

## 10 Things every executive need to know

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Over the years I have noticed things that start small but can bring the organisation down. These normally start as exceptions that management in the organisation tolerates but they can grow into big problems. Here are the things;

1. **Nepotism** – in the field of human resources recruitment and selection is one area plagued by nepotism and corruption. Most managers when they go into positions of authority they want to surround themselves with colleagues, friends and relatives for various reasons. One of the reasons is, these colleagues are unlikely to challenge them should they make wrong decisions. They will be loyal to the person who brought them into the organisation. Once this practice is ingrained into the organisation it becomes part of the culture. The whole organisations will be engulfed by this bad practice such that your organisation is viewed negatively on the job market.
2. **Do not advertise for jobs that do not exist** – some employers have gone into a very bad habit of advertising for jobs when they know there is a preferred candidate already. It is morally wrong for any leader of an organisation to promote that kind of practice. People in and outside your organisation will start talking about this bad practice. Your employer brand gets damaged in the process. Make it a policy that all job candidates are selected on merit. If you check most of the recruitment scandals, they surface because someone, somewhere in higher authority has instructed someone to hire a preferred candidate. The surprising thing is that most senior people including board members prefer to keep quiet when such things happen. Such things will only stop when those in power can call each other to order.
3. **How you pay your employees.** When you pay your staff do not use their circumstances as the key criteria. Pay and benefits must be paid to employees based on the value that the employees bring to the organisation. Arbitrary pay adjustments for specific individuals based on personal preference of the leader are a bad practice. You may find in some situations people who are close to the bosses are the ones that get paid more than others regardless of grade differentials. Once such a practice starts it affects employees perception of equity within the organisation. You will spend more money trying to correct such anomalies in the future.
4. **Blotted organisational structures** – When people are put into positions of power and authority the first thing they often do is to create a blotted organogram to accommodate relatives and friends. They also accommodate loyalist who may not necessarily be relatives. In the majority of cases, organisational structures have nothing to do with facilitating how work is done. It has everything to do with giving each other power and privileges. In the end, the organisation will have bloated organisational structures that cost the business huge sums of money without corresponding value being created. Your organisational structure should aim at all times not to have more than 5 reporting levels from the lowest person to the CEO. Aim for a wider span of control to flatten the organisational structures. Structures cost money and they must be optimised for value addition.
5. **A leadership that keeps grudges** – The quality of leaders matter is the success of your

organisation. As John Maxwell said ‘everything rises and falls on leadership “. With bad leadership in charge, do not waste your money putting together initiatives to drive business performance. Bad leadership is equivalent to corruption, nepotism and theft of organisational resources. Such leaders will get rid of talented individuals simply because they will have challenged the decisions of the leader. Such leaders make extremely difficult for anyone with the potential to thrive within the organisation.

6. **Screen people at entry** – Most organisations have lost millions of dollars because they hired the wrong people. Invest in objective and validated scientific selection methods, which will allow you to identify the right people for the job in the first instance. Some leaders do not prioritise ensuring that only the best people are hired in the organisation. It is a waste of resources and time to hope that you will be able to correct bad hires when they join the organisation.
7. **When your time is up leave** – Leaders must not stay for too long. On average 10 years is enough to give your value and allow others to carry on with the vision of the organisation. The average tenure globally ranges from 5 to 10 years. Leaders in your organisation must on their own adhere to this standard.
8. **Hire People with high integrity.** Integrity cannot be taught. Select the right directors from the beginning so that you do not waste time trying to correct them. It is an absolute waste of money for anyone to think that they can improve someone’s integrity through training.
9. **Be candid** – the inability of board members, executives and other senior managers to raise the red flag when things are going the wrong way is one of the most treacherous practices by executives. Good leaders question things. Good leaders raise objections when wrong things are taking place regardless of who is leading that bad practice. Executives must be courageous enough to respectfully raise concerns when the Board or the CEO is involved in malpractices. Unfortunately, most CEOs hire people with blind loyalty. As an executive be prepared to stand with the truth and what is correct even if it means you will be on your own against your colleagues. That is called leadership.
10. **Never advance your interest at the expense of the organisation.** When executives get into roles with power and authority, those with a weak character are tempted to prioritise personal interest ahead of that of the organisation. They turn their office into a mini – home. They want to be worshipped as if they are in political leadership. Avoid buying the best cars and other perquisites when your employees are starving.

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