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## Making your organisation an employer of choice

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Human resources is inarguably, one of the commonest natural resources that Nigeria is blessed with, thereby, making employers to tend towards believing that they always get the best of it whenever they are in need.

There is a critical example to analyse this fact to show, in the simplest manner, how wrong such a notion could be. In Nigeria today, one may be tempted to think that since the country is blessed with crude oil, her citizens should enjoy the products at their best quality level, or at least, at their cheapest costs. Though this is a natural truth, it has, however, been defiled by other circumstances.

The point here is that there is a general mismanagement of the resource, thereby, reversing the natural truth. This situation is also applicable to human resources if decisions relating to it are taken for granted, or founded in the belief that it is always there.

Organisations who think they have made the name and therefore, have no extra business of deliberately establishing values of personnel attraction and retention may only be losing fresh talents while also training a veritable team of workforce soon to be taken over by their closest competitors.

The burden of human capacity training and development in most cases has been left for some individuals.

People, on their own costs are acquiring high level professional skills and embarking on rare self development programmes to make them stand out and attractive in the employment market. Naturally, such professionals can only be attracted by employers of choice.

Generally, employers are seeking a new approach to reach their business goals. The ability to attract, optimise, and retain top talent is a vital component to achieving this objective.

Ms Joyce Gioia, a certified management consultant at the Herman Group in the United States of America and co-author, Mr. Roger Herman, in their article: "How to Become an Employer of Choice", said "Businesses want to increase their ability to attract top talent, and they know people don't want to work in an organisation that does not do a good job; they want to work in a place where they will feel proud to work."

They say that those organisations which do earn the right to be described as employers of choice will enjoy a higher level of performance, greater workforce stability and a level of continuity that assures preservation of the knowledge base, customer loyalty, employee satisfaction, and stronger profits.

So, how do you start making your organisation an employer of choice for top talents?

A human resources expert with a blue chip company in Lagos, Mr Tom Otuaga provides important ingredients for making an organisation an employer of choice. He says it begins with excellent knowledge and application of a basic concept in human resource management called "employee value propositions" which comprises ideals that make people want to work for a company. "For most people, money ranks at the top. So, to be an employer of choice, an organisation must have competitive salary scale in place," says Otuaga.

But this is not same for others. Other people would seek to work in a place where they can balance work and play. Otuaga says, people need a job where they can work to earn a living but still want to have a family life when they get back home. So this requires that to be an employer of choice "an organisation must be known to maintain a work life balance."

Otuaga is quite in agreement with American human resources strategist and author of Excellence at Work, Ms. Sandy Asch who at the 2007 edition of World at Work annual conference advised employers to "strive for balance."

She says, "Employees will be vital and energetic at work as a result of a balanced life. Employers should therefore give their employees the opportunity to refresh and renew.

This, Otuaga says, can be achieved by creating flexi work hours, where workers' excess time at work is knocked off from the next day, pushing their resumption time later.

Today's workforce expects not only to like their work, they intend for employment to become a primary vehicle through which they find fulfilment. Top performers demand work that is rewarding, where their unique talents are recognised and encouraged. To this, Otuaga says you must be seen to have a sincere and democratised management and guarantee job security. When employees see that employer listens and cares about their feelings, they will stay with the company.

"If you are also seen as an employer that takes for long term, that means there is job security for your staff and that is also critical to becoming an employer of choice," says Otuaga. Some people are not so crazy about how a job pays them but definitely will not like to work in a place where they know that their jobs are not secured.

Gioia and Herman therefore, summarises by recommending that organisations seeking to be known as employers of choice must be seen to have "great value and culture; visionary leadership; care of people; growth and opportunity."