

Why should I appraise myself if the boss will alter score?

CEO changes my appraisal ratings to read average and I am a hard worker with a vision

OFFICE DANDY

MAN - ABOUT - TOWN

I think I am developing ulcers—my upper stomach is on fire. How and when did it all start? After all the back and forth about who is meant to appraise me, I was told that the acting CEO would be the man to appraise me.

I really don't like the guy so you can imagine how I felt when I received the news. When I walked into his office, I found the man supposedly hard at work as he munched and gobbled on some exotic chocolates.

Though I am not a lover of chocolates, I was amazed that the man did not offer any to me. Anyway, the fact that he was munching did not stop him from making conversation. His chocolate filled mouth said, "Josphat, have a seat and let us chat," as he pulled out a highlighter pen.

My appraisal which I had painfully worked on was on his desk. This appraisal thing really baffles me because they ask you to rate yourself only to have your boss change your ratings. In some areas, I had awarded myself

"outstanding and exceeded expectations. Clearly, the acting CEO did not think so, because according to him I had not 'demonstrated sufficient vision and business mindset in my work'. I wanted to choke him as he changed most of my ratings to read average or met expectations.

How can this man who hasn't worked long enough with me to know my second name, talk about my vision. At the end of the appraisal, I could tell that I would get just an average in my appraisal.

The danger with this is that average appraisals do not get any form of pay rise. I had already prepared this month's budget on the assumption that I would get a five per cent pay rise commensurate with a met expectations appraisal.

Now this man has gone and ruined everything for me. Just the thought of what my financial future portends is filling me with dread and misery and with ulcers.

On the job search front, I have made some progress, but nothing conclusive has come my way. I got a call the other day to attend the second round inter-



view. Surely, what else do these guys want to know considering how intensive the first interview was.

I felt like I was in primary school all over again I was made to fill all manner of questions. I had to fill blanks, choose from multiple choices and even write answers—all in the name of a job.

The guy who was administering the interview was wearing a very smug look as he handed out the papers to me. I

am convinced that in his head he must have been laughing at my obvious discomfort.

After I completed the interview, I went online and Googled to see whether I had given the right answers. Imagine my shock, when I found out that most of my answers were wrong.

I am getting nightmares just imagining all my answers being marked wrong. I really want that job since my

current lifestyle is severely wanting. The combination of the appraisal and the job scenario is giving me ulcers.

During my lunch break, I plan to visit the staff clinic and get myself checked out.

I will also persuade the doctor to give me a few days off work so that I can rest and be away from this unsatisfactory environment.

Whoever talked about how passion and commitment are key to job satisfaction must have been talking about an unrealisable goal.

I feel no passion and commitment as I plod along the numerous e-mail requests that come my way. In these days of cost-cutting and savings I keep getting all manner of demands to procure goods at a lower price.

My job description tells me to procure for goods and services not to spend my entire working day trying to shave off ten cents here and there.

To make matters worse if I do not respond instantly, these request senders quickly escalate matters upwards and say that I am not a team player.

Do they imagine I am an octopus with eight hands? I am close to losing it at my job and my passion and commitment are at zero.

I need to see a doctor as soon as possible because I have bleeding ulcers thanks to my job.

When global downturn is used as excuse for company failure



RICKY'S MYTHS

RICHARD GITONGA



If General Electric's strategy of investment in China is wrong, it represents a loss of billions of dollars. If it is right, it is the future of this company for the next century" - said Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric.

As any good student of strategy I will tell you, there are seven main drivers of strategic change. They include environment, marketplace, business, organisation, culture, behaviour and mindset.

The first four are referred to as external factors while the latter three are called internal factors. When Jack Welch, the celebrated CEO made the quote regarding the GE strategy for China, he was most probably concerned about those discontinuous and uncontrollable external factors that could result in unanticipated outcomes.

Lately, comments from local business leaders have converged on the dialogue about the global credit crunch. Most business leaders who are engaging their constituents, shareholders or employees, are dove-tailing the performance of their companies to the global

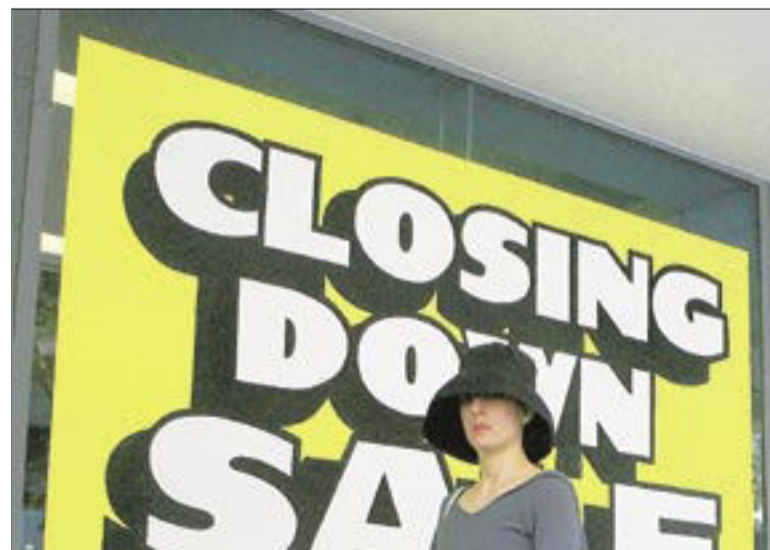
financial meltdown. However, what is interesting to note is that some of the companies using the story of the global meltdown as an escape-goat have long had strategic change problems that are more as a result of internal factors rather than external forces.

Let's take the example of a company that has long had cashflow problems due to factors such as the inability to drive revenue growth or collect account receivables.

Assume that the compromised situation is further magnified by poor management of costs and a culture characterised by employees with low morale.

This scenario would offer the top executive with several options. First, he or she could opt to resign and inform the market that they have failed in their duty as a leader. Secondly, he or she could take a salary cut and get the original compensation reinstated when the company is pulled out of the deep end.

Or three, the business head could opt to stay put, bury their heads in the sand,



Companies need to look at internal factors as a threat to success before pointing a finger at external factors such as global meltdown.

and shout "global credit crunch" from the highest point of their corporate headquarters. The reality is that some of our business heads do not have any about how their businesses have been affected by the global financial crisis.

Notwithstanding, it serves as a very compelling reason to project to interested stakeholders since most of us do not necessarily have the knowledge, interest or inclination to study and analyse the effects of this crisis.

The greatest risk that most companies face is the inability of their leaders to manage the internal "controllable"

factors which ideally if handled well, would enable them to navigate the unpredictable turns of the external environment.

The culture of a company is created as a result of the behaviour of its employees, be it negative or positive. Behaviour on the other hand is a result of the mindset of employees. Employees with a mindset characterised by predatory practices, mediocrity and resignation will never buy into the change agenda of any business head.

On the contrary, they will most probably have a negative impact on the inter-

nal uncertainties of the business such as operational and financial risk issues. In the realm of strategic change, internal issues of culture, behaviour and mindset are often over-looked because they are usually intangible and invisible to the outside world.

Notwithstanding, it is important to note that key drivers of strategic change are normally anchored on factors such as the presence of enlightened management, recognition of interconnectedness, development of all encompassing strategies, as well as the positive anticipation of change.

Strategy and operations

Changes in the social dynamics of a company must take place in order to support organisation changes in design, strategy and operations.

If we extend the same argument to the national arena, one can argue that the dynamics that have led to the requirement by the government to engage in large domestic borrowing, which will invariably drive up interest rates, is less as a result of external circumstances, but possibly more as a result of the inability to strategically manage internal factors which are anchored on culture, behaviour and mindset.

This is analogous to the lame game—when a man points a finger at someone else, he should remember that three of his fingers are pointed at himself.