



VOICE

Let's Invest in Human Capital.

Investissons dans le capital Humain

July-September 2023 / Quarterly



In a professional world of so many voices : CEOs, Coworkers, Coaches or Mentors, Stakeholders, Shareholders and our own voice, how does one decide what the right course of action is, in a given business context?

This quarter, let's talk about making strategic people decisions beneficial to your organization goals, to your people, or to yourself.

How can we know that we are making the right decision particularly in a context where stakes are very high, and each people decision will come with heavy consequences. Should we rely on our experience, our expertise, our gut or others' views and inputs? That is a tough call to make, and there is not a one-size-fits-all answer since each business context is different.

This edition of voice contains ideas, examples, various business contexts, research and information on HR or people decisions that you will find useful while you are in the process of making your own people-related decision. Enjoy the reading!

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Mirrors on self

Resist or Change? An important decision

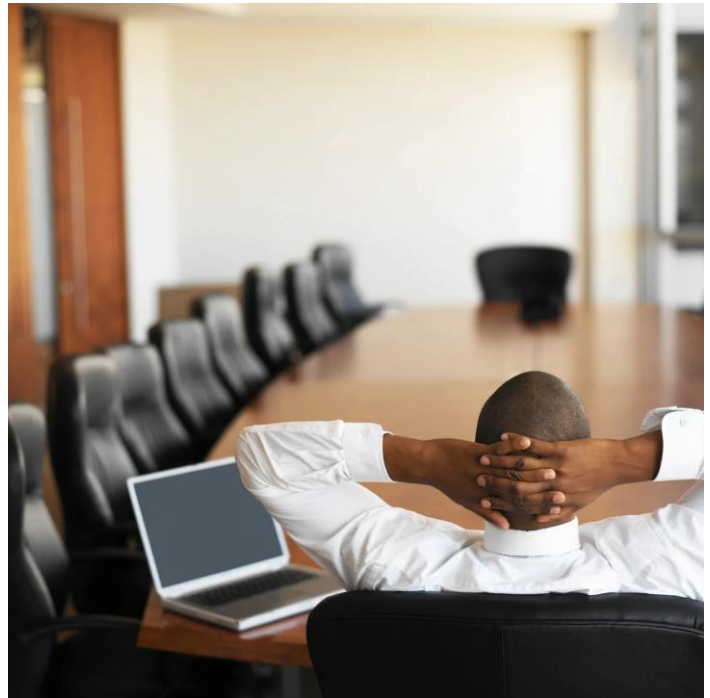
When people hear the word: resistance, they often see it as a conscious attitude of rebellion towards something or someone. While it is true that resistance has to do with saying no, or not accepting, it is not always a conscious reaction. When a person is informed that he has diabetes and that he should give up certain eating habits, but he refuses to do so, he is being consciously resistant to Change and may suffer from it. When it is time for a baby to grow up and be nourished with solid food, rather than his mother's milk. And he starts fighting, crying and screaming about it, it is an unconscious resistance to a change that he is unaware could only bring him health and growth.

Resistance to change is refusing to accept to flow with seasons and situations. Life is change, and nature itself tells us about change every single day. Our body changes and adapts to time, whether we want it or not. We grow teeth because the time to chew has come. Our sex organs developed as we got older, to prepare us for sex and for conception. Even in our simplest habits, we change and adapt. When it starts to rain, we put our coats on or don't forget to carry our umbrellas. When it gets hotter, no one forgets to switch the A/C or the fan on. And when it gets colder, no one forgets to switch the heating on. We even go as far as changing our future plans in anticipation of an upcoming change of weather.

Resistance to change means refusing to adapt, refusing consciously or unconsciously to prepare ourselves to live and flourish in a new situation.

Consider Luke's story. Luke is considered to be an expert in the multinational company where he works. Technical Director and an influential member of the Management team, Luke has seen his career considerably advance and he has earned the respect of all his colleagues due to his constant performance beyond assigned targets. He is a Leader and an Achiever. For 20 years, he has proven to be one of the best technical specialists around, working with and grooming a team of 20 to 30 well educated and competent executives that he has always managed brilliantly, with a firm and rigorous hand. It is this rigorous management style that has always earned him so much recognition during his long career.

At the beginning of the year, a new CEO is appointed to lead the company. His management style and way of working are completely different from what the company has known in the past 20 years, and after nearly 12 months of difficult collaboration with this new CEO, Luke decides that it is time to leave. He quits and moves on with his career by joining another

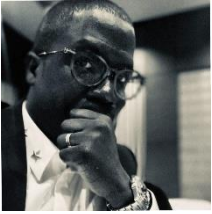


multinational as Regional Technical Director covering 8 countries. For him, it is a new start and a new opportunity to make use of his experience acquired in his career and last job.

But things do not go as he expects, and after working for 12 months, while his technical performance on the job is excellent, it is completely the opposite with his behavior that many do not appreciate around him, be they coworkers, teammates or bosses.

He realizes after a performance review and a 360 degree evaluation that nearly all his team members hate him. He is no example of symbol of respect as he used to be, and none of his Line managers gave good comments about him. Asked about this situation during his performance conversation with the CEO, Luke is frustrated, shocked and torn inside. He feels that people are against his straightforward way of dealing with situations, and makes the decision to carry on being who he has always been, as it is this side of him that has always helped him succeed in his career. He does not contemplate change whatsoever, no matter what happens. He is a good Technical Director, and he knows it.

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Strongwill, Partnership and Community Engagement illuminate a village in Mali.

In this edition of VOICE, I am inviting you to discover and appreciate a community impact project in Mali, made possible by the will and commitment of [Yahia Camara](#), **founding member and Deputy General Manager of the association Espoir 18**, which works for social integration and equal opportunities, a true enthusiast for the emergence of Africa. In this issue, Yahia Camara tells us about one of the community projects he has just completed in a rural area in Mali with the help of young people, **the lighting of a village by installing streetlights powered with solar energy**. When individual desires and the passion to help communities arises and associates with the commitment of an entire community, it gives.... **Light**. Let's read in his own words, the motivation behind and story of this impactful project.



Mr Camara, can you talk about the solar energy community project you conducted in Mali ?

The aim of the project was to bring lighting to a village located in western Mali in the Kayes region. The objectives: Bring more security to the village in a country that has been fighting against terrorism for ten years now, Allow the villagers to have a nightlife. (After 5:30 p.m. there was no more light). And Allow businesses to have a wider hourly amplitude, and this way have a better economic potential.



Visit the page of: [The Foundation Espoir 18 on](#)

What motivated you to start this project?

We have been carrying out projects abroad for fifteen years. At first, I wanted to contribute to my country of origin: Mali. Following a trip in 2003, I saw the poverty in my village, the ravages of poor-quality water that the villagers were drinking. I then worked with the Foundation I was working for to raise funding and have two water pumps installed. And that's how the fulfillment of contributing to communities grew in me. **"I travelled with 8 young people from the 18th arrondissement of Paris, we were ignorant and arrogant and we thought we were going to teach everything to the villagers and we were surprised by their ingenuity, their sympathy..."**.

How did you get the funding?

We worked on self-funding on one hand and on corporate donations from personal contacts who contributed to the project. I also contributed through my businesses in Mali.

In your opinion, what is the impact of this project today for the populations?



This project has had a real life impact: financially, it now allows merchants to open their shops until 10

p.m. for some. This allows the villagers to have nightlife, the children to be able to study, play games and walk around a little later in the evening. Activities are now organized in the evening, because most of the villagers are busy during the day. Having light makes it possible to see the danger coming, there is a strong reduction in the theft of cattle in the village.

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The central role of your HR or People function for a successful People Transformational Initiative.



Since the pandemic, there has been a high focus on transformational people initiatives across organizations in the world. Employees, Staff or now referred as People, have gained more value for organizations than in the past, as employers started to recognize the critical importance of being more human towards the people who make the business what it is. Companies have also realized the critical need to fundamentally change their trajectory, their corporate culture, or the way they conduct business. As such, here and there companies have started to recognize the need for transformation and in numerous organizations, plenty of transformational people initiatives have emerged designed to reach strategic business objectives while strengthening, protecting, engaging and retaining their workforce.

Companies' experiences investigated in studies have shown that succeeding in transforming an organization is far from being a given. John Kotter emphasized this difficulty when he reported in 1995 in his [well-known study](#) that **70% of corporate transformation programs fail**. Nearly thirty years later, this assertion unfortunately still stands as demonstrated in a [Harvard Business Review research article published in 2021](#).

Using a meta-analysis, the research found that **only 22% of companies in the analysis successfully transformed themselves** which suggested a 78% failure rate: Corporate Transformation is an extremely hard task.

This article is not a recipe for successful transformation. There are many good recipes out there for successful corporate transformations that I would like to encourage you to read about. Hard tasks are not made easy by only following a recipe, but most of all by selecting the right people in the kitchen, with the right knowledge, flair, experience, skills, and attitude, who can improvise on the recipe with great results, even when challenges appear along the way (while cooking). Hence, this article introduces the central role of your people function in a people transformational initiative at every stage of the program.

Why put your people function at the center of a people transformational program?



In nearly 25 years of professional experience in the corporate world, be it private, public, or nonprofit, small, medium, or multinational, the same fact always comes clear: HR is one of the only technical functions that almost every experienced leader in the organization claims or thinks to be an expert of. And more and more organizations have started to appoint non-HR executives at HR leadership roles. You would rarely see this when it comes to other corporate functions such as Finance, IT, Communication etc... It is quite understandable given that the HR function deals with People and most of the time experienced Leaders have accumulated substantial experience working with people over the years and we know for sure that knowing an organization culture in addition to its people provides a huge edge when it comes to people matters. Having said that, **let's always remember that the people function is a technical function, first and foremost.** [Click here to continue reading ...](#)

Coaching



Through HR lenses: 5 lessons on Service and Commitment inspired by Queen Elizabeth's life.

September 8th 2022 marked the end of an era as many media and newspapers reported. An icon whose life spanned nearly 10 decades and whose work lasted 70 years had just passed. The particularity of this monarch is that she inherited a gigantic responsibility at a very young age and went on to carry this enormous responsibility through multiple major political, social, and economic changes within her kingdom as well globally through the years, yet with an unwavering commitment and unshakable sense of service throughout.

At 25, she became Queen of 7 independent countries and Head of the Commonwealth and she assumed the role of a constitutional Monarch through the decolonization of Africa, through the troubles in her own kingdom with Northern Ireland, the devolution of the United Kingdom, the UK integration as well as withdrawal from the European community, while many of the UK territories one after the other became independent or republics, and all amidst her own family problems and numerous economic or social shocks. Her position could be assimilated to that of an "employee" of the Crown, or a "servant" of the Crown, as she served the British Crown and the Commonwealth People most of her life.

Before drawing a few lessons from her tenure that could be useful for all of us employees, leaders or business owners, let's gather a few facts about the service or "employment" of Queen Elizabeth II

→ **Tenure:** Her lifelong service lasted longer than an employee work life: +70 years; it went beyond the average retirement age of an employee. Though she could have retired earlier*, she chose not to retire nor abdicate and

remained on the job until her passing. As a matter of fact, it is reported* that her last royal engagement was the appointment of the UK 15th prime minister Liz Truss on September 6th, a few days before her passing.

→ **Application or Interest for the job:** Queen Elizabeth II did not apply to the position, nor was she elected or nominated into the job. She inherited the job by bloodline when her father passed away in 1952 and as such was given the position and took it. There was no recruitment process, no interview, no choice to express interest for this job among multiple other jobs, and no assessment of fitness for this job. This job was not necessarily her preferred one as there was no other jobs for her to choose from. When her father became King in 1936 after abdication of his brother, she was "prepared" for 16 years to take up that job someday as she became the presumptive heir to the throne. Her rank in the lineage determined her right or obligation to take that job.

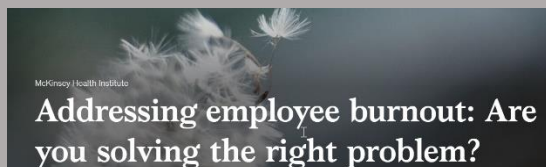
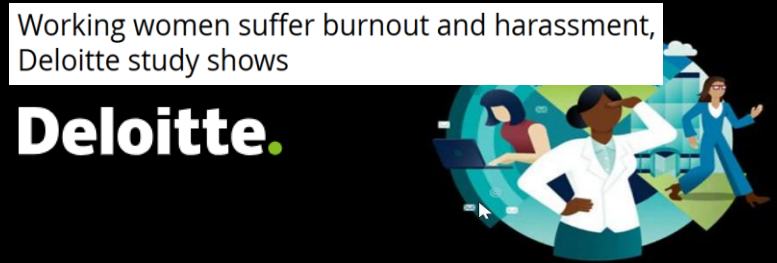
→ **Terms of Reference or Job Description:** The job description and duties were clear, but multi-faceted, covering multiple roles as Head of several entities: realms, states, nations, estates, organizations, and charities, etc... In addition, the job description changed over time as the realms changed and as the extent of the role was defined by law, constitutions and Acts that happened to change over time. The role also had an extensive list of rules, etiquettes, and pieces of royal protocol to follow. There was no mobility offered, neither geographical nor a possibility of reassignment to a different role. And there was no Staff Association, or organizational support to handle claims or discontent emerging from taking up the role.

→ **Reporting line:** This role is the highest in the job hierarchy of the United Kingdom. The reporting line was quite unique and complex, as the Queen, though formally not reporting to anyone, had to make decisions in conjunction with the UK parliament. As the Head of State and nations, you might say that she reported to herself or to the Crown, however it is safe to say that she somewhat reported to millions of people who contributed to her "salary and benefits" from their taxes and had a say in the public opinion of her reign, or her approval rating.

Leave and Work-Life Balance: Despite her busy schedule, her most complex position and her numerous activities, Queen Elizabeth II took vacations almost timed, at regular and precise times of the year and without fail during her 70 years of reign. What an undeniable example of taking care of oneself whatever the workload! That being said, [Click here to continue reading ...](#)

Research on People matters.

Burnout is on the rise globally and strongly correlated with negative workplace factors such as toxic behaviors: Is your organization addressing symptoms or root causes?
(Article inspired from findings of 4 studies related to Burnout in organizations)



Why is burnout on the rise globally when employers have actively invested into well being initiatives at work?

Though employers around the world have invested unparalleled resources in employee wellbeing and mental health initiatives since the Pandemic, Workplace burnout has been on the rise globally since 2021, and is now at an all-time high according to a February 2023 [research by Future Forum pulse](#), a quarterly survey of more than 10,000 desk workers in 6 countries: US, Australia, France, Germany, Japan and the UK . The report points out that two types of workers are more at risk of burning out than others: women and workers under 30 years of age. [Another report by Gallup in 2021](#) revealed that women have always had higher burnout levels than men and notes that the gap has doubled since 2019.

When the covid-19 pandemic stroke, it exacerbated employee health and wellbeing challenges, and employers immediately responded with concrete actions to ensure their people are protected and safe. As part of the [Mckinsey Health Institute Employee mental health wellbeing survey conducted in 2022](#), across the globe, 80% of HR leaders reported that employee wellbeing is a top priority in their organization. Yet, the phenomenon is rising, and burnout is globally on the rise and persists. What seems to be the issue or what is being missed/ is a fair question for corporate leaders to ask ourselves. This spike on burnout noted in all reports, despite employers' active actions, makes it an interesting phenomenon to look at more closely from a Human Resources strategic standpoint.

What is burnout ?

But first let's try and dissipate the confusion around what burnout is. Before we dive into the official definition of burnout, it is important to note that burnout is considered an occupational phenomenon and not a medical condition by the World Health Organization. This means that it is a factor that influences health status and is not an illness or a health condition. According to the World Health organization, burnout is a syndrome resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is illustrated by three indicators:

- Feelings of energy decline or exhaustion.
- Increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and
- Reduced professional efficacy.

A most recent [survey by Deloitte on burnout conducted in 2023](#) among 5000 women workers across 10 countries including 500 women from South Africa, notes that while a slight decline in burnout numbers is noticeable globally in 2023 compared to 2022, working women across the globe continue to suffer heavily and widely from burnout. In South Africa for example, it is reported that 40% of South African women feel burnt out, while 51% feel their stress levels are higher than a year ago.

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The Vision of this newsletter "VOICE" is to :

Inspire, Motivate, Encourage, Build and lead our readers to :
Invest in Human capital

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&

Join the **iChange** mission to impact our communities.

I am an **INDIVIDUAL**

I represent an **INSTITUTION**

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Community Leadership: I am setting up a community or non-profit activity or project, in the fields of Education, Training, HR Development or Coaching and I wish to share the impact of such a project that I conducted and their impact, to encourage others to do the same.

Community Partnership: We would like to know more about your projects to strengthen Human Capital in rural communities in order to be partners, contribute and encourage other institutions to join the mission **iChange**



Moral/Public Leadership: I want to invest in my personal human capital by strengthening my Moral or Community Leadership, or by strengthening my behavioral skills in order to better impact my environment.

Moral/Public Leadership: We want to invest in the Human Capital of our executives by strengthening their Moral or Community Leadership or their behavioral skills in order to better impact my environment.



International Certifications: I would like to obtain an international certification in Public or Community Leadership, in Public Policy, in HR or in Professional Coaching.

International Certifications: We want our executives or beneficiaries to get training to obtain international certifications in Professional Coaching, HR or Public Leadership or Public Policy.



Donation/ Volunteering: I would like to know more about the ASPIRE YOUTH project, which aims to prepare young people living in rural areas for employment, to donate or contribute as a volunteer.

Funding/ Volunteering: We would like to know more about your projects to strengthen Human Capital, to donate or to encourage our executives to contribute as Volunteers.