

#FAMELAB THAILAND
INTERVIEW: NAVEEN PITIPORNVIVAT, FAMELABBER 2016

**‘YOU NEVER
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UNTIL YOU
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IT.’**

LAST YEAR, THAILAND BROUGHT IN FAMELAB FOR THE FIRST TIME AND IT ATTRACTED MANY TALENTED SCIENTISTS WHO WERE PASSIONATE ABOUT EXPLAINING IDEAS TO PEOPLE WHO DO NOT STUDY SCIENCE SUBJECTS IN A FUN, SIMPLE WAY.

NAVEEN JOINED THE COMPETITION LAST YEAR AND MADE IT TO THE TOP TEN FINALISTS. LET'S HEAR FROM HIM WHY HE DECIDED TO TAKE PART IN THE COMPETITION AND WHAT HE THOUGHT ABOUT SCIENCE COMMUNICATION.



TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF AND A BIT MORE ABOUT YOUR FACEBOOK PAGE ‘SCIENCE HERE HERE.’

I have been interested in science since I was little. As I grew up, I became interested in seeing how we can apply scientific knowledge to our own lives, so I decided to study engineering. During my studies, I was also a physics tutor for high school students. When I was their age, I felt like the lessons we learnt at school were so lifeless, for example, teachers would ask us to calculate the speed of a ball or compute the reaction of a square box. As a result, I came up with the idea of creating science problems that were fun and engaging, giving students something that was fun, but would also make them think. This changed students’ perception of science from being a bitter pill to a sweet that everybody loves. Together with my friends, I created a page called ‘*Science Here Here*’ which explains scientific problems, activities and news updates from the field of science.

WHAT MAKE YOU APPLY FOR FAMELAB 2016?

When I first heard of this project I thought it sounded challenging, and I definitely wanted to join this competition even though I wasn’t sure how far I could go – I didn’t have any idea what topic I wanted to speak about at first. FameLab encourages science communicators to think outside the box, by allowing a presenter only a few props on stage to explain ideas to people who do not study science subjects and make them understand. You have to forget complicated ways of teaching, or any technical words commonly used by scientists.

On our website, we already used pictures and letters to communicate with our fans, but before a live audience I needed to start thinking about tone of voice, gesture, and some props. This change in how I communicate was challenging and really excited me, so it was fun right from the beginning. Apart from this, we also had an opportunity to meet other science communicators in the competition, and we may also have a chance to work together afterwards.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE PARTICIPATING IN FAMELAB 2016

It was my first time presenting in this kind of format. I’ve always been nervous about presenting on stage, but this was a proof that I could do it, so it gave me confidence. In the competition itself, I learnt a lot from other speakers, comments from judges, and especially from the science communication master class. It felt like I was in an acting class and the other competitors were all really good – I’m not sure where we got all that energy from! This workshop gathered some of the top, most talented experts in the field of science. Science communication is not only about explaining scientific facts, but also creating art in your own style. Every competitor understood this and it shows that science is not as boring as we used to believe.

WHY IS SCIENCE COMMUNICATION IMPORTANT?

Scientific knowledge is necessary for everyone. On a personal level, we apply science to our work, health, and the selection of goods and services we buy. In organisations or the government sector, we use it to form policies, build awareness of the environment, or increase economic productivity. So people should have basic knowledge of science, and it's a science communicator's responsibility to answer society's questions or tackle any misconceptions, and to inspire others to be interested in science. This helps society to move beyond fear and doubt, supports critical thinking and encourages new young scientists to do research and explore new knowledge and skills.

CAN YOU GIVE US A FEW WORDS TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO JOIN FAMELAB 2017?

You never know how well you can do something until you actually do it. I wouldn't say you should take yourself too seriously in this competition because FameLab's atmosphere is not the same as other competitions. Contenders need to bring out their best to present their potential and their chosen topic in the most outstanding way. I believe that when we try our best, it captivates and engages other people around us.

This competition is really a competition with yourself. If you think you are ready, fill in your application and join in!