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## Treat staff like your customers

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Companies should treat former, current, and future employees with a customer relationship management approach. file photo | nmg

Ever feel like just a number? When we call our banks, we must provide our account number. Call a supplier, we must verify our phone number. Go to a Government of Kenya office and we must produce our ID number. Humans are not robots. We do not base our emotions off a numeric world, yet we get treated calculatedly numeric in the modern era.

Our workplaces should not be one of those locations where we feel like only a number. Unfortunately, offices usually look at employment in terms of transactional relationships rather than meaningful and sustained.

A new line of thinking from Stefan Strohmeier of Saarland University in Germany details how organisations should view and handle employees considering customer relationship management techniques.

Extensive research exists on handling clients and how to maximise such relationships. However, significantly less research has gone into longer term views on how to strengthen employment relationship management.

Strohmeier postulates that firms should handle both customers and employees using similar techniques.

Customer relationship management looks at client needs through a firm's strategy, operations, and information systems.

In terms of strategy, organisations utilise generic plans with overarching goals that specify favourable market positions for growing and then retaining individualised mutually valuable relationships with previous, current, and potential customers.

Employers should look at employees in much the same way.

However, all too often companies only retain negligible human resources plans for their staff involving full-time equivalent numbers, cheap unimpactful trainings, and targets for paltry annual merit raises.

But firms should go further and get deeper into details of their overarching plan for employees including such salient details as how long should the average staff stay with the firm, how long until the average staff member gets promoted, what skills can the firm add that helps the employee's future job prospects, what pay differential should exist between the lowest and the highest paid employee, etc.

Inasmuch, treat former, current, and future employees with a customer relationship management approach.

Next, organisations use process to reach customers. Process involves interrelated sets of individualised collaborative, functional, and analytical tasks in sales, marketing, and service care that operationalises the customer strategy.

Employees should also be treated with such esteem and not merely as a necessary evil with just payroll and benefits processing but rather robust long-term goal setting, coaching, and mentoring processes as well.

Finally, companies utilise customer relationship management information systems.

Software provides individualised analytical, collaborative, and operational functionality in sales, marketing, and service care that enacts the process and strategy.

Employees should also enjoy analytical, collaborative, and operational functionality with human resources systems but in terms of recruitment, compensation, and especially the frequently neglected area of employee development.

Satisfied employees and staff alumni make business owners more money through referrals and extra effort. So, go and start of 2018 properly by developing a meaningful and impactful human resources strategy with buy in from all your top management.