

# Conquering Regional and Global Markets in 2010 and beyond

**Mwangi Wanjumbi**

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Many of us have proudly served the Kenyan market most of the time. But, it appears that we should now upscale our targets. We need to focus on not only regional but also global markets as well. We should actually strive to achieve this inevitable status especially in line with an expanded regional market.

To prepare ourselves towards this in 2010, there are a few things that we need to either eschew or adopt. It may be difficult especially to discard some age old habits, but unfortunately the choices are actually limited.

The world has changed and is continually changing. We need to become part of the change or we end up becoming irrelevant in the regional and global markets. One of our greatest undoing as Kenyans is our short focus towards the future.

Our thinking as individuals is largely based on the present situation. (This scenario is interestingly explained in an upcoming personal development book by this writer).

In studies, we seem to be focused only on education that prepares us towards reaping quick financial benefits. We appear to be inclined towards training as engineers, doctors, financial experts amongst others even where our personal attributes do not support the same.

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The universities on the other hand appear to be requiring divine intervention. They are distracted by the now seemingly easily assessable financial gains, at the risk of deviating from their missions. This may in the end spell doom for the country and even the region, especially if we end up failing to check on the quality of graduates produced.

In the meantime, our short term focus on careers leads us into wrong considerations and poor employee brands (both salaried and self). We do not bother to understand our own personalities and in-born traits. It is not unusual to find an accountant who is ordinarily supposed to be a journalist or vice versa.

We find teachers who are supposed to be comfortably serving in the police force; doctors who are supposed to be businessmen rather than life savers; nurses who are supposed to be maintaining law and order as policewomen. In fact, you can hardly spend a day without encountering poor services from a person in a mismatched career.

The truth is that every career is endowed with its own personality traits. When we venture into the wrong careers, it is unlikely that we will continually enjoy sustainable job satisfaction. In fact, we will even be lucky to rise into top positions in mismatched careers.

One may never even be creative in such a career. Not when performance is based on only following orders and instructions. When it is time to go home through retrenchment or retirement, we hang up our gloves and go home never to be economically active again. Why does this happen?

We cannot manage to apply the skills acquired because we were probably working only to earn a living. We are therefore not keen or able to apply the skills and knowledge acquired, especially when left on our own. Perhaps that is why people overstay in jobs even when circumstances dictate otherwise.

The business sector is even more hard hit. Majority of us Kenyans particularly have a narrow focus towards venturing into business. It is about making money whatever it takes. It is about acquiring quick riches.

Most of us will just think in terms of only what to buy and sell and how much to obtain from each transaction. We become obsessed into just thinking about money. Whereas there may be nothing wrong in that, we fail to consider the future sustainability of our plans. That leaves us in situations of dangerous short term business ventures.

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In fact, we more often than don't take time to undertake research on our ideas. We just embrace "me too" brands based on situations around us. Sadly, we do not have the patience to innovate and brand our own unique ideas thus making them inaccessible to all and sundry.

We also do not bother to venture into business guided by our own inborn traits and personalities. It is no wonder then that most people venture into

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business as a last resort, and due to poor considerations, only 15% of new businesses march past the 5<sup>th</sup> year.

Notably, many people in mismatched careers or businesses remain frustrated most of the time. This situation leads to continued stress whose eventuality is a variety of emotionally induced ailments (Ells). Is it not striking that 80% or more of people occupying hospital beds are actually suffering from preventable ailments?

Yes indeed, we may not disagree with Zig Ziglar who says that such people suffer from diseases that emanated

from the mind. They include depression, paralysis, ulcers, migraine and others resulting from unbearable stress.

As individuals, we need to identify our missions or purposes in life based on our personal attributes especially guided by our strengths and weaknesses. Like Spencer Johnson says in his book titled "One Minute Salesman," we can only succeed in what we do if we sell on purpose. That means we need to treat whatever we do as our way of life, therefore never as a quick fix.

In the meantime, simple science especially through psychologists will today enable us to understand our most befitting careers. Further, it is also not difficult to identify personal talents which are incidentally, the key guides towards venturing into rewarding lifelong careers.

On this we need to follow leads by Ben Carson, the renowned American neural surgeon and inspirational writer. According to the surgeon, you only need to identify (or be helped to identify) what you accomplish with ease compared to other people or what you enjoy doing that other people treat as time wastage.

You can then improve on it and convert it into gainful employment or career. Alternatively, you can follow your acquired skills, interests or hobbies which you can likewise convert into long term occupations.

In the meantime, you at a personal level need to keep abreast of developments in your career or business interests. You need to continually know what is happening regionally and globally through continued research, as opposed to learning from the surrounding environment. How for example do the world's richest men like Warren Buffet get to and continually remain in those positions?

In business particularly, you need to put money as the last item in the agenda. Align your talents, skills and interests with people's needs. Identify your strengths and weaknesses. Ensure that you work towards reducing the impact of your weaknesses through concerted efforts of building on your strengths. If you are for example not financially endowed, avoid businesses which require heavy financial outlay.

Choose instead a business that is more reliant on your creativity than finances. Music, advertising or creatives, salesmanship, arts amongst others all fall in this category. Further, learn more

and more about what puts Fortune 500 companies ahead of the rest.

Remember that you need to continually develop long and short term goals. As you seek to achieve those goals, you will find yourself lasting in the chosen business for a lifetime.

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Above all, we need to especially uphold ethical business practices for us to continually comply with sometimes unwritten regional and global market rules. In fulfillment of ethical business practices we need to embrace fair competition, corporate citizenship and at the same time conserve the environment amongst other ethical practices.

If we keep all the issues outlined in perspective we, will eventually be selling on purpose. This will definitely put us on the pathway towards continually conquering regional and global markets for now and the future.

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