

# Why I might just have to pursue the popular MBA

'I will have an excuse of leaving work early, keep getting time off and have a reason to

**M**ombasa is truly bringing out the best in me—in very many aspects of my life. Contrary to my expectations, I am literally glowing in colour and have put on a few kilos. The best part of it all is that I am seriously considering going back to the university for an MBA.

I have always held the view that those who attend evening MBAs only do so to show off and to try and show the world that they are indeed smarter and more well-read than everyone else. I think MBAs just give some people the license to moan about how much work they have to do and how many papers they have to present.

At times, I feel that some use MBA school as an excuse to leave work early and to keep getting time off work. You should listen to them talk about how many papers that they have to present when all they do is spend time on Google openly plagiarising and dubbing from the Internet.

A lady named Benta from our

**MAN-ABOUT-TOWN**  
OFFICE DANDY

Nairobi office further reinforced this view. She used to keep reciting about all the hardships of juggling motherhood, wifely duties, schoolwork and projects.

She kept doing it so frequently and so loudly that one imagined that she wanted to win the office martyr prize. After a lot of reflection on my present circumstances, I have come to realise that there might be something to this MBA hype after all.

My current role has become elastic and I am constantly doing everything and anything. I do recall HR telling me that I was the company ambassador in the area and had to represent the company's value, ethics and systems all the time to internal and external stakeholders.

For all my troubles, I am getting an extra 50 grand, which I shall not complain about at the moment. I have realised that I know very little about man-



"After a lot of reflection, I have come to realise that there might be something to being an MBA graduate after all."

agement and running organisations. Let us begin with managing people. I adopted the open door policy (I read somewhere that it is the right way to manage people).

What I had not bargained for is that this would be taken a different meaning to my juniors.

Every other day, I have someone coming into my office saying that they need to have a word from me. I recently discovered that the lady who is the "HR manager" started off as the office receptionist and secretary.

During that time she also was the one who distributed payslips and also circulated staff notices. She then undertook a diploma in HR and then she was assigned all HR matters.

The problem is that most of the staff members have failed to respect

her authority and judgement on HR matters. To make matters worse, most of her juniors have more degrees than her. That is why they feel that the only person who has the brains and education to deal with their issues is me.

This has complicated my life since I now have to deal with folks who want to deal me to listen to their pressing issues regarding pay, leave days and real or imagined fears of retrenchment.

My ability to respond has been hindered by my poor Swahili skills, my poor knowledge of the subject and the obvious fact that at the end of the day I am, but an ambassador. I am constantly saying that Nairobi holds all the answers and therefore pushing the blame elsewhere.

Just today I had to listen to some guy whine about how his superior had

denied him his rightful training opportunities. The guy is convinced that he is a victim of tribalism since his superior is of a different tribe. Now how in the world, am I to sort this out?

I have decided that only MBA School will sort me out. Perhaps if I learn a lot more about how to deal with people in a professional way, my life will get better. Question for me is where and how. Where are the universities to be found and where will I get the funds for the programme.

Though the 50k has helped a bit, I am still not financially stable. The loan for the Beast is still 50 per cent unpaid and I am yet to complete paying for my younger sister's school fees.

Perhaps, I could write a business case report and give reasons why the organisation should pay for my fees.

## Beware, firms may be stealing from you in harsh economy



RICKY'S MYTHS  
RICHARD GITONGA



**I**n times of economic abundance and prosperity, scrutinising the cost side of our personal profit and loss statements is inconsequential. However, as our country continues to undergo challenging economic times, it should be in everyone's interest to scrutinise all cash outflows.

It is in such times that unscrupulous companies look for creative ways to meet their revenue and profitability targets at the expense of their customers. In this regard, prudence calls for closer scrutiny of our telephone bills, bank statements, garage repair invoices, insurance premium renewals, and other fixed living costs.

One particular consumption invoice stands out from the rest. This happens to be the residential electricity bill. Closer scrutiny of the items on the bill will show that in the most ideal of situations,

you should actually be paying only 50 per cent of the invoice total.

The reason is that the cost of actual consumption items, which consist primarily of active (DC) and water heating, account for about 50 per cent of the invoice total.

The rest of the items on the bill are costs that have been passed onto you either as a result of inefficient operations on KPLCs part or a lack of imagination and creative accounting by the institutions top management.

Fuel cost charges account for 37 per cent of the total bill. Forex adjustments account for about five per cent of the bill. Other indirect non-consumption related charges include inflation adjustment, ERC Levy and REP Levy.

The unavoidable VAT comes prominently placed at the end of the bill. From a layman's point of view, it is difficult to



Consumers should scrutinise their bills carefully.

understand why the monopoly should be transferring fuel costs charges directly to the consumer.

At 30 per cent of the total bill, it is quite clear that there is something very wrong with the way the organisation is running its operations.

It is quite apparent that the diesel electric engines (DEGs) being used to power the turbines and generators are consuming a lot of expensive fuel at our expense. A surprise audit will likely reveal over-priced fuel inputs, high

incidence of pilferage during transit, and abundant wastage when topping up the generator tanks.

Regarding the forex adjustment item, which accounts for five per cent of the bill total, it beats logic as to why the monopoly has not directed its finance chiefs to negotiate with banks to hedge against foreign exchange risks. In these modern times, there are many risk instruments that are available to companies to help them hedge against potential risks that are beyond their

control. If the converse happens, that is, the Kenya shilling gains against other major world currencies, does KPLC pass on the gains to their so called esteemed customers? The reality is that this is unlikely to happen in our lifetime. The inflation adjustment item is one that intrigues the most. We are told by economists that underlying inflation is primarily driven by food and energy prices.

It, therefore, seems paradoxical that the monopoly that distributes energy has an inflation adjustment item in its pricing. I guess some energy economist can shed some light on this.

At two per cent of our total bills, the Rural Electrification Programme (REP) Levy should by now have enabled each and every corner of the country to be well lit and all our rural folk enjoying the benefits of electricity.

We are clearly living in interesting times. In spite of all this daylight robbery, we continue to passively struggle on with our daily challenges and burdens.

It will not come as a surprise to some when the next levy that is slipped into our bills reads "Alternative Energy Development Levy".