



INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP

By Antoinette Kwofie & Abraham Ongenge



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

Enabling Skills Development in the Banking and Alternative Banking Sector



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INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP

TOPIC:

INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES THAT WILL HELP ATTRACT AND RETAIN MILLENNIAL LEADERS IN THE FINANCIAL SERVICES SECTOR IN AFRICA

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CONTENTS

1	ABSTRACT	1
2	INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT	2
3	WHO ARE MILLENNIALS?	3
3.1	Literature Review on Millennials	3
3.2	Why are millennials needed in the Financial Services sector in Africa?	5
3.3	Why are millennials not attracted to the Financial Services sector?	6
3.4	Survey Findings	6
4	INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP	8
4.1	So what is inspirational leadership?	8
4.2	Why is inspirational leadership needed?	9
4.3	How can inspirational leadership be used as a tool to attract and retain millennial leaders in the Financial Services sector In Africa?	9
5	RECOMMENDATIONS	10
6	CONCLUSION	12
7	REFERENCES	12
	APPENDIX	12



1. ABSTRACT

"We don't inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children."

Over a century ago, Native American Chief Seattle is alleged to have expressed these words. Words that have stood the test of time and that are as relevant today as they were then. It speaks to the need for us to leave a legacy, to protect that which is, and set it up as a foundation for future generations to do more.

A group of bankers set off on a journey across parts of Africa to explore how leadership has shaped Africa and how to use it as a tool to build the Africa we would like to see. Each of us had journeyed and in some instances worked across Africa before. Yet this was a different journey - to experience and understand the African context in a way as never experienced before. We interacted with various people in the countries we visited; Regulators, entrepreneurs, industry leaders, some bank executives, business representatives, Fintech company founders and more. Wherever we went, the impact of leadership on the socio-economic environment was clear. The lessons we picked revealed that where there was clear, decisive and visionary leadership, or better still Inspirational Leadership, there was progress. The reverse also held true.

Evidence pointed to the fact much like other industries, the pace of change of the financial services industry was astronomical. The World Economic Forum (WEC) expects Financial Services and Investors sectors to be one of the industries that will see the most disruption in the medium term (World Economic Forum, 2018).

The observation was that regardless of the country we were in, the young entrepreneurs were hungrier to break the norm, embrace the change and do things differently. Even though experience and tradition is widely acknowledged to be of great value, the question that kept coming up was how these could be blended with the change dynamism commonly visible in younger leaders. We came away from the experiential journey knowing that somehow, in order to future proof our organisations; we needed an injection from this group of people.

In a recent report by PWC (PWC, 2012), millennials are said to make up one third of the current workforce across the world and will make up over 50 percent of the

workforce by 2020. Millennials are critical to the success and sustainability of the Financial Services sector in Africa. If an organization isn't set up to make millennials want to work for you, the future and or sustainability of your organization is at stake.

This study set out to understand the group of people who qualify as the next generation of leaders within the workforce, a group popularly referred to as Millennials. In order to achieve this, we needed to understand first-hand what matters to them and what inspires them. The study was built on primary data, sampling millennials across different African countries. We narrowed the selection to the educated, largely at least working class to middle and higher income classes in order to zero in on the specific grouping within the wider millennial group who are employable within the financial sector.

There seems to be a lot of research on Millennials and a lot of findings and myths on what they want from organisations. However, what this research sought to do differently was to explore how the current set of leaders could make a difference, inspiring a wave of what is obviously a needed change. In the words of John Quincy Adams, "If your action inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."

Findings from the research confirmed that Inspirational Leadership is one of the essentials to attract and retain millennials in the financial services and specifically the banking sector. It is very common for assumptions to be made about a group of people if their context is not understood. Millennials believe they are the most misunderstood generation. Our research revealed that this is nothing new and has pretty much been the case for every generation. They also believe that the traits believed to be associated with their generation are actually not peculiar to them, but to every leader willing to challenge their own mind-set and the status quo. Such leaders, willing to give others an ear, pausing to understand context and grant opportunities, inspire Millennials and give them reason to want to take their seats at the table. To the group that was sampled, being a millennial is more of a mind-set and less of an age group.

2. INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

In the last few years, the pace and unpredictability of change in the world of business, ranging from customer expectations and tastes to the way of doing business and indeed every facet of our life has been monumental. A lot of fancy terms have been used to try to define this and in many a boardroom, as well as business literature, one is likely to come across buzz words and acronyms like VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complexity, Ambiguity). Though much talked and written about, many do not necessarily understand or know how to deal with the impact thereof. Perhaps because they grew up in a generation that wasn't always as fast paced? In which case, is the younger generation necessarily better equipped to operate in these times? Or does the generation not matter in how we adapt to change?

What is clear is that, if the current leaders do not adapt to the times we live in and do not grow the next generation of leaders to do so, we would have failed the world. Travelling around Africa, from countries like Egypt and Morocco at the northern-most tip, parts of some of which sit closer to and identify more with Europe than with Africa, through the Central African country of Angola to the southernmost part of Africa where the Indian and Atlantic Oceans start to border each other, the leadership challenge is visible. How do we change the narrative about Africa? How do we inspire the next generation to do better?

As part of the Bankseta Africa expansion program, we embarked on a journey to explore various leadership themes through self-led adult learning. This article seeks to explore inspirational leadership in the context of Africa and provide critical thinking into inspirational leadership practices that will help attract and retain millennial leaders in the financial services sector in Africa, with particular emphasis on Kenya and Ghana. We explore the meaning of inspirational leadership in the context of Africa. We also shed light to who millennials are in our context and what they are doing in Africa. We identify reasons why millennials are not attracted to the financial services sector in Africa and provide practices that have attracted millennial talent in other industries. This paper will also recommend practices that help attract and retain millennial talent in the African financial services sector.

Organisations continue to constantly operate in a VUCA environment. In order for businesses to succeed globally and perhaps even more so in Africa, it is important that they remain agile and constantly dynamic. While adopting relevant technologies and new ways of working is important, sustainability of organisations will be enhanced by appealing and catering to a modern workforce, engaging millennials as well as by developing and retaining top, young talent.

Leaders of businesses have learned the need to incorporate millennials into the very fabric of their organisations. This is embodied by a statement by **Eben Meyburgh, Group Chief Executive Officer** of a leading construction business, **GVK-Siya Zama** who said, "To succeed, businesses need to constantly adapt. The future of our company and our sustainability are being moulded by appealing and catering to a modern workforce, engaging millennials as well as by developing and retaining top, young talent. With this in mind, our aim is to be the employer of choice in the construction industry."

Savvy organisations are setting themselves up to grow their millennial leaders. The cultural reality in Africa has seemed to be that knowledge is the remit of the old and experienced, a paradigm that is beginning to or rather is required to shift if progress is desired. There is a need to consciously work at changing this. Financial services firms in Africa need to start thinking radically for them to succeed in attracting and retaining millennial talent. A look at listed banks in Kenya and Ghana shows that none of the top executives is aged below 35 years old. There is also no representation in the banking sector Boards by millennials.

Are our organisations future proofed and are we building sustainable organisations? Is the next generation equipped with what it takes to balance the risks with the benefits of the dynamic world of today and tomorrow? And how can they be motivated to do so? This study seeks to research what it takes to do this in the banking sector in Africa, why we need to do so and how.

3. WHO ARE MILLENNIALS?

Millennials are perhaps one of the most researched and talked about group of people. There are several definitions and myths about who they are and what they want. Some say it's a particular age group, others say it's a mindset. What is this group of people and why is it important to understand them? It was an interesting journey to delve deeper into the subject.

For purposes of this research millennials are defined as individuals who reached adulthood around the turn of the 21st century. The precise delineation varies. We reviewed several research papers and articles and will present some.

3.1 Literature Review on Millennials

Neil Howe and William Strauss, authors of the 1991 book *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069* (Strauss, 1991), are often credited with coining the term. Howe and Strauss generally define the millennial cohort as consisting of individuals born between 1982 and 2004.

In a research paper on the subject presented at the AMRA 2018 Forum, Geopoll (Geopoll, 2018) states that millennials were born as the world entered a digital age; a generation that grew up with the internet and digital communications. This and their relative comfort with technology is the defining factor that sets millennials apart from previous generations. In Africa however, as various research studies confirm, millennials have not been fully defined by the traits that have been seen in the developed world.

Mobile phones are ubiquitous in most countries in Africa. The leapfrog effect for many Africans, whose first interaction with technology is with mobile phones, has had a tremendous effect, making Africa a mobile-first continent. However, amidst all the hype peppered with phrases such as 'Silicon Savannah', 'mobile money' and 'Africa Rising', there is a reality. The reality is that, on this tech revolution that is currently ongoing, the youth are the mavericks as confirmed by various studies by GeoPoll in multiple African countries as well as by other research agencies. It has also been obvious in the African countries we have visited, both before and during the Africa Expansion Project (AEP).

Guido Stein and Miguel Martin in their Case study on Five Keys to manage millennial talent (Martin, 2016) described millennials in the table below:

MILLENNIALS:

Who Are They and What Are They Like?

Even accounting for variation across the age range, millennials do display some common features, which are increasingly shaping management policies and practices.

THEY ARE GOOD WITH TECHNOLOGY

Total connectivity is a common trait among Western millennials, especially junior millennials, the first-ever digital natives.

THEY CRAVE NEW EXPERIENCES

They are skilled at multitasking and keen to learn and experiment. But in the words of some of the executives we surveyed, they can also be impatient. This can make it harder for them to stay focused.

THEY WANT APPROVAL

They appreciate acknowledgment and feedback, which they expect to receive from their managers.

THEY VIEW AUTHORITY DIFFERENTLY

They grew up with more relaxed parenting styles. Consequently, they do not respond positively to hierarchical structures or authoritarian leadership. They are also more autonomous in their decision-making.

THEY ARE AMBITIOUS - TO A DEGREE

Their ambitions are not necessarily related to the acquisition of material goods or social status, although they do aspire to be leaders. In general, they prefer to enjoy things rather than possess them, and accumulate experiences rather than own things.

THEY ARE SOCIALLY MORE THAN MONEY

They tend to distrust institutions, political parties and established structures.

THEY VALUE TIME MORE THAN MONEY

It is vital that they are able to reconcile their professional lives with their personal interests, which they are unwilling to sacrifice for the sake of work.

SOURCE: IESE Technical Notes by G. Stein, R. Mesa and M. Martin, and surveys of IESE Executive MBA participants by G. Stein and M. Martin.



Although this research has some western bias, various commonalities can be derived.

Brighter Monday in a research where they sampled 8,429 Kenya millennials on “Millennials and the Digital Marketplace: How to keep Millennials Productive in the Workplace”, describe millennials as Tech-Savvy, Digital natives, Can-do attitude, diverse, global citizens, entrepreneurial, multi-taskers, risk-takers, not fond of rigid working environment and productivity-oriented (Brighter Monday, Kenya, 2019).

According to Wangari, African Millennials who were born from the early 1980s until around the turn of the new millennium are perceived as having changed the world's understanding of Africa, bringing it from a 'dark continent' to 'Africa rising' through blogging and social media (Wangari, 2018). He also sought to clarify some myths about African millennials as set out below:

African millennials are young and the majority - This is apparently not true. Out of a population of 1.2Billion in the continent, those aged 19 years and below are at 51%. Millennials make up less than 30% of the continent's population. A new generation which is the majority in Africa is here; Generation Z or the iGen cohort, of those between 15-20 years, is the young and they are the majority.

They are all mobile and connected - This is not true. Although Africa has the highest growth rate in mobile phone penetration, there are only 420M unique mobile subscribers and a penetration rate of 43% in Africa against the global rate of 63%. Internet penetration remains significantly lower. This is attributed to lack of basic infrastructure such as grid electricity; high data costs, and household income levels among other factors. Despite this, internet access, especially that via mobile phone subscription, is growing and predicted to reach 41 percent of Africa's population by 2020.

They are mobile first; have higher phone usage - This is true. One of the biggest defining characteristics of Millennials globally is their usage and dependence on mobile phones. Increased dependency on technology and a mobile first approach is being driven by African Millennials according to a recent GeoPoll rapid survey carried out among youth in five Sub-Sahara African countries between the ages of 18-35.

They are all on social media - This is partly true. African millennials are increasingly using social media sites as tools for communication and a source of news and information. Social network platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter have become an integral part of everyday life.

That millennials are killing TV, radio, and print - Although social media has become the first point of breaking news in many regions, as seen in the percentage of those online and those on social media, in Africa, radio and TV are still king. Sub-Saharan African consumers watch TV or listen to the radio twice per day on average, while they access the internet only every second day.

However, African millennials have a different view on ownership in media and this is driving the diminished importance of live TV as the dominant communications channel. This is a generation that has become a 'prosumer' - creating and consuming their own content on blogs, YouTube, and various other social channels.

They do not care about serious matters- This not true. This is a myth as has been demonstrated by various research studies carried out on this demographic. Social media has become an important tool through which the connected Millennials voice their concerns and engage on the things that matter to them. This can be seen in movements and campaigns such as #BringBackOurGirls, #FeesMustFall, and #DataMustFall among others.

According to (Bresman, 2015), as more millennials assume leadership positions around the world, organizations are becoming increasingly concerned with how to ensure their success. In his study to understand what Africa millennials want from work, he found that millennials leaders in Africa are attracted to leadership roles that provide opportunities to influence their organisations. African Millennials seemed to care most about gaining opportunities to coach and mentor others. They also preferred a leader who empowers people compared to goals oriented or technical/ functional expert leaders. African Millennials have similar needs on work life balance compared to other millennials in other regions. However, in other regions especially in North America, millennials were willing to sacrifice work life balance for career progression.



3.2 Why are millennials needed in the Financial Services sector in Africa?

Although African millennials are not young nor are they the majority in Africa, they have now entered the workforce in strong numbers. They are a critical source of workforce in the banking sector. As a socio-economic group, millennials are growing in power and investment potential. In addition to reshaping the workplace, they are also influencing marketing and advertising strategies across the African continent. For the banking sector to remain relevant the industry must solve for millennial needs. Learning how to work with Millennials has become increasingly important over the past few years, as studies have noted.

In the next few years, millennials will be the main users of financial services. Learning and understanding the language of millennials is therefore important for banks.

In the highly competitive and fast changing industry that banking has become, with digitization and technology driving the way we do business, it has become very clear that Bill Gates could have been prophesying when he stated in 1994 that **“Banking is necessary, Banks are not”**.

Fintechs and telecom companies are churning out outcomes that are providing products and services that serve client needs without being banks. A lot of fintechs are championed and ran by millennials.

The future is now and the need to constantly challenge the status quo, driving entrepreneurship and turning ideas into companies; taking risks on new products and ways of doing things; taking a chance without the “overhang” of experience, which teaches us to tread cautiously, is absolutely key to survival and relevance.

A question that comes to mind is how do banks compete with the fintechs? How do they prevent them from rendering banks irrelevant? How do banks work with them to find cheaper ways of delivering better service to customers? How do banks remain relevant to their customers? And how do they prepare the next generation to keep banks going?

Banks must necessarily bring the millennial entrepreneurship spirit into the banking sector. The next generation must be guided with experience whilst not

holding them back. The organizations must be infused with people best placed to understand the needs of their generation. For the sustainability of the banking sector, it is absolutely important to prepare the next generation to gain experience and to take things forward.

In Cairo, we met a group of young entrepreneurs who thrive on taking a chance on their ideas in the Greek Campus. In Casablanca, we met more young entrepreneurs at TechnoPark who were using technology to provide tangible solutions to various sectors in their country. From a data led agricultural firm, to a mobile banking firm that sought to solution the unbanked or rather the “unwilling to be banked”, the genius was evident.

In Angola, Tupuka was a revelation of the tenacity of millennials when they believe in something. A group of 5 young men, 3 of whom had lived and schooled in the United States, but who believed enough in the African dream to return home to Luanda to as they put it in their own words “create history”. Despite the headwinds, and the countless rejections from people who couldn’t visualize the dream they had, they kept it alive. Foregoing wages for 2 years, operating from a single room, surviving the false starts, these young men are the epitome of persistence. Setting up an app based Uber Eats equivalent company in a country that didn’t want to use it, and extending it to products other than food, they fought the odds to make their dreams come true and to create a sense of value to different groups of stakeholders. They currently employ over 300 people directly and indirectly. They take the time and the interest to invest time in teaching some of their unskilled and uneducated employees till some of them are able to go up the ladder within the organization and earn better wages. Furthermore, they didn’t stop at it when they got the product they wanted. They keep redefining themselves and their firm to add value to their country. They are making a difference, one life at a time. They were an inspiration to the banking cohort that visited them.

That is the push needed to re-define banking. And that is something that exists boundlessly within millennials.

3.3 Why are millennials not attracted to the Financial Services sector?

Many surveys conducted have confirmed that millennials find banking restrictive and less engaging than other sectors. (Brighter Monday, Kenya, 2019) concluded that millennials think Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have better working conditions than the financial services sector;

INDUSTRY THEY THINK HAS THE BEST WORKING CONDITIONS

NGO	47%
Banking / Financial / Insurance	15%
IT / Technology	14%
Media and Communications	6%
Sales / Marketing	6%
Education and Training	5%
Engineering	5%
Retail	2%

A young lady we met at the Greek Campus enlightened us on why millennials prefer startups to corporates. Her reasons included the limited scope in corporates versus the steep and fast learning curve in startups, the variety of things to do in startups as against restricted schedules in corporates, and the fact that in startups they're able to set milestones for themselves on things that challenge them and they can celebrate little achievements as they go along. It was apparently a subject discussed a lot by her peers. Insightful!

3.4 SURVEY FINDINGS

Some of the findings from our literature review were not quite in line with the picture that had been painted of millennials over the years. It was interesting to confirm that context matters and the African context did lead to variations in behavior compared to millennials in the Western world.

We therefore undertook a survey of millennials from different African countries, to understand what mattered to African millennials in the banking sector and why.

Methodology

The survey results were based on 78 millennials polled across 10 African countries. Those surveyed were between the ages of 20 and 38 with most participants in the 26 to 30 category. 78% of respondents currently reside in either Ghana or Kenya. Males form 68% of the respondents and the rest were females. Interestingly but not surprisingly, 60% of the respondents feel their mind set is what makes them millennials, and not necessarily their age group. The rest believe it's an age play.

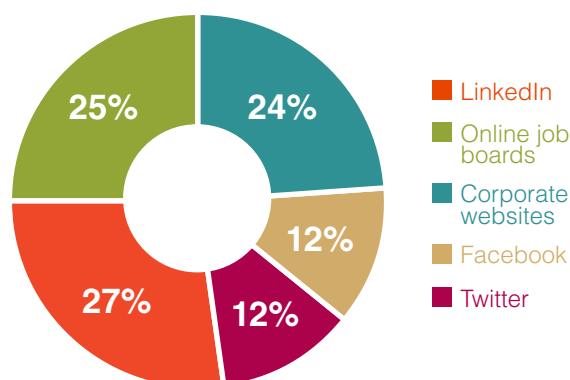
One of the key questions asked was around what attracts them to an organisation.

technology work culture ability one organisation make growth
grow work organization culture Career growth
Opportunities reputation way Career people Flexibility
working environment

The word cloud on their responses speaks to preference for opportunities, culture, growth and working environment as the attraction to an organisation.

We also sought to understand how they first engage an organisation.

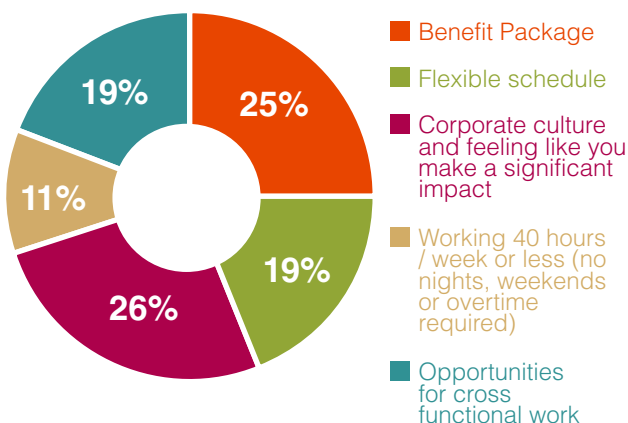
- When seeking employment, where are you most likely to look?



The response to this question not surprising, LinkedIn, online Job boards and corporate websites seem the first point of call for 76% of the respondents when seeking jobs. 24% of the respondents however show the inclination to also search via other sources including main stream social media outlets (Facebook and Twitter). The general predisposition nonetheless is to go online.

- Rank the following factors for selecting a job in order of importance

For our African millennials polled, corporate culture and benefit package are the two main factors they look out for in selecting an employer. Whilst 51% of the respondents have this inclination, there's an agreement in terms of Flexible schedule and opportunities for cross functional work as the next set of important factors considered in selecting a job, (19% in each case).



- What is your approximate average period you expect to stay with an employer?

Surprisingly, the respondents indicated they would stay above 2 years with an employer, with the majority, 37% staying between 4 – 5 years. 16% will however leave within 3 years. This is an indication that with the right engagement, they can be retained within the organisation.



When asked what would make them stay beyond the period indicated, about 50% selected job progression and another 25% skills enhancement. This is important in how we craft our retention tools.

52% of respondents indicated that having meaningful work that has lasting impact is the most important thing for them in the workplace.

From the responses received, remote working and opportunities for career advancement are the two most important key initiatives being implemented by Corporations to make the workplace more “Millennial Friendly”. Mentoring is also seen as an important initiative.

An overwhelming majority strongly agreed that state of the art systems that meet modern trends and efficiency, as well as an environment that offers the ability to freely suggest changes to work process appeals to them.

55% of respondents preferred Fintechs and Telecom companies, with only 30% indicating a preference for financial institutions.

passionate mentor empowers Transformational leader one listens
leader confident team leads example able cares

When asked what leadership style/practices will inspire them to remain in the financial sector, 82% indicated that Transformational leadership practices are what inspire them. Transformational leadership practices encompasses where a leader works with teams to identify needed change, creating a vision to guide the change through inspiration. They are also inspired by leaders who are passionate, confident and empowering.

When asked which behaviours or attributes of an inspirational leader they considered important, the respondents endorsed communication above commitment and passion and delegation amongst others

This then creates a question around how we can use inspiration as a retention tool for millennials in the financial sector.

4. INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP

4.1 So what is inspirational leadership?

Inspirational Leadership is about energizing and creating a sense of direction and purpose for employees and excitement and momentum for change. It is where a leader is able to paint a picture/sell the vision to employees, exciting them enough to make them own and run with it to achieve it. Employees are drawn to leaders who have imagination and energy, something that came out clearly in our survey. This is because they see in the leader the potential to fulfil their own ambitions and ideas.

The power of a company with leaders who inspire at every level up and down the organization is hard to overstate. These are the companies that consistently pull off innovative or heroic feats in business because so many of the people who work there are motivated to make them happen (Callahan, 2016).

There is therefore a need for leaders who can inspire, not simply with the power of their personality but with the power of their imagination. Such vision need not be reserved solely for those at the top of the pyramid; rather it can be recognized and nurtured by those who are in a position to groom and promote the next generation

of leaders. John Baldoni, an internationally recognized executive coach and leadership educator suggests three attributes of an inspirational leader:

REALISM: Inspirational leaders are rooted in reality. They know the facts but remain undeterred. This sense separates them from fools who are quick to rush into things before considering consequences. Inspirational leaders are keenly aware of what could go wrong and are honest about it. It is his honesty that draws capable contributors. They sense the leader knows the facts but is willing to experiment as well as persevere (Baldoni, 2009).

IMPROVEMENT: Wanting to make things better is essential to inspiration. Therefore, inspirational leaders value innovations. They are inherently creative because they are not satisfied with the status quo. Very importantly they seek to open doors for people who can innovate in their function, be it product development or logistics. They encourage employees to think for themselves (Baldoni, 2009).

OPTIMISM: You must believe in the better tomorrow. This is easy to do when the economy is rising but more difficult when it is shrinking. Optimism for the inspirational leader is not merely inherent; it is contagious. Others feel it and want to feed off it. This is essential to getting the work done now but developing next generation initiatives that will position the organization for success over the long term (Baldoni, 2009).

Leaders who can inspire others in a VUCA environment are necessary to help their organisations past crisis and provide direction to prosperity. Great leaders future proof their organization by looking at organisations as they should be and not as they are.

Inspirational leaders lead without fear and by that invite people to believe in possibilities. An inspirational leader adapts to the times.

In Africa we can identify the late Nelson Mandela - former president of South Africa as a leader showing the attributes of an inspirational leader by inspiring a nation historically challenged by apartheid to co- exist as equal citizens. His relentless pursuit to improve the lives of the people of South Africa by not being satisfied with the status quo is evident of improvement. He is famously



known for his three-hour speech on “I am prepared to die” where he expressed the reality of the struggle of the Africa people and at the same time the optimism that people will live in harmony. To quote President Nelson Mandela;

“During my lifetime I have dedicated my life to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all people will live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal for which I hope to live for and to see realised. But, My Lord, if it needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die”

Inspiring leaders are those who use their unique combination of strengths to motivate individuals and teams to take on bold missions – and hold them accountable for results. And they unlock higher performance through empowerment, not command and control.

Michael Jordaan, former Chief Executive of FNB, one of Africa’s leading banks, energized an entire organization to embrace an innovation culture against all odds, a culture that has remained long after he left. And that is a good example of a leader who unlocked performance through empowerment.

4.2 Why is inspirational leadership needed?

When employees aren’t just engaged, but inspired, that’s when organizations thrive. Inspired employees are themselves far more productive and, in turn, inspire those around them to strive for greater heights. Our research found that leaders that fostered engagement or commitment and modeled the culture and values of the corporation are inspiring.

The African banking sector is undergoing immense disruption. Consumers have been exposed to alternatives to fulfil their banking needs using various non-bank channels. Notably telecommunication, social media and fintechs have specialized in various financial services to provide best in class alternatives. Globalization has allowed Africans to access banking

services from global brands such as Apple, Amazon etc. Further concerns around financial crime, cyber security, customer confidentiality has led to increased regulation in the banking sector in order to provide confidence in the financial system, a phenomenon which doesn’t necessarily promote agility. It is impossible to comply oneself to success.

New technologies which are reducing the cost to serve have allowed new entrants in the banking sector to offer competitive products, thereby posing a real challenge to the operating models of existing banks which have to grapple with the high cost of old infrastructure. Leaders in the banking sector have the task to navigate this environment and lead organisations which have survived generations to continue being sustainable and agile in this environment. The pace of change is also increasing and therefore leaders should continually energize their organization by providing a sense of direction and provide excitement to navigate through change.

4.3 How can inspirational leadership be used as a tool to attract and retain millennial leaders in the Financial Services sector In Africa?

In her article “What Kind of Leader Will Thrive in Africa?”, Franca Ovadje cautioned that as Africa attracts greater interest and attention from multinationals, and as African companies expand their operations throughout the continent, their ability to understand and appreciate the distinct values, behaviour, attitudes and styles of local context becomes decisive for achieving outstanding performance (Ovadje, 2015). Allied to this is a growing recognition that successful leadership today requires the ability to inspire others. Inspired employees are more engaged in their work, they share a sense of ownership, they go above and beyond the call of duty, and they are more likely to carry out their assignments not because they must, but because they want to. In short, they feel a strong sense of corporate citizenship. To be this kind of inspirational leader entails, again, a deep understanding and appreciation of what local people consider inspiring.

Inspiring millennials in Africa will require leadership actions that are rooted in the African context. As corporate leaders increasingly find themselves working with diverse teams across borders, understanding the local context is crucial. Nowhere is this truer than in

Africa, a vast continent with immense social, economic, physical and cultural differences.

While some attributes of millennials are similar across the world there are various unique differences that influence how leaders inspire millennials in Africa. These unique differences are identified by (Ovadje, 2015) as:

Organizations in sub-Saharan Africa tend to be **hierarchical**. There is a deep respect for those in authority: the more status and seniority, the more power ascribed to that person. As an example, in Nigeria this is known as the oga (**big boss**) syndrome.

Another characteristic is **collectivism**. In many African cultures, the “family” is not just the nuclear family but an extended family, clan or in-group to which the employee belongs and feels a strong sense of obligation to. Sometimes it is this extended family that pooled their resources to put the employee through school. This is a tradition, particularly strong in Kenya, known as **harambee**, of pulling together for the common good.

Another important value in sub-Saharan African cultures is **ubuntu**, a concept of **human kindness**, which displays itself in the form of compassion, care and concern for others. Nelson Mandela is popularly considered a personification of **ubuntu** in the magnanimous way he reached across divides, affirmed people and worked to restore relationships, recognizing that one’s own humanity was intrinsically bound up with the humanity of others.

A social reality in Africa is high unemployment. Youth unemployment in sub-Saharan Africa, like many other regions of the world, is double that of adults and income inequality is high. People seek jobs primarily for stability of income, and the fear of unemployment will make people go to great lengths to hold on to their jobs. A job represents the means of survival not just for the worker concerned but for all the people who depend on that worker.

Various researches have shown that millennials who are joining the workforce have somewhat different expectations from their predecessors and this should reinforce a key point: for leadership to be outstanding, it must be contextualized. How you inspire millennial talent in the banking sector must consider these social and cultural realities and the tension and dilemma they may cause.

Given the context above what inspirational leadership practices will attract and retain millennials in the Financial Services sector in Africa?

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Embed a corporate culture that African millennials can identify with:

Millennials are, by and large, drawn to organizations with a corporate culture that is in tune with their own ideals. They want to be able to identify with the company where they work and its values – to feel what they are doing has a bigger purpose. (Stein & Martin, 2016)

While most leading banks have set statements of noble purpose it is not evident in their actions that they live their purpose. The Kenya parliament recently introduced a law that caps interest rates in the banking sector and while most banks state they put the client first, it was evident that lending decreased to perceived riskier sectors of the economy. As described in earlier sections, Africa millennials are concerned about the society and this culture that puts profit before anything else needs to change to attract millennials.

Foster a collaborative way of working

In the African context it may not be possible to eliminate hierarchy as it is rooted in most African cultures. However as (Ovadje, 2015) suggested, creating opportunities for employees to share ideas freely – and then act on them to give positive reinforcement can inspire millennials who prefer more autonomy, would like approval and are ambitious. Within the African banking sector there is an opportunity to encourage millennials to solve for societal problems like financial inclusion using technology, marketing and branding of products that speak to the youth. An inspirational leader needs to act as a facilitator rather than a ruler when leading millennials. Joint problem-solving that solicits and values everyone’s contribution, professionalism and consistency of action are more likely to earn millennials’ respect, as will regular developmental conversations about future career paths.

In an interview with a millennial in Egypt she stated that one the reasons she prefers working for a start-up is



because she gets to interact and collaborate at all levels be it the cleaner, the chief executive or her peers. This is also true about her interaction externally where she would meet government representatives and senior managers of established companies.

Provide continuous feedback

Millennials want to know where they stand in their performance hence regular reviews are vital to their productivity as they seek criticism or approval. A Kenyan study found that 98.5% of millennials think that getting feedback from their employer make them more productive (Brighter Monday, Kenya, 2019). 18% of millennials preferred daily feedback, 41% preferred weekly feedback while 31% preferred monthly feedback. Feedback needs to be faster mobile enabled. Banks appraisal systems need to enable continuous feedback by allowing feedback from various stakeholders to be consolidated in a digital way throughout the performance management cycle.

Leverage the digital savvy nature to future proof your organization

Millennials are the world's first digital natives: they cannot conceive of an existence without total connectivity and unfettered access to their social media networks. (Stein & Martin, 2016) Instead of restricting the use of social media and other technologies, companies should tap millennials' natural gifts with technology to improve digital capabilities throughout the organization. One way of doing this would be to roll out a reverse mentoring program, so that millennials can help older employees brush up on their technology skills. Leaders can also consult them when deciding on new technology purchases or upgrades.

In our visits to Morocco and Angola it was evident that millennials appreciated being given the opportunity to demonstrate their potential to those higher up. Sometimes, something as simple as inviting a millennial worker to sit on a board committee or attend an event with senior management can be as much of a motivational tool as a promotion or raise. Millennials are an important source of insight on changing client preferences.

Millennial Executive Committee (EXCO)

Banks should consider setting up a Millennial Executive Committee that engages with all millennials across the organisation. This is to create a sense of belonging and an outlet for discussing issues that matter to them. Periodically, members of this EXCO can be invited to meet with the main leadership/ Executive Committee for the bank to interact and also give suggestions on how to improve the working environment to make it more conducive for them. This gives them face time with the leaders of the organisation.

Cross functional/cross geography teams

The millennials surveyed, those interacted with on country visits as well as those researched have indicated the need for non mundane tasks and different experiences. To help achieve this, organisations could create cross functional teams with millennials to solve identified issues within the organisation. This exposes them to different parts of the organisation, building their knowledge and skills, and experience. It will also set them up better for job progression. Cross geography teams could also be formed in a similar way and digital tools used to help them work on projects in other countries without necessarily incurring travel costs.

Innovation Hub

The millennials within the bank could be allowed to form an Innovation hub where they come up with better ways of doing things, potential new products, etc and work to deliver these on a project basis periodically. This helps them develop and use their entrepreneurship skills and help keep the bank in business.

Mentoring

Banks are encouraged to setting up a formalised mentoring program for millennials when they enter the organisation is key to helping them map out their future with the organisation and hence retaining them.



6. CONCLUSION

The world of banking has changed; the banking cheese has moved. The customers have evolved and so have ways of servicing them. Banks need to recognise this and work to move in tandem. Now is the time for banking sector in Africa needs to embrace the arrival of the millennial generation as a wonderful opportunity. Sustainability and relevance of banks is likely to be impacted by how banks sustain and retain their millennials. They can be invaluable assets to help other generations of executives better understand the business world today. And they have plenty to say.

Job progression, empowerment, positive culture and flexibility are most likely to attract millennials. But inspirational leaders are necessary to retain them. Good communication skills, commitment, confidence and passion in leaders are pull factors as far as millennials are concerned. Having meaningful work that has lasting impact is essential to keeping them happy. They are ready to stay beyond 5 years with an organisation if they continuously progress or see opportunities to grow on the job.

Having said that, Generation Z, currently aged 19 years and below, are now the majority in terms of population in Africa. This is the first generation born into a fully technological environment. Although they seem like millennials, and have common qualities, especially in the use and uptake of technology, they have some unique traits that must be examined more closely. As this next generation acquires more spending power and marketers begin to turn towards them, our focus should move to better understand this younger demographic in addition to the much-discussed African Millennials.

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APPENDIX

1. What is your gender
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
2. In which African country do you currently reside?
3. What makes you a millennial?
 - a. Age
 - b. Mindset
 - c. Social media use
 - d. Favourite music genre
 - e. Other (please specify)



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4. What is your age?
 - a. 20 – 25
 - b. 26 – 30
 - c. 31 – 35
 - d. 36 – 38
5. What attracts you, as a millennial to an organisation?
6. When seeking employment, where are you most likely to look? Rank in order with 1 being the most likely and 5 being the least likely.
 - a. Corporate Websites
 - b. Facebook
 - c. Twitter
 - d. LinkedIn
 - e. On-line Job Boards
7. Rank the following factors for selecting a job in order of importance with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important.
 - a. Benefits package
 - b. Flexible schedule
 - c. Corporate culture and feeling like you make a significant impact
 - d. Working 40 hours/week or less (no nights, weekends or overtime required)
 - e. Opportunities for cross functional work
8. What is your approximate average period you expect to stay with an employer?
 - a. 0 - 1 Years
 - b. 1 - 2 Years
 - c. 2 - 3 Years
 - d. 3 - 4 Years
 - e. 4 - 5 Years
 - f. 5 Years +
9. What will make you stay beyond the period indicated?
 - a. Job progression
 - b. Improvement in remuneration
 - c. Job rotation
 - d. Skills enhancement
 - e. Other (please specify)
10. Which is the most important thing you look for in your work?
 - a. Being happy day to day
 - b. Financial success
 - c. Having meaningful work that has lasting impact
 - d. Having work that recognizes me for my accomplishments
11. Which one of the following do you most closely associate with happiness?
 - a. Doing good
 - b. Money
 - c. Work
 - d. Power
12. Rank the following from what you value the most (8) in the workplace to the least (1)?
 - a. Flexible working times
 - b. Performing new/varied work schedules
 - c. Structuring your own work and time
 - d. Multiple geographic experiences
 - e. Opportunity to lead projects
 - f. Interacting with organisational leaders
 - g. Opportunity to apply my skills
 - h. Remuneration
13. Corporations are implementing a number of changes to make the workplace more “Millennial Friendly”. Rank the below initiatives in order of importance with 1 being most important and 5 being the least important.
 - a. Increasing workplace flexibility so employees are not required to work from the office every as often
 - b. Increasing the number of community service projects sponsored by the corporate employer
 - c. Creating a mentoring program within the organization
 - d. Increased opportunities for career advancement
 - e. Creating a more comfortable, collaborative physical office environment equipped with pool tables, onsite coffee shops, open work spaces, etc.
14. From the list below, please state behaviours or attributes of an inspirational leader that you consider most important in the workplace with 1 being most important and 5 being the least important.
 - a. Confidence
 - b. Commitment and Passion
 - c. Delegation and Empowerment
 - d. Creativity and Innovation
 - e. Communication



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15. State of the art systems that meet modern trend and efficiency appeals to me
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly Agree
16. I favour an environment that offers the ability to freely suggest changes to work process
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly Agree
17. The opportunity to upskill in utilising modern technologies and acquire latest industrial knowledge in my field of work motivates me
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly Agree
18. What kind of leader inspires you?
19. What leadership practices will inspire you to remain in the financial sector?
20. As a millennial, which industry appeals to you most?
 - a. Finance
 - b. Telecommunication
 - c. Financial Technology
 - d. Mining
 - e. Engineering



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