:

This is one of the most important departments, since they are responsible to grow the business. They are tasked for looking for potential opportunities, acquiring more clients and providing and selling more services to the existing clients. Another important role of this department is to maintain fruitful relationship with the existing clients, so that the clients can spread the positive word of mouth and refer more clients.

Strategic and Content Planning:

This team is basically the brain of the entire organization. They are responsible of designing campaigns and coming up with new and innovative ideas, that align with the clients brand identity and the motive of the campaigns and accordingly, create the maximum amount of exposure for the clients. Every member of this team needs to have a very good knowledge

about the clients' products or services, the targeted customer and the behavioral pattern of the targeted customers.

Creative/ Visualizer:

As per the name suggests, this is the most imaginative and innovative department of the organization. They are tasked creating and designing visual contents for the clients, as per the plans given from the strategic and content planning department. They design static and dynamic contents as per the requirement, aligning with the brand identity and guidelines. They basically work with any form of digital designs and their core motive is to bring the ideas of the planning department into an eye-catching digital form.

Client Service:

This department works as the bridge between the organization and client. They manage all sort of communication with the client's team and the organization and ensures the highest satisfaction level for the clients. Another important task of this department is managing the social media and digital accounts of the clients and make sure contents are being delivered and queries are being addressed properly.

Operations

The operations department at Spade Digital works as a both an HR and Operations department. This department is tasked with maintaining the entire operations of the organization is running and functioning properly. They oversee each and every department and work towards improving the work flow of the organization. Since this department deals with very crucial and sensitive information, the members of this department work under direct supervision of the CEO and COO.

Finance

Spade Digital does not have an entire different team working for the finance department, rather, this department is functioned by the Head of Finance himself and he directly works under and reports to the CEO.

2.7 Competitive Analysis

As a creative digital agency operating for over 5 years, Spade Digital does have some quite a lot of competitive advantages over their competitors. The further details are discussed below:

2.7.1 SWOT Analysis

Strength	Weakness
Though they have been operating for over 5 years, Spade Digital's core strength is the young and energetic team that they have. Since this is still a growing industry in Bangladesh, having a young team is always an advantage. Furthermore, they have a very good service record and have a good number of loyal clients; Henceforth, the word of mouth is highly positive for them.	Since they are not a very big agency compared to their competitors, they do not have sufficient digital infrastructure, to support their growth. Additionally, they do not have a good number of knowledgeable workforce for certain departments, which is causing them to lag behind their competitors.
Opportunities	Threat
With the digital industry growing every day, Spade Digital has a very high chance of thriving in this industry. Moreover, during the current pandemic, most business have shifted online and this has been a turning point for Spade, since most businesses are looking for this kind of services. Similarly, introduction of newer advertisement concepts and social media trends, look very prospective for Spade's future.	A crisis that they are recently facing is with both employee and client stability. Due to growing number of options, both the clients and the employees are prone to shifting more and hence they are facing a high disadvantage on that end. Additionally, not having enough governmental support to optimize this industry, is also acting as a major drawback for Spade Digital.

Table 1: SWOT Analysis

2.7.1 Porter's 5 Force Model

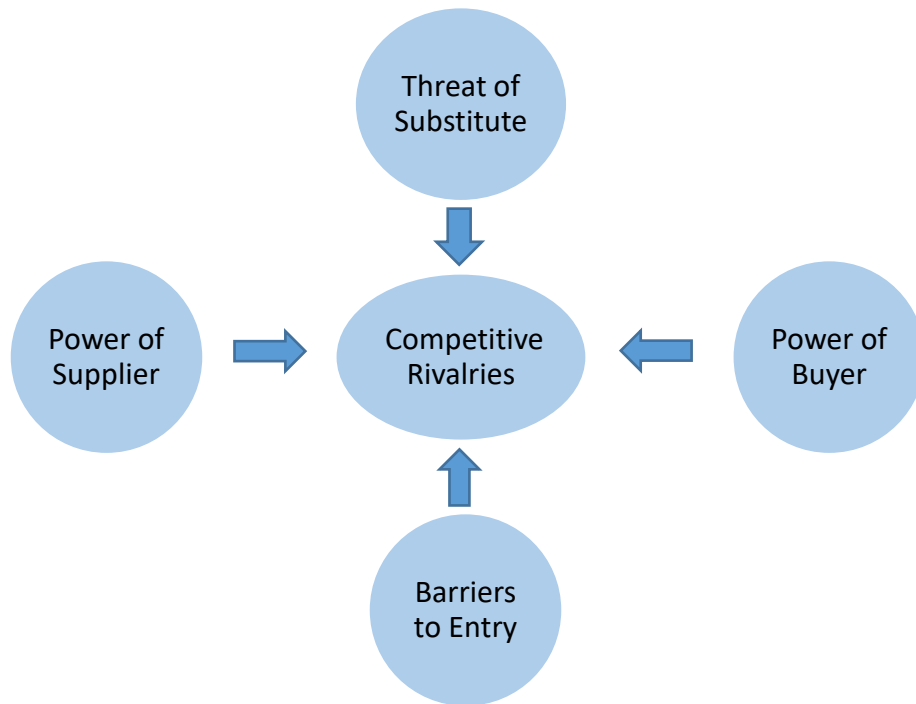


Figure 3: Porter's Five Forces Model

Barriers to Entry (Low): As a service oriented company, with very high prospective and very low initial investment required, the barriers to enter in this industry is extremely low.

Supplier Power (High): Considering there are only few platforms to use as a mean of social media promotions, such as Facebook, Google, Youtube etc. the power of suppliers are very high in this industry.

Buyer Power (Moderate): Clients who have and require works in a bulk and are contracted with specific agencies do not get much power over negotiating, those who are not, can negotiate their way.

Threat of Substitute (High): With growing number of freelancers and most big companies shifting to do their digital promotions in-house, the threat of substitute is very high.

Competitive Rivalry (High): With a very high number of substitutes available, the rivalry among the competitors are very high.

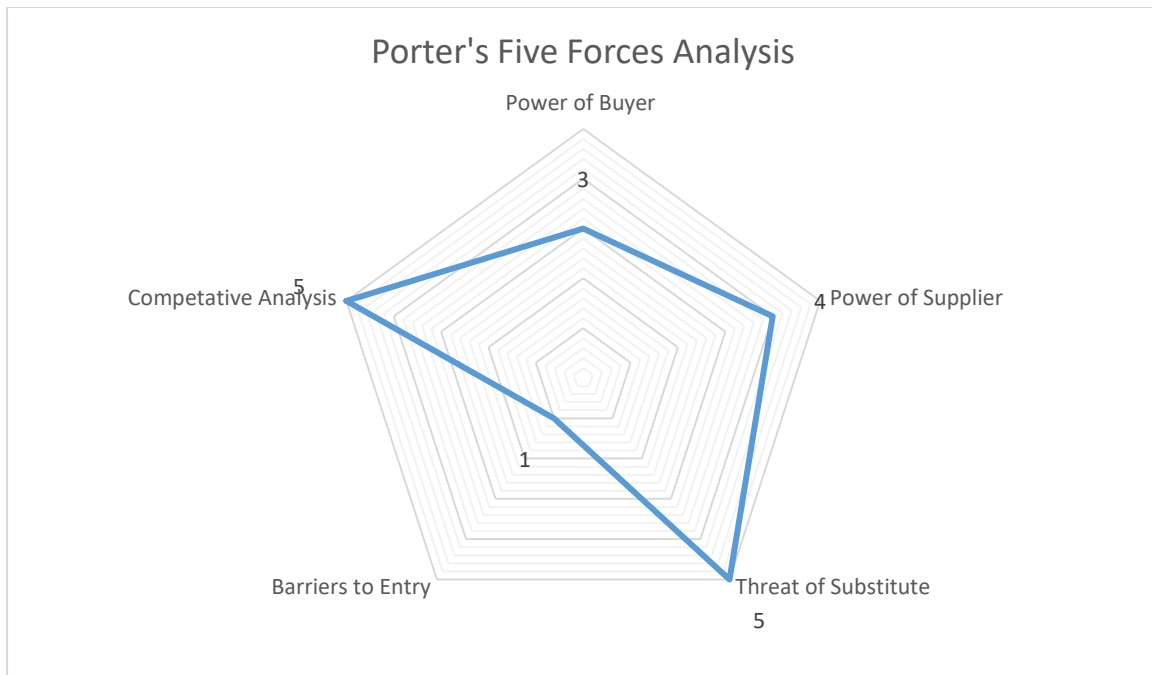


Figure 4: Porter's Five Forces Analysis

2.8 Summary and Conclusion

Starting from such a small scale, there is no doubt that Spade Digital has gone on to become one of the thriving digital agencies in Dhaka city. In an industry that is booming on a daily basis with the inclusion of newer concepts, techniques and technological advancements, there is a huge potential for Spade Digital. In order to rise to the top, they have to invest more on research and development and make more proactive decisions, so that they can stay a step head of their competitors.

This internship gave me the opportunity to get a clear idea on how a digital agency functions and how they conduct their day to day operations. I had the honour of working with some of the top and renowned individuals in the industry and got to experience their amazing work environment and learn a lot from my senior colleagues.

2.9 Recommendation

For Spade Digital to grow more and become one of the top digital agencies in the country, they have to focus more on their weaknesses that are mentioned on the SWOT analysis, considering this is one of their major concerns as of now. They should also keep in mind, going forward they will be needing more experienced individuals to take their organization to newer heights. They should also start to increase their reach into newer and growing territories such as Chittagong, where they might be able to get a higher exposure, considering not many digital agencies as such are available on those territories.

Chapter 3: Operations Culture in the Digital Agencies of Bangladesh

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Background

With the increasing need of having a digital presence, most organization are looking towards shifting to the digital platform for having a strong connect with their target groups. While having a digital presence has become optimum, it is not possible for most organization to create and maintain these platforms, hence this is where the role of a digital marketing agency begins. Though these agencies work as a third party organization for the companies, they deal with a lot of sensitive data and information and also, they are accountable to maintain the company's identity to a vast majority of audience. Henceforth, understanding the operations culture and working with an agency that aligns with core values and culture of the organization is essential to get the optimum output.

3.1.2 Objective

With this report, I am hoping to get a better understanding of:

- What are the major problems leading to inefficient operations in digital agencies?
- What are the reasons behind these inefficient operations in digital agencies?
- How can proper and structured maintenance of the operations culture aid on better outcomes for the stakeholders?

3.1.3 Significance

The rise to various online platforms and the ability of reaching a vast majority of audience at once, has paved the way for digital marketing agencies to thrive. Hence, to get the best output in the most efficient manner, proper operations management is the key. Only recently,

marketers and senior management of the digital agencies have come to accept and acknowledge this fact and have opened a separate department to oversee the operations. Having said that, valuable information regarding this topic is vastly scarce.

3.2 Methodology

In order to validate this report, I compiled the data collected from various interviews, literature reviews and personal observations that I had, while working at Spade Digital. The report will be useful for operations management graduates, researchers and academicians, who are willing to get an in-depth knowledge on the digital agency industry of Bangladesh, more specifically, their work and operations culture.

3.3 Findings and Analysis

3.3.1 What is Operations Culture and why is it necessary?

Operations culture is the way the entire workflow of an organization is maintained and how the work from one department to another is shift and allocated. In this thriving industry, that we also call the digital marketing industry, an ample amount of work is being done which is very alien to us and most of the people from other background or industries might not understand. Hence to ensure a smoother way of entry for the new aspirants to enter this sector, a proper structural operations culture should be maintained throughout the industry.

Furthermore, the most important factor to maintain a proper and uniform operations culture throughout the industry is necessary, so that the workflow of the entire organization is smooth and easily adaptable. Considering, a huge number of stakeholders are involved in this sector, if a uniform operations culture is maintained, it is easier for even the clients to understand and adapt to the culture of the digital industry.

3.3.2 Findings

During my internship at Spade Digital, I came across a lot of loopholes in the operational culture and later found out this is the normal practice of the industry. Here are few things I found, that I believe are pulling them backward and becoming a cause of inefficiency:

- One of the core problems that I found was that, most of the works that are being done by the digital agencies are subject to an ample number of changes, which are given by the clients and thus, they lead to delayed delivery of the contents. Most of the time it is seen that, the clients give changes for the contents in the last minute and this creates a havoc to get the work done.
- Time management among the digital industry has always been a big issue since its inception and it is sometimes seen that the works are not completed in due time. The primary reason for this issue, I believe, is that the time management within the companies are not done properly. Since it is a creative industry, it is often seen that the departments are not functioning in a usual manner as any other normal organization and more often than not, it is seen that the employees are not maintaining work KPI's due to creative blocks and the works often get delayed.
- This pandemic has been a huge issue for most industries and the digital industry is no different from the other ones. It is often seen that since most employees are having to work from home, the workflow is not as smooth as the normal times and a communication gap is being created every now and then. This is due to improper operation structure and also the scarcity of proper infrastructure.

3.4 Summary and Conclusion

Though the importance of an appropriate Operation Culture has been very recently addressed by the digital agencies of Bangladesh, there are a lot of scope of improvement that can be done on this sector. It is a turf with a lot of areas still untouched and will definitely be able to create wonders and make a lot of difference if addressed properly.

This will definitely help the digital agencies to function in a smoother manner and will help them increase their efficiency by a greater extent.

3.5 Recommendation

To implement the best and most effective ways of Operation Culture, organizations should go back to the basics and try to stick to a uniform and more theoretically proven methods. For the major concern that they are facing regarding time management, they should strengthen their HR policies and in the meanwhile, also motivate their employees to be more punctual in every regard.

Furthermore, as I've encountered during my internship period, with the introduction of both Discord and Time Doctor, most employees have become more cautious and aware of the importance of time management and the importance of punctuality; these instruments should be used more to monitor the employees as they help to both measure and oversee the efficiency rate of employees and work processes. I believe, implementing these practices throughout, they might be able to reach a higher level of efficiency rate and improved outcomes in the future.

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