

The NEWTIMES NEWSLETTER

ISSUE: February — March 2010

Since September 2006

REGULAR HIGHLIGHTS

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A COMMUNICATION TO CEO'S / BUSINESS EXECUTIVES

This is our Social Responsibility of Inspiring Change through Story Telling and Critical Analysis of Topical Issue.

Welcome to our yet again incisive newsletter that touches on personal, business and national development issues and strategies. We analyze the situation as it is and give you our own perspective. Let us together study and understand our national and business trends so that we can make important decisions from informed positions. This is our contribution towards inspiring change in search of progress.

THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

How to Control Our National Politics with Precision

During the Gulf War of 1991, we were treated to rather interesting scenarios. The state of Iraq, under the leadership of Sadaam Hussein had invaded Kuwait, its tiny southern neighbour and converted it into one of its provinces. The world was angry and the reaction was sharp. Americans amassed global support and a coalition army was formed subsequently setting base in Saudi Arabia. From there, we got to know how modern war is fought more in the air rather than land based foot soldiers. We learnt how coalition forces, under the command of General Norman Schwarzkopf kept weakening the enemy installations from the air. It was interesting how laser guided tomahawk missiles kept destroying enemy war installations with precision, as we were continually updated. By the end of the air attacks, the enemy forces were completely weakened leading to restoration of Kuwait into its original status, without much loss of coalition resources especially through ground battles.

War is therefore no longer about military arsenal and battle hardened soldiers but a match of all with continually changing technology. What of our politics or better still our leadership processes? Perhaps we need to inject some tactic based on scientific or technology driven processes. It appears that in this era of the 21st century, something needs to be done to tame our leadership. Many are no longer enthusiastic or even ready to live our national social economic well being at the mercy of a few men and women who can only be tamed periodically through the vote. Incidentally, we are supposed

to be their bosses but this is only realized during electioneering. The rest of the time we are held at ransom by their moods, attitudes or even wishes.

Until listening to a presentation by Caesar Handa of Strategic Research, I had never figured out how political leadership can with precision be controlled like the tomahawk missiles. It is since this presentation at the British Council Leadership Forum that I took more interest in opinion polling.

According to Mr. Handa opinion polling took shape in the 1940's as a project of Gallop therefore adoption of the name Gallop Polls. The polling aims to meas-

be tested through the research.

Further, Caesar insinuated that the most commonly known opinion polls are based on political matters. In fact, we have since introduction of competitive politics in 1992, witnessed many situations where opinion polls have predicted election results with precise accuracy in Kenya. In developed countries, opinion polls have been relied on to extrapolate election results as well as people's opinions on topical issues with discrete accuracy.

Locally, opinion polls can be used to effectively influence the thinking and behavior of our politicians. In that regard, opinion polling can be a formidable tool of shaping our democratic process as well as responsible governance. In fact, why can't opinion polling therefore be an effective tool that could continually be used in guiding our national legislation process?

The opinion polling process as Caesar insinuated would have to be recognized in our statutes for it to be obeyed by our national leadership. Only then will the now increasingly popular opinion polling get entrenched as a way of obtaining public opinion thus guiding our political direction. In this regard, we may need to push for opinion polls to be officially accepted as part of our national agenda and subsequently subject them to legislation aimed at governing their conduct. Our leaders will consequently be inclined to follow the people's wishes once opinion polling is legislated. On the other hand, our national leadership will cease being erratic and follow charted paths in the same way as the laser guided

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ure people's views on any issue with precise accuracy, especially when guided by well thought out confidence limits. This process has been used to nurture democracy particularly in developing countries. As may have been witnessed, the process does not lie as long as the right methodology is followed. It follows scientific steps which focus on the population under study from which a suitable sample is developed. Opinion polling can also be guided by the ideas that need to

tomahawk missiles. Without doubt, many will be tempted to agree with this proposition which would certainly align our politics with modern terrorism.

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PERSPECTIVE – Sharing recent change inspiring experiences

Why Professionals Detest Leadership Positions in Social forums



In the newsletter of Aug/Sept 2009, this perspective section captioned the topic "leadership baptism by fire." I had explained my experiences since having accepted to become one of the leaders in our Social Club. The experiences were then tough, though I was never expecting them to become even tougher. I had become a member of a team only to learn later that our leadership objectives were completely at variance. Some were ready to serve whereas others were seemingly out to perpetuate varied personal interests. Some of the objectives included doing business with the club based on situations which may not have been pegged on arms length arrangements.

For the different parties to achieve their goals, it became a matter of compromise. However, there was a limit to which compromise would be acceptable, all in an effort of making teamwork to flourish. Meanwhile, I had never at any one time dreamt of becoming either a politician or a political operator. I had accepted the Leadership position believing that my role was to provide professional guidance on matters of common interest, especially with regard to financial management. Halfway into the one year term, all was going right for me, despite obvious challenges. My advice and approach to issues was working well. The club experienced monumental changes including some serious projects which may last for a long time in the members' minds. Unknowingly, my approaches to professional management started hurting interests of others in the team including other internal stakeholders. Time was running out and they were not achieving their objectives. Something had to be

done to tone me down or better still destroy my leadership influence which had by now been popular with members. As a start, improvement of the automated financial management operations was brutally scuttled.

This particular act badly affected the remaining teamwork efforts. In fact, further members of the team resigned. Personally, I had 3 options. I could as the key finance person have played ball and accepted all the requests "demanded" by the other parties, even if they would hurt the interests of the Social club. I could also have resigned and let things take their own course. In my perception, the latter would have been a cowardly leadership act. Instead, I chose to stay on and stay put without allowing the interests of majority to be compromised. I courageously stuck to my principles and beliefs and got my way on most of the key and contentious leadership issues.

In the process, I was able to attend to my usual routines without spending so much time worrying about the day to day occurrences in the club. In any case, I was not meant to be providing fulltime services. Unknown to me, a strategy had been put in place by my detractors. They had sworn to turn my successes to disadvantages, on the contrary. They spent many hours as well as invaluable efforts trying to destroy my influence. "This guy has refused to sign this or that cheque (even when they were clearly irregular), therefore stalling this or that project. This guy has disapproved this project or the other (even when they were clearly calculated to satisfy personal interests). Indeed, this guy is a real liability to the club's progress."

Without doubt, many

supporters of my detractors bought the misinformation and propaganda. Luckily, they all knew that the information was political intrigues by distraught leaders. No action therefore could have been taken on any of the issues. The end result was an electoral defeat for not only myself but also my "team mates." How can we re-elect a team that cannot work (or is it agree to eat) together? This was the concern that was uppermost in the minds of the voters. But did I care? Not at all - Those who knew the truth are even now fully aware about the failures and successes of our social club.

Earlier on, I had formed a habit of updating members on the positive developments which we had been experiencing. Even when things changed, the information flow continued. The communication influenced members into taking continued and increased interest in the affairs of their club. Earlier years, the interest had only been lackluster. Eventually, I had lost an election which I had only given lukewarm attention. I had become weary of political maneuvers which are reminiscent of the national situation. I was only interested in finishing the term whatever the outcome. Without doubt however, I left with my head high having inspired change especially with regard to influencing members' interests.

Further, I learnt many practical leadership lessons that will be invaluable in my leadership skills development training as well as writing. Besides, it is now clear to me why many practicing professionals are unwilling to venture into leadership situations. Not many would have the courage and guts to deal with sometimes murky situations, which are incidentally a reflection of the national political circumstances.

Welcome for more @ <http://www.newtimesconsultants.com> Comments @ info@newtimesconsultants.com

PTAK News: PTAK – Professional Trainers Association of Kenya, the body registered by the Government with the main objective of taking workplace learning to new levels is continually growing in size and stride. ALL registered members will without exemption require certification through attending an initial PTAK TOT – Trainer of Trainer's Course. The Courses will now take place every 3rd week of every month. Book your place early to avoid disappointment. CONTACTS: KTTI Complex, 2nd Floor, Commercial Street, opposite KEMSA Phone: 254 20 2519102 email: info@ptakoffice.org web: www.ptakoffice.org



Thought for the Month – March 2010- Changing our Time Orientation

One of the greatest differences between Africans and the Westerners is the concept of time. Culture and African religion scholars are agreeable on the same. Past time orientation indicates that people are guided by past experiences in order to forecast into the future. No wonder the confusion brought about by changing weather patterns, occasioned by global warming. Future orientation on the other hand does not rely so much on the past but mostly extrapolates into the future in order to determine likely occurrences.

Perhaps our past orientation can be explained by some uniqueness about us Africans. During my early days in secondary school, I studied African Religious Education. I scanned through many books with a view to establishing religious cultures of different African people. I read facing Mt. Kenya which was authored by Jomo Kenyatta, long before becoming Kenya's first President. I was empowered by Professor John Mbiti's writings as well. Much Later, I studied challenging lessons on philosophy which is about search and dissemination of knowledge. One great realization is the closeness of Africans to their ancestors.

Many African communities adore and continually remember their dead relatives. In African religious education, the recently departed relatives are referred to as the "living dead." The name borrows from the fact that they are still in our memories. We keep remembering them and even making sacrifices in their honor. The only grandmother (maternal) that I encountered as I grew up was quite amazing. Many times I could confront her during her lonely moments. I could seek to know what was bothering her. She could instantly refer me to her dreams in the company a favorite long dead brother. She could compare him with her other dead and even living relatives. When referring to her relationship with this brother, she could talk about it as if they were only recently enjoying life together. Interestingly, even my mother's memories of her own "popular" uncle were hazy.

Many years after the death of my grandmother, I still recall her attachment to the living dead as I understand it now. I am further inclined to relate the African's past time orientation with too much thought of our living dead.

Thought of our interactions with those gone relatives distracts as from associating with the future. We end up living for the day as opposed to planning for long lives ahead of us. I may be wrong; but I am afraid I could be right. We need to embrace a paradigm shift through future forward planning. We need to think less of the past and more of the future. This approach will certainly cure many of the ills that we are continually experiencing even as a nation. (This is an extract from an ongoing personal development book by this Author)

Mwangi Wanjumbi (Newtimes Newsletter Author) Comments @ info@newtimesconsultants.com

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INSPIRATION FOR THE MONTH

Your destiny solely depends on you

I had not had a one on one discussion with Martha for all the years that I had known her. I did not even have an idea of her age. So, it was a pleasant opportunity to know about her present and past, upon meeting during these uniting school visits. When I sought to know what she does, Martha's story was really amazing. She freely volunteered many details including the fact that she spent 10 years in primary school (instead of 7), long before it was converted to the current 8-4-4 system. At one stage, she had to go back to the 6th grade just to ensure that she did not lose a chance of continued schooling. Her rural based parents had given up on her, but she hadn't. How could they keep educating a girl who was only grasping Mathematics but failing badly in all other subjects? No wonder Martha was getting the same grades on each of the 3 times that she sat the national primary school examination.

Secondary school was not any different. Martha again excelled in Mathematics but not the other subjects. Many years after getting bored with the subordinate job that she had secured in a quasi-government body, Martha recollected herself and decided to attempt becoming an accountant. She felt it was time to utilize her earlier proficiency in Mathematics. Apparently, Martha seemed to have been right on this. Several years after, Martha is one of the few Certified Public Accountants in her organization. Further, she is the only professional amongst her siblings, despite her weaker academic grades. Know yourself. You must be having a personal gift even if others do not see it. This gift can if pursued help you rise to the top. Even when others suppress the same, give them no chance. You are after all the master of your own destiny.

By **Mwangi Wanjumbi Newtimes E-Newsletter Author More @ <http://www.newtimesconsultants.com>**



Did you know?

- That only 15 % of our successes in life are attributable to our technical skills. The rest 85% is attributable to our soft or people skills - Dale Carnegie, 1931
- That you should never allow yourself to be everybody. Strive to join the 10% who bring change only through constantly developing themselves - Jim Rohn.
- That you can now watch the editor live in action @ <http://newtimesconsultants.com/ideogallery.html>?

Our Motto: Inspiring Change Our Guiding Principle: Continually Taking Business to the Next level. This is a bi-monthly Communication to Corporate CEOs/Business Executives from Mwangi Wanjumbi, the Managing Consultant and Chief Trainer of Newtimes Business Solutions. He is himself a Business Strategy Consultant and Management/leadership Skills as well as Motivational Trainer

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THE CEO'S DILEMMA

Integrity Dilemma – Making Choices on Consultants



Many times I have heard this question, which is sometimes a major concern to most institutions. It can also be a major undoing to organizational, industry and national development, especially. Perhaps some tips or views on the matter could help unravel the dilemma. So, is it ethical for an organization to use the same consultant as that of the competitor? The question reads.

Whether it is ethical or unethical, the issue is entirely left to consulting clients. But it is good for them to make decisions from informed positions. The first scenario to consider is derived from this Consultant/Author's experience as a COYA – Company of the Year Award Consultant, who has evaluated numerous companies over the years. Well structured companies have organizational strategies which are unique in their own ways. Further, the companies have varying strengths and areas of improvement. No company therefore is like any other. Even in situations of “me too brands,” (copy and paste), variations will always arise, one way or the other. That is why me too brands approach does not work well, and if so, only by chance.

The other perspective is that the work of consultants is to more often than not continually take the clients' business to the next level. This is normally independent from experiences from other competitors, especially considering that each company pursues own unique strategy. If the consultants were to entirely dissociate from dealing with related companies and therefore spread the experiences gained, there would be risk of limiting organizational, Industry and national growth. However, the choice on whether to use same consultants as the competitor is entirely left to consulting clients. By the way do companies choose to attend open courses depending on the identity of other participants? I bet not. What matters most I believe is the likely benefits.

NOTE: Perhaps, it would be of help if you can make steps of unraveling your dilemmas through customized CEO/ Business Executive coaching sessions or fully fledged consulting solutions, tailor – made training solutions not withstanding.

Contact us for more @ info@newtimesconsultants.com

Further Reading:

The following articles are just a sample of those written by the Author and published in the print press so far. Those listed below are recommended reading for everyone interested in personal, organizational, national or even global development issues. Apparently, 90 % of the population is stuck in group think (Jim Rohn). For Continued Personal development join the 10 % who continually seek and apply more and more knowledge and information. The articles cover such areas as:-

- Ethics: Changing our values on work and money – <http://www.newtimesconsultants.com/ethics.pdf>
- Personal Strategy; many skills half a brain – <http://www.newtimesconsultants.com/Newsletter-%20Personal%20strategy.html>
- Degrees are not an end in themselves and must add value – <http://www.newtimesconsultants.com/degree.pdf>
- Culture and behavior in the workplace -<http://www.newtimesconsultants.com/NewsletterCulture%20and%20Behaviour%20at%20the%20workplace.html>
- Employers “failing” the training test? – http://www.newtimesconsultants.com/fail_train_test.pdf
- Money? It is the last thing in my mind – <http://www.newtimesconsultants.com/Newsletter-Money.html> (A cure for our Chronic Money Mania?)
- ONE KENYA: The tribe is not to blame - http://www.newtimesconsultants.com/tribe_blame.pdf (We are all the same after all)

These are just examples of highly enlightening articles that relate to our own sometimes challenging personal and national situations. Check also <http://mwangiwanjumbi.wordpress.com> – this is a personal blog