

# **The National Anthem Is a Good Brand for Kenya**

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## **BY MWANGI WANJUMBI**

It is one year since Brand Kenya Board started operations. Thanks to the government which saw the need to establish a body which aims to market Kenya as a country, its products and all the niceties that make this great nation what it is. Prior to this, the only visible efforts which were close to branding the country included tourist promotions in various countries, spearheaded by the Tourism ministry.

Perhaps it is worth noting the initiatives by Alfred Mutua, the government spokesman, as well. His efforts are driven by the slogan Najivunia kuwa Mkenya (I am proud to be Kenyan). In the meantime, we need to appreciate the fact that the Kenyan brand has been in existence proper since 1963, when we attained national independence.

This Kenyan brand aimed at achieving three main goals at independence; eradication of poverty, illiteracy and disease. Never mind that we have not achieved any one of the goals as yet. While the numerous efforts in trying to get to the next level are appreciated, it appears that one key initiative has either been ignored or has not been considered as value adding to the Kenyan brand. Apparently, branding the people of Kenya has been taken for granted if not forgotten.

Insights into our national history indicate that one of the greatest national feats ever was hoisting the Kenyan flag, on top of Mt Kenya. Even the National Anthem must have been sung endlessly as the celebrations continued. But, it appears that the singing of our anthem was not taken far enough. Not many Kenyans remember or give any thought to this anthem that is a prayer especially after leaving high school. Yet this great national prayer reflects values that would make us strong personal brands if superbly aligned with the national brand. The alignment may only be possible if the values are embraced by all.

In any case, the National Anthem is the thread that binds citizens with one another as well as their country in any part of the world. If the values expressed in the anthem had been embraced, there would be more brotherhood (and sisterhood) in this country; more justice amongst us; more inclination towards hard work rather than the well-

entrenched, get- rich-quick mentality which is without doubt a dangerous, negative culture.

The Brand Kenya Board can change the undesirable cultures, attitudes and behaviors attributable to Kenyans today through this anthem. Let the board begin by re-branding our national values as advocated in the National Anthem. Notably, the same branding process is a sure path towards organizational development strategy which is equally applicable to our national situation.

Consequently, Brand Kenya board needs to quickly strategize on transforming the Kenyan people brand. With this the country and its products will become an even easier sell, especially in the regional and global markets.

Wanjumbi is a management consultant and trainer with Newtimes Business Solutions, a Nairobi-based human resource development consultancy firm.

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