



THE C-SUITE

with
Ian Ortega

If you have followed this column until this point, then some major themes must have emerged. One is that strategy in the emerging world is amorphous, second is that family business is the future. All great economies are sustained by resilient family businesses. Yet, family businesses are also some of the most complex systems to run because of the intersection of family and business.

Family businesses are usually characterised by the founder, the Matriarch or Patriarch that built the business from the trenches. They were the revolutionary, the general that bears many scars because of this business growth journey. Quite often, theirs is not classroom knowledge, it is street knowledge, refined with time and experience. They have come to acquire a natural sensitivity, a business instinct.

While the rest of the business is looking Eastwards, they will notice that the real way to go is Westwards. The Founder has peculiarities that make them successful in their industry. They have their own pattern-recognition, abstract reasoning, and are also great at insane execution. The time it takes for a Founder to go from idea to execution is almost zero. They have a bias towards actions, and know the most efficient path to get to the right outcome.

The point here is that the Founder has qualities you will never find in any business school. They have been battle-hardened, they have the social capital. Customers have dealt with them overtime and they trust their word. The Founder represents certainty, quality, everything that the world comes to associate with the business brand. In fact, most of the goodwill of the business is embedded within the personality of the Founder. The Founder is a crucial intangible asset of the business. But the time always comes when the Founder (1st Generation) has to hand over the mantle.

Transitions

In Uganda, one of the most beautiful transitions was in the Mulwana Group, the transition from James to Geoffrey. It is a beautiful story of an indigenous business that moved from the first generation to second generation.

Usually, Founders will try to manage the transitions. Increasingly reduce their presence and input to the business while giving the 2nd Generation a chance to come in, find their way around the ropes of the business. The Founder will take on the role of Observer or Coach, only coming in when it is absolutely necessary.

At this point, I am describing this as a smooth transition. It is always far from true. There is never a smooth transition. First, the Founder and the 2nd Generation come from different worlds, they have



The Aga Khan siblings have continued to carry on the family businesses. PHOTOS/ABUBAKER LUBOWA

Managing transitions in family businesses

been formed by different conditions. In business, the hardest thing to replicate are the conditions that created an entrepreneur. Every condition creates a certain kind of entrepreneur.

The second generation will be an early adopter of many new technologies, new people management philosophies, and they will not have many attachments to the people that worked with the Founder. The Founder will have many people to whom they owe some loyalty, those people with whom they fought in the trenches. Yet, they may now be liabilities.

In one of the companies, the Founder had kept a certain driver on the payroll simply because he'd been his first driver, the one who chose to trust him aka Employee 001. The second generation may not share some of these sentimentalities and this will be a source of conflict.

The major conflict is that the two generations have different perspectives, and are products of different environments. Thus, it's a conflict of world views. Where the Founder exercises Strategic Patience, the 2nd Generation may want to move in fast, break things fast, and carry out quick reforms. But the Founder has also learned by getting burnt, they know that sometimes agency is not everything. But how do they pass on such a message?

Usually, it is to allow the second generation the freedom to also make their own mistakes, so that somewhere along the way, the two worlds find a meeting point. At this meeting point, they borrow lessons from each other and are able to chart out a way

into the future for the business.

The hardest test

The hardest test is always the one sat by the second generation. They have more to prove, and they have their full reputation on the line. The first generation may have faced pressure, but if they had failed, no one would have blamed them. It would be another business failure. For the second generation, there is just no room to fail. They must suc-

ceed because there is a reference point of someone who already did it.

Yet, second generation also faces the huge task of reinvention, pivoting, pointing the business to new worlds, new ways of thinking, and they must get buy-in for these transformations. They also face conflicting loyalties from those accustomed to the Founder.

Above all, for the Founder, it takes a long time to trust the sec-

ond generation at the wheels, they will keep micro-managing them, vetoing their decisions. In the end, we find that there is no proper way to do a transition, every family business must do soul-searching and do it in their own best way possible. It is the case of when the old world is dying and the new world is struggling to be born.

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MARACHA DISTRICT SERVICE COMMISSION P.O BOX 1, MARACHA

EXTERNAL ADVERT NO. 2/2026-VACANCIES

Applications are invited from suitably qualified Ugandans to fill the vacant posts that exist in Maracha District Local Government as listed below;

Applications should be submitted in triplicate on PSC Form 3 (Revised 2008) NOT later than Four weeks (JUNE 19, 2025) to the SECRETARY DISTRICT SERVICE COMMISSION P.O BOX 1, MARACHA.

Application forms are obtained from Public Service Commission and Education Service Commission website, Secretaries District Service Commission Country Wide & All Photocopying points within Maracha and must be filled in the applicants' own hand writing with three (3) current passport size photographs attached.

Applications should bear the Title and Reference Number of the post applied for. Photocopy of National Identity cards, summary forms, certified photocopies of Academic Certificates, Transcripts and Supporting documents must accompany the application forms.

For detailed information please refer to the job descriptions and specifications for Local Government 2011 and 2017, Ministry of Public Service Website at www.publicservice.go.ug, Education Service Commission Website and all District Service Commission Offices Country wide.

DEPARTMENT	POST/JOB TITLE	SALARY SCALE	REFERENCE NO.	NO. OF VACANCIES
ADMINISTRATION	Principal Town Ship Officer	U2	MAR/DSC/11/2025	01
	Parish Chief	us	MAR/DSC/12/2025	01

NOTE: RECRUITMENT INTO THE DISTRICT PUBLIC SERVICE IS A FREE SERVICE, PROMISING OR OFFERING ANYTHING TO INDUCE MEMBERS OF DISTRICT SERVICE COMMISSION, THE STAFF OR ANY OTHER LEADER AT THE DISTRICT IS ILLEGAL. ANYONE WHO DEMANDS ANY BRIBE FROM A JOB APPLICANT, SHOULD BE REPORTED TO THE RELEVANT GOVERNMENT AGENCIES LIKE IGG, SHACU, RDC, MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SO ON. WE STAND FOR ZERO TOLERANCE TO CORRUPTION.

SECRETARY, DISTRICT SERVICE COMMISSION