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Value of consultants against internal team

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A student in library. PHOTO | FOTOSEARCH

Consultants here, consultants there, consultants everywhere. Many pundits suggest that Kenya has the highest number of management consultants per professional worker in the world. Consulting comprises big revenue in the world. Management consulting in the United States alone represents a Sh19.9 trillion industry.

In developing nations, The Boston Consulting Group estimates that emerging market cities, like Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu, represent 67 per cent of global GDP growth increasing roughly one per cent each year against rural areas and developed cities.

We can expect the management consulting business in Kenya to flourish as a sector as our economic growth remains one of the highest in the world.

But what drives Kenya's insatiable demand for management consulting services? Businesses here love to spend money on two ubiquitous types consulting services: business plans and team building.

Kenyan business culture holds that external input to develop company strategic plans is more favourable than an internal team.

Inasmuch, Kenyan CEOs spend hefty sums on periodically compiled strategic plans but unfortunately less money goes into the "how" the firm will precisely reach the lofty plan goals.

The best consulting firms also incorporate organisational development, organisational behaviour, consumer psychology, and marketing research to help realise the goals instead of just dreaming about the targets.

But many Kenyan businesses from Nairobi's industrial area to Mombasa's importers, Athi River's export processing zone, Naivasha's flower farms, Kericho's tea heartland, and Kisumu's lake fishing industry desire the best consulting support from top firms but cannot afford it.

Instead, such companies often settle for dismal briefcase consultants who only know one way of doing things which they likely found and downloaded on Google the day before.

Businesses can still find pocket-friendly often free solutions by acquainting themselves with the latest management research that serves as the source where top consulting firms get their frameworks and methods of advice. Knowledge from business research ranges from how to use humans' ancient brain patterns to get consumers to buy more products and services, increase employee output, enhance innovation, increase market share among thousands of other topics.

Among the thousands of research journals, the following represent the most prestigious cutting-edge thought leaders.

The best management and leadership journals in the world are the Academy of Management Annals, Academy of Management Journal, International Organisation Journal, Strategic Management Journal, Journal of Management, and the Journal of Human Resources.

The leading marketing journals include the Journal of Marketing, Journal of Marketing Research, and Marketing Science. The top finance journals are the Journal of Finance, Review of Financial Studies, Journal of Financial Economics, and Journal of Accounting Research.

When delving into the in-depth world of business science research, executives will see the shockingly high rate of plagiarism and lifting of ideas that even big management consulting firms take from university faculty researchers.

Then, much of the content and methodology comes from outdated academic literature instead of the latest literature.

Some readers might not know how to interpret the statistics underpinning the featured research. However, a busy executive who only skims through the abstracts followed by the literature reviews in the articles will grasp powerful skills to boost his or her business.

These articles even contain employee, customer, and supplier surveys that firms can use to garnish critical feedback without hiring a consultant whereby the consultant almost always just copies the same surveys out of the journals or creates their own unscientifically invalid suboptimal questionnaires and tools.

So, take the time to do some research beyond simple Google searches when different company problems arise.

Look to the source of proven, tested, and validated ways from research journals in order to boost your business and save money on consulting fees in the meantime.