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RIKA

2024

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RIKA is a transformative force reshaping leadership development across Africa.

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Letter from the publisher

Welcome to the first edition of The Times of RIKA!

This publication marks the beginning of a journey—one that seeks not only to celebrate Africa's promise but also to catalyse the forces shaping its future. Here, we embrace the power of ideas and the potential that emerges when visionaries come together with a shared commitment to transformation.

Within these pages, we have brought together inspiring voices and transformative ideas. This magazine is for those who see Africa not just for what it is, but for what it can become—a continent on the rise, driven by innovation, resilience, and a deep-rooted belief in its own potential.

In this edition, we delve into the critical themes of talent development, leadership evolution, growth, and productivity. Each section is designed to offer fresh perspectives, challenge established paradigms and spark new ideas. From exploring the intersection of technology and human potential to rethinking traditional approaches to economic growth, we invite you to look at Africa through a lens of limitless possibilities. We are also privileged to feature an entire section on Africa, with Prof. PLO Lumumba's thought-provoking insights as a centerpiece.

At the heart of this magazine is the RIKA ecosystem, a growing network of leaders, innovators, and changemakers who embody the spirit of collaboration and resilience. "RIKA," a Bantu word, refers to people who have gone through an initiation ceremony together and are expected to go on and do great things. This ethos reflects the shared journey of our Fellows and alumni, who are not just advancing their careers but reshaping the organizations and communities they touch.

We aspire for this magazine to be an invitation to engage in a dynamic conversation about the future we are collectively building. The Times of RIKA aims to foster a community of thinkers, doers, and dreamers—people who are not content with the status quo and are willing to roll up their sleeves to create meaningful change.

Thank you for joining us on this journey.

“

*It always seems impossible
until it's done.*

Nelson Mandela



Susan Githuku

Publisher & Executive Director, RIKA



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SCAN TO CREATE
TANGIBLE WEALTH

Letter from the editor

The future belongs to those who see beyond the horizon.

This magazine is more than a publication; it is a reflection of our shared aspirations, a platform for bold ideas, and a tribute to the resilience and ingenuity that define Africa. Here, we aim to provide a space where thought leaders, innovators, and change-makers can connect, explore, and contribute to the dynamic narrative that is reshaping our continent.

Within these pages, you will find a tapestry of insights on Africa's journey towards growth and excellence. From exploring the evolving role of leadership in navigating an unpredictable world to understanding how talent can be harnessed as a strategic asset, the content herein is both a guide and a source of inspiration.

This magazine is a testament to the power of collaboration and the spirit of progress. It seeks to inspire readers to look beyond the immediate challenges and to see the potential that lies in fostering a culture of continuous learning, innovation, and growth. We hope that as you explore these pages, you will feel encouraged to contribute your own voice to the dialogue, to question established norms, and to pursue excellence in every endeavour.

At RIKA, our own journey reflects this spirit of growth and innovation. We are thrilled to announce that we are now preparing for Cohort 6, a testament to the enduring value of this programme. As we grow, so too do our partnerships with leading organizations in Africa and across the globe. These collaborations are enabling us to deepen our curriculum, ensuring it remains cutting-edge and relevant to the evolving demands of leadership and human capital management. Furthermore, we are on the cusp of launching new products that will expand our reach and provide even greater opportunities for learning and development.

The journey of growth is never linear, and the path to progress is often winding. Yet, it is through our collective efforts, our resilience, and our commitment to pushing boundaries that we can transform aspirations into reality. As you immerse yourself in this magazine, I encourage you to reflect on the role you can play in shaping a better future, not only for Africa but for the world at large.

Together, let us embrace the possibilities and strive to elevate what is possible.

“

Progress is not linear.

Maria Montessori



Natalie Manga

Editor & Programme Director, RIKA

Debbie Hollis

Founder, Devlinks

As we gear up for the inaugural RIKA Leadership Summit, Debbie Hollis — founder of DEVLINK and former Deloitte and Touche Consultant — shares her enthusiasm for what promises to be a transformative event. “RIKA’s powerful vision of shaping HR leaders as catalysts to spark Africa’s advancement deeply resonates with me,” says Hollis. The summit, she believes, is a crucial enabler of this vision, offering a platform to drive positive change across the continent.

Debbie is eager to immerse herself in an environment that promises to challenge and inspire: “I can’t wait to be surrounded by new perspectives and like-minded individuals who are driven by an insatiable curiosity to broaden their horizons.” Her anticipation extends to the rich tapestry of topics on the agenda, highlighting the unique opportunity the summit offers to delve into complex issues impacting organizations across Africa.

For Debbie, the summit is not just an event but a movement focused on leveraging Africa’s rich human resources. “Participating in the event provides an unrivalled opportunity to explore fresh approaches to solving complex issues,” she adds. She looks forward to joining the conversation, interacting as a community of practice, and fostering connections that stimulate both personal and professional growth.

Don’t miss the chance to share ideas and insights with HR leaders like Debbie at the RIKA Summit. It’s an opportunity to unlock the potential of Africa through innovative and inspired leadership.


A catalyst for change

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Co-founder and Executive Director, RIKA Leadership Programme.



JEAN-FRANCOIS COUSIN
Global Executive Coach, Former Chairman of ICF.



PROF. PLO LUMUMBA
Founder, The PLO Lumumba Foundation.



DR. FRANK NJENGA
Chairman, Chiromo Hospital Group.



NATALIE MANGA
Programme Director RIKA Learning, Master of Ceremony.



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Senior Partner, Tactive Consulting.



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CEO Advisor & Partner, MontaRosa.



PETER NJONJO
Founder and Chairman, Selu Group.



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Media Executive, Master of Ceremony.

SUMMIT OBJECTIVES

- Harness Insights from Global Thinkers and Leading Thought-leaders.
- Gain proficiency in specialized toolsets and skillsets across critical domains:
 - Design Thinking
 - Artificial Intelligence (AI)
 - Cybersecurity
- Enhance Leadership Capabilities and navigate Leadership in a BANI World
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- Catalyze Organizational and Personal Growth
- Foster Economic and Social Impact

Africa Leadership Talent Productivity Growth

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**Human
capital is the
foundation of
organisational
resilience in a
rapidly evolving
workplace.**

Examining workplace trends highlights the pivotal changes shaping how teams and individuals achieve success. These shifts underscore the importance of agility, inclusivity, and innovation in modern organisations. Embracing these trends ensures a stronger, more adaptable workforce equipped for the future.



Beyond the title: reimagining HR leadership

The modern Chief People Officer (CPO) or Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) is no longer confined to traditional HR responsibilities. Their role has become an intricate blend of strategy, culture, talent management, human-centricity, productivity, and transformation. This evolution demands titles that go beyond convention to reflect the expansive and critical impact of HR leadership in shaping the future of work.

Here are a few bold, boundary-pushing titles that encapsulate the multifaceted expectations of this role:

1. Chief Workforce Impact Officer

Ensures that teams and individuals are aligned with the organization's broader purpose and strategic goals. This role fosters cross-functional collaboration by breaking silos and promoting shared accountability across departments. By driving collective impact, this leader ensures that employee contributions directly advance organizational objectives and create meaningful results.

2. Chief Well-being and Productivity Officer

Integrates initiatives that prioritize employee mental, physical, and emotional well-being with strategies to enhance productivity. The role emphasizes the creation of a balanced work environment where employees feel supported and motivated to perform at their best. By fostering a culture of care and efficiency, this leader ensures sustainable performance and a thriving workforce.

3. Chief People and Performance Officer

Bridges the critical connection between talent management and organizational success. This role focuses on aligning people strategies with measurable business outcomes, ensuring that employee contributions directly impact key performance indicators. By optimizing performance management systems and development plans, this leader drives growth for both individuals and the organization.

4. Chief Human and Business Synergy Officer

Harmonizes business goals with a human-centric approach to create an engaged, motivated, and high-performing workforce. The Chief Human and Business Synergy Officer ensures that organizational strategies are designed with empathy, inclusivity, and employee well-being at their core. By integrating human needs with business priorities, this role fosters alignment that benefits both the workforce and the bottom line.

5. The Chief Talent and Transformation Architect

Both a strategist for talent development and a change leader for organizational transformation. This role involves attracting, retaining, and growing top talent while leading efforts to evolve the organization's culture and processes. By balancing people-focused strategies with transformational initiatives, this leader prepares the organization for long-term success.

6. Chief Culture and Capability Officer

Responsible for shaping an inspiring workplace culture that aligns with the organization's values and goals. The Chief Culture and Capability Officer focuses on building the skills and capabilities employees need to adapt and excel in dynamic environments. By embedding cultural and learning initiatives into the organization, this leader drives engagement and readiness for future challenges.

7. Chief People Potential and Growth Officer

Works to unlock the full potential of employees by integrating

mentorship, development, and career advancement into the organization's strategy. This role focuses on empowering employees to grow personally and professionally while aligning their aspirations with organizational needs. By fostering a growth mindset, this leader ensures that the workforce remains adaptable and motivated.

8. Chief Engagement and Empowerment Leader

Ensures employees feel deeply connected to their roles and empowered to take ownership of their contributions. The Chief Engagement and Empowerment Leader fosters innovation, collaboration, and accountability by creating an environment where employees are motivated to succeed. By championing engagement initiatives, this role helps build a culture of trust and commitment that drives organizational success.

9. The Chief Workforce Experience Designer

Crafts meaningful and seamless employee experiences throughout the entire lifecycle, from recruitment to career progression and beyond. This role ensures that every interaction an employee has with the organization reflects its values and supports their development. By enhancing employee satisfaction and engagement, this leader strengthens retention and cultivates a positive workplace environment.

10. The Chief Purpose and Workforce Productivity Officer

Ensures alignment between organizational goals and employee values, fostering a shared sense of purpose across the workforce. The Chief Purpose and Workforce Productivity Officer connects purpose-driven work with productivity initiatives to drive engagement and performance. By aligning motivation with measurable outcomes, this leader ensures employees are both fulfilled and effective in their roles.

THESE TITLES MATTER

The evolving demands placed on HR leaders, showcasing their role as strategic architects of culture, innovation, and human potential. They go beyond traditional labels to emphasize the expansive influence of HR leadership in driving organizational success.

It's not just about rebranding; it's about redefining what it means to lead in HR.



|| Maria Shipiri
Chief Human Resources Officer

Three Emerging Trends

In a world where the workplace is constantly evolving, HR leaders are being called to innovate, adapt, and shape the future of work. Through insights from top CHROs, we explore the emerging trends redefining talent, culture, and leadership, and the strategic thinking needed to keep organizations resilient and forward-focused.

In our conversation with Maria Shipiri, a global CHRO and founding Taskforce member of RIKA, we asked her what she had observed in her years of leading and advising organizations. She shared three trends that she believes are reshaping today's workplace and which organizations must address thoughtfully to stay resilient.

1: The Rise of First-Line Manager Abdication—Are Leaders Passing the Buck?

In recent years, an unsettling trend has emerged. "First-line managers are increasingly offloading their people management responsibilities—either pushing them upwards to senior leadership, downwards to the team, or directly to HR. It's a perplexing shift that deserves careful attention."

Why is this happening? Maria suggests there are a few likely culprits. First, many managers feel underprepared or even overwhelmed by the complexities of people management. "Leadership today demands not just technical expertise, but also emotional intelligence, cultural sensitivity, and adaptability—all of which can be challenging to master," she notes. Additionally, organizations often reward technical skill with promotions, yet they may overlook the need for robust management development and growth. Some managers having adopted into this responsibility overlook the need to be prepared to lead and sometimes start aspiring for more senior management roles, exacerbating the problem. This gap leaves many first-line managers ill-equipped to handle the day-to-day nuances of leading people, particularly teams representing multiple generations.

"This abdication comes with real costs," Maria continues. "When managers pass off their responsibilities, it undermines team cohesion and accountability necessary for the delivery of business plans. Employees end up uncertain about whom to turn to for guidance, and HR becomes bogged down with tasks that should be handled within the team." To address this trend,



she emphasizes that organizations must first understand and accept that a gap exists the prioritize training, development and overall growth that empowers first-line managers to confidently handle people management. "By investing in learning to acquire skills and behaviors," Maria asserts, "we can strengthen the managerial backbone that holds organizations together."

2: People Are Burning Out Faster—and It's Not Just Work

Maria next addressed the increasing issue of burnout, noting that it has become "more than just a buzzword; it's a crisis affecting workers across all levels and industries including CEOs." Burnout today, she observes, extends beyond the workplace and is fuelled by the broader complexities of life in a hyperconnected, demanding world.

"The pandemic blurred the lines between work and personal life, creating a nonstop cycle of 'always on' that left employees with little time to recharge," she says. "Social pressures, financial concerns, and personal challenges only add to the strain, making recovery from burnout a complex challenge. Work-life balance is no longer a matter of simply leaving work at work; it requires a holistic view of employee well-being, one that considers emotional, mental, and even physical health."

Maria advises that organizations need to look beyond productivity metrics and implement comprehensive well-being programs. "Flexible work arrangements, supporting personal family matters, reviewing workload and how it's measured, providing mental health resources, and frequently updating policies that encourage real downtime are just the beginning," she explains. "Leaders must foster a culture where opening up discussions on burnout are normalized and not viewed as a performance matter, where taking time for self-care isn't

just accepted but actively supported. Addressing burnout holistically is not only humane but also crucial for long-term productivity, employee engagement, and retention."

3: Embracing the Multi-Career Generation

Finally, Maria highlights a trend that challenges traditional employment structures: the rise of the multi-career mindset among younger employees. "The traditional career path is rapidly being replaced by a more flexible, entrepreneurial mindset—especially among Gen Z and Millennials," she observes. "These younger generations increasingly seek purpose, variety, and creativity in their work, often through side hustles, freelance projects, and even multiple simultaneous careers."

This trend, Maria notes, poses questions around commitment, loyalty, and reward. "For employers, this shift means rethinking job roles and reward structures," she explains. "Instead of making employees choose between their job and their passions, progressive organizations are finding ways to accommodate both. Flexible hours, project-based roles, and even formalized arrangements for pursuing side gigs can attract this talent while balancing organizational needs. Compensation models may need to become more innovative, with performance-based incentives or partial-project pay that allows for greater autonomy."

By embracing this shift, Maria believes organizations can foster a culture where employees feel supported in pursuing diverse goals—inside and outside the workplace. "This approach not only attracts top talent but also drives higher engagement and creativity," she says. "The goal is no longer just to employ; it's to partner with individuals who are building multi-dimensional careers."

David Ssegawa
CHRO at Equity Group Holdings

Re-defining human capital

When asked about emerging workplace trends, David Ssegawa, CHRO at Equity Bank and a founding member of the RIKA Taskforce and Faculty, found it challenging to narrow down his observations to just three trends. "It's a very exciting time to be in the profession," he shared, "and we need true business thinkers within HR to drive these changes forward." David outlined six key trends that he believes are reshaping the HR landscape, each highlighting the shift toward a more dynamic, thoughtful approach to managing talent.

1. Data-Driven HR Decisions

"The rise of HR analytics is transforming how we approach recruitment, retention, and performance management," David explains. Today's HR professionals are leveraging data-driven insights to make informed decisions that directly impact business outcomes. By predicting turnover, optimizing recruitment efforts, and tailoring development plans, HR can align closely with strategic goals, moving beyond traditional HR functions to become a key player in shaping business success. Data analytics enable HR teams to identify trends, evaluate the impact of engagement initiatives, and even forecast workforce needs. With data-backed decision-making, HR leaders are positioned to create more precise, effective strategies that support both the organization and its employees.

2. Skills Over Degrees

David highlighted an important shift: "Many organizations are moving from traditional qualifications to a skills-based approach, prioritizing competencies and experience over formal degrees." This trend is opening doors for candidates from diverse, non-traditional backgrounds, who bring unique perspectives and skill sets. As businesses evolve rapidly, adaptability and a diverse skill set are more valuable than ever. Emphasizing skills rather than degrees means organizations can focus on finding candidates who have the specific competencies needed, regardless of their educational background. This approach not only expands the talent pool but also fosters a culture of inclusion and adaptability.

3. Mental Health as a Priority

"Mental health has moved from being an afterthought to a strategic priority," David notes. Organizations now recognize that well-being is essential for productivity and engagement, leading to

substantial investments in mental health resources, such as therapy benefits, stress management training, and mental health days. This focus on mental health is more than a trend; it's a fundamental shift in how organizations view employee support. By fostering an environment that acknowledges mental well-being as integral to employee success, companies are building cultures of trust and resilience. Such initiatives are especially critical as employees navigate increasingly demanding work and personal lives, providing a holistic support system that benefits both individuals and the organization.

4. Employee Experience Over Traditional Engagement

David observes that companies are broadening their perspective from traditional employee engagement to a more comprehensive view of employee experience. "Today, we're focusing on everything from onboarding and career development to day-to-day work-life balance and exit experiences," he explains. A positive employee experience is critical for building loyalty and fostering retention. Organizations are recognizing that engagement scores alone aren't enough; instead, a holistic approach that considers the full employee journey is essential for long-term success. From welcoming new hires to supporting them through transitions, every touchpoint matters in shaping a fulfilling work experience.

5. "Work from Anywhere" Mindset

Remote work is no longer a perk—it's becoming a core part of organizational structure. David describes how companies are adopting a true "work from anywhere" mindset, allowing employees to work from virtually any location. "This shift prioritizes output over location, fostering a 'borderless' workforce," he explains. By enabling employees to work from different cities or even countries, organizations are not only enhancing flexibility but also expanding their talent pool. The "work from anywhere" model aligns with employees' desire for autonomy, allowing them to integrate work into their lives more seamlessly. This approach is redefining productivity and reshaping organizational boundaries.

6. Intrapreneurship Programs

"Organizations are creating intrapreneurship initiatives to harness creativity and drive innovation," David shares enthusiastically. Intrapreneurship



allows employees to pitch new ideas, launch mini-projects, and "run a business within the business." These programs inspire fresh thinking and cultivate a sense of ownership, helping organizations tap into their workforce's full potential. Intrapreneurship programs empower employees to experiment, innovate, and contribute to the company's growth in meaningful ways. By supporting employees in developing and leading their own initiatives, organizations are fostering an entrepreneurial culture that encourages continuous improvement and breakthrough ideas.

While David outlined these six trends as the most impactful, he hinted at a few others that are equally relevant in today's evolving workplace landscape:

Digital Detox Policies

Recognizing the effects of digital fatigue, organizations are starting to introduce "digital detox" policies, including email-free weekends, "no meeting" days, and limited online hours. These initiatives allow employees to recharge, improving both mental health and productivity.

Reverse Mentorship Programs

In a bid to bridge generational gaps, reverse mentorship pairs younger employees with senior leaders, offering insights into tech trends, social media, and emerging cultural perspectives. This approach empowers younger employees while keeping senior leadership current.

David concluded by emphasizing that it's a pivotal time to be in HR. "We have the opportunity—and responsibility—to be true business thinkers who shape the future of work. These trends aren't just about HR; they're about building organizations that are adaptive, inclusive, and prepared for what's ahead.

**Talent
management
is key to
sustainable
success and
competitive
advantage.**

Prioritising the development and retention of high-performing teams creates a culture of excellence. Productivity flourishes when individuals are empowered with the tools and support they need to thrive. Focusing on talent ensures long-term organisational growth and adaptability in an ever-changing landscape.



Why the Nine-Box Matrix is still my go-to tool

So yes, while the Nine-Box may not be flashy, it's a solid, straightforward approach that delivers. At the end of the day, I'll take a tool that sparks real conversations and drives decisions over one that's just full of buzzwords, shiny or new.

Let's address the elephant in the HR room: the Nine-Box Matrix. Yes, it's been labelled everything from "basic" to "over-simplified," but as any seasoned HR professional knows, simplicity is often underrated. Despite the latest talent management fads, the Nine-Box Matrix has a staying power that's hard to beat. It's straightforward, efficient, and gets us right to the heart of what matters: performance and potential.

Does it capture every nuanced angle of an employee's career? No, of course not. But do we really want a 64-Box Matrix that captures everyone's horoscope too? Let's be real: no one has time for that. The Nine-Box strips it down to the essentials, sparking productive conversations and driving critical decisions.

Here's why I'm still a fan (and why I think you should be too):

1. It's Easy to Understand

Simple axes, clear labels—no PhDs needed here. Everyone can follow along, which is crucial when you're sitting down with a cross-functional team.

2. It Sparks Necessary Conversations

A Nine-Box review means tough but meaningful discussions. Are we investing in the right people? Are we clear on who needs development? This tool brings focus to those questions.

3. It's Adaptable Across Contexts

Retail, tech, finance—you name it, the Nine-Box works. It's one of the few tools that's truly industry-agnostic.

4. It's Honest and Transparent

Unlike some sugar-coated assessments, the Nine-Box forces us to be upfront about both stars and strugglers, so everyone gets a fair shot at growth or support.

5. It's a Shared Language

From HR to Finance, everyone understands the Nine-Box, making alignment easy. When teams speak the same language, great things happen.

6. It's Efficient for Succession Planning

Sure, it's not the only tool in town, but it's one of the best for mapping out succession plans that actually work. Quick, effective, and reliable.

7. It Promotes Retention, Not Just Promotion

This isn't just a tool for identifying rising stars; it's also about recognizing those who need extra support to reach their potential.

8. It's a Classic with Staying Power

Trends come and go, but the Nine-Box has survived because it works. It's like the HR equivalent of your favourite playlist—reliable, tested, and still just as good.

POTENTIAL	High	'Potential Gem' High Potential Low Performance	'High Potential' High Potential Moderate Performance	'Star' High Potential High Performance
	Moderate	'Inconsistent Player' Moderate Potential Low Performance	'Core Player' Moderate Potential Moderate Performance	'High Performer' Moderate Potential High Performance
	Low	'Risk' Low Potential Low Performance	'Average Performer' Low Potential Moderate Performance	'Solid Gem' Low Potential High Performance
		Low	Moderate	High
PERFORMANCE				

Over-promoting can be a disaster for everyone



The Peter Principle

Promotions are given based on tenure or a candidate's success in a previous role, irrespective of their ability to excel in the new role.

Let's be honest promoting someone into a role they aren't ready for might seem like a generous nod to their hard work or a quick fix to fill a vacancy. But it's a little like giving someone the keys to a sports car before they've learned to drive. It may seem flattering at first, but there's a lot more at stake than just their resume. Over-promoting can lead to a painful spiral for the individual and can wreak havoc on the organization.

Why over-promoting is tough on employees

For the unsuspecting employee, being thrust into a role beyond their capabilities is a recipe for insecurity and stress. Here's why it's a lot more "sink" than "swim" for most people:

1. Insecurity

Imagine being handed a job you know you aren't ready for. Hello, imposter syndrome! They'll constantly feel like they're faking it—and terrified they'll be found out.

2. Anxiety

There's the thrill of a new title, sure, but soon, reality bites. Unprepared employees often spiral into anxiety, knowing they lack the skills they need to thrive.

3. Unable to Cope with Demands

The learning curve feels like scaling Everest. With tasks piling up that they're not equipped to handle, they start sinking fast, unable to keep up with job demands.

4. Stress and Burnout

The pressure to perform without the right tools quickly leads to stress, leaving employees drained, demotivated, and, eventually, burnt out.

5. Damaged Confidence

Ultimately, being over-promoted can shake their core confidence. They may feel like they're failing daily, which leaves lasting scars on their professional self-esteem.

And it's terrible for the organization, too

Over-promoting doesn't just harm the individual—it can be a costly mistake for the organization as well. Here's why it's more "dead weight" than "development" for a company:

1. Reduced Productivity

The struggle to get up to speed means productivity takes a major hit. Tasks are delayed, errors increase, and team efficiency suffers.

2. Lowered Morale Across the Team

Watching a colleague flounder in an ill-fitting role can dampen the spirits of the whole team, leading to discontent and frustration among capable coworkers.

3. Customer and Client Impact

An unqualified person in a key role can have ripple effects externally. Mistakes, missed deadlines, and lack of professionalism can harm relationships with clients and customers.

4. Higher Turnover Costs

If the over-promoted employee eventually quits (or worse, needs to be let go), the organization has to start the costly hiring process all over again.

5. Poor Strategic Decisions

When someone not yet skilled for their position makes decisions, it can misdirect team efforts, lead to poor outcomes, and ultimately harm the organization's goals.

Matching People to Their Potential and Capability

Leaders have a responsibility to assess and promote employees thoughtfully. A great match means matching people to roles that reflect their true potential and current capabilities. This takes rigorous evaluation and a commitment to providing honest feedback—and sometimes a reality check.

When it comes to promotions, a healthy mix of aspiration and preparation is the magic formula. It's tempting to offer shiny new titles, but let's not hand out rocket fuel to people still learning to steer.

The best promotion is the one that's deserved, desired, and destined for success. Let's keep people aligned to their best selves—and avoid organizational (and individual!) meltdown in the process.

Not everyone
is “talent”
—and that’s
perfectly fine



Imagine a world where every single player on a football team wants to be the star striker. Chaos, right? Yet, in today's HR landscape, we're quick to label every employee as "talent," creating a one-size-fits-all mentality that assumes everyone is destined for greatness. This might sound inclusive, but in reality, it dilutes the meaning of talent and breeds unrealistic expectations.

The fact is, not every employee is "talent," and that's not only okay—it's essential. When we apply the "everyone is talent" mantra across the board, we lose sight of the nuanced roles and contributions that actually keep an organization running. Just like every position on a team has its unique purpose, each role in a company has its own value. Not every position requires standout potential or high performance; some call for consistency, reliability, and steady expertise more than anything else.

Why "Talent" Can't Describe Everyone

Traditionally, "talent" refers to those with unique skills, exceptional potential, or high performance that make them stand out. But labelling everyone as "talent" blurs these distinctions, leading to misplaced development efforts, poor role alignment, and ultimately, frustration. It's a setup where all employees are primed to aspire to lofty career goals—whether or not they're inclined or suited to reach them. As a result, organizations end up investing in growth paths for people who may be happiest and most productive right where they are.

The Downside of the "Everyone is Talent" Approach

Allow me to explain why the over-inclusive approach creates significant challenges:

1. Misallocated Resources

When everyone is seen as high-potential talent, we often waste resources on programmes that don't align with certain employees' skills or ambitions. Not everyone needs leadership training, nor do they necessarily want to climb the career ladder.

2. Unrealistic Expectations

Forcing every employee into a "talent" mould can lead to frustration.

Not everyone wants to be the next big star, and not every role requires exceptional creativity or high growth potential. Some employees find purpose and satisfaction in performing their roles consistently and well.

3. Reduced Focus on True High Performers

When "talent" is spread too thin, actual high performers might miss the targeted development they deserve. With everyone labelled as "talent," it becomes harder to differentiate and reward those who truly drive innovation and results.

4. Role Confusion and Potential Disengagement

Not every role is meant for star performance. By calling everyone "talent," we risk alienating those who excel in essential, steady roles but don't fit the "high potential" stereotype.

Why We Need Non-Talent Roles, Too

Not every role demands a high-potential employee, and that's precisely what makes a well-balanced team.

Think of support roles, for example—these positions don't need breakout performers as much as they need reliable, consistent contributions. Employees in these roles provide the stability that organizations rely on, whether or not they're labelled "talent."

Additionally, many employees find fulfillment in stability rather than upward mobility. Pushing ambitious development plans on employees who aren't looking to climb the ladder can lead to discontent and disillusionment, creating a disconnect between an employee's goals and the organization's assumptions.

Rethinking Talent for Greater Precision

So, instead of labelling everyone as "talent," let's embrace a more precise view, one that values diverse ambitions and skill sets.

Here's how we can rethink the approach:

1. Focus on Role Requirements, Not Just People

Define talent by what the role demands. Not every role needs a high performer, and not every position benefits from high-potential ambitions. Recognize and respect the unique contributions each position brings.

2. Customize Development Approaches

Tailor growth plans based on individuals' career goals and the demands of their roles. Those who are content in stable roles don't need high-potential development; they need relevant skills training and stable engagement efforts.

3. Value Every Contribution

Appreciating employees for their unique contributions—whether or not they're considered "talent"—cultivates a positive, engaged work environment. Not every employee should be on a fast track; they should, however, feel valued in their roles.

4. Encourage Open Career Conversations

Honest conversations help define what "talent" looks like for each employee. For those aiming to rise, tailor development accordingly. For those content in their roles, reinforce that their contribution is essential and appreciated.

Recognizing that not every employee is "talent" doesn't make them any less valuable. In fact, it shows respect for the diversity of contributions that make an organization thrive.

Understanding mental health in the workplace

When I studied psychology many years ago, mental health diagnoses were starkly different from today's nuanced understanding. People were classified as "idiots," "morons," and "imbeciles" based on the severity of their condition, reflecting a time when mental health was poorly understood, and compassion was not part of the clinical lexicon. Later, terms like "mad," "sad," and "bad" emerged, lumping a range of issues into simplistic labels that offered little insight into individual struggles. Fortunately, today's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5-TR) provides detailed criteria that articulate the complex spectrum of mental and emotional challenges, helping to identify conditions more empathetically and accurately.

In many parts of Africa, however, the old language and stigma linger, causing individuals to suffer in silence due to the fear of being labeled. The workplace—where people spend a large part of their lives—becomes a critical environment for change, offering potential support or, conversely, exacerbating distress due to stigma and lack of awareness.

Mental Health Challenges: Diverse and Often Invisible

There has been a notable rise in mental health issues globally, including the incidence of depression, anxiety, and personality disorders such as histrionic and narcissistic personality disorder. Compounding this, the increasing suicide rates across different age groups highlight the depth of the mental health crisis. High-profile figures and leaders have openly discussed the pressures that can lead to mental health struggles, as we've seen from instances of public burnout, nervous breakdowns, and personal conflicts.

Beyond workplaces, the political and corporate arenas have witnessed a troubling trend of individuals with traits associated with malignant narcissism or psychopathy rising to powerful positions. These personality types, characterized by lack of empathy, grandiosity, and a need for control, can disrupt environments, foster toxic cultures, and even influence national policies negatively.

Addressing mental health is essential not only for compassion but also for business productivity. Mental health conditions like depression and anxiety lead to absenteeism, lower productivity, and high turnover, costing the global economy an estimated \$1 trillion annually, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Organizations that create open dialogues on mental health and train leaders to recognize signs of distress—especially in the face of rising mental health crises and workplace challenges—are better prepared to offer timely support.

Lessons from Public Figures: Mental Health is Universal

It goes without saying that mental health challenges can affect anyone, regardless of success or status. Figures like Marissa Mayer, who spoke openly about burnout, and Sir Richard Branson, who discussed anxiety, reveal that struggles affect people at all career stages. Public figures have also exemplified how unaddressed mental health issues can lead to tragic outcomes, as in the cases

of high-profile suicides among celebrities who appeared to have fulfilling lives but were struggling privately with mental health crises. These stories highlight the importance of understanding mental health as a universal concern, as well as embracing neurodiversity and inclusive workplaces.

Steps for HR Teams: Cultivating Knowledge and Compassion

HR teams play a vital role in fostering mental health awareness and supportive workplace culture. Key strategies include:

1. Educate and Train

Offer ongoing training to help HR and managers recognize distress and know when to suggest help.

2. Foster Openness

Encourage leaders to share experiences, reducing stigma around seeking help.

3. Implement Supportive Policies

Provide flexible work arrangements, mental health leave, and counseling.

4. Provide Accessible Resources

Offer employee assistance programs (EAPs) and mental health days. Encourage assessments and therapy where required

5. Create Peer Support Networks

Facilitate groups where employees can share experiences, fostering solidarity.

Recognizing mental health not as a weakness but as a vital part of well-being creates a supportive, productive culture that values all employees, laying a foundation for healthier, more sustainable organizations.

Ode to the distracted worker

We Come In Multiples

Oh valiant worker, at your screen you stare,
With coffee in hand and a faraway glare.
Your fingers poised, ready, your mind so intent—
Until a ping! A ping! Away your focus went!
Once warriors of tasks, now lost in the feed,
Where likes and memes fulfill every need.
From Tik-tok videos to tweets that never quite end,

You've more tabs open than you can comprehend.
Your calendar's packed with meetings galore,
But half of them? Truly, a bore, a chore.
Yet bravely you sit, camera on, chin high,
Hoping no one sees that you're scrolling on the sly.
Slack dings and pings with ceaseless delight,
Each notification a thief in the night.
"Urgent by noon!" says the boss with a roar—
But first, that article on work-life rapport.
Oh, brave multitasker, juggling with flair,
Between work and wander, between focus and air,
You toggle and scroll, like a seasoned pro,
From spreadsheets to YouTube in one swift flow.
And when five o'clock rolls around at last,
You close your laptop, free at last!
But wait...an email slides in with a jolt,
Because work's become endless—and life?

On hold.



Do you know about behavioral economics?

Have you heard of behavioral economics? This fascinating field, blending psychology with economics, is revolutionizing how we understand and influence decision-making in ways that are intuitive and effective. Unlike traditional economics, which assumes people act rationally, behavioral economics acknowledges that our choices are often shaped by biases, habits, and emotions. It's being applied successfully in various fields—from boosting workplace productivity to improving health and well-being.

Consider how Google uses behavioral economics in their cafeterias: healthier food options are placed at eye level, nudging employees toward better choices without limiting their freedom. Another example comes from the financial sector, where some banks are helping customers save more by automatically setting realistic savings targets—transforming daunting financial goals into manageable habits. These small, purposeful nudges are making a big impact and aren't limited to tech giants or financial institutions; they can be practical for any leader or organization aiming to create meaningful, lasting change.

Behavioral economics provides leaders with tools to motivate and inspire teams by tapping into human nature. Below are some key principles that are reshaping leadership and engagement, offering practical ways to create a more responsive, human-centered workplace.





Key concepts of behavioral economics for leaders

Behavioral economics offers leaders actionable insights to encourage engagement, productivity, and motivation—without sweeping changes. Here are a few powerful concepts to consider:

1. Nudging

Nudges are small prompts that gently steer people toward desired behaviors while respecting their freedom of choice. A simple example is setting automatic defaults, like eco-friendly printing or reminders to submit reports before a deadline. These subtle changes can lead to big improvements in productivity and decision-making over time.

2. Loss Aversion

People generally prefer to avoid losses rather than seek equivalent gains. This insight can be applied in the workplace by framing incentives around what might be lost rather than gained. For instance, instead of promising bonuses for meeting targets, consider framing incentives as something that's "theirs to keep" if goals are achieved—a tweak that leverages this powerful human motivation.

3. Anchoring

The first piece of information people receive often serves as a mental anchor, shaping their perception of everything that follows. Leaders can use anchoring to set strong initial expectations—such as clear project goals or performance benchmarks—that shape how team members interpret feedback and stay focused on quality outcomes.

4. Power of Small Wins

Achieving small milestones gives people a sense of progress, which is incredibly motivating. Breaking down large goals into smaller, manageable steps and celebrating each achievement fosters a culture of growth and continuous improvement, keeping teams energized and committed to their objectives.

Bringing behavioral economics to life in the workplace

Many companies have already embraced behavioral economics to enhance culture and productivity. At Google, the strategic placement of healthier food options encourages employees to make better choices, resulting in a healthier workforce and higher employee satisfaction.

Similarly, companies like IBM use behavioral insights to improve collaboration by setting and reinforcing shared goals, creating a stronger sense of community and purpose.

Applying behavioral economics in your leadership

You don't need a degree in behavioral economics to see the benefits. Start by identifying key behaviors you want to encourage, then experiment with small nudges to support them.

For example, I've begun to share examples of effective collaboration in team meetings to foster a "we're all in this together" mindset. Additionally, gathering feedback and tracking metrics helps assess the effectiveness of these nudges, enabling real-time adjustments and improvements.

Building a future-ready workplace with behavioral insights

In today's world, where understanding people is as essential as understanding policies, behavioral economics equips leaders with tools to foster a truly supportive environment.

Moving beyond traditional incentives, this approach respects the natural motivations of individuals, creating spaces where people are inspired to bring their best selves to work.

If you're intrigued, start small. Pick one principle—whether nudging, anchoring, or celebrating small wins—and apply it within your team. You'll be amazed at how these seemingly minor changes can ripple across your organization, creating a workplace culture of engagement, support, and continuous improvement.

Embracing behavioral economics is a journey, but each small step brings us closer to workplaces that are more human-centered, responsive, and future-ready.



A case for the 3- to 4-day workweek

In today's fast-paced, always-on world, our work expectations have become relentless. We're not only dealing with the demands of delivering high-quality results under tight deadlines but also facing the uncertainties and anxieties of a VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous) world. Add the pressures of a BANI (Brittle, Anxious, Nonlinear, Incomprehensible) reality, and it's easy to see why so many are grappling with burnout, mental fatigue, and a constant need to recalibrate work-life balance.

Given this context, isn't it time to rethink the traditional five-day workweek? Could a shorter workweek actually boost productivity, innovation, and well-being in ways that a rigid schedule simply can't?

The reality is that the expectations placed on organizations and employees today are higher than ever. Amid constant disruptions and an overwhelming volume of information to process, we're expected to stay agile, responsive, and adaptable.

These demands contribute to organizational anxiety, with leaders and teams constantly "on alert," striving to stay ahead and manage changes as they come. But as demands increase, productivity paradoxically seems to suffer. Our ability to process information meaningfully decreases under constant stress, making it challenging to maintain high performance sustainably.

In this environment, a shorter workweek might offer a solution that not only respects employees' mental and emotional limits but enhances productivity. By reducing the number of hours worked, we're not reducing the potential for achievement—instead, we're reshaping it, focusing on efficiency and the quality of outputs rather than the mere quantity of time spent working.

The Icelandic experience

Evidence from Real-World Trials

Iceland has already pioneered shorter workweeks with impressive results. In a study conducted between 2015 and 2019, Icelandic organizations introduced four-day workweeks in several public sector workplaces without a reduction in pay. The results were promising: productivity remained stable or, in some cases, even improved. Employees reported significantly reduced stress, better work-life balance, and overall greater job satisfaction.

Iceland's experiment highlighted that when employees have time to recharge, they bring more energy, focus, and creativity back to their work. And let's face it, these are exactly the qualities we need in a VUCA-BANI world.

If a small nation like Iceland can embrace a model that prioritizes quality of life and well-being alongside productivity, why shouldn't larger, more complex organizations consider the same approach? It's tempting to dismiss the idea as impractical, especially for demanding industries. But in Iceland's case, the success of these trials has not only made the model viable but highly appealing to both employers and employees.

By focusing on structured, effective hours rather than simply "putting in time," Icelandic workplaces became proof that less can indeed be more.

More than time off

The Broader Impact on Well-Being and Productivity

Critics of a shortened workweek often argue that fewer hours would translate into unfinished projects, diminished team cohesion, and the loss of valuable “face time.” But when employees have the mental and emotional space to rest, reset, and engage with life outside of work, they tend to be healthier, happier, and more engaged. Furthermore, a shorter workweek can support individuals in rebalancing their work-life equation, something that’s become even more critical in a world where personal and professional boundaries are increasingly blurred.

This isn’t simply about giving people time off; it’s about creating a more thoughtful, sustainable approach to work. In a BANI world where unpredictability reigns, organizations need employees who are rested, clear-headed, and adaptable.

A fatigued, distracted workforce cannot respond to challenges as effectively as a team that has time to think creatively and problem-solve without burnout lurking in the background.

Rethinking productivity

Focusing on Quality Over Quantity

The traditional five-day workweek was designed for an industrial era where productivity was measured by the number of hours clocked rather than the quality of ideas or the impact of decisions made. But today, productivity is less about time and more about outcome.

Imagine a workplace where every hour counts because people are rested, motivated, and focused. In such an environment, people are less likely to engage in “busy work” and more likely to zero in on high-impact tasks that deliver true value. This shift from “hours worked” to “results achieved” could redefine organizational productivity altogether, fostering a culture where creativity and strategic thinking are prized.

Is a shorter workweek right for all organizations?

While the idea of a 3- or 4-day workweek may not be suitable for every industry, it’s worth exploring for many. Some fields, such as healthcare or customer service, may require round-the-clock coverage. But even in such fields, a shorter workweek could be applied to individual roles or teams, offering flexibility without sacrificing continuity.

Technology and remote work setups make it easier than ever to customize working arrangements, tailoring solutions to fit the specific needs of different sectors.

Organizations that want to remain competitive should consider at least experimenting with shorter workweeks, much like the Icelandic model. By starting with pilot programs or segmented teams, companies can gather data and observe impacts on productivity, employee satisfaction, and overall performance.

A bold vision for the future of work

In a world full of volatility, ambiguity, and pressure, moving to a 3- to 4-day workweek may sound radical. Yet, the evidence from Iceland and the growing body of research around flexible work arrangements suggest that this approach can be not only productive but transformative. The shift won’t be easy—it will require a reimagining of our work culture and our expectations. But if we are serious about creating a work environment that can thrive amid the complexities of the VUCA-BANI era, then perhaps it’s time to take a hard look at the workweek itself.

The traditional workweek isn’t sacrosanct; it’s a framework we invented, and it’s one we can redesign. The future of work is not about rigid structures but about adaptability, resilience, and, above all, honoring the humanity of the people within it. In the end, the question is not whether a shorter workweek is feasible but whether we are brave enough to pursue a more thoughtful, balanced approach to work in a world that desperately needs it.



Leadership
is the driving
force behind
transformation
and growth
in uncertain
times.

Exploring the evolving nature of leadership reveals the qualities necessary to inspire and guide effectively. Strong leaders build trust, foster innovation, and navigate complexity with purpose. Empowering leadership ensures that organisations and individuals achieve their fullest potential.





What **is** leadership

It is a question that shivers with simplicity, belying the vastness it contains. Much like love or truth, leadership is one of those intangible forces we recognize more by its effects than by its forms. It is felt in the weight of decisions made, in the echoes of actions taken, in the silent ripple of influence that unfurls over time. And perhaps, at its essence, leadership is less about exerting control over others and more about the ways we learn to steward that rarest of resources: our own courage.

Leadership begins as an inside job. It is, first and foremost, the ability to stand squarely with oneself, to examine what we believe, and to hold that mirror up to the world without flinching. A true leader is not one who insists on knowing all the answers but who learns to dwell gracefully in uncertainty. This is a kind of leadership that neither demands perfection nor performs strength but instead finds its ground in vulnerability.

For a leader, vulnerability is not weakness; it is a sturdy root system reaching into the unknown, a vital openness to learning, and an invitation to others to come as they are.

Consider, too, that leadership, like art, is deeply interpretative—a blend of intuition, intellect, and empathy. To lead is to be in constant conversation with one's principles and one's purpose, to keep listening even when the easy answers would have us harden. Real leadership is this willingness to remain porous to the world, to absorb the needs of others without erasing oneself in the process. It is this softness within structure that gives a leader the flexibility to bend and stretch without breaking, like bamboo that can withstand storms precisely because it does not resist the wind.

And what of those rare leaders who inspire, who incite us to stretch beyond our own limitations? These are the leaders who do not focus on merely directing action but on curating environments where potential is fostered, where talent ripens and grows wild. They do not impose a map but cultivate a landscape.

Such leaders know that people do not bloom in the rigidity of command; they unfurl in the spaciousness of encouragement, in the trust extended before it is earned, in the careful shaping of boundaries that allow for exploration.

So perhaps leadership is not a thing one is, but a space one holds—a shared space, an open space, a place of becoming rather than knowing. A leader is not a fortress but a bridge, not an oracle but a guide who knows that the path is made by walking and that the journey, and all its discoveries, belong to us all.

In the end, to lead is to serve. It is to show up for others, not out of a need to be indispensable, but from a desire to be useful. It is to understand that the impact of true leadership is often invisible—rooted in the quiet, unremarkable gestures, in the cultivation of trust, in the patience of letting things unfold. As Lao Tzu so wisely put it, "A leader is best when people barely know he exists...when his work is done, they will say: we did it ourselves."

A few years ago, in an edition of the HPD Africa Magazine The Edition Volume 4, we asked a number of leaders in Kenya this very question: What is leadership? Their responses were as varied as the topography of the land itself—some rooted in ideals of service and integrity, others infused with visions of growth and resilience, each reflecting a different facet of this expansive concept. Yet across these answers, certain themes emerged: leadership as an inward journey of integrity, a commitment to collective growth, and a willingness to listen deeply. Each response, unique as it was, spoke to the tension and beauty inherent in guiding others while remaining rooted in one's principles.

Over the page, we share a few of those responses, each a testament to the many ways leadership can be understood, practiced, and embodied. In their words, we glimpse not only the complexity of leadership but also the courage, empathy, and imagination required to wear it well.

- Jean-Francois Cousin
- Pastor Oscar Muriu
- Carol Musyoka
- Professor Judi Wakhungu
- Bharat Thakrar
- Sunny Bindra

“
*Much like love or truth,
leadership is one of
those intangible forces
we recognize more
by its effects than
by its forms.*

Exceptional leaders are agile

Jean-Francois Cousin

Global Executive and Team Coach, Speaker and Author

What is it that exceptional leaders do to consistently succeed beyond expectations? The answer took shape right in front of me for over 18 years, as I learned about exceptional leadership in action from those I have been privileged to coach, more than any course possibly could have taught me.

Attempting to summarize my learning from them made me realize that their exceptional leadership is underpinned by seven things they do, all captured in the acronym LEADERS, namely: love, enable, assemble, dare, embolden, reach and sustain. Here are snapshots of why and how exceptional leaders engage with their people in that singular way.

Love Themselves And Others

Why would smart people follow their leaders in unknown, possibly risky terrain, when even



those leaders are unsure about the smartest way ahead? Essentially, people will keep supporting their leaders if they have a form of “love” for and trust in them. For that to happen, leaders must have been caring deeply for their team members and demonstrating sufficient selfleadership to remain trustworthy in adverse environments. To attain such qualities, leaders must take a journey of self-awareness and, most importantly, self-acceptance.

This combination breeds self-care, growth, self-trust and, ultimately, self-leadership. Next, leaders outgrow their ego, daring to drop their mask, be humble and open up.

At that point, the benefits of their developmental journey expand further. Having enjoyed learning to know, accept, care for and trust themselves, leaders are better able and keen to know, accept, care for and trust others. In doing so, they demonstrate a great form of love — one which triggers reciprocity and builds trust.

Enable Others To Play At Their Best

Great leaders are great learners and assume that everyone is gifted with talents. They offer their people that priceless “double-A gift” of their undivided attention and unlimited appreciation. They keenly learn from them and uncover, unlock and nurture their potential. They learn something useful from those who disagree with them. They challenge and support their people to bring their A-game while avoiding overprotecting them, for that would forfeit the solid growth occurring in the discomfort zone.

Exceptional leaders recognize that the ultimate test of their greatness as a leader is about how successful they are at enabling others to be great — a much taller order than winning the vain game of trying to be “the smartest person in the room.”

Assemble And Catalyze Collective Intelligence

And Agility Exceptional leaders discard the mundane to focus on what matters most. They embed not just love but also purpose in their teams — “L&P,” the immensely valuable counterpart to the “P&L”!

Once their people are purposedriven, leaders partner with them to actualize and coordinate the talents on board, and they embed in everyone’s minds that by playing together, everyone shines far more than they do when playing by themselves.

Successful leaders know that two of the most valuable assets of their organization are the collective intelligence and the agility of their teams. They become “CIA catalysts” and use five practices I invite you to discover in this previous article.

Dare, Knowing It’s Better To Try-Fail-Improve Than Regret Not Trying

Another distinguishing feature of exceptional leaders is that they have “no respect for the status quo,” as Steve Jobs remarked. They nourish that fortitude to continuously raise the bar for themselves and inspire others to do so.

They avoid the delusional quest for perfection and smartly settle instead for delivering “just good enough,” fast.

As they change the game to secure better outcomes, they take calculated risks. Then they own mistakes and embrace them as sources of growth, for they know that taking responsibility strengthens you, while making excuses or blaming others belittles you.

Embolden Others To Surpass Themselves

Ever the optimists, exceptional leaders grow, while pessimists shrink. They find that light within themselves that can be a beacon for others, and they let it shine. And they convey an infectious, can-do energy to the people they work with.

Those leaders also know that leadership is like a dance: Sometimes you lead, sometimes you follow. Hence, they empower their people, staying ready to right the wrongs if things go south. And, as they motivate others to walk the extra mile, they assure them that they have got their back, no matter what.

They celebrate milestones and successes, small or big, to nurture, throughout their organization, the belief that “we can win, one step at a time.”

Reach And Sustain Holistic Success

The road to meaningful success is always rocky. Great mess and distress precede greatness and success. Exceptional leaders press ahead, understanding that winners just fight longer. To nourish their resilience, they allow themselves to disconnect regularly, to then better reconnect both with themselves and with others. They are disciplined in scheduling pauses to stop doing, stop thinking and just be quiet for a while.

Afterward, their refreshed minds see more clearly what’s best to make happen next. And they relentlessly advocate self-care to the people they lead, so they can all not just do better but be better.

Which letter(s) in LEADERS can you magnify in your leadership style at this moment? What first step will you take today? Should you feel inspired to make a bolder and highly creative jump forward in terms of leadership impact, I invite you to embrace reinventing your leadership with your inner artist.

“
Exceptional leaders recognize that the ultimate test of their greatness as a leader is how successful they are at enabling others to be great.”

Pastor Oscar Muriu
Senior Pastor, Nairobi Chapel

Leading is skill and integrity

WHAT IS LEADERSHIP TO YOU?

Leadership is a hard concept to define. No two people fully agree on it, but when you see leadership happening, you immediately recognise it. I personally define a leader as someone who 'Takes people from where they are to where they need to be'.

My definition assumes several things about a leader. First is that they know where people 'need to be'. That's a matter of envisioning a desirable future and understanding why that future is the correct one.

Second, 'taking people' assumes that you can mobilise them and get them to willingly follow. There are two ways to do this, the first is by coming behind people and forcing them to move towards that future. Repressive governments force, threaten and imprison anyone who opposes, this is not true leadership. The second way is to go out ahead of them and THEY follow behind, out of their own free will and volition. That sort of leadership is much harder to give because you cannot hold anyone under duress to follow. In the Bible, Jesus said in John 10:10 "My sheep know my voice and follow me", it's a choice, by consent. African goatherds lead their flock or herds from behind with a big stick, occasionally throwing rocks to knock the lead bull in the right direction. The biblical model of leadership is from in-front, with the sheep following willingly because they trust the shepherd's voice.

Third, 'where they need to be' and not 'where they want to be'. Sometimes, what people want is not what they need. We all avoid hardship and sacrifice, but many dreams cannot be achieved without sacrifice.

People will always choose the easy way out, the comfortable way that often takes them to the very place they don't want to be. A good leader has to help people see what they need, and help them deal with their fears, their hesitations and their reluctance to bear pain or to sacrifice . . . and then lead them to the very place they are afraid to go to.

That's what leadership is about.

WHY IS LEADERSHIP IMPORTANT?

Because nothing happens without leadership! It's that simple. The CEO, the President, the Leader is the most important resource any organisation has. If you have bad leadership, you're going nowhere. If you have good leadership then the sky's the limit.

The crisis of our political, so called democratic leadership process is that it is geared to give us bad leadership. We have a broken system that cannot deliver what we need. Our system does not test the candidates for vision, ability to mobilise people or trustworthiness of a proven track record.

It spews out people who have the money to bribe and pay voters, often with money acquired through corruption and unjust means; it spews out leaders who frighten their people with the rhetoric of doom and gloom if their perceived tribal enemies get access to power; and it spews out people who have no agenda but to remove the incumbent and take over, but once they have taken over they don't know where they are going.

WHAT IS YOUR PERSONAL LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY - IN OTHER WORDS HOW DO YOU LEAD?

One of the greatest leaders in the Bible was King David. David unified his nation, secured peace on its borders, brought back God honouring values into society, defended the cause of the poor and needy, and enabled Israel's wealth to grow to its fullest potential. Under him the Israel of his time became a regional superpower that everyone respected and admired. In Psalm 78:72 it says of him "David cared for them with a faithful and honest heart. With skilled hands he led them." His leadership was characterised by two qualities – integrity and skill. Integrity is when who I am in the dark is completely consistent with who I am in the light. I have nothing to hide, I have no double standards, and my word is my bond. Skillful hands means when I know how to envision people, to negotiate cohesion, to forment trust, to listen, to make good decisions and to deliver. Those are the two sides of leadership.

How do I lead? I strive for these two things. To be a man of integrity because integrity is what leads to trust, and trust then enables people to follow me as I lead from the front. I also strive to be skilled in what I have been called to lead, aiming for the highest standards of excellence and ability. I read a lot of leadership biographies and books, anything that will hone my skills.

WHERE ARE THERE EXAMPLES OF GREAT LEADERSHIP TODAY?

There are three areas I look to for great examples. First are historical figures. Second is in the Bible. And thirdly is living examples among us. My living favourites are Nelson Mandela in his 'Long Walk To Freedom', and Lee Kuan Yew 'From Third World To First'. My Bible favourites are Moses and David, while my historical reads right now are George C. Marshall and 'The Leadership Secrets of Billy Graham'.

WHICH LIVING PERSON MOST EXEMPLIFIES LEADERSHIP TO YOU?

Possibly Billy Graham, he's still alive but very elderly. Billy was a consistent leader all his life, never had scandal, and never faltered in his vision. He started well, and he finished well. He was a counsellor of US presidents, and about the most humble man you ever met. I admire him because he served with focus and honour.

“
*Because
integrity is
what leads
to trust.*”

1

LEADERS KNOW
WHERE PEOPLE
'NEED TO BE'

2

LEADERS MOBILISE
PEOPLE AND GET
THEM TO WILLINGLY
FOLLOW

3

LEADERS HELP
PEOPLE SEE WHAT
THEY NEED

He was just a young teenager when he started his ministry, but he built it up amazingly so that by the end of his life he had stood and preached the gospel to millions upon millions of people worldwide. This I admire.

WHAT IS THE BEST LEADERSHIP LESSON YOU HAVE EVER LEARNED?

Three years ago I went through a difficult spell of leadership – a 'dark night of the soul' sort of experience where I wondered whether I had the stamina to keep leading against the headwinds. It was triggered by the post election clashes and dark side of Kenya that we saw then. For me who has spent his whole life trying to teach men godly values and how to live in peace with each other, the clashes removed any scales I might have had about how evil the human heart can be. In my moment of disillusion, someone put a little book, possibly the best book on leadership I've read in a long time, called 'A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the age of the quick-fix', by Edwin Friedman. Friedman's thesis is that when one leads in an anxious society, the society they lead domesticates and disempowers them so that they cannot be bold. If they seek to lead boldly then that society attacks and punishes them for their boldness – sort of 'cuts the tall puppy down'. Most leaders therefore quickly learn to lead by listening to what the masses want, and limiting their 'vision' to simply articulate what the polls show; they don't have the courage to cut a new path. So they poll the masses and then say 'this is what I was thinking all along'. It's a failure of nerve. That book helped me strengthen my resolve to lead with courage, to dream, and to cast vision, even if I was made to pay a price for it.

AS A COUNTRY, AS A PEOPLE, AS A CONTINENT, OR AS A GLOBAL CITIZENRY - WHERE DO WE MOST NEED LEADERSHIP?

As a country there are many areas we need leadership it's almost impossible to single out a few. We are disillusioned with our political leadership and the failure of nerve that our President displays. His inability to deal decisively with corruption, the feeble attempts to wipe out impunity, the flip-flop back and forth about the ICC, the lack of a unifying, national cohesion strategy, the un-dealt-with problem of the denial of human rights to the IDP's, the 'political-balancing' appointment of weak leaders to positions of national leadership, and most recently the attempted massacre of our new constitution by parliament. Sometimes I despair for this nation.

I think what we need most as a nation is a leader who stands for something of worth. Most of our presidential aspirants have nothing different to offer except 'Kibaki must go' or 'Raila must go'. If we elect them we will find ourselves in a desert of political vision.

What do we need most? Leadership that has a comprehensive vision that takes into account a respect for human life, the creation of wealth, a cohesive society that has clearly articulated values, and a passion for stewarding the environment. Our vision 2030 could be that, but without a national leader to frequently cast a compelling reason for vision 2030, the whole vision might eventually die for lack of leadership, having been relegated to a committee by a parliament that lacks the political will-power to fulfil it.

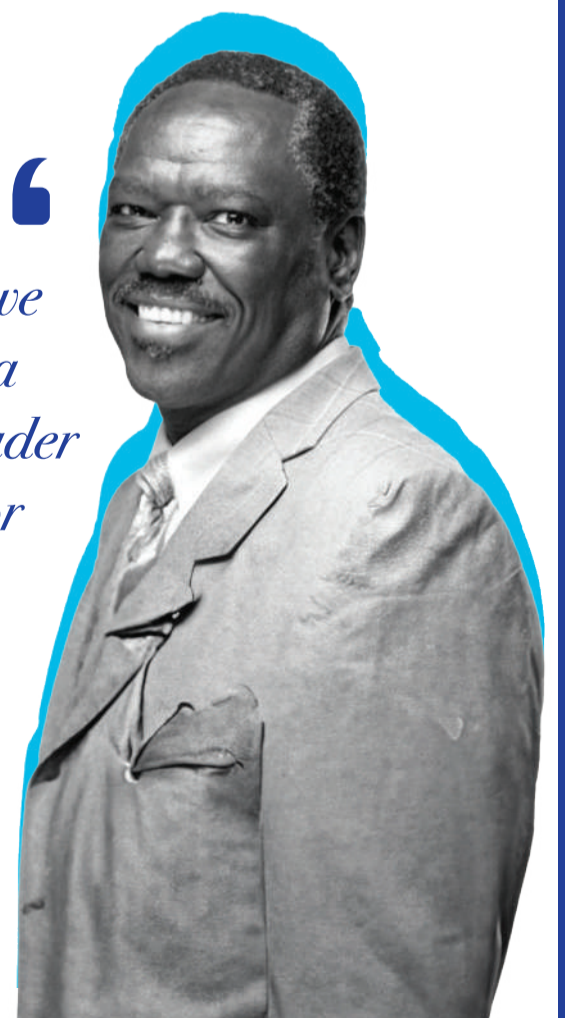
WHAT IS THE BEST BOOK YOU HAVE READ ON THE SUBJECT OF LEADERSHIP?

Four books because I believe there are four levels of leadership every leader must master. First is leadership of self. Steve Covey's book 'The 7 Habits of a Highly Effective People' is exactly that – a book on how to lead yourself well. The second is James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner classic bestseller, 'The Leadership Challenge', which is the best book I have ever read on how to work with and motivate people and teams. The third is Jim Collins 'Good To Great' on the art of leadership and leadership processes that deliver. The fourth is The Bible which gives me the values that every leader must aspire to, values of humility, truthfulness, generosity to the downtrodden, and powerlessness.

YOUR LAST WORDS ON LEADERSHIP – ONE EXPRESSION THAT SUMS UP THE ESSENCE.

There are two sides to leadership – integrity and skill. One without the other will eventually hurt the people being led.

“
I think what we need most as a nation is a leader who stands for something of worth.



Leadership is not management

WHAT IS LEADERSHIP TO YOU?

Quite simple, really! Leadership is the ability of a person to make their followers want to jump off a cliff because they believe in that person's cause – which is to jump off cliffs! This then begs the question about how leaders can use that power for good or for bad. A leader ensures that their followers 'see' and buy into their vision then want to execute it with every ounce of their enamoured being!

WHY IS LEADERSHIP IMPORTANT?

Is it really? If you think about it, what we have in many organisations today are managers. People who manage other people who are there for the contractual payment they get at the end of every month. Are such organisations struggling? I think not. They are trundling along the path of mundane, predictable stability.

You find leaders in transformative business and remarkable growth. These organisations are head and shoulders above their peers in transforming the way their respective industries are perceived and do business.

So the million-dollar question should be: Why should leadership be important to shareholders – the true owners of businesses? Answer: because you want your organisation to make a difference.

WHAT IS YOUR PERSONAL LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY - IN OTHER WORDS HOW DO YOU LEAD?

Leadership is situational. At times it requires leading from the front in times of crisis or major organisational change. The team must see their leader taking charge and ownership of problems or change initiatives.

At other times it requires leading from behind, being the gentle wind behind the sails of your team as they chart an unfettered course for the organisation based on its strategic objectives. Finally, it may require a consultative approach, where team members are involved in making major decisions so that their input is felt to be valued and they can take ownership of the outcomes.

WHERE ARE THERE EXAMPLES OF GREAT LEADERSHIP TODAY?

I find most of the great leadership examples exemplified in team sports, football in particular. All you have to do is watch the European championship matches to see how a team can come from a 3 – nil position at half time to win

a match in the remaining 45 minutes! What happens in the changing room during half time is clearly an example of a coach painting a vision of victory in a very dire situation and making his players believe that they can play exceptional football in 45 minutes, score a minimum of 3 goals to force extra time, and then win that match. That is leadership!

WHICH LIVING PERSON MOST EXEMPLIFIES LEADERSHIP TO YOU?

One of my former (and most favourite) bosses AH. He taught me that the word "impossible" is nothing but a 10 letter word with high scrabble scores! He is one person who can convince me to move to the moon and start selling oxygen simply because: it's impossible! He taught me about situational leadership and how to always keep your team members covered.

WHAT IS THE BEST LEADERSHIP LESSON YOU HAVE EVER LEARNED?

When it rains, it pours and that too shall pass.

AS A COUNTRY, AS A PEOPLE, AS A CONTINENT OR AS A GLOBAL CITIZENRY - WHERE DO WE MOST NEED LEADERSHIP?

In our political sphere, badly! We don't have leaders in our political system; we don't even have managers for that matter. We just have bad mistakes that are repeated every five years.

WHAT IS THE BEST BOOK YOU HAVE READ ON THE SUBJECT OF LEADERSHIP?

Leading Change by John Kotter. I wish I had read it before I was involved in a nightmare change process at one of my previous employers. I probably would have done things a lot differently.

YOUR LAST WORDS ON LEADERSHIP...

Leadership is about....ahhh.....let me think about this.....got it! Leadership is about NOT being a manager. Not making people do the same things over and over again because that's what is written in some prehistoric organisational script. Leadership is about writing new scripts over and over and getting your people to play their respective roles wholeheartedly.

Carol Musyoka

Consultant

“
Leadership is about writing new scripts over and over and getting your people to play their respective roles.



Leadership is a cause, leaders are mavericks

Professor Judi Wakhungu

Former Cabinet Secretary and Ambassador

“
*Leadership
should never be
about a legacy,
but about passion
and a cause!*”

WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

Leadership is having a vision on how to improve certain conditions. It is about having the presence of mind to do what needs to be done even when it is new or difficult. It is about articulating a purpose that others can understand and follow.

WHAT NAMES COME TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT LEADERSHIP AND WHY?

Oprah Winfrey is a media leader, transforming a simple reporting job with a \$20,000 salary into a global phenomenon. Nelson Mandela exemplifies leadership in politics, teaching forgiveness and achieving his dream of a Rainbow Nation amidst a world of uninspiring politicians. Carlos Slim, one of the world's richest men and head of Grupo Carso, demonstrates that success can emerge from poverty.

WHO IS THE ONE INDIVIDUAL THAT HAS HAD A TREMENDOUS IMPACT ON YOU AS A LEADER?

My late professor at Pennsylvania State University, Prof. Rustum Roy, instilled a sense of purpose in me and over 600 STEM graduate students by teaching that our vocation is defined by leadership and service. He encouraged us to always ask, “What am I doing for the good of society today?” — a question I still ask myself, no matter how small the contribution.

WHAT ONE CHARACTERISTIC DO YOU BELIEVE EVERY LEADER SHOULD POSSESS?

Leadership should never be about a legacy but passion and a cause! While leadership has many traits and each leader is different, I believe that vision, tenacity and courage are critical. I also think that the ability to communicate elegantly and fittingly to different audiences is very important.

IN YOUR OPINION, ARE SOME PEOPLE 'BORN' LEADERS AND OTHERS NATURAL FOLLOWERS?

The jury as to whether it is 'Nature' or 'Nurture' is still out. I think it's both but 'Nurture' inspires hope. I believe that with mentorship and the right circumstances we can all be inspired to become leaders and succeed.

IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT IS THE MOST FREQUENT ERROR MADE BY LEADERS?

Some leaders, upon attaining success, forget where they started and lose focus, believing they'll be admired forever. Humility is essential. In academics, we recognize that the more we learn, the less we know. Success should ideally humble us, especially when it leads to leadership.

WHICH ONE BEHAVIOUR OR TRAIT HAVE YOU SEEN DERAILED MORE LEADERS' CAREERS THAN ANY OTHER?

HUBRIS! Kenyan politicians are a good example. You notice that once they get elected into Parliament, several become arrogant and forget their constituents.

IS LEADERSHIP HARD?

Leadership is hard. Leaders are mavericks who delve into untested waters with few people to cheer them on. You must be tenacious as you chase the fulfilment of a vision. Secondly, once you succeed you have to maintain the success and rise to higher expectations. Great leaders make extremely difficult choices look easy.

AS A LEADER, HOW DO YOU MAINTAIN THE STAMINA, ENERGY, AND PASSION TO KEEP PUSHING FORWARD?

I'm passionate about STEM and its role in sustainable development, poverty alleviation, and a green economy. My message reaches globally, and I work as a change agent for emerging economies. Though the journey is challenging—most efforts bring setbacks—I focus on the successes, as a positive outlook keeps me going!

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE THE LEADER OF THE FUTURE?

The next generation must be skilled in many ways including communication across the various platforms available. They must understand that leadership is not about fame or history but whether you can make a difference even if it is to only one person.

- Equip yourself with Vision, Passion and Compassion
- Always seek advice, do not assume that 'I know'
- Be tenacious, it is easier to give up than to proceed with a difficult assignment

HOW DO YOU ENSURE CONTINUED GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT AS A LEADER?

By nature, my work leaves little room for stagnation. Rapid advancements in STEM and the evolving international development agenda require me to think differently every day. I must also stay aware of shifts in the international political climate due to our funding sources, understanding how new foreign policies or government changes impact our goals. I am, in every respect, constantly on my toes.



Leadership is facilitating compromise and steering the ship

WHAT IS LEADERSHIP TO YOU?

I look at leadership as getting a bunch of people together who are smarter than you and providing them direction and motivation to get things done. Sometimes there will be disagreements as smart people occasionally have strong opinions about what they know but the role of leadership is to facilitate compromise and to continue to steer the ship towards a desired direction.

WHY IS LEADERSHIP IMPORTANT?

Without leadership there can be no progress. Someone needs to stand up and lead people forward in an organised manner.

WHAT IS YOUR PERSONAL LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY - HOW DO YOU LEAD?

My philosophy is simple. I believe in creating harmony. This is important in leadership. I also believe that everyone has some value. There are some people who are very smart but they may not make the best leaders. My perspective is that by bringing together a disparate group you must tactfully manage the differences and do so in the most diplomatic way possible. Perhaps one may say that I lead is by massaging egos and personalities. What is crucial is that I get people to see the bigger picture, provide the vision, ensuring that all are focussed on what we are trying to achieve.

WHERE ARE THERE EXAMPLES OF GREAT LEADERSHIP TODAY?

Corporate organisations today are where good leadership is found. You know why? It is because they are focussed. Rules, goals and tasks are clearly defined. There are also clear policies and Key Performance Indicators. The CEOs are not employed for life as their boards can force them out on short notice if they do not perform. This builds a sense of responsibility and accountability to deliver what is good for the business. On the other hand look at politicians. Rarely can they be sacked for not delivering on their promises.

WHICH LIVING PERSON MOST EXEMPLIFIES LEADERSHIP TO YOU?

Well, there are several people but let me pick two. Steve Jobs had a vision around technology. He hired smart people and drove execution hard to deliver what was in his mind. That is leadership. I also look at Nelson Mandela. Although he was severely mistreated he saw the bigger picture and made a big courageous and wise decision. Despite the vested interests of people around

him, he did not compromise. For many, the decision he made to make peace with his captors was the wrong one, however he was ahead of these myopic people. That is wisdom.

WHAT IS THE BEST LEADERSHIP LESSON YOU HAVE EVER LEARNED?

I think I have learned about leadership most when it has been absent. I have sometimes found that in my organisation, I have placed people in positions of leadership when they did not have leadership skills. Having technical skills may not mean that a person is a leader of people. Promoting someone because they are loyal will not turn them into good leaders.

WHERE DO WE MOST NEED LEADERSHIP?

The political space is sadly lacking in leadership. This is where we have the biggest gap. Look at religious organisations everywhere. They have a structured leadership hierarchy and they mostly function well. Educational institutions and the private sector also benefit from the structures that are in place. Perhaps politics would do better if we simply had dictators. Not malevolent ones but benevolent dictators like Lee Kwan Yew. I am not sure that democracy always works. There is too much horse trading and managing vested interests everywhere.

WHAT IS THE BEST BOOK YOU HAVE READ ON THE SUBJECT OF LEADERSHIP?

I do not generally read, but perhaps if I was to name one, it would be the 'Bible' or 'Koran' of the Hindus which is Bhagavad Gita. The lessons in this holy book are so many. It should be considered literature.

WHAT IS AN EXPRESSION THAT SUMS UP THE ESSENCE OF LEADERSHIP FOR YOU?

It really is about getting a disparate group of people with eclectic opinions and motivating them to go in the same direction through the effective management of their needs and egos.

“
I look at leadership as getting a bunch of people together who are smarter than you and providing them direction and motivation to get things done.”

Bharat Thakrar
Former CEO, Scanad Group



Sunny Bindra
Writer, Educator, Public speaker

Leadership isn't about you, it's about them

So you've been installed in the corner suite, the precious letter of appointment sitting on your desk. You're finally the head honcho, the big cheese, the numero uno. You have the power, the status, the perks that you've always craved. You're a leader now.

No you're not.

If there's one thing I would like to dispel from your mind as you read this brief note on leadership, it is the mistaken idea that leadership is about you.

It really isn't.

The day you are appointed the big boss should not be the happiest day of your life. It should be the most frightening. It is the first day in your journey as a new leader. It is not the end, it is just the beginning. It is not a reward, it is a massive responsibility. You should not sleep contentedly that night.

When you are appointed, you are not yet a leader. You will become a leader, in the true sense of the word, when you create a result. Not a result for yourself, please note; but rather, a result for your followers. Someday, we may applaud your work as a leader, once we view your scorecard. That day is not today.

Leadership, you see, isn't about you at all. It is a mantle you wear that bestows enormous responsibility upon you. Responsibility to uplift the people who, willingly or reluctantly, follow you. Responsibility to provide direction and guidance to achieve a collective mission. Responsibility to get performance out of others to attain a common goal, for the benefit of all those you lead.

Leadership, then, isn't about what you do.

It's about what you can inspire others to do. A leader isn't the commandant barking orders; he or she is the maestro conducting the orchestra, the coach urging the team forward from the sidelines.

We don't really get this in this part of the world. Government appointments are made as rewards for political support, as though getting the job is the end, not the beginning. CEOs seem to bask in unearned glory the minute they take on the job, as though it's a validation of their life to date and nothing more is needed.

I repeat, true leadership is the most selfless of roles. It requires immense personal sacrifice in order to create good for others. It is a duty best taken reluctantly and with great humility, for you will now lose yourself and your personal goals in the service of the collective.

That does not mean you are not leading. As a leader, you will make the final decisions; you will weigh all the judgements; you will choose the key people; you will allocate resources. You will matter a great deal, and your compensation will reflect this. The point is, however, that we will not rate you by looking at you; we will rate you by looking at your achievements for others.

That is why, in order to evaluate a leader you must study the followers. The worth of the national leader is measured in the collective wellbeing of the nation, not by the number of cars in the leader's convoy. The worth of the corporate leader is measured in the engagement and passion of the employees, and in the loyalty of customers, not in the speeches of the leader.

That is why the best leaders are always found looking out of windows and not into mirrors.

“
*A leader
isn't the
commandant
barking orders;
he or she is
the maestro
conducting
the orchestra,
the coach
urging the team
forward from
the sidelines.*



Go on and brand yourself

In a VUCA BANI world, where volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity, and non-linearity converge to redefine the landscape of our existence, the imperative of branding oneself stands as a beacon of resilience amidst perpetual change. Defining, concretizing and exuding your brand is not merely a superficial facade, but a strategic endeavour to carve out one's distinct identity amidst the cacophony of shifting paradigms.

To define your brand is to distill the very essence of your being into a cohesive narrative that resonates with your audience on a profound level. It's about uncovering the core values, passions, and beliefs that set you apart in a sea of sameness. Your brand essence is the soul of your identity, the intangible quality that captures the hearts and minds of those you seek to influence. It's about crafting a unique value proposition that transcends mere transactions, offering something that cannot be replicated or commoditized. In a world inundated with choices, your brand must stand as a beacon of distinction, a shining example of what sets you apart from the crowd.

To achieve this, one must exude authenticity at every turn, for authenticity is the bedrock upon which enduring brands are built. It's about staying true to your values and principles, even in the face of adversity, and allowing your true essence to shine through in every interaction. It's about forging genuine connections with your audience, engaging them in meaningful dialogue, and fostering a sense of trust and loyalty that transcends mere transactions.

At the heart of your brand lies your unique value proposition, the promise that sets you apart from your competitors and resonates with the deepest desires and aspirations of your audience. It's about articulating/ presenting/ living ... what makes you different in a way that is compelling and irresistible, leaving no doubt in the minds of your audience as to why they should choose you over the competition. Whether it's through innovative products, exceptional service, or a compelling brand story, your value proposition must be crystal clear and impossible to ignore.

Ultimately, the goal of branding is to become synonymous with a desired outcome or experience, to be the first name that comes to mind when people think of a particular product, service, or solution. It's about owning a space in the minds of your audience, occupying a unique position that cannot be usurped by competitors. When they think of X, they should think of you, and when they think of you, they should think of that desired X. This is the pinnacle of branding excellence, the holy grail that every brand aspires to achieve.



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with top talent that fuels growth and impact



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OUR BRANDS ACROSS AFRICA

**RIKA is a
transformative
force
reshaping
leadership
development
across Africa.**

Its vision focuses on creating leaders who inspire change, innovation, and purpose. Through fostering collaboration and learning, RIKA equips individuals to address complex challenges. The programme is a beacon of empowerment, enabling leaders to build impactful futures.



About RIKA

RIKA is a common word in Bantu languages that stands for a group of individuals coming of age who have undergone a significant initiation ceremony together and emerged on the other side ready to have lasting impact and to fulfil their destiny.

In 2019, the Blue Haven Initiative (BHI), an impact investment family office based in Boston, Massachusetts, conceived the idea of supporting organizations in Africa to achieve their full potential through targeted investment in human capital management. BHI partnered with Human Performance Dynamics Africa (HPDA), a human capital management firm based in Kenya, to create a leadership curriculum for professionals across Africa. The chief goal was to build the next generation of Chief Human Resource Officers equipped to meet the emerging demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution on a continent primed for rapid transformation. A convergence of three key factors made this initiative particularly timely:

Africa as the Next Frontier of Growth

Africa, with its population of approximately 1.2 billion people in 2019, is projected to reach 1.7 billion by 2030, according to a Brookings Institute report. The World Economic Forum estimates that by 2030, Sub-Saharan Africa will be home to 20% of the global working-age population, expanding its workforce faster than the rest of the world combined.

The Impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution

The Fourth Industrial Revolution has created a convergence of physical and virtual environments, introducing a new age of Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity (VUCA). This evolving landscape brings unpredictable socio-economic outcomes and shifting workplace demands. As organizations adapt to these challenges, responsibility often falls on leaders, particularly those in human capital management, who must navigate this complexity while maintaining focus on employee engagement and productivity.

Gaps in HR Leadership Readiness

Despite decades of evolution, the HR function still faces questions about the value it adds to organizational performance. Studies indicate that HR



departments have the potential to drive significant impact but need further support to fully align with new workplace demands. A 2020 BHI-commissioned survey of over 400 CEOs and HR leaders in Africa revealed that HR professionals often lack certain technical and soft skills, limiting their capacity to unlock the full potential of their function.

From 2019 to 2021, BHI sponsored the development of a well-defined curriculum, conceived by former Fortune 50 CHRO Susan Wakhungu-Githuku, with support from a founding advisory task force of local and global thought leaders. HPD Africa engaged distinguished professionals, including Freddie West (CDC), Dominic Kiarie (Century Capital), Maria Shipiri (Prudential Africa), David Ssegawa (Equity Bank), Maryanne Ochola (Andela), noted leadership coach Mary Mukindia, and Paul Kasimu (Safaricom), to form the first task force on the curriculum.

Curriculum Development

Thirty-eight global organizations were invited to bid for the curriculum development, including esteemed institutions such as Wharton, INSEAD, and the University of California, Berkeley.

Exell Intel, a UK-based strategic consulting firm founded by former Accenture and Coca-Cola Talent Executive Deborah Exell, won the bid and subsequently developed the curriculum.

Inaugural Cohort

The first cohort of RIKA Fellows was inaugurated in February 2022 with 23 participants. This global faculty included Professor David Ulrich of the University of Michigan and the Josh Bersin Academy. Since then, the programme has continued to grow, with the fifth cohort set to graduate in November 2024.

Expanding RIKA into 2025 and Beyond

Starting with a single programme, RIKA has evolved into RIKA Africa. Beginning in 2025, RIKA will offer a comprehensive suite of programmes designed to catalyze the development of emerging leaders across Sub-Saharan Africa.

Through a unique blend of international expertise and deep local insights, RIKA is well-positioned to advance Africa's human capital potential, preparing leaders who are ready to navigate complexity, embrace innovation, and drive growth across the continent.

Liesel Pritzker Simmons



Deborah Exell
Head of Faculty at RIKA

Transforming leadership in Africa

Deborah Exell is a distinguished leader in human capital management and serves as the Head of Faculty at RIKA, where she has been instrumental in shaping the programme since its inception. Deborah fondly referred to as Debs, has held significant roles in various global organizations. She has worked with Deutsche Bank, American Express, The Coca-Cola Company, and Lloyds Banking Group, focusing on human resource development, global talent, learning, and leadership.

In recent years, Deborah has held board positions as Head of Human Capital and Business Transformation for private equity companies, driving success across their portfolio companies. She is also a partner at MontaRosa, where her expertise has catalysed strategic growth and developed distinctive value creation capabilities in the market.

Below, she shares her insights on RIKA's impact, her role in its evolution, and her vision for its future.

HOW DID YOU FIRST BECOME INVOLVED WITH RIKA, AND WHAT DREW YOU TO THE PROGRAMME?

I was introduced to RIKA through the Blue Haven Initiative and Human Performance Dynamics Africa when they were envisioning a human capital management leadership curriculum for Africa. What immediately struck me was the ambition and vision of the programme—not just to train HR leaders, but to genuinely transform leadership on the continent. When Susan Githuku with whom I worked many years ago at Coca-Cola shared the vision for RIKA, I was immediately intrigued. Being part of a project that blends global best practices with local realities was an opportunity I couldn't pass up.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR PRIMARY ROLE IN SHAPING RIKA, AND HOW HAS IT EVOLVED OVER THE YEARS?

My primary role has been as the lead faculty member and Head of Faculty. Drawing on my experience at Coca-Cola and other global organizations, I helped shape the initial curriculum, ensuring it was both rigorous and relevant to the unique challenges African leaders face. It's been exciting to see the programme grow and to have a hand in making it a cornerstone for leadership development in Africa.

YOU'VE TAUGHT MULTIPLE COHORTS ON TOPICS SUCH AS DESIGN THINKING AND ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN. WHAT HAS STOOD OUT TO YOU ABOUT THE FELLOWS?

The Fellows are exceptional in their hunger for knowledge and their willingness to engage deeply with the material. What stands out most

is their diversity—professionally, culturally, and in terms of their perspectives—which makes the discussions incredibly rich. I've also been impressed by how quickly they take what we teach and apply it in their organizations.

Their energy, curiosity, and drive remind me of why programmes like RIKA are so important. It's a privilege to guide them on their leadership journeys.

HOW HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE AS A FACULTY MEMBER INFLUENCED YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA?

My experience with RIKA has reaffirmed the incredible potential of leaders in Africa. They are navigating some of the most dynamic and complex environments, and their ability to adapt and innovate is inspiring. At Coca-Cola, I saw how global talent strategies could create impact, but RIKA has shown me how locally tailored solutions can be even more transformative.

Leadership development in Africa isn't about copying existing models; it's about creating something unique that responds to the region's opportunities and challenges.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE UNIQUE STRENGTHS OF RIKA COMPARED TO OTHER LEADERSHIP PROGRAMMES?

RIKA stands out because it combines the best of global expertise with deep local relevance. The curriculum is not just imported; it's co-created with an understanding of Africa's unique needs. The emphasis on peer-to-peer learning, self-awareness, and practical application sets it apart.

Another strength is the network RIKA creates—a supportive community of leaders who continue to engage long after the programme ends. Having worked on global talent initiatives, I know the value of such networks, and RIKA's is one of the strongest I've seen.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR RIKA'S FUTURE, AND HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR ROLE EVOLVING?

My hope is that RIKA continues to grow into the premier leadership development platform in Africa, known not only for building HR leaders but also for shaping transformative organizational leadership. I see RIKA expanding its reach, offering even more specialized programmes, and attracting talent from across the continent and the Diaspora.

As for my role, I hope to continue contributing by mentoring faculty, designing innovative curricula, and teaching new cohorts. I'm excited to see how RIKA evolves and to remain part of its journey.

“
RIKA creates a supportive community of leaders who continue to engage long after the programme ends.”

Daniel Wanjira
Director of Strategic Initiatives

Using capital as a tool for impact

Daniel Wanjira, Director of Strategic Initiatives at Blue Haven Initiative, has been instrumental in guiding RIKA's mission since assuming oversight in 2021. His extensive experience in impact investing and sustainable development has enriched RIKA's vision of cultivating transformative leaders across Africa.

WHAT IS BLUE HAVEN INITIATIVE (BHI), AND WHAT DOES IT DO?

Blue Haven Initiative is a Boston-based family office that takes a holistic approach to investing, using capital as a tool to drive both competitive financial returns and meaningful social and environmental impact. We manage a diversified portfolio across asset classes, including public equities, private equity, direct investments, and fixed-income holdings, as well as grants and catalytic investments. Our mission is rooted in the belief that tackling the world's most pressing challenges requires long-term thinking, creative solutions, and partnerships.

WHY DID BLUE HAVEN INITIATIVE CHOOSE TO INVEST IN HUMAN CAPITAL LEADERSHIP, LEADING TO THE SUPPORT OF RIKA?

At Blue Haven, we recognize that addressing the world's most pressing challenges necessitates innovative and long-term strategies. Investing in human capital leadership aligns with our mission to effect systemic, lasting change. Africa stands on the cusp of transformative growth, and realizing this potential requires leaders equipped to navigate complexity and uncertainty. Our support for RIKA aims to catalyse this process by developing leaders who can guide their organizations and communities toward sustainable progress. It's about creating a ripple effect of positive impact across the continent.

WHAT INSPIRED BLUE HAVEN INITIATIVE TO PARTNER WITH HPD AFRICA ON THIS PROGRAMME?

We were drawn to Susan Githuku expertise in human capital and her vision for leadership in Africa, which aligned closely with our values. HPD Africa brought the local knowledge and networks needed to ground RIKA's curriculum in Africa's unique realities. BHI's broader commitment to human capital development includes prior partnerships with Nairobi-based USIU and IHRM, reflecting our belief that partnerships can amplify impact.

LIESEL SIMMONS CO-FOUNDED RIKA WITH A VISION TO TRANSFORM LEADERSHIP. HOW DOES HER APPROACH TO IMPACT INVESTING SHAPE THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND RIKA?

Liesel's vision for impact investing is rooted in long-term thinking and systemic change. She understands that transformative leadership is essential for addressing Africa's unique

challenges and opportunities. Her philosophy—leveraging wealth to create meaningful impact—is deeply embedded in RIKA's curriculum.

Through her leadership at BHI, she's ensured that RIKA doesn't just equip leaders with skills but also fosters a mindset of resilience, adaptability, and purpose.

HOW IS RIKA CONTRIBUTING TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE HUMAN CAPITAL ASSETS FOR AFRICA?

Sustainable human capital involves creating leaders who can adapt, innovate, and build resilience within their organizations and communities. RIKA addresses this by equipping Fellows with not only technical skills but also the soft skills and strategic thinking required to lead in today's world. The growing network of RIKA alumni is becoming a cadre of change agents across diverse sectors, driving impact in their roles and mentoring others, thereby ensuring a multiplying effect that strengthens Africa's human capital for generations to come.

WHAT IMPACT HAS RIKA ACHIEVED SO FAR, AND WHY DOES BLUE HAVEN INITIATIVE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT IT?

RIKA's impact is nascent but growing. Feedback from Fellows indicates they are applying their learning to drive organizational change, testifying to RIKA's effectiveness. We continue to support RIKA because it aligns deeply with our belief in long-term, transformative investments. It's not just a programme; it's a movement creating a pipeline of leaders ready to shape Africa's future.

WHAT CHALLENGES DOES RIKA FACE, AND HOW IS BLUE HAVEN INITIATIVE HELPING TO ADDRESS THEM?

Scaling without compromising quality is a challenge, especially for a programme like RIKA that prides itself on tailored, impactful learning. Ensuring the financial sustainability of the programme while maintaining accessibility for a diverse range of Fellows is another challenge. At Blue Haven, we're working closely with the RIKA team to strategize on these fronts, exploring diversified revenue streams and leveraging our networks for sponsorships and partnerships. Our role is to support RIKA in balancing growth with its commitment to excellence.

IF RIKA WERE AN ANIMAL, WHICH WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

I would liken RIKA to an elephant. Elephants are known for their intelligence, strong social bonds, and ability to navigate complex environments—qualities we aim to instill in our Fellows. Just as elephants are keystone species in their ecosystems, RIKA-trained leaders are pivotal in their organizations and communities, driving positive change and fostering resilience.

“
The growing network of RIKA alumni is becoming a cadre of change agents across diverse sectors.”

“

Sharing the wonderful feedback from Cohort 1

Our facilitators Deborah, Susan, and Matt – a cut above the rest, they have taught us and challenged us to be thinkers, raised the bar on how we do what we do, and to always ask the ‘so that’ question. The privilege to learn amid such a high caliber of business and HR leaders was such a huge honour, I could sign up for RIKA over and over again!

Vivienne Miliza, Kenya

The mentorship component was to me quite ingenious since it provided a bridge between the explosive content, our current reality and the aspirations we hold. In having someone who has been there, done it, and is now looking to help me steer my journey in the right direction, RIKA has really put me in the driving seat of this adventure. So far my conversations with my mentor have helped me resolve significant leadership matters and the relationship promises to be a game shifter in my career. I am particularly grateful for this part of the RIKA program.

Alex Obuhatsa, Kenya

RIKA has imparted skills, and knowledge which has caused a complete mindset shift for all of the fellows. We now have an obligation to reframe how we position ourselves for the next phase our career and deliver differently: With the RIKA stamp of excellence, passion and commitment.

Brendah Nambarilwa, Uganda



Cohort 1

Feb - May 2022



- 01 Alex Obuhatsa
- 02 Andrew Ssebwalunnyo
- 03 Betty Mutile Kimeu
- 04 Brendah Nambalirwa
- 05 Caroline Chebet Misoi
- 06 Claire Aduvuka Eboi
- 07 Diana Gombe Onjiko
- 08 Elfridah Ask
- 09 Elizabeth Owino
- 10 Emmanuel Okia
- 11 Faith Nene
- 12 Irene Maani Khaoya
- 13 Juliet Thenya
- 14 Kyle Chetty
- 15 Mabel Kibore
- 16 Nkirote Mwaura Njiru
- 17 Nyambura Kimani
- 18 Patience Njau-Nyaga
- 19 Paul Nkusi Kasumba
- 20 Ruth Kemunto Nyamoko
- 21 Sheila Nyanjui
- 22 Thomas Omondi Achola
- 23 Vivienne Miliza

Inside the world of RIKA:

Conversations with
fellows and alumni

Thomas Omondi
Group Chief Operating Officer
Centum Investments Company Limited
Nairobi, Kenya



Strategic leader focused on Growth

Thomas is an accomplished business leader with extensive experience across retail, aviation, private equity, and real estate sectors. Thomas brings a wealth of expertise in strategy, sales management, human resources management, operations management, and business process improvement. His strong leadership capabilities are complemented by a deep understanding of airport operations and management, making him a versatile and results-driven professional.

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO JOIN THE RIKA PROGRAMME?

I joined RIKA because I wanted to bridge the gap between HR and the business function. As a Group Chief Operating Officer, I understand that success in any organization hinges on the seamless alignment between people and strategy. I saw RIKA as the ideal platform to deepen my understanding of how HR can be a true partner to the business, driving value and impact beyond the traditional operational role.

WHAT ARE THE TWO BIGGEST TAKEAWAYS FROM THE PROGRAMME FOR YOU?

The first is that HR teams often underestimate the need to ‘sell’ their value to the business. This was a significant realization for me. HR has so much to offer, but without positioning its value clearly and persuasively, the function can struggle to gain the influence it deserves.

The second takeaway is the power of HR analytics. I’ve come to appreciate how effectively data can tell a compelling story about workforce trends, performance, and opportunities. Analytics provide the evidence HR needs to move from being seen as an intuitive discipline to a strategic partner with measurable impact.

WHAT IMPACT HAS RIKA HAD ON YOU SO FAR?

RIKA has significantly enhanced my ability to articulate the value of a world-class employee value proposition, especially in a rapidly evolving workplace landscape. I’ve gained deeper insights into how such strategies can attract, retain, and empower top talent, which is critical for organizational success. The program has also inspired me to think more creatively about aligning employee experiences with business goals in innovative and meaningful ways.

WHAT SURPRISED YOU MOST ABOUT THE PROGRAMME?

I was surprised to discover how many cutting-edge and efficient methods exist to position HR as a strategic partner at the leadership table. These approaches challenge traditional perceptions of HR and showcase its potential to drive business outcomes directly. The emphasis on speed and precision in these methods was truly eye-opening and has reshaped how I view HR’s role in organizational growth.



“
It has reshaped how I view HR’s role in organizational growth.”

“

Bringing you the incredible reflections from Cohort 2

My exciting leadership journey with RIKA, very transformative! The RIKA Leadership program truly ignited my leadership capabilities and helped unlock my potential into championing design thinking and data analytics. The programme was customized to meet the specific needs and challenges of a particular industry, organization, or target group of leaders. I valued the innovative curriculum which incorporated some cutting-edge leadership theories, practical frameworks, and innovative tools that set it apart from more traditional leadership development approaches.

Jocelyn Omusebe, Kenya

As a Medical Director and in charge of Operations at Emergency Plus Medical Services, what I have been able to apply from my participation in the RIKA Leadership Program is the principles learnt in agile organizational development that has helped me to build a more agile environment and culture by fostering and enhancing adaptability, we are able to re-strategize in our operations systems in response to industry changes thus our continuity in maintaining a competitive edge.

Dr. Christine Memusi, Kenya





Cohort 2

Feb - May 2023

- 01 Alvina Brauhauser
- 02 Astridah Musonda
- 03 Beatrice Linah Kówitti
- 04 Caroline Wambui Mwangi
- 05 Dr. Christine Memusi
- 06 Doyinsola Atanda-Obalaku
- 07 Ehitemariam Ayele
- 08 Emily Kamunde-Osoro
- 09 Eunice Kanyesigye
- 10 Eva Wasunna
- 11 Judy Githaiga
- 12 Jocelyn Omusebe
- 13 John Mwangi
- 14 Juliet Muheirwe
- 15 June Adembesa
- 16 Liza Shaka Shubaka
- 17 Lucy Hudson
- 18 Mwaka Shimabale
- 19 Sheila Naseiku Lengees
- 20 Sipiwe Mwaba
- 21 Zipporah Maruvu

Inside the world of RIKA:

Conversations with
fellows and alumni

Shirley Batungi Gyera

Human Resources And Administration Manager
Kilimo Trust
Kampala, Uganda

Emphasis on self awareness

Shirley is a Human Resource & Admin Manager at Kilimo Trust, an independent organization dedicated to driving agriculture-led development across the East Africa Community (EAC) Region. Operating in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda—and now extending its efforts to the new Republic of South Sudan—Kilimo Trust focuses on fostering sustainable agricultural practices, enhancing food security, and empowering local communities to achieve economic growth and resilience.

SHIRLEY, YOU TRAVELLED FROM UGANDA TO ATTEND THE RIKA PROGRAMME, AND IT'S CLEAR THAT YOU'RE DEEPLY COMMITTED TO ADVANCING YOUR CAREER. HOW HAS THE RIKA PROGRAMME CONTRIBUTED TO YOUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH, AND WHAT MOMENTS STOOD OUT MOST TO YOU?

The RIKA Programme has been nothing short of transformative for me, both personally and professionally. One of the highlights was the opportunity to meet and listen to Prof. PLO Lumumba. His passionate discourse on the imperative for Africa's growth challenged me to think critically about the role we, as leaders, play in shaping the continent's future.

Professionally, the programme exposed me to innovative HR practices and allowed me to engage with experts and peers from across the region. This has not only broadened my perspective but also equipped me with strategies to overcome challenges like talent acquisition and performance management, which are critical in my role at Kilimo Trust.

YOUR ROLE AS A MENTOR UNDER THE GIRLS FOR GIRLS ORGANIZATION REFLECTS YOUR COMMITMENT TO EMPOWERING OTHERS.

HOW HAS THE RIKA EXPERIENCE INFLUENCED YOUR APPROACH TO MENTORSHIP, AND HOW DO YOU PLAN TO USE WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED TO SUPPORT YOUR MENTEES AND PEERS?

Mentorship is something I'm incredibly passionate about, and RIKA has elevated my ability to provide meaningful guidance. One of the key takeaways from the programme was the emphasis on self-awareness and emotional intelligence.

These insights have helped me approach mentorship with greater empathy and a deeper understanding of the unique challenges my mentees face. I now encourage mentees to focus not only on their technical skills but also on developing their leadership presence and ability to adapt to change.

YOU'VE MENTIONED TALENT ACQUISITION AS ONE OF YOUR ORGANIZATION'S KEY CHALLENGES. HOW HAS RIKA EQUIPPED YOU WITH THE TOOLS OR STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THIS, PARTICULARLY IN A SECTOR LIKE AGRICULTURE WHERE ATTRACTING TOP TALENT CAN BE DIFFICULT?

Talent acquisition in the agriculture sector is indeed a challenge, especially when competing with industries that often offer higher visibility and resources. RIKA provided me with fresh perspectives on how to position our organization as an attractive employer. I learned to leverage storytelling to highlight Kilimo Trust's impact and mission, which can resonate deeply with purpose-driven candidates.

The programme also emphasized the importance of creating a strong employer brand and using data-driven insights to refine recruitment strategies. For example, I now plan to implement metrics that track the effectiveness of our talent pipelines and identify areas for improvement.

“
One of the key takeaways was the emphasis on self-awareness and emotional intelligence.”



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Sharing the uplifting comments from Cohort 3

I joined RIKA as a functional HR leader. I leave with a new leadership perspective as a global business leader ready to potentially explode and ready to add value to the business. I came in dwaff, I leave a giant. With a new growth mindset, nimble, agile, design thinker, equipped to take organizations to the next level in the VUCA world. I am strategically prepared for the next challenge in my career. I now know how much potential I have, confident enough to lead as the next generation HR leader in Africa and beyond.

Juliet Najjuma, Uganda

I now know with understanding how to manage change. Leadership styles have made me to be emotionally aware and have the commercial acumen to manage finances like in the private sector.

Febby Mulambia, Zambia

RIKA Leadership Program gives me insightfull of knowledge that I can apply in real situation. This knowledge will help me to grow and to act as a very good and effective HRBP.

Lalandy Ramesy, Madagascar





Cohort 3

Aug - Nov 2023

- 01 Abigail Borlu
- 02 Annette Ngugi
- 03 Catherine Munene
- 04 Christine Mayengo
- 05 Desmond Mukolwe
- 06 Elizabeth Nyakwea
- 07 Elizabeth Robertson
- 08 Enos Frelimo
- 09 Febby Mulambia
- 10 Fredericka Squire
- 11 Gloria Maiga
- 12 Grace Adjei-Fordjour
- 13 Husna Omar
- 14 Juliet Najjuma
- 15 Ketry Kubasu
- 16 Lalandy Ramesy
- 17 Martha Oyiera
- 18 Mukunya Mugo
- 19 Raissa Njike
- 20 Samuel Irungu
- 21 Sarah Kinyanjui
- 22 Scholastica Thuo
- 23 Tessy Edewor

Inside the world of RIKA:
Conversations with
fellows and alumni

Rita Muigai

Vice President, People & Culture
Meda
Nairobi & Toronto

Holistic perspective

Rita is an enthusiastic leader driven by the opportunity to work with people, systems, and structures to build high-performance teams and shape organizational culture. Believing that HR extends beyond its traditional scope, she is committed to fostering innovative work environments that engage employees and support their growth and success.

RITA, CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR RECENT PROMOTION TO THE ROLE OF VICE PRESIDENT, PEOPLE & CULTURE AT MEDA! WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO JOIN THE RIKA PROGRAMME, AND HOW DID IT ALIGN WITH YOUR CAREER ASPIRATIONS?

Thank you! Joining the RIKA Programme was a deliberate choice. I wanted a training program that would challenge and stretch me, equipping me with the skills to elevate my impact as an HR leader. When I reviewed the curriculum and saw the calibre of trainers, I knew it was the right fit for where I wanted to go in my career. The program's focus on strategic HR leadership, coupled with insights from seasoned experts, perfectly aligned with my aspiration to lead HR as a strategic partner to the business. I was seeking a transformative experience, and RIKA delivered exactly that.

ONE OF YOUR KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM RIKA WAS THE IMPORTANCE OF LOOKING AT HR FROM AN "OUTSIDE-IN" PERSPECTIVE. HOW HAS ADOPTING THIS APPROACH INFLUENCED YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE?

Adopting an "outside-in" perspective has transformed my leadership style by encouraging me to view HR through the lens of the broader business ecosystem. Instead of focusing solely on internal HR processes, I now consider how external factors—like market trends, technological advancements, and industry challenges—impact the organization and its

people. This approach has made me a more proactive and informed leader, enabling me to anticipate needs and design solutions that address both internal and external realities. It's about staying ahead of the curve and ensuring that HR strategies not only support the business but also help it thrive in a competitive environment.

YOU HIGHLIGHTED THE POWER OF PEOPLE ANALYTICS AS A GAME-CHANGER FOR HR. CAN YOU SHARE AN EXAMPLE OF HOW YOU'VE USED ANALYTICS TO INFLUENCE KEY BUSINESS DECISIONS?

One of the key lessons from RIKA was recognizing the strategic potential of people analytics beyond basic tracking. At MEDA, I've used analytics to provide insights into workforce productivity and retention trends. For example, by analyzing employee engagement data, we identified areas where team satisfaction was declining, allowing us to address potential turnover risks proactively.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY HAS BEEN THE MOST TRANSFORMATIVE ASPECT OF YOUR RIKA JOURNEY, BOTH PERSONALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY?

The most transformative aspect of my RIKA journey has been the shift in mindset. Personally, it has pushed me to think of myself not just as an HR leader but as a strategic partner who can influence organizational outcomes at the highest level. It's given me the confidence to take on complex challenges with clarity and purpose. Professionally, the program's emphasis on strategic alignment and people analytics has revolutionized how I approach my role. It's no longer about HR in isolation—it's about integrating people strategies into every aspect of the business. This holistic perspective has been invaluable in shaping my leadership journey and preparing me for greater impact in the future.

“
This holistic perspective has been invaluable in shaping my leadership journey and preparing me for greater impact in the future.”



Inside the world of RIKA:

Conversations with
fellows and alumni

Liz Robertson
Head of People and ESG
KOFISI Hospitality Group
Nairobi, Kenya

Empowering people, driving impact

With over 14 years of experience in people operations, Liz is passionate about collaborating with teams and individuals to help them reach their full potential. She has a strong focus on HR tech and digital employee experience, people & culture, organizational learning & development, and change management.

AS HEAD OF PEOPLE AND ESG AT KOFISI HOSPITALITY GROUP, YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR INTEGRATING HUMAN CAPITAL STRATEGIES WITH ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL GOALS. WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO JOIN THE RIKA PROGRAMME, AND HOW DID IT ALIGN WITH YOUR CAREER ASPIRATIONS?

I had been searching for an impactful and relevant HR leadership program for years, but nothing seemed to fully resonate—until I found RIKA. With 14 years of HR experience and eight years of living and working in Kenya, I wanted a program that addressed not just HR, but also the unique challenges and opportunities of Africa’s workforce. RIKA exceeded my expectations by blending a strong business focus with innovative HR approaches. What stood out was its emphasis on the future of work in Africa, equipping leaders to navigate the complexities of people management in rapidly evolving contexts. It wasn’t just about theory—it was about creating actionable strategies. RIKA offered a holistic perspective that aligned perfectly with my aspirations to drive both organizational and societal impact through people strategies.

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE MOST SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS OF THE RIKA PROGRAMME ON YOUR CAREER SO FAR?

The impact of RIKA has been transformative. Just a few months after completing the program, I received an exciting new job opportunity with a larger organization at a later growth stage, which has allowed me to further hone my leadership skills. The program didn’t just equip me with tools and insights—it gave me the confidence to step into a more complex and impactful role. More importantly, it shifted how I approach HR as a business driver.

I now focus on creating deeper synergies between people strategies and overall business goals, ensuring that HR is not just a support function but a critical component of organizational success.

ONE OF YOUR KEY TAKEAWAYS WAS UNDERSTANDING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CPO-CEO RELATIONSHIP. HOW HAS THIS INSIGHT INFLUENCED YOUR APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP?

The CPO-CEO relationship is foundational to an organization’s success, and RIKA provided me with the tools and mindset to build and nurture this critical partnership. I learned how to position HR as a strategic ally to the CEO, driving people-focused solutions that directly impact the bottom line. Since RIKA, I’ve been more intentional about fostering open communication with my CEO, ensuring that our people strategies align seamlessly with the company’s vision and objectives. This relationship has allowed us to address challenges collaboratively and drive initiatives that resonate across the entire organization, from talent acquisition to ESG priorities.

YOU MENTIONED THAT ANOTHER TAKEAWAY WAS YOUR DEEP DIVE INTO DESIGN THINKING FOR HR. HOW ARE YOU APPLYING THIS COMBINATION OF SCIENTIFIC AND CREATIVE APPROACHES IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE?

Design thinking for HR was a revelation—it taught me how to approach challenges with curiosity, creativity, and a structured problem-solving mindset. By combining data-driven insights with innovative thinking, I’ve been able to design people strategies that are not only effective but also deeply engaging for employees.

For example, I’ve applied design thinking to enhance employee engagement at KOFISI by reimagining our performance management system. Instead of a one-size-fits-all approach, we’ve created tailored solutions that address specific team dynamics and individual needs. This has not only improved productivity but also strengthened our organizational culture.

“
The impact of RIKA has been transformative.”



“

Showcasing the inspiring feedback from Cohort 4

When I saw the RIKA programme, what stood out to me was their ability to mould somebody into a leader that's capable of managing the volatility that is happening in the world now. We discussed the future of work and the uncertainties that come with it. The programme is preparing us for uncertainty, any ambiguity that is out there, and we'll be better positioned to face it.

Enka Ng'andwe, Zambia

It's a fantastic curriculum. Speaking about the new outlook and strategy around HR was the most interesting thing for me, especially with the future of work. The lecturers are amazing. There's a lot of mentorship and discussions. That exchange, for me, is the most exciting part. It allows us to learn something new or see things from another perspective.

Thethe Kenabulungu, DRC

I'd call the interactions [I've had during the RIKA programme] very thought provoking. They get you into a space where you you're thinking, you're innovating... you have to think, you have to explore, you have to open your mind. For me, that's really what makes it very interesting and different from any other program I've done.

Leticia Iguma, Uganda





Cohort 4

Feb - May 2024

- 01 Asha Ndisiyon Ngoley
- 02 Barbara Agwang
- 03 Enka Nkuwah Ngándwe
- 04 Gisele Uwase
- 05 Gladwell Mbugua
- 06 James Muhia
- 07 Josephine Mwaniki Noah
- 08 Kudzai Shekede Maigurira
- 09 Leticia Nandago Iguma
- 10 Lillian A. Ochieng
- 11 Mark Wanyama
- 12 Martin Kibisu Mulanda
- 13 Mary Nyag
- 14 Mirriam Twikirize
- 15 Qamar Gulleid
- 16 Rita Muigai
- 17 Rukia Abdulkadir
- 18 Shirley Gyera
- 19 Shivan Kakure Karemera
- 20 Taariq Twaha
- 21 Thethe Kenabulungu

Inside the world of RIKA:

Conversations with
fellows and alumni

Thethe Kenabulungu Ntumba
Country Head Of Compensation & Benefits
EquityBCDC
Kinshasa, DRC-Congo

Driving strategic leadership

Currently Country Head of Compensation and Benefits at EquityBCDC, Thethe completed Cohort 4 and shares her reflections on her experience.

YOU WORK IN A COMPLEX POST-MERGER ENVIRONMENT WITH EQUITY BCDC, LEADING INITIATIVES TO ALIGN COMPETENCIES AND HARMONIZE CORPORATE CULTURES. WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST SUCCESS IN NAVIGATING THESE CHALLENGES, AND WHAT LESSONS HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM THE EXPERIENCE?

The biggest success has been the creation of a unified talent framework that identifies and aligns key competencies from both organizations while addressing gaps and overlaps. This required a collaborative approach to workforce planning, ensuring every employee could contribute effectively in roles that leverage their strengths.

The key lesson has been the power of clear and empathetic communication. Employees often resist change due to uncertainty, and providing transparency about the integration process while celebrating small wins helped build trust and cohesion. Leadership role modelling was equally crucial; when leaders embody the desired culture, it encourages employees to follow suit.

YOU ARE BASED IN CONGO DRC BUT YOUR ROLE SPANS MULTIPLE COUNTRIES WITH DIVERSE WORK CULTURES. HOW DO YOU ENSURE INCLUSIVITY AND EQUITY IN YOUR HR PRACTICES ACROSS VARIED CONTEXTS?

Inclusivity and equity start with understanding the unique cultural and socio-economic contexts of each country. We take a localized approach by involving regional leaders in policy development and decision-making processes to ensure relevance and effectiveness. At the same time, we maintain a unified set of core organizational values that guide our practices across all geographies.

Regular training on diversity and inclusion for leaders and teams ensures these values are consistently upheld. Finally, we use data to track equity metrics and address any disparities proactively.

YOU'VE EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AS A PIVOTAL DEVELOPMENT AREA. WHAT DOES STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP MEAN TO YOU, AND HOW DO YOU SEE IT TRANSFORMING HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT?

To me, strategic leadership means having a clear vision, aligning it with organizational goals, and empowering teams to execute it effectively. It involves anticipating future trends, embracing innovation, and making data-driven decisions to stay ahead of the curve. In human capital management, strategic leadership transforms the function from being purely operational to becoming a key driver of organizational success.

It enables HR to design impactful programs, like predictive analytics for talent retention and change management initiatives, that support long-term growth and adaptability.

“
The key lesson has been the power of clear and empathetic communication.”



Inside the world of RIKA:

Conversations with
fellows and alumni

Enka Nkhuwah Ng'andwe
Human Resources Manager
Educore Services
Lusaka, Zambia

Great networking & connections

Enka holds a Real World Skills MBA from Zurich Elite Business School and is a dynamic, results-driven professional known for her creativity and innovation. With extensive experience as a Human Resources practitioner, she has a proven track record across corporate HR functions, the mining and FMCG sectors, as well as the education industry.

ENKA, TRAVELING ALL THE WAY FROM ZAMBIA TO ATTEND THE RIKA SUMMIT SHOWS YOUR DEDICATION TO PROFESSIONAL GROWTH. WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO JOIN THIS PROGRAMME, AND HOW DOES IT ALIGN WITH YOUR CAREER OBJECTIVES?

Thank you! My primary motivation for attending the RIKA Summit is the opportunity to deepen my leadership capabilities and prepare for the next phase of growth at Educore Services. In my role as an HR Manager, I am constantly navigating complex workforce dynamics, from managing a diverse team to adapting HR strategies in an unpredictable business environment. This program promises to equip me with agile leadership practices, innovative HR technologies, and the expertise to create a culture of inclusivity and wellness.

I am particularly passionate about harnessing the potential of a diverse talent pool and creating a workplace where everyone feels valued and respected. By participating in this summit, I aim to gain insights and practical tools that will help me implement a competitive total reward structure, improve workforce planning, and strengthen talent retention strategies at Educore. Ultimately, this program aligns with my vision to drive strategic change and foster an environment where both employees and the organization can thrive.

THE EDUCATION SECTOR IS EXPERIENCING RAPID CHANGE . WHAT ARE SOME OF THE KEY CHALLENGES YOU FACE, AND HOW DO YOU PLAN TO ADDRESS THEM WITH INSIGHTS GAINED FROM THE RIKA PROGRAMME?

Indeed, the education sector is evolving quickly, and managing HR within this dynamic

environment is both exciting and challenging. One of our key challenges is workforce diversity—bridging gaps due to differences in age, race, education, and culture while maintaining a unified organizational culture. Additionally, workforce planning remains an area of concern, particularly in recruiting and retaining top talent in a highly competitive market. I see the RIKA Summit as a vital step in addressing these challenges. With the knowledge I acquire, I plan to refine our total reward structure to ensure it is competitive and appealing to current and potential employees. By leveraging HR technologies and analytics, I aim to improve workforce planning, develop robust succession plans, and address skill gaps proactively. Moreover, the summit's focus on inclusivity will guide me in fostering a culture that respects diverse perspectives, promotes employee wellness, and aligns all staff around shared values.

NETWORKING WITH HR PROFESSIONALS ACROSS AFRICA IS A KEY FEATURE OF THE RIKA SUMMIT. HOW DO YOU PLAN TO LEVERAGE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR ORGANIZATION AND THE BROADER HR COMMUNITY IN ZAMBIA?

Networking is one of the aspects of the RIKA Summit that excites me the most. Connecting with experienced HR professionals across Africa will allow me to exchange ideas, learn best practices, and gain fresh perspectives on tackling HR challenges. I plan to leverage this network to introduce innovative solutions to my organization, especially in areas like change management, HR analytics, and fostering inclusive work environments.

For the broader HR community in Zambia, I aim to share the insights and tools I acquire through mentoring upcoming HR practitioners and contributing actively to the Zambia Institute of Human Resources Management. By mentoring students and interns at Educore, I hope to prepare the next generation of HR leaders with practical, forward-thinking strategies that can propel the HR profession in Zambia to new heights. The connections I make at RIKA will undoubtedly enrich both my contributions to Educore and the wider HR community.

“
Connections I make at RIKA will undoubtedly enrich both my contributions to Educore and the wider HR community.”



“

Encouraging words from Cohort 5

The CEO Memo has been the highlight of my RIKA journey so far—it's insightful and actionable. Initially, I thought RIKA was designed only for HR leaders, but it's so much more. The programme has broadened my perspective and equipped me with skills to be a more impactful organizational changemaker.

Molly Kwamah, Kenya

What stands out for me about RIKA is the opportunity to connect with professionals who work in similar spaces. The network I'm building is invaluable. Additionally, the exposure to world-class speakers and the development of new skills I previously lacked have been truly transformative for my career.

Nyokabi Kiarie, Kenya

RIKA has been a catalyst for my personal and professional growth. The sessions on self-awareness and leadership have helped me identify areas to improve as a leader. Applying what I've learned has already started making a tangible difference.

Lilian Mogaka, Kenya

The combination of peer learning and expert insights has reshaped my approach to leadership and strategy. It's very relevant in navigating the complexities of a VUCA world

Arnold Ogema, Kenya





Coohort 5

Aug - Nov 2024

- 01 Dianah Kwarisiima
- 02 Brenda Wejuli
- 03 Nyokabi Kiarie
- 04 Lilian Mogaka
- 05 Mercy Wakida
- 06 AnnJudy Macharia
- 07 Faith Mbutu
- 08 Innocent Ndika
- 09 Pamela Gitonga
- 10 Kevin Wagubi
- 11 Rose Nyambura Karanja
- 12 Ruth Abraham
- 13 Taaka Odera
- 14 Arnold Ogema
- 15 Nancy Nyagah
- 16 Nancy Kalama
- 17 Suweibatu Adams
- 18 Esther Wanjiku Wangai
- 19 Herina Mbutu
- 20 Molly Kwamah

I have been part of RIKA since it was just a concept—a bold idea brought to life through conversations between Susan Githuku, Liesel Pritzker Simmons, and Blue Haven Initiative's Strategy Director, Megan McCarthy. It was inspiring to witness the evolution from initial brainstorming to drafting the Terms of Reference for the curriculum, engaging with Deborah Exell and her team and the task force that helped shape the programme.

From those early days, we have grown tremendously. Starting with Cohort 1 in 2022, we are now preparing for Cohort 6, and the journey has been nothing short of transformative. Working with global thought leaders like Professor Dave Ulrich, often called the father of HR, and the brilliant minds at the Josh Bersin Academy has elevated RIKA to global standards of excellence.

Today, RIKA continues to evolve in exciting ways. Under the dynamic leadership of Natalie, our Programme Director, we are forging new partnerships, including potential collaborations with Europe-based AIHR, to ensure the programme remains future-ready and innovative. Every step feels like we are architecting chapters in RIKA's unfolding story—an adventure filled with purpose and possibility.

As we prepare for this next leg of the journey with Cohort 6 in 2025, we invite you to join us in these TIMES OF RIKA, where leadership is reimaged.

Sellah Nyongesa
RIKA Programme Coordinator

Join us on this adventure



RIKA
LEADERSHIP
PROGRAMME

April-July 2025

Register now for Cohort 6!

Why choose RIKA?

- Hybrid Format
- Transformational Impact
- Cutting-Edge Learning
- 5 Key Acumens
- Global Faculty
- Network Of Peers

Application deadline: Feb 1 2025

Apply at: rikalearning.org



In a complex and challenging world, what we read can shape the way we lead.

UTOPIAN

In which direction . . .

In a world of rapid change, people are becoming more contemplative, seeking visions of better societies and a deeper understanding of humanity's potential. Utopian literature offers a space to imagine ideal worlds and alternative social systems, allowing us to explore values like justice, harmony, and human flourishing that might otherwise feel distant or unattainable.

This article examines five seminal utopian works—Utopia by Thomas More, The Republic by Plato, Looking Backward by Edward Bellamy, News from Nowhere by William Morris, and Herland by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. Each of these classic narratives reflects the cultural and historical context in which it was written, offering unique insights into the ideals of community, equality, and cooperation. Through their imagined societies, these authors critique the flaws of their own worlds while inspiring readers to envision a more just and equitable future.

UTOPIA

By Thomas More

Thomas More's Utopia presents a society rooted in communal ownership, equality, and justice, challenging the societal norms of his time. The book invites readers to consider an alternative way of life where resources are shared fairly and moral integrity guides governance.

THE REPUBLIC

By Plato

Plato's The Republic explores the nature of justice through a structured, class-based society governed by philosopher-kings. This vision of a harmonious state reflects the ideal that each individual should contribute to society according to their abilities.

LOOKING BACKWARD

By Edward Bellamy

Bellamy imagines a future society marked by technological advancement, cooperation, and social equality, erasing the economic disparities of the 19th century. Through centralized planning and equal resource distribution, Looking Backward offers a hopeful model of progress.

NEWS FROM NOWHERE

By William Morris

Morris's News from Nowhere envisions a post-capitalist, pastoral society where people find joy in creative, voluntary work and live in harmony with nature. This utopian world stands as a critique of industrial-era alienation and advocates for environmental sustainability.

HERLAND

By Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1915)

In Herland, Gilman portrays an all-female society thriving without men, challenging gender roles and showcasing a world based on cooperation, sustainability, and collective well-being. This feminist utopia pushes readers to rethink the possibilities of gender and societal organization. Each of these works encourages us to envision a just and harmonious world, challenging the flaws of existing societies and urging us toward the possibilities of a better future.

... do you lean?

In the realm of literature, few genres provoke as much contemplation and introspection as dystopian fiction. These narratives, often set in imagined futures, serve as powerful mirrors to our present, reflecting the potential consequences of our societal choices and technological advancements. Among the most influential works in this genre are Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, George Orwell's *1984*, Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We*, George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*. Each of these seminal novels explores themes of control, freedom, identity, and humanity, challenging readers to consider the delicate balance between societal progress and individual rights. As we delve into these profound narratives, we uncover not only cautionary tales about the future but also enduring insights about the human condition.

In revisiting these dystopian classics, we are not merely engaging with tales of despair but are also being offered a profound opportunity to reflect on our values and choices. The stark warnings of these novels encourage us to envision and work towards a utopia—an ideal society where freedom, justice, and human dignity are upheld above all. It is in this spirit of reflection and aspiration that we must approach the challenges of our time, inspired by the enduring power of these literary masterpieces.

1984

By George Orwell

Orwell's *1984* depicts a society under totalitarian control, where individual freedom is eradicated, and truth is continuously manipulated by an omnipresent government. Through Winston Smith's story, Orwell warns of the dangers of absolute power and the erosion of autonomy in a world dominated by surveillance and propaganda.

A BRAVE NEW WORLD

By Aldous Huxley

In *Brave New World*, Huxley imagines a society where technological and societal engineering have stripped away individuality, depth, and freedom, replacing them with superficial pleasure and conformity. The story serves as a stark critique of the cost of sacrificing emotional depth for societal order and convenience.

WE

By Yevgeny Zamyatin

Zamyatin's *We* envisions a future where citizens, known only as Numbers, live in a regimented society that enforces collective harmony at the expense of individuality. Through D-503's internal rebellion, the novel exposes the peril of suppressing personal freedom in the name of state control and conformity.

ANIMAL FARM

By George Orwell

Animal Farm is a satirical fable that critiques the corruption of revolutionary ideals through the allegory of farm animals overthrowing their human oppressors only to replicate the same abuses. Orwell's novella highlights how unchecked authority can erode principles and replace freedom with tyranny.

NEVER LET ME GO

By Kazuo Ishiguro

In *Never Let Me Go*, Ishiguro explores the haunting reality of cloned individuals raised solely for organ donation, raising questions about the ethics of scientific progress and the value of human life. Through Kathy, Tommy, and Ruth's quiet acceptance of their fate, the novel invites reflection on humanity's responsibility to preserve dignity and compassion amidst technological advancement.

DYSTOPIAN

BOOST YOUR MIND!

Mental sharpness and creative thinking are crucial in tackling today's challenges. Engaging with thought-provoking puzzles enhances problem-solving and strategic skills. These challenges offer a fun and energising way to refresh the mind while sharpening critical faculties. By blending entertainment and intellect, they provide a perfect balance for any professional day.

DID YOU KNOW?

The average cost of a bad hire is at least

30%

of the employee's annual salary*

* Date from The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)

WORD SEARCH

T	O	E	E	Y	O	L	P	M	E	M	N	B	C
I	T	N	E	M	T	I	U	R	C	E	R	E	O
E	G	N	I	R	O	T	N	E	M	T	V	N	M
G	N	I	N	I	A	R	T	E	P	A	P	E	P
W	E	E	O	E	S	I	R	H	B	L	I	F	L
O	W	N	M	R	P	T	N	P	T	E	I	I	I
R	E	G	C	U	L	T	U	R	E	N	M	T	A
K	L	A	E	O	L	C	M	O	E	T	G	S	N
F	L	G	F	R	E	T	E	N	T	I	O	N	C
O	B	E	P	E	R	F	O	R	M	A	N	C	E
R	E	M	L	L	O	R	Y	A	P	W	R	L	T
C	I	E	D	E	V	E	L	O	P	M	E	N	T
E	N	N	A	C	A	R	E	E	R	G	O	M	E
N	G	T	E	B	W	O	R	K	P	L	A	C	E

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| RECRUITMENT | RETENTION |
| PAYROLL | PERFORMANCE |
| TALENT | ENGAGEMENT |
| CAREER | WORKFORCE |
| TRAINING | CULTURE |
| DEVELOPMENT | COMPLIANCE |
| WORKPLACE | EMPLOYEE |
| HRIS | WELLBEING |
| BENEFITS | MENTORING |

THE FUTURE OF WORK

Down

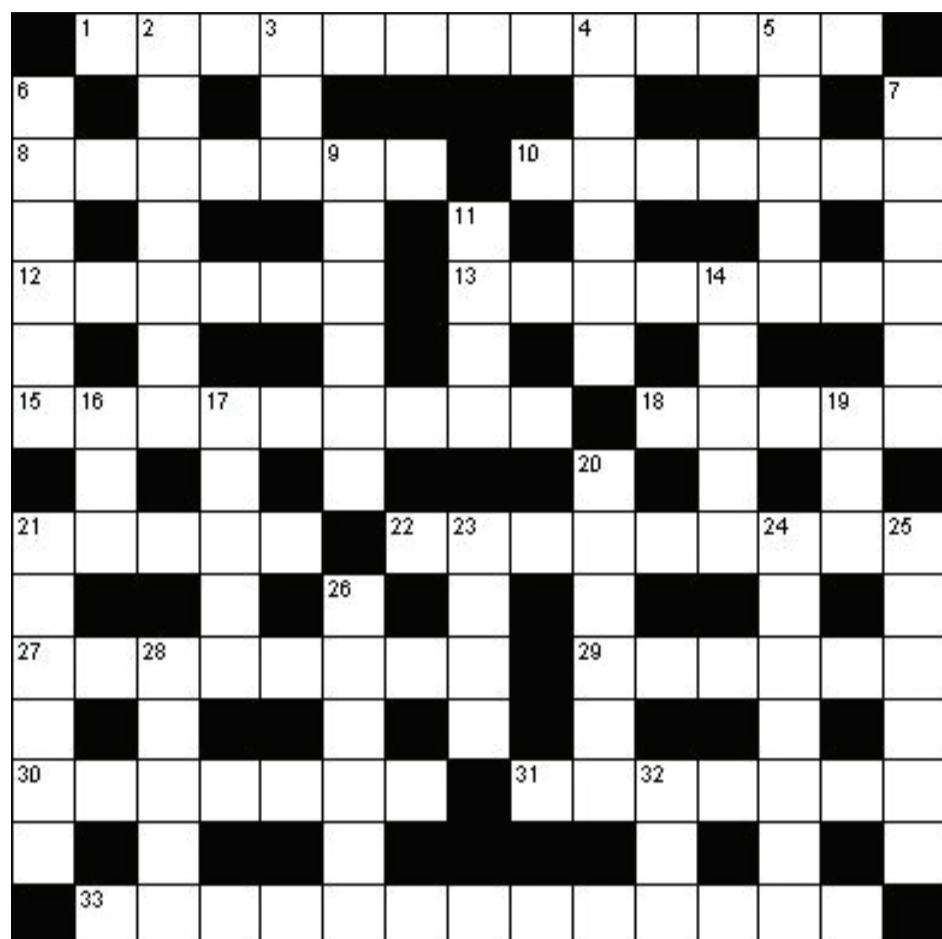
- Physical or emotional exhaustion caused by prolonged work-related stress.
- Allowing employees to choose when, where, and how they work.
- The efficiency of work output within a given time period.
- The overall perception and interaction that a worker has with their organization, abbreviated.
- A labour market with short-term contracts or freelance work instead of permanent jobs (2 words).
- The inclusion of individuals with different backgrounds and perspectives.
- Technology that simulates human intelligence to perform tasks, abbreviated.
- A workplace model combining both in-office and remote work.

Across

- Describes a world that is brittle, anxious, nonlinear, and incomprehensible.
- The ability to guide and inspire a team towards achieving goals, often associated with vision and influence.
- Planning for future leadership transitions within a company.
- Acquiring new skills to improve one's job performance or career prospects.
- Creating a work environment where everyone feels welcomed and valued.
- Fair treatment and opportunities for all, regardless of background.
- Business practices that meet current needs without compromising future resources.
- The Fourth Industrial Revolution, marked by advancements in digital and technological innovation.

All Answers: Page 83 ▶

QUICK CROSSWORD



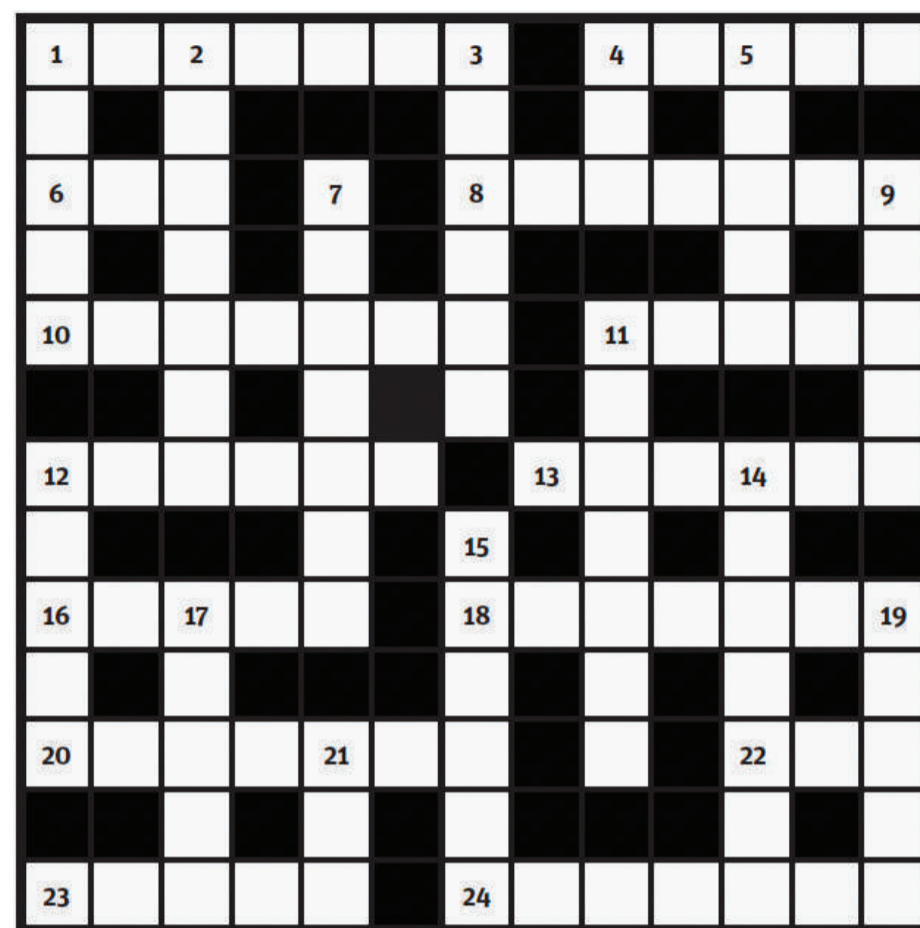
Down

- 2 Living in the ocean (7)
- 3 Make lace (3)
- 4 River in N South America (6)
- 5 Greased (5)
- 6 Die from lack of food (6)
- 7 Eccentric person (6)
- 9 Commands (6)
- 11 Employs (4)
- 14 Covered with leaves (5)
- 16 Vase (3)
- 17 Residence (5)
- 19 Glass container (3)
- 20 Wide street (6)
- 21 In a simple manner (6)
- 23 Depend (4)
- 24 Pear-shaped fruit (7)
- 25 Scottish town (6)
- 26 Abduct (6)
- 28 Shade (5)
- 32 Taxicab (3)

Across

- 1 Reflection (13)
- 8 Uppermost part of a tree (7)
- 10 Graceful antelope (7)
- 12 Raved (6)
- 13 Burn without flame (8)
- 15 Holy Communion (9)
- 18 Musical instrument (5)
- 21 Muzzle (5)
- 22 Cemetery (9)
- 27 Textile fabric (8)
- 29 No one (6)
- 30 Not strict (7)
- 31 Die (7)
- 33 Telephone directory (9,4)

CATCH-WORD PUZZLE



Down

- 1 A drop in the ___ (5)
- 2 It is always ___ just before the dawn (7)
- 3 Cease and ___ (6)
- 4 All at ___ (3)
- 5 In ___ days (5)
- 7 A ___ stone gathers no moss (7)
- 9 ___ and shovels (5)
- 11 Catch ___ (7)
- 12 Eat, ___ and be merry (5)
- 14 Operated by remote ___ (7)
- 15 The lion, king of ___ (6)
- 17 ___ of interest (5)
- 19 Rough around the ___ (5)
- 21 Play it by ___ (3)

Across

- 1 Just what the doctor ___ (7)
- 4 ___ and sweet (5)
- 6 To ___ is human (3)
- 8 ___ comic (7)
- 10 Pins and ___ (7)
- 11 ___ button (5)
- 12 The devil is in the ___ (6)
- 13 Belt and ___ (6)
- 16 ___ on the cake (5)
- 18 Time is of the ___ (7)
- 20 Finders ___ (7)
- 22 Like a red ___ to a bull (3)
- 23 Older and ___ (5)
- 24 Free ___ (7)

DID YOU KNOW?

22%

of new recruits
LEAVE their job
within 45 days
of being hired

SUDOKU

4		6		2	1	5	9	8
	8		7		5	6		
			4	6	2			
	3		5	7				
2	9	7						
8	1			5	4			
9			2		7			
			9	1		2		

Fill in the puzzle so that every row across, every column down and every 9 by 9 box contains the numbers 1 to 9.

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M-Gas offers a revolutionary Pay-As-You-Cook model, bringing affordable, clean cooking to households that rely on charcoal, kerosene, firewood, and other unclean fuels. Through our innovative Smart Metered LPG solution, customers can prepare meals with payments as low as 20 KES, making clean cooking accessible and affordable for low-income households and underserved communities. Our unique, last-mile delivery approach brings gas directly to customers' doorsteps, transforming the cooking experience by ensuring convenience, affordability, and safety right at home.

Product Features:



Pay-As-You-Cook

Cook any meal for as low as 20KES



Never Run out of Gas

Our Tech detects your Gas level and we schedule a change before it runs out.



Fast Cooking

Cook fast and efficiently with a 2-burner Stove



Low Upfront Cost:

For as little as 300KES you get a full solution to start cooking.



Website: <https://mgas.ke/> | Facebook: MGasKenya/ | Toll Free Line: 0800 711 428

PUZZLE ANSWERS

7	6	3	9	1	8	2	5	4
9	4	5	2	3	7	8	1	6
8	1	2	6	5	4	3	7	9
2	9	7	1	8	3	4	6	5
6	3	4	5	7	9	1	8	2
1	5	8	4	6	2	9	3	7
5	2	1	8	9	6	7	4	3
3	8	9	7	4	5	6	2	1
4	7	6	3	2	1	5	9	8

SUDOKUTOPO

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
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QUICK CROSSWORD

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CATCH-WORD PUZZLE

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WORD SEARCH

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THE FUTURE OF WORK


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 RIKA AFRICA
KOFISI Square, Riverside Drive,
Nairobi, Kenya

 Tel: +254 716 424 932
Email: info@rikalearning.org
rikalearning.org