

management

A KIM PUBLICATION

SUCCESS • INFLUENCE • INSPIRATION

EAST AFRICA'S PREMIER BUSINESS, MANAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP MAGAZINE



February 2012

KSHS 300
TSHS 6,000
USHS 8,700
RWF 2,500
US\$4

ISSN 2074-7802

QUICKSAND FOUNDATION

What next for
Kenya's real estate
sector?

DON'T BE CAUGHT NAPPING

Why & how Kenyan
businesses should
manage 2012 political
risks

SENI ADETU

EABL CEO ON ATTRACTING, MOTIVATING AND RETAINING TALENT

EXPERT WRITERS



AARON JONES

Aaron is the MANAGEMENT magazine's roving writer on matters of customer service. He is the Founder and CEO of Jones Consulting, a Kenyan company that specialises in training in the area of quality management, customer service, and sales enhancement. Every month, Aaron writes about customer experiences and follows up with providers. If you have good and/or bad experiences share it with him, and let us influence customer service standards in East Africa.

Email: aaron@jonesconsulting.co.ke



LEX LINDEMAN

Lex is the Africa Leadership Development Specialist at Human Resources Boosters, creator of the Leadership Accelerator Workshop. He has been active as a leadership consultant in over 20 African countries.

Email: lex@hrboosters.com



SAMUEL VICTOR MUTINDA

Samuel is the Founder/Director and Chief Knowledge and Talent leader of W'KATYA Associates Kenya. He holds Bachelor of Science BSc with Honours in Business and Information and communication technologies. He is currently pursuing an MBA. W'KATYA Associates Kenya provides among other things, educational consultancy, career advisory, innovation & talent management, ICT solutions provider and research services.

Email: vikta2002@yahoo.com



HANVAN DER POOL

Hanvan is a Senior Advisor Talent management, Manager Dunea College and Guest lecturer at multiple Dutch and International training functions, including Vrije Universiteit van Amsterdam and the Rotterdam School of Management.

Email: han@vanderpool.com



PAVAN UBHI

Pavan is the Head of Corporate Business at Dry Associates Investment Group focusing on fixed income securities and offshore investments. She offers financial planning services to both individuals and institutional clients with the objective of achieving client's long and short term financial goals. She has over four years experience in local and offshore investments.

Email: pubhi@dryassociates.com



THURANIRA MWENDA MUTUNGA

Thuranira is a consultant writer/editor. He holds a Bachelor of Education in English and Literature from Kenyatta University and a Postgraduate Diploma in Mass Communication from the University of Nairobi. He has a wide experience both as an educationalist and public relations practitioner.

Email: thuraniramutunga@yahoo.co.uk



BOB PATERSON

Bob is a regular writer and shares his wealth of experience spanning 34 years working for a multi-national firm with readers. He has valuable thoughts on various aspects of running an organisation, leading teams, dealing with stakeholders, and living a fulfilling life. Paterson is currently the CEO of a medium-sized truck company in Nairobi.

Email: paterson@africaonline.co.ke



DEREK BBANGA

Derek runs Public Image, a company that helps professionals and companies enhance their soft skills, professional image and communications skills. Follow his blog at publicimageafrica.blogspot.com

Email: Derek.bbanga@publicimageafrica.com



URBANUS KISSIU

Urbanus holds a Bachelors Degree in Communication and Public Relations. He is currently working with Tell-Em Public Relations,. He has previously worked at DHL Express as a Marketing Assistant. Urbanus is also a writer and an inspirational speaker.

Email: urbanus.kisiu@tell-em-pr.com



RUPI MANGAT

Rupi is a graduate with a Masters (Arts) degree from the University of Nairobi. She is a travel writer whose work has appeared in several publications. She is passionate in the economics of nature and governance.

Email: Rupi.mangat@yahoo.com



JOSEPH NYANDIKO NYANCHAMA

Joseph is an MBA graduate, a professional accountant, member of the Institute of Certified Public Accountant of Kenya and, a Professional Public Secretary (CPS). He has been a lecturer at Moi Institute of Technology, a certified trainer and certified integrity assurance officer. He is a motivational speaker on transformational and servant leadership.

Email: josephnyanchama@gmail.com



SULTAN AMRI NASSOR

Sultan is a Fellow of KIM and Chairman of the OPI Technical Team. He is a consultant, trainer and motivational speaker with over 25 years experience in the area of Quality Management, Leadership and Governance. Amri has designed and delivered assignments in Kenya, Rwanda, DRC (Zaire), Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda and Southern Sudan.

Email: sultan.amri@yahoo.com



The CEO factor in talent management

In an increasingly competitive business environment, company executives now find themselves being proactive in developing and growing their outstanding employees. LEX LINDEMAN and HAN VAN DER POOL discuss the concept of future-proof talent development (TD) by explaining the role of the CEO and how the HR function can position itself as a strategic supporter, innovator and challenger of the CEO.

Photo: SHUTTERSTOCK

“At the end of the day you bet on people not on strategies,” is a famous phrase by Larry Bossidy, CEO, AlliedSignal. Research by Jim Collins in *“Build to Last and Good to great,”* highlights the essential role of talent management. Based on rigorous analysis, here is a clear link between company strategy and the talent management strategy.

The CEO factor

The responsibility of TD lies with the top executive. The CEO and the organisation’s top tier must be actively involved in developing future management. The top managers should be active as coaches, mentors or trainers to their teams. The CEO has a prominent and active role in education or action learning, which means talent linked to experienced leaders are utilised for critical issues of the organisation.

This can be made possible by connecting future talents with several top managers and assuming several career paths (think of career choice menus and career co-creation, instead of fixed career paths). The performance appraisal process and succession planning can be more flexible to allow rapid necessary adaptations in allocation of jobs. The approach should not only be top-down. Start by having a dialogue with talented employees to discuss the organisation’s future and their personal ambitions.

For clear, future-proof positioning of TD, it is important to make good and calculated choices. Involve the right persons at the correct moment. For example, role models and change agents in the field of organisation and personal development.

Working with talent

Talent development starts by selecting the talent. Learning agility is a critical factor here. The future talents need to be open to change, courageous, can handle ambiguity, be strategic thinkers, creative, and innovative. Selecting the right talent is an important issue during recruitment, assignment and promotions; if they don’t possess the behaviours above, they are not fit for the jobs ahead. The CEO plays a part by reviewing the selection process and by meeting the talented candidates.

Organisations must provide innovative answers to increasingly complex strategic issues. It is therefore, crucial, that talented professionals gain insight into the most important business issues. In many organisations, strategic management is strongly aware that something fundamental needs to take place to prepare the organisation for far-reaching external development in the years to come. These developments are existential by nature, such as surviving in an environment with increasing strong competition, the yet unknown but undoubtedly drastic consequences of reshaping of the markets, and the necessity for a sustainable economy. Subsequently, the awareness grows that a one-time action programme for TD is not sufficient because the organisation is expected to adjust constantly. This constant adjustment means continual learning which has to be organised. An important aspect of future-proof TD is to involve talented professionals and expect them to contribute to organisations’ long and short-term objectives.

This is only possible by combining TD with the strategy of the organisation and issues like business development, innovation, and sustainability. Not only are development investments made

when linking these business issues with individual and group development, but immediately value is created in several areas in the short and long term. Just by choosing this approach and marketing it actively within and outside the organisation, TD becomes an active accelerator for individual and business success.

Apart from linking topics, there are still more adaptations necessary for TD. It is not about using totally different instruments, but different allocation and the use of TD instruments like succession planning and development programmes. Also in the future, succession planning remains an important topic; more so if talent is more difficult to find. It is thereby important to arrange succession planning more flexibly and transparently.

Innovative programmes

It is logical that development programmes develop, challenge and support this behaviour. For the design and execution of programmes, this has a number of consequences. First, strategic organisation topics must be found back in the programme design. If customer orientation is important, ideally, customers should play an important role in the programme. If the organisation is aimed towards operational excellence it’s important that the programmes are also ‘lean and mean.’

Second, programmes should unite several perspectives. Ideally, it is about: developing substantive (knowledge and insight) and mental (behaviour/ attitude) competencies, developing skills to familiarise and reinforce themselves with the company values and standards which strengthen the strategically desired culture (company DNA). Third, make concrete contributions to the

development of the organisation and company results. Innovative development programmes will play an important role in future-proof TD and it is, thereby, essential that these programmes develop employees within the organisation context instead of next to it.

As earlier stated, these programmes have to link to the organisation's strategy and business issues. Apart from that, the approach and the interventions used should be more aligned to the (future) requirements of the organisation, and better aligned to the wishes of the future talented employees and/or independent professionals. Organisations must change more rapidly, become more flexible and operate more innovatively. This is also asked of the talented employees.

Nobody questions the importance of learning and developing talent. However, in these uncertain times, training and development activities are often put on hold or investments in training and development (T&D) are drastically reduced. One of the reasons T&D activities are cut or reduced is the difficulty of proving that development is a valuable and effective component of successful talent management. The challenge now is to attract, retain and develop talent in a more proven, effective way. This is becoming the guiding principle across companies, whether entrepreneurial, public, private or family owned.

Wider perspective

You can also look at a wider perspective than your employees. It is becoming necessary to bring talented, independent professionals who fit well in (the future) organisation. However, it is a waste of money and time if a position has to be filled urgently, to engage professionals on the basis of availability instead of whether they fit. Another important group is the company's alumni (former employees). In a network economy it is important to treat them as ambassadors because they influence many other talented employees within the organisation.

Level of sophistication	Evolution to future-proof talent development to support the CEO (Model Bersin & Associates, 2009)
4	Future-proof TD approach Flexible and transparent process, clear link with strategy. Focus on all key positions. Innovative instruments. Strategic dialogue between top and HR/TD (business partner and challenger).
3	Renewed TD approach There is a link between strategy and TD. Besides focus on management, there is also attention to professionals, experiments with more innovative instruments. HR/TD are business partners.
2	Traditional MD/TD approach Including performance management, succession planning, development plans and programmes. HR facilitates the process, but is no real business partner.
1	Limited MD approach List of successors and sometimes, high potentials. No planning of personal development. HR plays a supportive role.
0	No MD/TD approach Possibly, there is only a list of candidates for the top of the organisation.

To combine these perspectives, the use of an effectively calculated mix of instruments becomes important. The importance of blended learning and action learning will increase further. With the use of these tools' effectiveness, cost conscience, and connection are combined to the participant's wishes. Creative and impact-full approaches such as DILO (Day in life of), temporary changing roles, (social) training periods and pressure cooker meetings will replace traditional ways of working as training modules.

Level 4 talent development

An important aspect is to measure and evaluate the TD approach at several levels and from several (stakeholders') perspectives. It will thereby by means of plural look at assessing if ambition is effectively gained. This means a regular, strategic dialogue about the business objectives and the link with TD.

With the current economic times, it is important to mobilise all talent within and outside the organisation for business objectives. Combining organisation perspectives with individual perspectives guarantees sustainable results and prepares the organisation for the future. The CEO cannot rely completely on his/

her intuition alone; he/she needs the support of a professional HR as a real, challenging business partner.

Innovative answers must be given to strategic questions. It is, therefore, imperative that the CEO and HR know how to translate business questions into development solutions which produce results for the organisation.

When talent development is really embedded in the organisation and seen as an ongoing rhythm the total processes in an organisation will not only run more smoothly, but also more effectively, generating shareholder and stakeholder value. ■

About the authors:

Lex Lindeman is an Africa Leadership Development Specialist at Human Resources Boosters the creator of the Leadership Accelerator Workshop and are active Leadership Consultant in over 20 African countries. Email: lex@hrboosters.com.

Han van der Pool is a Senior Advisor Talent management, Manager, Dunea College; and Guest Lecturer at multiple Dutch and international training functions, including Vrije Universiteit van Amsterdam and the Rotterdam School of Management.