



“The key to any positive transition is to get out of your comfort zone and explore new opportunities.”

Mohammad Nurun Nobi, Engineer
VF Asia Limited, Bangladesh,
Hong Kong Polytechnic University, MSEM '16

Patience & perseverance

“Success for me, is the accomplishment of an aim or purpose. Sometimes, we may achieve it after a delay, but the trick is to stick to your goals courageously.” Mohammad Nurun Nobi upholds integrity, curiosity, patience and perseverance as his core values to achieve success

A dream to fly

Nobi always wanted to fly. His passion was to join the Air Force of Bangladesh, but he lost out on his dream in the final round of the selection.

To his credit, he did not allow this disappointment to faze him. He enrolled himself at the University of Dhaka and took up Leather Engineering. “By the time I decided to study engineering, the only available course was Leather Engineering,” says Nobi, “but I took it, because I never wanted to be stuck without an option in hand.” His down-to-earth sentiments bely his journey as a resilient scholar.

Nobi lives by the code of patience and perseverance. He graduated with a degree in Leather Engineering and went on to complete his MBA with a concentration in Marketing. After graduating, he worked for three footwear manufacturing and retail companies in Bangladesh, including Bata shoes and Bay & Jenny’s for almost eight years in retail, merchandising and production departments.

His diligence and strong work ethic paid off when he was selected for the VF-Asia-Hinrich Foundation Global Trade Leader scholarship. VF is a Fortune 500 global apparel and footwear company. Its brands include Jansport, Eastpak, Timberland and North Face.

My time to fly – Flexibility is key

Nobi received the VF Asia-Hinrich Foundation Global Trade Leader scholarship to pursue his Master in Manufacturing Systems Engineering & Management at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University in 2016.

Hinrich Global Trade Leader pathway to success in trade



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"I was looking for a scholarship opportunity to earn an overseas master's degree. One of my alumni informed me about the scholarship offered by the Hinrich Foundation," said Nobi.

"It was a difficult decision for me to leave Bata, which was a secure job, and I was doing well in the company. I had a wife and young daughter too. But in my heart, I knew it was an opportunity that could change my life. I knew it was my time to fly."



Nobi regularly conducts factory visits with the VF Engineering Team

Living away from his family was a challenge. But living as a student in Hong Kong was an experience Nobi cherishes. Besides world-class education, it gave him direction, a better world-view and a coveted job with VF.

"Super-convenient transportation system, multicultural work environment, mega business hub of Asia and open trade policy are my takeaways of living in Hong Kong," reminisces Nobi.

"I believe that being flexible with your career path is the best way to plan your life. Sometimes 'Plan A' does not work in life and we need a 'Plan B'. The important thing is to keep working hard and things will fall in place. The Almighty is always with us to make it happen. We need to just initiate it at the right time, at the right place."

Nobi believes that goals may change, but the passion to succeed should remain unchanged.

Piloting processes

Nobi noted how his multicultural exposure both from his studies and work gave him a different perspective in looking at things, and opportunities.

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As a Plant Engineer with VF Asia in Bangladesh, Nobi is a living example of high adaptability and patience to see amazing results. “My main responsibility is to create an efficient manufacturing processes for our different product lines such as outerwear, backpack and footwear.”



Making new friends and exploring new places were among the thing Nobi enjoyed most while studying in Hong Kong

He has the gift of blending in seamlessly with his surroundings, which helps him to adapt quickly and perform his duties to the best of his ability. Nobi's strong communication skills, fast learning, high adaptability with different cultures and eagerness to learn new things allow him to excel in his chosen field.

“I believe the manufacturing industry can create more jobs compared to other industries – and my passion is to master all processes in this industry so I can create a strong supply chain by efficient use of man, machine and materials.”

Overcoming challenges

Nobi recalls two big challenges he has overcome in his career.

First, when he had been assigned a new responsibility for the men's footwear category at Bata. His role asked to compete within an



Nobi looking sharp with Gareth Brooks, Managing Director of VF Asia Limited, during the VF Annual Dinner 2017

unstructured shoe market with the category targeting rural customers with a high degree of price sensitivity.

To work within the parameters of best quality products with minimum price, for any structured company, was akin to a soldier going into battle. As always, Nobi patiently forged ahead.

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"I did market research to know more about my competitor's strength, customers' demand and market potential," Nobi related.

"Based on my findings, I made a concrete plan for product development, manufacturing and distribution. Finally, I launched my collection in the market after six months of coordinated effort from our dedicated product development, costing, manufacturing, quality and sales teams.

The product collections were a big hit in the market, as they were extremely customer-oriented. My category business grew significantly during the first season of the year, leading sales targets, among all categories. It was a winning moment for me and my teams, when my bosses appreciated this initiative."

Nobi believes that a certain level of maturity and selflessness brings a great team together. "A great team is a group of people who work together, understand and sacrifice time and effort for each other to achieve a common goal."



Nobi is President of the Alumni Leadership Committee 2017-2019

His second challenge was at VF, where Nobi is responsible for developing and implementing scientific labor costing system by using GSD (General Sewing Data) system through its supply chain.

"In 2018, I was given a difficult task to develop GSD database for VF Jeanswear Coalition (currently known as Kontoor Brands) within a tight timeline and exceptional quality requirements. To achieve this goal, I visited various garments factories in Bangladesh throughout an entire year to understand the current manufacturing practices, collect production information and to find the best possible method of garment manufacturing. I used that information for building



Nobi poses with Hinrich Foundation Founder Merle Hinrich

the GSD database for VF Jeanswear collection and met my annual goal with exceeded expectation rating.”

He has worked with great teams, but finds these two events to be great case studies in tremendous teamwork.

Heart of gratitude

Nobi firmly believes that every cloud has a silver lining. He is grateful to everyone who has helped him reach one step nearer to his goals.

“First and foremost, I am grateful to the Almighty, my parents and my wife for always supporting and believing in me. I am extremely grateful to Mr. Merle Hinrich for being my mentor and for continuously guiding me about my career. Hinrich Foundation Program director Alex Boome has also been a key player in my selection for the scholarship and has guided me all the way,” Nobi said.

Visionary global trade leader

Flying high in the global trade industry is Nobi’s passion now. “Trade helps countries to grow their economies, create jobs and reduce poverty — gradually bringing about a prosperous and healthy world economy. I want to be a global trade leader to boost the growth of my country and take healthy initiatives in the economic development of my part of the world.”

“I want to see myself as an example for my country and the world, as a person who stands for bringing positive change in people’s lives.”

His vision is to challenge movement in manufacturing. “Moving from one country to another to achieve lowest costs for products is the biggest bane for manufacturers. We can’t keep moving. The answer lies in efficient processes that will reduce costs.” Nobi plans to keep working towards these innovations until he strikes the right balance.

In his role as the President of the Hinrich Alumni Leadership Committee, he is able to lead a pool of talented Hinrich Foundation alumni, travel to different

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Bringing his lovely family to Hong Kong was one of Nobi's unforgettable experiences

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countries and interact with different cultures. He feels honored to be at the helm of the committee and feels that it gives him opportunities to bring about change like never before.

"I feel privileged to be a mentee of Mr. Hinrich. It is like learning the ropes of sustainable trade from a true master of global trade."

Winning is a waiting game

"I have had several winning moments in my career, but winning the VF-Hinrich Foundation Global Trade Leader scholarship to pursue my Master in Manufacturing Systems Engineering & Management will always remain top of my list." Waiting patiently for his dream to take off wasn't easy for Nobi, but he worked hard – and never gave it up.

Nobi encourages scholars to stay flexible, stick to their goals and work patiently for success.

"The key to any positive transition is to get out of your comfort zone and explore new opportunities," says Nobi. "It was hard for me to leave my wife and kids, and live away from them, but where there is no pain, there is no gain either."

Read more stories of inspiration from our Hinrich Global Trade Leaders [here](#).



"My success is measured by my career achievements and my ability to try new initiatives at work."

Laura Xiao

Operations Director
Workstem HR
Management System

Hinrich Foundation alumna
Thunderbird School of Mg't
MBA '10



"Success, for me, is practicing my daily ritual of adding value to my education and skills. It's new life experiences and the value that comes along with that!"

Mai Nguyen,

Marketing &
Research Manager
AUSTRADE, Vietnam

Hinrich Foundation alumna
Hong Kong Baptist University,
MAIJ '2011



"A Hinrich scholar values work-life balance. Peace of mind is as much a target as fame and material wealth."

Sophal Bun,

Associate Dean
College of Media &
Communications
University of Cambodia

Hinrich Foundation alumnus
Hong Kong Baptist
University, MAIJ '14



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