

# The NEWTIMES NEWSLETTER

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*Inspiring Change through Story Telling and Critical analysis*

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

### The strategy of owning up and moving on could be less painful

Right now, I am sympathizing with our dear President Mwai Kibaki. Many title deeds and allocations of Mau Forest were issued during his first term of office as the President of this country. This means that Mau, one of the Key national water catchments continued being grabbed well past the KANU era. The effects of desecration of this former Forest have now started biting us hard. And since the buck on national goofs must rest somewhere, it is unfortunate that this has to be the seat of ultimate Power. The buck must inevitably be placed at statehouse, Nairobi. But first, why is the issue of Mau of even more grave concern to this country?

If you can reason with me, perhaps you can see the gravity of the Mau debacle. Incidentally, basic science indicates that 75% of the human body is made up of water. It is no wonder then that a dead body immediately shrinks into a very small size within only a matter of days.

Right now, our water requirements especially in Nairobi are substantially being acquired from underground borehole resources. Like a dead body's loss of water, the earth's water table is continually being depleted. This effectively means that the earth's surface will continually set at lower levels. In fact, one does not need to be a scientist to see that, loss of this underground water mass without constant replenishment from rainwater especially, will eventually give in to this sinking of the ground's surface. And as this surface sinks, the lowest points on the land mass will naturally become part of the sea.

Notably, the sea will always be replenishing its water resources through convectional rains. So, as the sea retains or even heightens its levels, the adjacent land mass will be sinking. It is no wonder then that Mombasa City and others could be history in the next 20 years as recently predicted.

If we perhaps listened to Professor Wangari Mathai who has since the early 80's been warning us about the dangers of not conserving our environment, we probably could not have reached where we are. We are now in the thick of things. As a whole nation, we are facing the consequences of ignoring the Professor's warnings.

We are going through dark moments in the nation. Our national economy could now be hard hit by reduced hydro electric power generation, which has led to the ongoing electricity rationing. Many jobs will certainly be lost especially in the informal sector which cannot sustain idle employees especially during the rationing periods. Cost of

producing goods and services will likewise skyrocket as businesses turn to the more expensive alternative sources of energy, the foremost being diesel generators. Besides, businesses will be producing below their performance potentials.

Sadly, when business performance slackens, the national tax revenue equally reduces. The government will naturally not meet its obligations as outlined in the current and probably future national budgets.

Food security is likewise threatened. Without rains, there will be little food produced even for national consumption. A country without food for its nationals is one whose peace and stability is naturally threatened.

Livestock production is at the moment at an all time low. Therefore, the destruction of Mau Forest presents a grave situation to the very livelihood and peaceful continuity of our nation.

This therefore, leaves us with the inevitable conclusion that continued politicking about reforestation of the Mau should from now on be treated as a threat to our own national security. We should not any more continue annoying Mother Nature through politicking on this national resource.

Subsequently, if I was the President of this country, I would first apologize to the nation for the mess on Mau. I would make the victims to understand that this is a national crisis which must be addressed at great pains to the Nation and the children, mothers and fathers who were wrongly settled in this national resource. This would greatly inspire and energize the envisaged evictees even under desperate situations. They may effectively not even be forced out of Mau. They will instead under difficult emotional constraints co-operate in righting the wrongs against mother nature when great leadership is demonstrated on the matter.

Read more @ <http://www.newtimesconsultants.com/newsletters.html>

## PERSPECTIVE – SHARING RECENT CHANGE INSPIRING EXPERIENCES

### Leadership Baptism by Fire

I had never known how difficult it is to be in leadership positions in this country. Towards the end of last year, I was prevailed upon to take a leadership position in my social club of 12 years. This is the place where I have spent many evenings and sometimes weekends in an attempt to stay on top of life through maintaining mental and physical fitness. I am actually an ardent swimmer and jogging enthusiast of many years. During the years as a club member, I have interacted with many people most of whom now know me for who I am and what I stand for. Subsequently, when the last annual elections were called, I was convinced to present myself as the candidate to head the Club's treasury which I reluctantly did. I was eventually elected by a landslide despite not engaging in enthusiastic campaigning that is synonymous with leadership positions in this country. At the takeover ceremony, I was warned that the club will run smoothly only up-to the next May, when members' annual subscriptions will stop trickling in. I sought to know how the previous leaders of 3 years had been controlling stock movement. "We have been relying on the goodwill of staff because the computer system has not been up-to the task," said the outgoing officials

My first reaction therefore was to take time to study how the club operates. Surprisingly, the club did not have any systems. Money was just flowing in and out anyhow. With due respect, the work of the Hon Treasurer seemed to have been only signing cheques after earlier selecting the list of suppliers. No attempts had been made to implement controls of monitoring performance, expenditure and so on. The staff had taken full advantage of the loopholes to do what was obvious. It was now upon me to make a difference if the club was to operate smoothly past the month of May, as I had been warned.

The second task was implementing control measures especially on what to buy, from where, when and how, with the full support of other elected leaders. The third measure was to set up a fund from the annual subscriptions so that it could help in the period beyond May. But surprisingly the fund had apparently built up to a few millions by the said May. The Club was on the other hand amazingly able to pay all its recurrent bills from revenue generated from operations, as the new fund continued growing.

Meanwhile, the control measures that I had innocently initiated started hurting some of the beneficiaries of earlier systems. Some key staff started strategizing on how to outsmart the new strict measures. When caught, they suffered the wrath of new accountable leadership. The worst had not happened. Touching the Club Chief Executive was seemingly stepping on a live wire. Hell broke loose. A seemingly organized cartel of milking the club to the last cent through dubious supplies and other means had just been smashed. I had never known that I could have been dealing with leopards in goat skins within the Club leadership. This leadership eventually broke into two camps. One of them had started eying the fund continually building up and at the same time pressing for maintenance of the status quo. The change group that I ended up leading was continually wrestling to break from the past.

Eventually, this change oriented group won. After difficult challenges it was able to perfect and modernize the computerized information system, a huge Standby Generator and a lighted jogging field in a club which had been crying for the same projects for many years. Having lost steam, the change opponents gave up their leadership positions most probably to strategize on the future. Today, the elated and supportive club membership is within 7 months enjoying the fruits of leadership borne from baptism by fire, Kenyan style. The next time you are in similar leadership dilemmas, obtain support from your followers through effective communication at the minimum. Above all, you need to realize that Leadership concepts actually apply in the practice.

Mwangi Wanjumbi

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

**TIPS:** PTAK – Professional Trainers Association of Kenya, the body entrusted by the Government to take workplace learning to new levels is now not only a reality but also an active organization. Registered members need to know that they will require certificates which will only be issued after attending a TOT – Trainer of Trainer's Course. The next such course is slated for 22<sup>nd</sup> –23<sup>rd</sup> October 2009. Book your place early to avoid disappointment. CONTACTS: KTTI Complex, 2nd Floor, Commercial Street, opposite KEMSA Phone:254 20 2519102 email: [info@ptakoffice.org](mailto:info@ptakoffice.org) web:[www.ptakoffice.org](http://www.ptakoffice.org)

## THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH – SEPTEMBER, 2009

### Everybody Who chooses Can Be a Leader

Many times, I am disappointed at the sight of people shying away from leadership positions. It is even worse when Kenyans associate leadership with only politicians some of whom are in the positions by default. Leadership shy Kenyans are oblivious of the fact that there is business leadership, church leadership, Social group leadership, organizational leadership and many more. No wonder there are many junior employees in offices that hold top leadership positions in Churches and elsewhere.

Luckily, all types of leadership follow one simple concept – The power of influence – period. The challenge is what power you possess which makes you stand out as a potential leader, capable of influencing others to do as you wish. It does not matter whether you force them or make them comply willingly. Needless to venture into the intricate details, you can start becoming a leader today. Are you charismatic? Do you have any expertise which people recognize and eventually attracts them to you? Keep thinking about the others. Work on becoming the best using whatever power of influence that you are endowed with. You will certainly end up somewhere.

Mwangi Wanjumbi (Newtimes Newsletter Editor)

## OUR KEY SOLUTIONS

We provide Holistic Corporate Capacity Building Training Solutions

Our Flagship program is the innovative *bottom up Corporate Employee (Re-) Branding Solution through*

- *Staff Motivation and Capacity Building Training for - General/Junior staff*
- *Staff Motivation and Capacity Building Training – Supervisory/Middle Management Staff*
- *Staff Motivation and productivity Management Training – Senior Managers*
- *Applied Business Leadership Skills for CEOs and Business Executives*

*All other courses ( see [www.newtimesconsultants.com](http://www.newtimesconsultants.com)) and programs such as application of the balance score card will easily fall into place and at the same time continually reinforce the now solid employee brands.*

**All Our Courses are DIT approved. They are intended to arm participants with soft skills or emotional intelligence. This enhanced emotional Intelligence enables the trainees to effectively apply new and existing professional and technical skills. The key benefit is achievement of sound foundation for continually improving performance.**

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Please Check @ <http://www.newtimesconsultants.com/testimonials.html>

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You can now view video clips depicting us live in action @ <http://newtimesconsultants.com/videogallery.html>

## INSPIRATION FOR THE MONTH

### Living a full and economically active life

When I met Marceline in a Government Office, one morning in the last week of August, I had no idea that she was my student at large. She had read one of my articles in the print press and somehow wished to clarify one or two things in the event that she ever met the writer. “I am about 40 and pursuing a diploma in Management. I am not sure how I will use it. I am not even sure I would need to do a degree course but I am being put under pressure.” Perplexed by her dilemmas, I simply sought to know whether she reads novels and also her favorite author. “Sydney Sheldon of-course,” she promptly volunteered. “Have you read ‘The Rage of Angels’ as well as ‘Are you Afraid of the Dark?’” I enquired. “Indeed, I still have the two copies in my home library,” Marceline declared. “Then you need to realize that Sheldon wrote the first novel at 58 years followed by many more, the last one being penned at 88 just one year before he joined his maker. Here at home Roger Steadman founded the Steadman Group when he was 65 years (Today he is in his 80’s),” I unapologetically stated. In fact, Marceline and others only need to be encouraged to discover who exactly they are and their purpose in this world. Continued and focused learning can do the trick. Only then shall we all enjoy full and economically active lives.

**Did you know?**

- That if you keep challenging your mind through learning, it depreciates by only 3% over a lifetime. Incidentally, you are old at 20 if you stop learning and still young at 80 with continued learning. This is all according to research.
- That the Newsletter editor takes ½ working days (4 hrs) only to write this newsletter? This is in response to a reader's concern.
  - That you can now watch the editor live in action @ <http://newtimesconsultants.com/videogallery.html> ?

## THE CEO'S DILEMMA

### When A Strike Inevitably Becomes legal

In this era of performance contracting and application of the Balance Scorecard, we should not waste valuable time debating over legality or otherwise of workforce strikes. When employees down their tools, they do it to enforce their right for reasonable remuneration for their efforts. In Kenya, it has been hard to witness any strike that has at any time ever been declared legal. When would be strikers are compliant with the requirements of the law, they are more often than not just allowed to stretch into irrelevance as time ticks. You can definitely recall recent strikes that ended up achieving nothing other than expression of workers' frustrations. But why wait for strikes to happen in profit oriented organizations? Notably, employees will more often than not have downed their tools long before the beginning of the official strike. They will have been de-motivated therefore performing only to justify being at work. Could this be avoided?

Properly implemented performance management processes will today give good guides on how to ensure that employees are performing at their best. In particular the employer and employees are able to agree on periodical targets. When the two are working in tandem, and supporting one another, there is no reason why there could be conflicts unless of-course other extraneous factors crop up. In an ideal situation, employees would be delivering as expected and therefore adding value to the workplace. Should the employer be unwilling to fulfill his/her part of the performance deal, there would be nobody else to blame. The 'strike' will effectively become legal- upende usipende. Top performers do not always communicate through strikes. They simply walk away or are poached, sometimes with their client portfolios and/or the organizational memory. Imagine the pain.

## FURTHER READING:

The following articles are just a sample of the more than 50 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. For Continued Personal development join the 10 % who continually seek and apply more and more knowledge and information. The articles cover such areas as:-

- Personal Strategy; many skills half a brain – Sokoni of MSK -) This is a great piece on self realization
- Degrees are not an end in themselves and must add value – Standard Newspapers 25<sup>th</sup> Aug 2009
- Culture and behavior in the workplace - Sokoni of MSK (Dec 2007) – About real cause of workplace challenges
- Staff training adds value to the economy - Business Daily (May 2008). Do you ever think of the value of training?
- Money? It is the last thing in my mind – Business Post (March 2008) ( A probable cure for our Chronic Money Mania)

These are just examples. Each of the articles adds value in different ways and situations for all those interested in becoming GLOBAL Citizens. These citizens are an informed lot who continually seek to become the best in whatever they do – They acquire **EXPERTISE ORIENTED LEADERSHIP**. Strong Moral values become their guiding light- YES, WE MUST ALL RE-THINK THE KENYA OF TODAY AND TOMORROW TOO. Check also <http://mwangiwanjumbi.wordpress.com> – this is a personal blog

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**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**