

The NEWTIMES NEWSLETTER

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Inspiring Change through Story Telling and Critical Analysis of Topical Issues

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

Is Strategy of Forcing Change Through Isolating Individual National Leaders Well Informed?

We have in the recent past been treated to news about so and so being banned from traveling to the USA. As the travel restrictions persist, they also continue to be more personalized. One wonders why the US government particularly has started targeting individuals for this discrimination and not the state any more. It is of-course expected that other Nations could easily follow suit in this persistent humiliation of our country.

Whether to agree with this strategy of forcing change is neither here nor there. What is clear however is that we are part of the global village and cannot by any means disentangle ourselves from the trends of this village. If we can consider this global village as a huge club of nations, may be we could get a clearer picture. For one to become a club member, it sometimes involves lengthy processes which include revealing intricate personal details. Any doubts on past record leads to rejection of the membership application. Membership on the other hand involves accepting to follow rules on dressing code, behavior and relationship with other members. Any deviations from rules and procedures results to disciplinary action which may at the extreme include expulsion.

In our case, we have as a nation accepted many rules that govern behavior in this global club. We have embraced many international conventions especially those spearheaded by the United Nations. We have endorsed conventions on human rights, child rights, environmental conservation, International Criminal Court and many more. Apparently, these rules are dynamic and keep changing with time. That is why some national constitutions are dynamic. The constitution of the USA for example only addresses the principle rules that appertain to given situations. The details are left for interpretation depending on the facts available and the prevailing situation.

Our own constitution is static. It is a historical document which was motivated by the situation that was prevailing when it was developed. The fact that it has accommodated some amendments here and there has not helped much. It is the same document whose overhaul has dragged for more than two decades of the slightly less than 5 that we have been independent. It has led to political crises for not addressing modern challenges. The same constitution is sometimes in conflict with desired national changes that would be in line with international trends. A good example is the laws on land ownership and usage. They have caused inter-ethnic, clan, family and neighborhood conflicts.

On the other hand, we as a nation would want to every now and then fall back to the international community whenever there is a national crisis. The current challenges of national famine are a case in point. Part of the same was caused by displacement of the farming community during political crises of 2008, whereas others could be attributable to poor agricultural management practices and policies.

It appears that the international community is becoming weary for continually being asked to chip in help on crises which are occasioned by mismanagement of our resources. The international community would want to see our country remain as a player in the global market of goods and services. Tourism and foreign investments for instance still have high potential but would only thrive in a situation of certainty. It is no wonder then that the national managers of change are now being targeted for isolation. They are being humiliated for their part in either not influencing or frustrating desired national change. Whether this will yield success in making our Nation to conform to the order of the global village is another matter

altogether.

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PERSPECTIVE – Sharing recent change inspiring experiences

There is Need to Embrace Continued Learning as a Culture more than Ever Before



Perhaps you have heard the talk of a learning nation, learning organizations, ardent learners and so on. Have you ever thought about why you or most of us do not fit in any of the learning descriptions? May be yes or may be no. Whatever the case, the truth is that majority of Kenyans are only interested in academic oriented learning. The aim is to get academic certificates so that they eventually secure jobs or promotions for those already in employment. Yet, life is about continued learning.

Right now, there is a great demand for university education especially in Nairobi. One corner of the CBD – especially that adjacent to the University Way is almost being taken over by Town Campuses of both public and private universities. One side of the road of course is the home of University of Nairobi. In the recent past, competing universities have been acquiring building after building on the other side of the said University way and directly opposite the University Of Nairobi. Even empty spaces which have in the past been used as parking have not been spared. This situation is not likely to be reversed any time soon.

As economists would confirm, when demand rises to the extent of outstripping supply, quality of goods and services becomes threatened. One wonders whether we are getting the right drivers of our national economy and public sector through the mass produced graduates. May be yes may be not. But, perhaps that is why the banking and insurance industry no longer employ graduates as management trainees but rather as clerical officers. Upward mobility in these sectors is now driven by personalized efforts exhibited by superior performance. It is not clear how the public sector ensures that it employs graduates who are up-to the task. In India for example all graduates must undergo a serious placement examination before employment in public service.

Meanwhile, it is only through continued workplace learning that organizations will achieve full performance potential, especially under the prevailing situation. High standards of the learning process must also be adopted for best results. Besides, employers will only be encouraged to embrace continued learning when the results are measurable. Why will this be the case?

While, training in a recent Training of Trainers – TOT course, under the auspices of the Professional Trainers Association of Kenya -PTAK, I was surprised to learn that training impact analysis, a process of measuring the benefits of training, is treated as a foreign concept by most trainers and employers in Kenya. This process is a research into the quantitative and qualitative benefits achieved from training interventions. One can measure improvement in efficiency in almost every attribute of training. Indeed, one can determine the efficiency in communication, teamwork, leadership skills or any other.

Unfortunately, not much attention is given to this stage of training evaluation as I learnt from these trainers turned trainees of the session. Training impact analysis needs to take place about 3 months since delivering the training programs. Perhaps, that is why many employers do not give much thought towards continuous learning and development of their workforce. Luckily, there is always room for improvement especially through adopting dynamic ideas for the benefit of continued business growth.

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

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PTAK News: PTAK – Professional Trainers Association of Kenya, the body entrusted by the Government to take workplace learning to new levels is now fully positioned towards fulfilling its mandate. ALL registered members will without exemption require certification through attending an initial PTAK TOT – Trainer of Trainer's Course. The next such course is slated for 16th - 17th November in Nairobi and 23rd – 24th November 2009 in Mombasa. 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 – November, 2009

Inculcating Positive Values amidst Highly Entrenched Negative Cultures

"Whatever you do is insignificant but it is very important that you do it," Mahatma Gandhi. Those are the words that keep ringing in mind whenever I am writing an article either for publication in the print press or this newsletter. Through writing, I am able to interact with many people some of whom I will certainly never have any physical contact with. I believe that I am able to influence or inspire change in my own small ways. I have in particular been committed to writing irrespective whether there are financial rewards or not. In that light, I am always delighted whenever somebody stops in the streets to let me know that s/he appreciates my articles especially when there is a particular reference. I feel the same if not better whenever I get even a single mail in appreciation of one article or the other.

In the meantime, I have since 2006 written severally on values as well as positive and negative cultures. I have advocated the fact we can only change the dangerously entrenched negative cultures through embracing positive personal values. I at one time explained about the "one degree or 1 % more" concept. I explained how water boils at 100 degrees Celsius for it to change form. At 97, 98 or 99 degrees, water is still very hot but can't change form. You must be patient for it to reach the boiling point of 100 degrees upon which, it will transform to vapor or steam. The challenge is that you may never know when the water is hot enough to change form.

Similarly, the little things that we all do towards inspiring change cumulatively add value to the national situation over a span of time. In that regard, I take this early opportunity to congratulate all the players of Ungwana initiative for formulating a value moderating idea which could bring the needed change in this country. In fact, entrenched negative cultures can only be changed through inculcation of positive values.

Mwangi Wanjumbi (Newtimes Newsletter Editor)

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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 Capacity Building Training – Senior Managers**
- **Applied Business Leadership Skills for CEOs and Business Executives**

All other courses (*see 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.

WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS

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

OUR PAST AND CONTINUING CLIENTS – Check www.newtimesconsultants.com

Images never lie. They instead communicate even more effectively. You can now view some which are continually uploaded @ <http://www.newtimesconsultants.com/pictorials.html>

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

INSPIRATION FOR THE MONTH

Are you Pursuing Personal Goals or?

Many people as well as organizations take the concept of setting goals for granted. They fail to appreciate that goals are the desired achievements of the journey of life or a defined period of time. Objectives on the other hand are the roadmaps through which to achieve the set goals. For one to achieve the goals, it is normally required that the goals set must be SMART. They must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and finally time bound. Do people set goals at all and if they do, do the goals pass the test of being SMART? One cause of failure in whatever you are doing is not having goals at all or having the wrong goals. The next time you are setting your goals ensure to above all set your own goals. Do not set those meant for other people.

Do not in other words do anything because others are doing the same. That is copying or adopting "me too brands." You are

unlikely to be sharing the same competencies with those you copying, a situation that could lead to eventual failure. On the other hand, never set goals whose success depends on other people. It is not unusual to find a man or woman setting a goal of marrying one person or the other, even without ever having been friends with the said person. Failure in achieving goals leads to frustration, a situation that can be avoided.

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Did you know?

- That you can eliminate fear by courageously confronting fear? I have now conquered my height phobia using the same method.
- 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.
 - That you can now watch the editor live in action @ <http://newtimesconsultants.com/videogallery.html> ?

THE CEO'S DILEMMA

Allowing Plans to be professionally executed.

Another building has recently collapsed, this time in Kiambu Town killing 16 innocent Kenyans. It was a deeply upsetting experience even to those of us who never lost any blood relatives. Nevertheless, we are duty bound to take care of not only our investments and lives but also those of others. In the meantime, enquiries indicate that most buildings collapse during construction because necessary engineering requirements are either skipped or ignored, yet top quality professionals are brought on board at the planning stages. The professional inputs of architects, quantity surveyors and structural engineers are discarded immediately after or just before commencement of construction work, on some of the projects. Some of the said projects are just lucky to survive whereas others fail to see the light of the day.

Many of us keep condemning those associated with visible projects that end up the Kiambu Town building route. But, even worse applies to services when professionalism is not embraced. We continue enjoying mediocre services for ignoring the quality factor. Dr. Deming, a foremost Japanese quality Guru, theorized that "Quality is Free." You get it right first time; there is neither re-work nor wastage of resources. Unfortunately, we have a tendency of following shortcuts in most life situations, all in the name of maximizing on savings. In the end, we never get requisite value for services rendered. We settle for poor performance standards all in the name of cost. In the end, personal, organizational as well as national progress becomes persistently inhibited. Let us keep remembering that quality is free in whatever we do in life, careers or business. Above all, we must eliminate mediocrity in the name of saving on costs, a situation that sometimes becomes even more expensive.

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:-

- Ethics: Changing our values on work and money – Management Journal KIM – Sept 2009 (You can review your values on money and work)
- 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 25th Aug 2009
- Culture and behavior in the workplace - Sokoni of MSK (Dec 2007) – About real cause of workplace challenges
- Employers "failing" the training test – Industrial Training Magazine (Sept 2009) - 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**