

Lydia's behaviour at the village wedding makes me proud

Mini-skirt gives way to a modest long dress as we join wedding crowd in my backwater 'shags'

I need not have worried about the dress even one bit—it did not cause me any form of anxiety. Let us just say my trip with Lydia was nothing like I had expected. I spent the early part of the road trip wondering how I was going to manage, firstly to get Lydia to change her wardrobe and secondly, to ensure we arrived in the village with me behind the wheels of her car.

The second quarter was really about me showing Lydia the sights and sounds of where I grew up in a bid to distract myself from her very nicely shaped figure. Along the journey, she asked that we stop at the nearest shopping centre to my shags.

When we got to the shopping centre, she asked for the nearest hotel where she could change.

Despite the number of changes that have happened in my township, it still remains rather backward. I can tell you that all eyes were on me when we entered the "five-star" hotel with Lydia and her short dress. She was galloping alongside me, with a rucksack on her

MAN-ABOUT-TOWN

OFFICE DANDY

back. I was sure that in no time, SMSs and missives will have found their way ahead of me—and I knew what the subject would be—my flimsily clad female companion.

As soon as we sat down, Lydia said: "Hebu order me a soda as I go to the ladies."

As she walked to the ladies, I could not help but look at her figure and her endless legs in awe and wonder. Under different circumstances, I would be giddy with joy for being the subject of envy but now I was petrified. In fact, I was so petrified that I contemplated ordering a beer.

Lydia took a long while in the ladies but when she showed up, the wait was worth it.

She had changed into a long dress that concealed everything save for her lovely face. I could have kissed her. She came and calmly sat by me as she told me she "did not want to get her outfit

She got rather tipsy from drinking the local brew which was part of the wedding celebrations



When Lydia returned from the "ladies room" She had changed into a long dress that concealed everything, save for her lovely face.

for the wedding dirty."

"I did not want to embarrass you," she said coyly.

Things got even better when we left the hotel. She gave me the car keys and told me: "You drive, after all you know the way to your shags."

I could have leaped with joy but instead I behaved as if this happens every day. I did enjoy driving her car and I made sure the entire village saw me—with the driver's window open and my hand conspicuously hanging out.

Lydia did me proud in the village—

she literally blended in the background with all the chatty women and girls from the wedding.

In fact, she got rather tipsy from drinking the local brew which was part of the wedding celebrations. Looking back, I cannot recall much about the wedding because my focus throughout the wedding was just how well (or badly) Lydia was fitting in with the crowd. On our return trip, I elected not to give any of my relatives a ride into the city — to avoid any potential for embarrassment.

I am now back in Mombasa, and I cannot help musing about my relationship with Lydia. Does she treat me like a good friend or does she see any sort of romantic future with me? She has taken to sending me forwards of naughty emails and naughty texts? Just the other day, she sent me a text telling me what she is wearing and how some bloke was really ogling her.

What should I make of all of this? Is it that she wants me? Or is she too comfortable with me? I would like to ask these questions but I am afraid it could make things worse.

Luckily for me, I am spared the thought process by the rushed entrance of my secretary. She is screaming at the top of her voice that someone has been arrested at the security gate and he is not guilty. I take time to calm her down as I summon the head of security to come in.

After five minutes, the guy comes in. He tells me calmly that an office messenger has been caught at the gate trying to take off with 20 reams of office paper.

To this claim, my secretary breathlessly shouts, "Si yeye." Right now, I banish thoughts of Lydia and try to unravel what the real story is.

Companies, too, can project their dual personalities



RICKY'S MYTHS
RICHARD GITONGA



From time to time, we come across colleagues, friends or total strangers who have dual personalities. For those of us with a long enough memory, we were entertained and intrigued by a news item on CNN a couple of years ago that featured a woman who apparently had six different personalities.

This revelation was quite intriguing to the less informed. Members of the medical fraternity refer to this condition as Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) or Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD). This is a psychiatric diagnosis that describes a condition in which a single person displays multiple distinct identities or personalities (known as

alter egos or alters), each with its own pattern of perceiving and interacting with the environment.

This psychiatric condition is analogous to the challenges that many companies are likely to face as they develop and execute online business strategies. With the expansion and the penetration of broadband internet connectivity, many businesses will have to seriously consider how to leverage the internet to enhance efficiency, or increase effectiveness in service delivery. Unfortunately, most companies will suffer the symptoms of DID at some point as they grapple with the challenges of extending their business models into the online space.

The leaders of the organisations

in question will most probably have to consider how to approach the following questions: Should their online business be consistent with their offline business? Should they create a new e-business? Should they extend their business brands by offering products and services that they do not offer offline? These are obviously challenging but important strategic questions that business leaders need to consider as flawed and poorly executed approaches could damage their existing reputation.

The dual personality of a business is a strategy that encompasses the idea that an online business can have a slightly or significantly different personality than the one that the consumer sees in the traditional world of bricks and mortar.

Classic examples can be drawn from the websites of some of our local tourist destinations. Their websites are normally designed by top notch webmasters who are able to use their skills to portray their clients as world class. Pictures on the websites show white pristine sandy beaches and hotel em-

ployees waiting attentively, even gratefully, serving tourists who look like they have just qualified for Mr Kenya and Miss Kenya body building and beauty contests respectively. Should the hotel or lodge be located in some game reserve, the website will have pictures of "The Big Five" seemingly abundant in herd and pride sauntering at the fringes of game tracks.

Well, as we all know, the reality of the physical world is usually poles apart from the virtual world. Chances are that the beach hotels in question have plenty of seaweed and other debris littering their once pristine beaches and the service in the hotel is likely to be pathologically slow delivered by indifferent staff. In the case of the lodges, the pictures of the "big five" were probably lifted off some commercial website that sells stock photos and the last time a lion or elephant was seen in the park grounds was when a documentary on African wildlife was shown to guests in the dining room!

Granted, this may all seem a little far-fetched but shows the incidence of

dual personality among companies. Customers who get the privilege of experiencing the companies' bricks and mortar and virtual environments may very well think they are dealing with separate entities. The friendly, welcoming and navigable website may project the exact opposite environment of the gloomy, disorganised and cold retail outlet. As business leaders reformulate their corporate plans to factor in the emergence of broadband internet applications in Kenya, they need to be cognizant of the fact that human beings are by and large creatures of habit, and prefer dealing with other humans who project stable and consistent personalities. This state of affairs helps build stable relationships that help create an atmosphere of understanding and mutual respect.

So go ahead and conduct an audit to determine whether your business is projecting a dual personality. You may well discover that it needs the services of a consultant spin doctor!

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