The Need for Greenhouse Gas Accounting

Discrimination & Harassment
Strategies to reduce risk in the workplace

One-On-One with SRC Chief Executive Officer Anne Gitau

Becoming the Best Company to Work For
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Dear Readers,

I gladly welcome you to this edition of HR Journal after a brief lull. A lot has happened in the HR field and work place since we last communicated; but then again, isn’t the work place always dynamic?

Organisations are ever on the move in a bid to keep their employees and other publics engaged, as they externally fight to increase their space and influence in the market place. Technology, especially, has made the battle for relevance even more intense as people are able to communicate—network—easier, and companies are able to ride on it to improve their processes, thus efficiency. It has also led to an explosion of innovation through which firms have raised their visibility, such as social media platforms, and in the process opening them up to more scrutiny on whether they are doing things right.

So, can your organisation stand the test of whether it is a good place to work? Do you have a culture of success that makes people want to work for you, and your employees to stay? Companies such as Google, and locally BAT, have been voted as the best employers in a number of surveys. Whereas there are other equally coveted firms in Kenya and worldwide, what can we borrow from them to make our organisations better? One of our writers has some thoughts on it.

But discrimination and harassment, as much as we would like to think otherwise, are rather common and lessen the appeal of many organisations. While it can never be the deliberate policy of any progressive firm to condone the harmful practice, it can creep in and become ingrained in the organisation’s culture if left unchecked. Victims may suffer silently or respond aggressively to the perpetrators of the vice, but the end result is that it does not bode well for team work and productivity.

In our lead article, we look at the risk involved in and how to deal with discrimination and harassment in the work place. “When such behaviour is made or caused by someone with authority or influence over an individual, and then the behaviour is rejected by that individual, the rejection results in an adverse tangible employment action toward that individual,” says our writer. She goes on to suggest ways that you, the HR manager, can manage the situation.

Also in this issue, we carry an interview with the Chief Executive Officer of the Salaries and Remuneration Commission, Anne Gitau. The mandate of the commission needs no emphasis, and its work has been quite visible since its establishment by the 2010 Constitution. Ms Gitau answers some question’s on the SRC and gives her perspective on the HR profession.

There is much more in the magazine, so turn the pages. And remember, your articles are always welcome.

Editor
The practice of Human Resource Management in Kenya has evolved a great deal, but even with the recent developments it has a long journey ahead in trying to keep up with the rest of the world. We still have managers who do not recognise, utilise or appreciate the value-creation role HR plays. It is a challenge even for some of the country’s biggest firms who are having problems acquiring and keeping talent because of lack of proper HR strategies.

The founder and chief executive of the Virgin Group, Richard Branson, says “Don’t take employees for granted. If you don’t value your team, they won’t value your customers.”

Remember, also, Stephen Covey, “Always treat your employees as you want them to treat your customers.”

It is thus quite shocking for many graduates who spend most of their productive years wishing for a chance to work for the “big” firms, only for them to get there and discover that small firms may actually offer a better working environment. Most of the organisations have been accused of overworking their employees and offering small pay compared to the amount of effort they put in. It is assumed that some of them do this because they know how much graduates aspire to work for them.

But a study into one of the world’s biggest firms proves that even big companies can and should adopt the best HR practices because they are key players in the industry.

Google has been named the best company to work for by respected publications Fortune and Forbes magazines—for several years in a row. Google is big in terms of all references possible. From the number of employees, profit and customer base to the impact its products and services offer. Here are some of the lessons Google admirers can learn from one of the largest employers in the world:

**There is something to a name:**

Do the titles we give our staff offer any form of motivation in any way? Google calls its HR department People Operations (POPS). The managers have titles such as Director of Staffing and Vice President of People Operations. Around the late ‘80s when “Personnel” was replaced by “Human Resources”, it was noticeable the way people were no longer viewed in a personal way, instead simply as a faceless human resource to be used and consumed. I believe the names we use greatly affect the motivation levels of people and kudos to those companies in Kenya who have shifted from the term Human Resources and other less inspiring job titles.

**Going all the way:**

Google monitors its employees’ well-being to a degree that can seem absurd to those who do not work for the company. Google use what they call a happiness machine. They conduct a lengthy annual survey of employees by the ‘Googlegeist’. The People Operations department functions more like a rigorous science lab than the pesky hall monitor most of us picture when we think of HR. At the heart of POPS is a sophisticated employee-data tracking programme, an effort to gain empirical certainty about every aspect of Google’s workers’ lives - not just the right level of pay and benefits but also such trivial-sounding details as the optimal size and shape of the cafeteria tables and the length of the lunch lines.
In the past couple of years, Google has even hired social scientists to study the organisation. The scientists – part of a group known as the PiLab, short for People and Innovation Lab – run dozens of experiments on employees in an effort to answer questions about the best way to manage a large firm. How often should you remind people to contribute to their retirement savings, and what tone should you use? Do successful middle managers have certain skills in common – and can you teach those skills to unsuccessful managers? Or, for that matter, do managers even matter – can you organise a company without them? And, say you want to give someone a raise – how should you do it in a way that maximises his happiness? Should you give him a cash bonus? Stock? A raise? More time off?

It all boils down to the rewards:

Excellence thrives where it is recognised. New mothers would get five months off at full pay and full benefits, and they were allowed to split up that time however they wished, including taking some of that time off just before their due date. Google’s lavish maternity and paternity leave plans probably do not surprise you.

At times Google’s largesse can sound excessive – noble but wasteful from a bottom-line perspective. Forbes disclosed one previously unannounced Google perk – when an employee dies, the company pays his spouse or domestic partner half of his salary for a decade.

Yet it would be a mistake to conclude that Google doles out such perks just to be nice. POPS rigorously monitors a slew of data about how employees respond to benefits, and it rarely throws money away. The five-month maternity leave plan, for instance, was a winner for the company. After it went into place, Google’s attrition rate for new mothers dropped down to the average rate for the rest of the firm. Most of its workers are engineers, the kind of people who demand data to get them to change their ways. The people analytics department tries to show that even the small caricatures actually make a difference in their lives.

Some of Google’s HR lessons will not apply to all companies but the focus is how much we can learn and apply in Kenya.

Research shows that an upbeat work culture correlates closely with financial performance. The study defines a “great workplace” as one where employees trust the people they work for, have pride in work they do and enjoy the company of people they work with. Since the participating companies tend to be those motivated by a desire to improve and excel on this HR parameter, it would come as no surprise that 73 per cent of the employees had positive perceptions about their workplaces. Friendliness, non-discrimination, pride and trust in management’s competence were found to be the strengths of these organisations.

On the other hand, perceptions about favouritism by managers, politicking, inequitable distribution of profits, lack of unique benefits and absence of collaboration in decision making were found to be some of the leading areas for improvement for organisations.

In conclusion, I think it is time that those actually in charge of people in the organisation start focusing on people as an integral asset to the company. In time, Google’s findings – which it often shares with other HR professionals – may improve all our jobs.

“You spend more time working than doing anything else,” says Google’s head of People Operations, Lazlo Bock. “If you work eight or 10 hours a day, it’s more time than you spend sleeping, more time than you spend with your spouse. When you add it up it gets really depressing. You like your job, but for all time it should be – and it could be – something more. So why isn’t it?”

As Jack Welch, chief executive of General Electric summarises so well, “If you pick the right people and give them the opportunity to spread their wings and put compensation as a carrier behind it, you almost don’t have to manage them.”
The Salaries and Remuneration Commission is an independent commission established by Article 230 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010. It was set up at a time when there was outcry over the huge public wage bill which was increasing the government’s debt levels, and eating up funds that could otherwise go to development projects. In the SRC’s own words, it was also a time when “attraction and retention of requisite skills to execute public service functions, productivity and performance, and transparency and fairness in remuneration setting and review, was seriously in question”. Thus, its key mandate was to set and regularly review the remuneration and benefits of all state officers, and advise the National and County governments on the remuneration and benefits of all other public officers.

HR Journal recently had a chat with SRC Chief Executive, ANNE GIT AU, a HR professional who heads the Secretariat. Following are excerpts of the interview:

**Question:** Briefly, what is your role at the Salaries and Remuneration Commission?

**Answer:** I am the link between the commission and the secretariat, while serving as Commission Secretary. As the person in charge of the secretariat, I have the responsibility as a leader to inspire the people working under me to help the commission deliver on its mandate. In addition, I am the accounting officer for the secretariat and have to ensure that every coin is used for the purpose it is intended.

**Q:** Could you please let our readers into your professional background?

**A:** When I finished my A-Levels, I wanted to study Law but there was a double intake at the universities so I missed out. Instead, I ended up in Bachelor of Education. My first job was teaching, but I also did a Certified Public Secretary course in the meantime. In 1996, I left teaching and joined Standard Chartered Bank as a clerical officer. While there, I made a request to the head of HR to let me assist in making presentations in meetings and that set me on the way to a career in HR. I enrolled for a Masters degree in HR which I finished in 2002, during which time I was working as consultant with Hawkins Associates. I later went into the public sector as HR and Administration manager at IDB, where I was called in to help restructure the bank for retail business. I took up the same position at Higher Education Loans Board in 2007 until 2012 when I joined Salaries and Remuneration Commission as deputy Chief Executive Officer. After serving as acting CEO in 2014, I was appointed CEO in 2015 after going through the vetting process by Parliament.

**Q:** With such expansive work history in the public and private sectors, you must have experienced some challenges in the different set-ups. What would you say is the key sticking point when handling the human resource complement?

**A:** People have different values, they want to do things their way and will resist change. Many also do not want to be held to account, so they will look for every opportunity to escape responsibility for their actions. To be able to handle people effectively, you must have a high level of perseverance.
Q: You mentioned that one of your former employers hired you to help in restructuring the company, which in many instances comes with loss of jobs. How did you tackle the retrenchment process?

A: In the course of the organisation’s life, retrenchment may be necessary, but it has to have a human face. As such, the HR manager has to design a strategy that ensures minimal harm to those leaving the company, especially psychologically. It is not an easy thing to lose one’s job so the employees need to be counselled and adequately prepared for the process. Secondly, you must show them that there are opportunities outside the organisation such as entrepreneurship—investing their dues—or re-employment. The management has to empathise with the people affected by the restructuring, don’t just throw them away.

Q: What would you say are your strengths, then, that have taken you this far?

A: I am a visionary. I know where I want to be, both in career and personal life as well. Always working on how to get there. I am also energetic; I am an avid runner and cover three kilometres every day, as well as participating in some marathons. I also believe strongly in personal sacrifice, such that in whatever I do people can see me as an example. Integrity is also central to everything I do; to do everything in the right way. All in all, I try to be a better person and to serve others with humility.

Q: Despite the leaps that the HR profession has taken, there are still concerns that it is not getting its due recognition. Are we heading in the right direction?

A: The HR profession is not being felt at the highest level, but we are getting there. We are seeing more professionals being appointed to senior positions such as chief executives and on company boards. I would like to encourage all young HR professionals out there that they made the right decision, it is an uplifting career. But they must also take time to learn everything in the work place to become better people managers.

Q: In the recent past, there have been a number of strikes—and threats of strikes—by public sector workers. One of them by teachers had far-reaching impact on the concerned publics. How do you suggest we deal with industrial action?

A: Under Article 41 of the Constitution which deals with Labour Relations, every worker has the right to form, join or participate in the activities and programmes of a trade union, and to go on strike. So, dealing with industrial action effectively is two-phased: One, that the employer does everything to make sure that strikes do not happen by engaging the relevant parties. This involves arresting early enough any situation that could potentially lead to a strike. Two, that if a strike does happen, to minimise the damage to the parties involved. This ideally means resolving the contentious issues in the shortest possible time.

Q: The high rate of youth unemployment has been described in various forums as a ‘tick- ing bomb’. What is the problem and how do we rectify the situation?

A: I think the way we can create more jobs is to focus more on industrialising the country. Industrialisation creates employment, but in Kenya jobs have not grown as expected because we are more inclined to consumption. The content of education in schools and colleges is also not fully aligned to the needs of industry, thus causing a major skills gap in technical areas. In addition, society lacks character and integrity—we are increasingly seeing more cases of corruption, both in public and private sectors. Students are even cheating in exams. We need to change our national mentality from studying to get a job, to that of also becoming entrepreneurs. One does not have to be formally employed to be productive. There is also need to give internship opportunities to students so that they can get hands-on skills and a better feel of their chosen careers in the course of study.

Q: A glimpse into your personal life...

A: I am married with three children and I try to spend as much time as possible with the family. I also spend time mentoring young people in my service to the church and community.
Discrimination and Harassment
Strategies to reduce risk in the workplace
By Lucy Kirima

Good employees are the organisation's greatest assets. Employees are worth protecting from hazards such as discrimination and harassment. And, when wrongdoing is allowed in the work environment, it places employees and your organisation at risk. Managers are in the best position to minimise risk. With their help, the organisation can prevent and, if necessary, effectively manage workplace risk and wrongdoing.

Of course, employers have increasingly realised that liability for discrimination and harassment may arise from the behaviour of managers, supervisors, and employees. However, it is also important to keep in mind that non-employees who interact with the workplace can cause liability for your organisation. A non-employee is anyone who participates regularly, or even on occasion, in workplace and interacts with employees and others.

Non-employees can include volunteers, vendor clients, job applicants, family members and friends of employees, independent contractors and temporary employees.

Non-employees can create risk by subjecting employees to wrongdoing, while employees can create exposure by subjecting non-employees to wrongdoing. For example, harassment of non-employees by employees is a growing area of concern.

As a result, it is helpful to keep in mind that anyone in the workplace can create and be the victim of discrimination and harassment. Common areas of discrimination include sex, race, colour, religion, gender, national origin, age and disability.

Discrimination and harassment in the workplace injure employees, foster poor morale, reduce productivity and expose the organisation to costly litigation losses—loss of money, time, energy and even employees.

Harassment—most often sexual harassment—is especially costly to organisations, in terms of decreased productivity and morale, lost work time, medical costs, legal fees and liability. Sexual harassment is commonly referred to as either “hostile environment” or “quid pro quo.” Quid pro quo harassment also includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance, or has the purpose of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

When such behaviour is made or caused by someone with authority or influence over an individual, and then the behaviour is rejected by that individual, the rejection results in an adverse tangible employment action toward that individual.

Therefore, every organisation should have a law against employment discrimination and harassment. Anti-discrimination laws are aimed at promoting ability-based decisions regarding employment opportunities, including: being hired, receiving compensation and benefits, keeping a job, receiving training or other resources, receiving a promotion or job assignment and receiving the same conditions and opportunities in the workplace that others receive.
Harassment is especially costly to organisations

Jeffrey Chasen outlines the five core principles of Smart Risk Management. These strategies help to protect organisations, your employees and yourself.

1. No Tolerance for Workplace Wrongdoing

Organisations cannot afford to tolerate workplace wrongdoing. Most importantly, managers are role models for the other employees within their organisation; a manager who is guilty of discrimination and, or, harassment sends a very negative message to all employees: that this type of conduct is tolerated in the workplace.

Additionally, managers cannot allow or condone discrimination and harassment by others. Managers not only set a positive example of “no tolerance,” but also act as an obstacle to others who may want to commit wrong under their watch. And, although these principles are important, it is equally important to never rush to judgment. When someone is accused of wrongdoing, he or she also has rights that must be protected, and any punishment must “fit the crime.”

2. Observation

Managers should always be on the lookout for risk and wrongdoing. For example, it is helpful to understand the importance of careful observation in hiring, regularly inquire about employees’ well-being and job satisfaction and recognise that even the smallest hint of risk or wrongdoing deserves immediate attention. It is also important to keep in mind that discrimination or harassment can occur at any time, even in the best work environments.

3. Communication

Perhaps “silence is golden” …but usually not in the workplace. Quick and decisive communication can prevent risk and wrongdoing from spreading throughout your environment. To set a standard of effective communication in your workplace, you should make it clear that your organisation does not tolerate discrimination or harassment. Although actions do speak louder than words, a positive message – especially if it is regularly reinforced in a variety of ways, including training – can be an effective and quick means of prevention and deterrence. Also, make sure that employees feel comfortable discussing their concerns. And provide candid and consistent feedback to employees.

Finally, when a concern arises, be mindful of the privacy rights and interests of all parties. Although you cannot promise to keep everything confidential, the organisation and employee are best served by sharing information on a “need to know” basis.

4. Empathy

Managerial empathy is the ability to identify with your employees so you can understand their feelings and needs. It can be as simple as trying to “place yourself in your employees’ shoes.”

5. Fairness

Fairness begins with respect and dignity for all employees. Fairness in the workplace demands that you uniformly and consistently apply laws, rules, policies, procedures, and practices.

Although these five strategies are important on an everyday basis, there are two especially important opportunities to manage the risk of discrimination and harassment:

1. Counseling employees. At its most basic level, employee counseling is feedback and interaction between a manager and an employee. Counseling can include providing encouragement, advice, constructive criticism or a warning. Most counseling is, and should be, verbal. However, in many cases, warnings (and even commendations) should be documented in the employee’s file for later review. The manager or supervisor should counsel and interact with employees, individually and as a group, as much as possible. Counseling also means keeping the door open to employee feedback and comments. The more interaction between the manager or supervisor and employees, the more likely employees will come forward with important information. The manager should warn an employee when he or she should cease an action, perform in a different manner or do something they are not presently doing. A warning is a “red flag” to an employee.
A warning is a “red flag” to an employee that continuing in his or her present course will lead to a negative reaction from the organisation.

A common mistake is believing that warnings are necessarily reprimands. A warning is not a reprimand so much as a form of counseling. When performing an evaluation, a manager should not consider a warning as a negative on an employee’s record. The manager should accompany a written warning with a verbal counseling session. Whenever an incident occurs that requires a warning, the manager should meet with the employee as soon as possible after the incident and discuss what actions the employee should take. Finally, warnings are written reminders. They remind a manager of when an employee received a warning and may mark the beginning of a paper record of possible poor or improved performance. Counseling is an effective means of improving employee performance. Positive interaction also is important for discovering risk and deterring wrongdoing.

2. Termination of employment. Certain acts of wrongdoing may require immediate termination. As a result, helpful strategies for termination include:

3. Preparation, such as verification of important facts and development of talking points for the termination meeting—, including in the preparation process (and perhaps the ultimate meeting) those individuals in the organisation trained in human resources management and legal counsel.

4. Reviewing the employee file to make sure that the reasons for termination are adequately documented.

5. Discretion and sensitivity: terminating employees in an appropriate environment, away from other employees and third parties (and, if you are angry, taking the time to cool off before counseling an employee). However, in the vast majority of situations, an appropriate witness to the termination should be present.

6. Prompt handling – from investigation to analysis to determination – without a rush to judgment.

7. Taking special care during the exit interview, keeping in mind that everything said (and written) may be presented to a jury, the media and others outside of – and sometimes hostile to – your organisation.

8. Listening to what the terminated employee says, and documenting everything for the record (even profanity, wild statements and anything else you observe).

Discrimination and harassment are costly to an organisation – and to each person in it – so the focus must always be the prevention of risk and wrongdoing. However, once a problem arises, an organisation must act with no tolerance for such wrongdoing, maintaining proactive observation and communication along with a commitment to empathy and fairness.

Organisations should not assume or imagine all is well but should ask: Are there any warning signs in the workplace for possible discrimination, harassment, or any other forms of wrongdoing? What new risks seem to be emerging that can be prevented before they arise in the workplace?
Balanced Scorecard
Driving Organisational Transformation with the Performance Management System

By Kellen Kiambati

THE BALANCED SCORECARD IS a strategic planning and management system that is used extensively in business and industry, government, and nonprofit organisations worldwide to align business activities to the vision and strategy of the organisation, improve internal and external communications and monitor performance against strategic goals.

It was originated by Drs. Robert Kaplan (Harvard Business School) and David Norton as a performance measurement framework that added strategic non-financial performance measures to traditional financial metrics to give managers and executives a more ‘balanced’ view of organisational performance.

The balanced scorecard has evolved from its early use as a simple performance measurement framework to a full strategic planning and management system. The “new” balanced scorecard transforms an organisation’s strategic plan from an attractive but passive document into the “marching orders” for the organisation on a daily basis.
Learning and growth constitute the essential foundation for the success of any knowledge-worker organisation.

basis. It provides a framework that not only provides performance measurements, but helps planners identify what should be done and measured. It enables executives to truly execute their strategies.

Kaplan and Norton describe the innovation of the balanced scorecard as follows:

“The balanced scorecard retains traditional financial measures. But financial measures tell the story of past events, an adequate story for industrial age companies for which investments in long-term capabilities and customer relationships were not critical for success. These financial measures are inadequate, however, for guiding and evaluating the journey that information age companies must make to create future value through investment in customers, suppliers, employees, processes, technology, and innovation.”

Perspectives

The balanced scorecard suggests that we view the organisation from four perspectives, and to develop metrics, collect data and analyse it relative to each of these perspectives:

The Learning and Growth Perspective

This perspective includes employee training and corporate cultural attitudes related to both individual and corporate self-improvement. In a knowledge-worker organisation, people - the only repository of knowledge - are the main resource. In the current climate of rapid technological change, it is becoming necessary for knowledge workers to be in a continuous learning mode. Metrics can be put into place to guide managers in focusing training funds where they can help the most. In any case, learning and growth constitute the essential foundation for success of any knowledge-worker organisation.

Kaplan and Norton emphasise that ‘learning’ is more than ‘training’; it also includes things like mentors and tutors within the organisation, as well as that ease of communication among workers that allows them to readily get help on a problem when it is needed. It also includes technological tools; what the Baldrige criteria call “high performance work systems.”
processes for which we are providing a product or service to those customer groups.

**The Financial Perspective**

Kaplan and Norton do not disregard the traditional need for financial data. Timely and accurate funding data will always be a priority, and managers will do whatever is necessary to provide it. In fact, often there is more than enough handling and processing of financial data. With the implementation of a corporate database, it is hoped that more of the processing can be centralised and automated. But the point is that the current emphasis on financials leads to the “unbalanced” situation with regard to other perspectives. There is perhaps a need to include additional financial-related data, such as risk assessment and cost-benefit data, in this category.

**Strategy Mapping**

Strategy maps are communication tools used to tell a story of how value is created for the organisation. They show a logical, step-by-step connection between strategic objectives (shown as ovals on the map) in the form of a cause-and-effect chain. Generally speaking, improving performance in the objectives found in the Learning and Growth perspective (the bottom row) enables the organisation to improve its Internal Process perspective objectives (the next row up), which in turn enables the organisation to create desirable results in the Customer and Financial perspectives (the top two rows).

**Strategy maps are communication tools used to tell a story of how value is created for the organisation**
The Wrong Bunch
How unethical job seekers dupe employers to get that slot

By Dr Karim Omido

Introduction
In spite of your qualifications, as an under-employed or an unemployed person, ever wondered how, in your perception, some undeserving, less qualified individuals climbed the employment ladder - let alone secured a job? How about as a seasoned manager; ever wondered how, in your thinking, certain individuals secured particular jobs or job grades given their mediocre performance? Well, you are not alone. There are many ways of securing a job that may not necessarily be ‘white’. But to paint a proper picture on this, it is only just to give a prelude on employment statistics and showcase the extremities to which people are willing to go to get jobs, their qualifications notwithstanding.

(Un)employment Statistics
The world population according to USCB (2014) stands at 7,186,173,600 and still counting. Out of these, ILO (2014) figures show that roughly 201,800,000 remain jobless, not taking into account those under the age of majority and the retired. This reveals the extent to which the employment situation is grim. Indeed, this unwelcome circumstance in the perception of Sanyal (2014), has witnessed organisations’ quest for higher profits year-on-end the world over effecting right-sizing strategies. These strategies have led to retrenchments and layoffs, which in turn have exerted pressure among the unemployed, under-employed and those employed but are unsatisfied with their current job on account of future uncertainty and fear of the unknown. This pressure for organisations to limit jobs through rationalisation in an endeavour to increase profits prompted by the need to survive competition has consequently at the outset withered the number of jobs available in the market.

The few available jobs accompanied by increased discontent among those seeking for new jobs has further compounded the
employment scenario, thus exposing a frenzy of activity among the desperate; all in the quest to secure employment. With everyone looking for suitable work, competition for jobs has thus increased manifold and is viciously rife. This has forced job seekers to think ‘outside the box’ to gain an edge over their more able peers to secure a means of livelihood.

In this hitherto harsh brutal world, however, nobility is no longer considered a virtue in surviving the test of life. Getting jobs by hook or crook is now becoming a fad that is not easy to detect. What is more, although Hillenkamp (2013) asserts that nowadays getting employment is not easy, there are a few exceptions to his view. These exceptions do not overlook the reality that economic hardship thrives in the vast quarter of the globe. It has certainly not helped relieve the plight of the desperate job seekers either. The job market situation being desperate has called for desperate measures being taken by those in desperate need for jobs.

This need driven by the many for the few jobs has not been privy to developing nations alone. Even developed nations are facing the same difficulty. Job opportunities are increasingly getting hard to come by especially in light of economic realities. In Kenya, for instance, the population according to Kenya Bureau of Statistics (2014) has already hit the 41,800,000 mark. There are no visible signs of it reducing. According to the Economic Survey (2014), last year alone, only 742,800 jobs were created with a paltry 116,800 emanating from the formal sector. This insinuates that a significant population remains either unemployed or under-employed and seeking jobs. Job search is hence a real and existing prospect in practice.

Reasons for job search vary far and wide. While some range from the need to attain further career growth, others may seek jobs for sustenance of family units and yet others to move away from dirty corporate politics (Solomon and Wilson, 2012). In this regard, there are many avenues through which job seekers can and do secure jobs. Not everyone who eventually ends up getting a job has used genuine means. Some of these means are mala-fide and nothing near close to bona fide. This begs the question: how do job seekers get jobs via mala-fide avenues?

**Malignant job seekers**

The power of knowledge knows no bounds (Guilder, 2013). Knowledge commanding a magnitude of societal respect demands of the holder to have at the very least a degree. But for all truths and purposes, a degree is certainly no guarantee for a job but it, nevertheless, increases chances to get one.

To acquire an academic degree in Kenya, on the lower side, costs roughly about Ksh500,000 in tuition fees alone. This cost is oblivious of monies spent on books, conveyance, hostel and general maintenance costs. Not everyone can afford university education hence the motivating reason why job-seekers using mala-fide means may and have often used fake degrees complete with
dubious transcripts at a fraction of the cost to secure local jobs, much to the chagrin of genuine hustlers.

Indeed, this calibre of malignant job seekers has taken the meaning of the term ‘acquisition of degree certificate’ to new heights altogether. The near perfection to which papers are doctored is alleged to save the perpetrators not only money but more crucially time and effort in form of ‘unnecessary struggle’ that would otherwise go into reading, exams and, inter alia, research. Counter checking the validity of these papers seems to have unfortunately not been followed through by practicing HR managers. Cook and Cripps (2005) assert that HR managers scarcely verify the authenticity of degree certificates, let alone foreign oriented degree certificates.

On the other hand, Sullivan (2004) points to HR managers being inadvertently misled by some applicants into offering them jobs. Besides cases where unscrupulous job seekers have ‘paper degrees’, there have been cases of them perusing professional lexicon and memorising a little technical jargon to reinforce their deceptively bamboozling lingo while interacting with selection panelists during the interview. The flow of technical terminology spewing from their mouths is so eloquent that one would be mistaken to think they have been in the field for years.

While this may be experienced in certain instances, other circumstances may show candidates playing the physically challenged card because they want to be offered employment on account of the rule on inclusivity in employment. Once they secure employment, their defects astonishingly disappear. By clouding their incompetence using this strategy, they single-handedly pass interviews purely in the manner they play around with words or actions as they engage with the interview panelists.

Verbal intercourse often is complemented with a résumé or curriculum vitae (Rizvi, 2007). This may be manipulated severally. At the onset, given that HR managers are ever inquisitive on large voids in between employment history of a candidate that are inexplicable, the candidate may disguise this by simply jotting a cover letter or certificate of service purporting to have emanated from a fictitious outfit and showing the candidate’s fibbed service. No candidate wants to appear to have been off employment or work activity for a long period. To obscure this occurrence, the candidate goes the extra mile to mask this.

‘Engineering’ of contact details can be done by a candidate who wants to dupe a potential employer who seeks recommendation support. Recommendations to vouch for an applicant’s performance history or potential are sought by a prospective employer many-a-times from institutions, organisations or persons who have in the past associated with the candidate. These may be schools, universities or previous employers. Since it is the candidate that provides a self-edited résumé, the prospective employer acts on it on the strength of the
The candidate can then respond to the potential employer by positively vouching for or writing his own recommendation letter. Some candidates fill in fictitious voids when it comes to periods of education or employment history duly backed by ‘manufactured’ certificates of service, experience letters, and performance record showing alleged exemplariness. Indeed, if and when a prospective employer decides to contact a referee, the phone call or letter ends up going back to the candidate’s alternative telephone number, postal or e-mail contact address irrespective of the name directed. The candidate can then respond to the potential employer by positively vouching for or writing his own recommendation letter. So much for the so-called ‘Confidential Letters’.

A determined job seeker can beat the system if he or she wants to because many HR managers do not, for reason of time, finance or work pressure, ascertain the sanctity of a candidate’s information.

Growing trend

To curtail deception by job seekers, it is no wonder that the government, insofar as public hiring is concerned, insists on candidates presenting certificates of good conduct from the Criminal Investigation Department and other documents from various bodies showing a clean. The same cannot quite be said of the private sector but the trend appears to be growing where such clearance is mandated.

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Attracting and Retaining Talent
Why the best employees are on the move

By Agnes Makomere

ATTRACTING THE BEST TALENT and keeping it engaged does not just happen. Talent management and employee retention is critical to the success of an organisation. Without focus and an understanding of people, behavior and what engagement and reward strategies work for best culture, attracting the right talent and reducing turnover can be a challenge.

Employees decide to switch jobs for a variety of reasons. Attracting new blood to your workforce is a good thing, but a constant turnover is detrimental to performance, morale and the overall sustainability. Most organisations leak talent because they do not give enough care and recognition to their workforce.

Often that is because they see human capital as an easy asset to replace than any other company asset. Viewed this way, there is no incentive to make those who are so integral to a business any better than they are, since when a part goes ‘wrong’ or is not quite right, all what one should do is to change it for another.

Whilst that may seem to work well for some companies, this creates a demotivating and suffocating work environment which employees will want to leave.

Once a company is known for being suffocating and hostile, it will find it increasingly difficult to attract new blood to help keep it invigorated and moving forward in a competitive market.

Unfortunately, some companies have managers or leaders who do not appreciate best talent. In such conditions, unique individuals with talent to offer – the ones who think outside the box, the ones who will drive the business forward – are often seen as ‘problems’ that need to be eliminated. Such leaders or managers forcefully create a stressful work environment for talented employees.

The recipe for success, of course, is to see a business as a ‘living entity’ where people are its heart and soul. These are people that require a healthy culture in which they can express themselves, put their own particular genius to work, and have their talent recognised rather than be seen as some kind of threat.

Following are suggestions on what organisations can do to attract the new talent that they need and retain what they have:

1. Be clear about what a company stands for. When those at the top do not have a clear picture of values, vision and mission, how can they inspire others to follow them in the right direction?

2. Establish a culture of trust since talent cannot develop in a culture of control, bureaucracy and suspicion that arises when trust is absent.

3. Look to become a talent-driven organisation where the intellectual, emotional, spiritual and physical needs of employees are met.

4. Encourage work-life balance. When a workforce is collectively stressed, one will have an under-performing organisation. When constantly pushed to the limit talent does not and cannot thrive.

5. Reward creativity, innovation and thinking outside the box, as this will allow talent to expand beyond its job description just what is required in a fast-moving, highly flexible modern global economy.

6. Maintain the momentum of change by celebrating and communicating short-term wins so as to create that ongoing ‘feel good factor’.

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7. Make continuous learning a priority as this will energise the entire organisation across all levels and enable it to develop in the way that a 21st Century organisation should.

Some of the best practices for attracting talent and reducing turnover include:

**Provide career navigation and personal branding strategies**

Involve employees in the talent management and recruitment process as much as possible - ask questions to find out what attracted them to your organisation to begin with, what motivates them and what keeps them engaged. Employee development is also key – it is important to provide coaching, educational opportunities and training programme to your workforce. By letting potential hires and employees alike know your organisation will help them plan their desired path, set concrete goals and provide support to help them achieve those goals, you will help attract talent and increase engagement and retention.

**Hiring the right managers makes a big difference**

Managers are often involved in the interview process. They are one of the first interactions a potential new hire has with the organisation. Steve Miranda, managing director of Cornell University’s Centre for Advanced Human Resource Studies, said in an interview that he believed 80 per cent of employee turnover resulted from the environment created by managers as opposed to the company at large. So it is critical to work closely to make sure there is a consistent open line of communication between potential new hires and their would-be managers, and that managers are working collaboratively and positively with their employees to reduce turnover.

**Good PR goes a long way towards increasing employee referrals**

An organisation with a culture of trust gets good public relations – good PR goes a long way towards increasing employee referrals and reducing talent acquisition costs. Organisations with higher levels of trust and transparency often have higher levels of performance and retention, also reducing turnover and talent acquisition costs. An organisation with a culture of distrust is an organisation destined to be doomed. To attract good talent and maintain positive employee retention ensure your organisation has a culture of trust, not distrust.

**Recognise good performance**

Be it financially or with some other non-monetary benefits, recognise employees when they achieve their goals and perform above and beyond. No one wants to work for an organisation where they go ignored. Potential new hires can pick up this. It is important to pay attention to what motivates different employees. Not all employees prefer to be recognised for a job well done in the same way. Make communicating these policies to potential new hires part of your talent management process.

**Hire the right kind of employees who are both skilled and culture fit**

When trying to attract new talent, focus on skills and culture fit is important to success. Some people are “shooting stars”, but if they are not culture fit, the organisation will not see maximum performance or retention from the new hire. Be transparent, have a clear employee value proposition, communicate with potential new hires and employees early and often know what they want and what you want, and what motivates them. Never force a fit.

This should help set up a successful partnership that leads to a higher performance and retention.
Some professionals have argued that few organizations struggle to fill open positions today because there seems to be an endless supply of candidates to choose from as local universities saturate the market with new graduates. A closer look will, however, reveal that recruitment in East Africa is not quite as simple as it seems.

The 2010 ratification of the East Africa Community Common Market Protocol provided for ‘four freedoms’ including labour mobility, thereby increasing the flexibility of recruiters during selection of potential employees from a regional pool.

Rwanda has taken precedence as the new favourite relocation hub for both international and regional talent, with organizations putting up their advertisements in the local media as well as head hunting strategically for senior staff with key skills and experience, especially from Kenya.

Despite the civil war, South Sudan has also received quite an influx of Kenyan employees, and although not covered by the protocol, regional talent is attracted by the international contracting terms offered by international organizations and banks based there. It also seems that there are more career growth opportunities in South Sudan than in the flooded Kenyan market.

However, while on one hand the relocating employees stand to gain enormously in terms of career and remuneration growth, how to account for the brain drain within each country is also contentious because the skills being plundered by these countries are top tier—economists, technical specialists and finance specialists, to name a few.

Government legislation to ensure stricter measures in work permit issuance to foreigners in countries such as Ethiopia and Tanzania has tethered labour mobility to and from these countries. In Tanzania for example, a law against the recruitment of foreigners is projected to save 20-30 per cent of local jobs that would ordinarily be given to foreigners.

But while such legislation is advantageous to the local employees because competition for jobs is reduced and employment opportunities increased, it is disadvantageous to them, especially when recruitment opportunities are limited for foreigners in rare professions where fewer nationals will hold the requisite skills.

Recruitment for civil servant positions and some corporate organizations also continues to be a challenge, due to political interference by government agencies through politicisation of recruitments and lobbying for positions—where merit is no longer the core principle for hiring.

In addition, recruiters in Eastern Africa are also required to have a thorough understanding of the complexities of labour laws within the different countries, the most complex environment being Somalia. Technically, Somalia has an internationally-recognized government in place, but one without much clout. It is a war-torn country whose regions are controlled by different clans, warlords and the infamous Al-shabaab. Different regions in Somalia also have local government legislation and labour laws and decrees that are not applicable in other regions. For example, the Presidential decree of the President of Somalia is not applicable in other regions of the country. One must consult and refer widely not only regarding the labour law applicable to the specific region, but also attention must be given to the fact that mobility of labour within different regions in the country is forbidden—citizens in one region cannot move to live and work in another region within Somalia.

Information, communication and technological setbacks including connectivity problems due to lack of infrastructure in countries such as Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo are
also of great concern to recruiters. Poor deployment, obsolete equipment and telecommunication infrastructures, poor remote work tools and unavailable HR information systems make recruitment tedious as the difficulty of reaching local talent becomes apparent due to lack of access to telephone, internet and computers. Many organizations will need to re-evaluate their recruitment strategy and make numerous exceptions in order to complete even the simplest of recruitments.

Anyone recruiting in Somalia also knows the unmasked impact that many years of conflict and war has had on talent. According to the World Bank world development indicators, school enrollment in Somalia is a paltry 29 per cent, compared to other East African countries such as Rwanda and Kenya with 134 per cent and 112 per cent respectively. Uganda and Tanzania also have 110 per cent and 93 per cent enrollment.

Accordingly, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, positions the Somalia adult literacy rate at 37.8 per cent (25.8 per cent in females and 49.7 per cent in males). With the education levels being so low, recruiting while trying to employ diversity and equal opportunity strategies to give women fair opportunity becomes a stretch, seeing as there are such few candidates, if any, to consider who have a good educational background and work experience. The Diaspora, of course, has a good plethora of candidates to look out for. However, the remuneration and living conditions in war-torn countries are often not attractive enough to citizens living in the Diaspora, except for those interested in returning home for good.

In addition, recruiters must also contend with ongoing security issues including widespread insecurity and youth radicalisation into militant and terrorist groups, which necessitate the mandatory inclusion of background checks and security clearance as part of the recruitment process—thereby dragging the process all the more.

In countries such as Tanzania and Somalia where the national local languages are spoken extensively and used to teach in schools, the language barrier will definitely be a prickly issue because many candidates will lack basic requisite skill for eloquence in English which is an essential requirement for hire in most International organizations. In addition, while majority of the citizens in Eastern Africa are Christians by religion, Somalia is primarily an Islamic state. Recruiters must be culturally sensitive of this when travelling to Somalia in the way they speak and dress—the headscarf, for example, is mandatory for all women travelling to Somalia.

The challenges detailed above, however, do not come close to the elephant in the room—the veiled thorn in the flesh of every employer—the dishonesty of the applicants themselves when they turn in their applications for advertised positions. These days, jobseekers boldly submit not only fake documentation of their purported education certificates and other personal details, but also plagiarised materials and samples of their work.

While some organizations do carry out background checks before hiring, there are some applicants who manage to pass through the cracks to get hired, but many are later exposed and dismissed amid media hype and scandal—with their employers often surprised to find out that some of their applicants’ submissions are not authentic. This is especially so in the East Africa region where there abounds unaccredited training institutions, and the ease with which unethical back street vendors and printers dish out fake documentation to job seekers.

In reality, many East African citizens continue to strive daily to free themselves from poverty. But human rights abuses including sexual and physical violence, the break-up of families due to war and weather catastrophes such as famine, drought and floods, the non-existence or collapse of healthcare systems and the unavailability of universal education opportunities all contribute to unemployment and low job opportunities in many of the countries.

The inadequacy of recruiting experts who understand the technicalities of the region and a focus on closing immediate short-term skill gaps without considering long-term solutions makes the situation worse in the region.

Tanzania law against the recruitment of foreigners projected to save 20-30 per cent of local jobs

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It is now widely accepted that climate change is occurring. The range of consequences, time scales to act, methods for addressing the issue and other such particulars are still open for debate, but an overwhelming majority of scientists worldwide have publicly agreed that human-based greenhouse gas emissions are a serious problem facing humanity and the planet on which we live.

However, even if all the world’s government, business and civil society leaders agree on the emission reduction targets necessary to mitigate the catastrophic effects of global climate change, the problem of accurate measure and accounting for these emissions persists. How are emitters going to reduce what they are not able to measure or quantify? Business operators, local authorities, port users and government lack skills on greenhouse gas accounting for successful management of global climate change.

Many people are not sure what produces greenhouse gases or how they can be reduced. The public also confuses weather and climate change, leading to the perception that climate change is out of our control, unpredictable, and therefore does not require action.

GHG Environmental Accounting is a technical subject that involves tracking down greenhouse gases and allocating them to the owners. Emissions come as a resultant of human activities and emitted to the atmosphere. In the accounting, we are interested in measuring the emissions that cause global warming. We also want to establish the sources of the emissions, type of emissions and how to quantify the emissions into carbon dioxide equivalent and in collect parameters or metric tonnes.

Many organizations are interested in taking action to reduce the greenhouse gases they emit. They must carry out GHG inventory as the first step to establish the sources of the emissions and how much emissions they emit with a view to taking action to reduce it. With the inventory, organisations are able to identify emission reduction opportunities.

The GHG Accounting helps in many ways. Through the accounting work, organisations can justify why they should play a role in Corporate Social Responsibility. Most organisations are ready to reduce their emissions and if they cannot, then a GHG expert will make recommendations that they can offset against. Organisations are thus able to improve their image and their products are acceptable internationally for taking steps to reduce their emissions level.

To effectively do environment accounting that meets international standards, the work must be in line with the ISO Standards to gain recognition. This is a highly scientific process, unlike the normal financial accounting that we do, therefore ISO14064-1 Standard outlines very stringent requirements that must be met when carrying out the GHG Accounting and the protocols that must be followed.

An environmental accountant can assist organisations to identify areas that require efficiency improvement and reduce cost. With improved efficiency, there is an economic benefit which translates to higher dividends to shareholders on their investment. There are also reduced GHG risks on investment returns if the organisations embrace environmental accounting. The organisations interested in establishing their GHG Emissions profile are also able to put in place an environmental policy on emission management.

In the current regime of Carbon Trading, environmental accounting is necessary. It is only through the accounting that emissions reduction projects are identified for compensation or sale or purchase of credits.

Lack of GHG accountants in developing nations is a major barrier to accessing of funds under the Climate Change Kitty. Countries starting to take climate change seriously need the GHG accountants in their boards of management to benefit from such expertise. County governments that want to move faster and be ahead of the rest require GHG accountancy to assist them to benefit from the great potential that exists in the regions.

Understanding GHG accounting has great economic and environmental benefits. You cannot manage what you cannot measure.