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CBE Focus



CBE advisory panel member appointed to BRICS Business Council

The CBE executive of the CBE congratulates Nizam Kalla on his appointment as chairman of the BRICS Business Council's Manufac-turing Working Group.

Nizam is a former president of the CBE and currently serves on the CBE advisory panel.

In the appointment letter, council member Dr Stavros Nicolaou stated that "Mr Kalla brings a wealth of experience in this field and that he has proven to be a reliable, respected and trusted leader and participant in the BRICS fraternity."

He extended the council's support in the task ahead as Nizam has an understanding of the critical nature that manufacturing plays in driving growth, transformation and prosperity in markets across the world.

Yusuf Moosajee, Executive Director of the CBE, said: "This is a deserving appointment and we offer our support to Nizam towards any initiatives to revive and grow the manufacturing industries in SADC countries."



Nizam Kalla - CBE Advisory Panel member serving on BRICS

Like 1956, our women will rise again to protect our democracy

History bears testimony to the significant role that Women played in the liberation of our country. Women came together from different ethnic groups - Black, White, Indian, and Coloured, all united in their common goal.

Twenty thousand women of all races participated in the 1956 Women's march in opposition to the pass laws. The work and sacrifices that were made by the women in organising this march was mammoth, but a common goal spurred them on.

The formation of the Federation of South African Women was made up of many women's groups, including African, Indian, Coloured and Whites.

The Federation's primary objective was "to bring the women of South Africa together to secure full equality of opportunity for all women, regardless of race, colour or creed; to work for the protection of women and children of our land."

As part of the Women's Charter, it is stated that "We shall teach the men that they cannot hope to liberate themselves from the evils of discrimination and prejudice as long as they fail to extend to women complete and unqualified equality in law and practice. Freedom cannot be won for any one section or for the people as a whole as long as we the women are kept in bondage." This charter was also included as part of the Freedom Charter.

In this month of August, we celebrate the significant contribution made by women in all facets of our country, and remember the women of the past who rallied to the call to bring about our hard-won democracy.

History calls upon women once again to stand up with men and say: "enough is enough!" In the face of the insurrection of last month, which was a well-orchestrated plan to destabilise the already fragile political and economic landscape, we should not allow our hard-won democracy to be hijacked by groupings with nefarious intent.

We really have two choices - sit back and allows thugs to ruin our country, or push back as civil society, both men and women, and put tremendous pressure on Government to start ruling our country as they are supposed to do. We need to wake them up from their slumber and save our country. The alternative is too hard to contemplate.

Like the women of 1956, our women will no doubt play a leading role in addressing this new challenge to our democracy.

Yusuf Moosajee—CBE Executive Director

Remembering CBE Women's Day High Teas

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Remembering CBE Women's Day High Teas...continued

Covid-19 has again denied CBE from hosting and honouring women's achievements. We decided to go down memory lane and publish pictures from some of the successful Women's Month CBE events of the past.











Special Gandhi-related policeman's belt donated to Ahmed Kathrada Foundation

A 1900 standard issue belt forcibly taken from a policeman who tried to assault Mahatma Gandhi with it will find a permanent home at the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation.

Baboo Nagdee donated the belt to the Foundation in July 2011, on behalf of his family at a function at the Walter Sisulu Centre in Kliptown where the historic Freedom Charter was signed more than five decades earlier.

"The belt has been a prized possession in our family to signify the strong bond that our grandfather, Mohamed Essop Nagdee, had with Gandhiji when he was mobilising the community to protest the unjust laws that were being introduced around 1900," Nagdee said afterwards, but he deferred to veteran activist Mosie Moola to relate the story to the community leaders present.

"This belt became very famous because in the early days of the last century, Baboo's grandfather was very closely associated with Mahatma Gandhi.

It was at a place near the town of Warmbaths, that one of the policemen present was attempting to assault Gandhiji. Baboo's grandfather got quite mad, pushed the man aside, gave him a shot and pulled the belt away," said Moola.

"This was a very brave and daring thing to do at the time, because if you took anything off a policeman, it was a major offence."

Little is known of the aftermath of the incident, but the belt became a talking point for the local Indian community for many years to come, although it was carefully hidden from the apartheid authorities for decades more.

Kathrada could not attend the function because of a death in the family, so veteran Lenasia activist Isu Chiba accepted the belt, encased in glass, on his behalf.



L-R Veteran South African Indian freedom fighters Baboo Nagdee, Isu Chiba and Mosie Moola at the handing over of a famously infamous belt to the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation.



How communication keeps the family-owned business together

Communication is the glue that holds any business together. Likewise, the concentration of that glue is vital to separate fact from fiction, success, or failure. This is no different for Family-Owned Businesses (FOBs), yet perhaps one of the most essential elements. In FOBs, communication needs to be structured, precise and detailed to avoid derailing the mission and vision.

In a South African context of communication concerning FOBs, many second and third-generation businesses did not or still do not have a clear communication model. Most communication took place over the meal table or while commuting from their home to their business. The communication was not documented but recalled if there was a challenge.

When the strength of such communication in an FOB is low, based on ambiguity or no clear lines of control, more fiction than fact emerges and leads to confusion. Mistrust develops and damages the business operations.

Therefore, structured communication plays a defining or imperative role. This key factor lays a foundation for the family-owned business's future transition between generations.

Selecting the methodology of communication; being clear of the message itself that needs to be dispersed, staying in sync of the message and being responsive to the message, are essential to the success of the message between the sender and receiver.

1. A starting point to strengthen your communication campaign within an FOB should be to define a communication channel from Shareholders to the Board of Directors and vice versa. The Shareholders themselves should define the communication channels within their ranks, so as to clarify facts first and forge a roadmap in communication. It is also helpful to ensure that there is agreement on the intended message content, instructions, concerns and resolutions to avoid miscommunication, which also has repercussions.
2. Secondly, strong communication channels, both verbal and non-verbal (written emails, texts etc.), can promote generational business continuity by ensuring the correct messages are communicated, as well as minimise mistrust and anxiety.
3. When clear communications and expectations are promoted correctly, these can boost morale and retain talent, propelling the business forward. It may also create a platform for robust discussions among members, which in turn promotes idea sharing, development of creativity and other positive benefits.

Thirdly, the communication should be conveyed easily and clearly, so as not to create confusion in disseminating the message. The binding glue should be able to develop, engage and manage communication between the hierarchy of the family-owned business, from Shareholders to Directors, Directors to Divisional Heads, and Divisional Heads through to their teams.

Successful FOBs or "old monied family-owned businesses" that were in their third generation or older before the demise of apartheid, used minute-taking to clear any confusion and relay the facts. Post-apartheid many of these businesses felt political freedom was business freedom.

The education system evolved, and many doors opened for the previously disadvantaged to further their studies. There was and is peer pressure between families as to where their offspring studied. So many of the patriarchs believed that a high performing student from an Ivy League University would bring new business ideas.

However, there was a culture shock that occurred. The returning offspring were not on the same page with the patriarch's views and hence there was a sudden increase in business failure from 1997 to 2007.

Decision-making and purse strings handed over through blurry lines of communication affected business. Initially, it was the founder and his sons; thereafter founder; sons and managers as the business grew.

Now, it is the founders, sons, their offspring, and the managers. This line of communication was blurred. Blurry lines of communication can be between the first phase i.e. founder and his children, as they understood the family creed and values.

As the businesses expand and evolve with new family entrants, there needs to be a defined line of communication. The glue being family policies, family member employment policies, family shareholding policies, advisory councils for managing challenges, roles of family and non-family directors; roles of family and non-family managers and managing the succession plan.

Ahmed Seedat is a member of the Board Research Desk and a registered Professional Business Advisor. He is a renowned author, mentor and keynote speaker who has spent years cultivating his knowledge and experiences into holistic solutions, empowering a multitude of entrepreneurs globally. His work nationally and internationally has earned him an enviable reputation, based on successful results. He has vast personal expertise in the dynamics of family-owned businesses.

From the CBE Archives

In this edition we reflect on the founding of the CBE and its work for the first two-years which led to the branding of the CBE as a progressive movement.

May 1989	**A conference entitled "The Role of Business in a Changing South Africa" was hosted by the Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC) at Milpark Holiday Inn. This gave birth to the TIC Business and Economy Group, later renamed the Congress of Business and Economics (CBE).**
Oct 1989	CBE was part of an MDM Solidarity Committee supporting SWAPO with various logistics in the Namibian elections. (CBE was instrumental in arranging transport logistics).
Dec 1989	CBE was represented at the Conference for a Democratic Future (CDF), "to intensify our struggle against Apartheid, exploitation and to unite our people as never before."
Feb 1990	CBE hosted a Dinner on "The Economic Implications of the Education Crisis."
Mar 1990	Zaheer Motani of the CBE addressed a meeting hosted by the Benoni Independent Traders and Professional Association. The theme was "The need to organise small business." In addition, several CBE members addressed several forums that year.
Apr 1990	CBE hosted a seminar on "Nationalisation and Redistribution" with Professor Nick Binedell from Wits Business School, Professor Sampie Terblanche, Economics Professor at the University of Stellenbosch and Nick Coleman at the Carlton Hotel.
Apr 1991	CBE hosted a seminar on value added tax (VAT) by a team of tax experts at the Carlton Hotel.
Between June and Sept 1991	The CBE went on a roadshow to various regions assisting business people affected by consumer boycotts. A series of consultations culminated in the formation of a CBE Business Forum in October 93, representing business from all over the former Transvaal province.
Sept 1991	An MOU was signed with a fraternal organisation from Natal known as the Consultative Business Forum (CBF).
Oct 1991	CBE was represented at a Patriotic Front conference in Natal. The conference endorsed the setting up of an All-party Congress (APC) or Pre-Constituency Assembly meeting that came to be known as CODESA.
Oct 1991	CBE made input in a Sunday Times Metro article on the Indian Community.
Nov 1991	CBE hosted a dinner Sandton Sun Hotel, where guest speaker Dr Pallo Jordaan of the ANC Information Department acknowledged the important role of the CBE.

A Perfect Storm - Understanding the Current Anarchy and Looting in SA

By Manish Patel

There are a number of antecedents to the current social unrest and looting in our country, the root of which analysts across the spectrum have identified broadly as the result of dissatisfaction with government interventions to address poverty, unemployment and the ever-widening inequalities in society.

These issues are inter-related. Firstly, we suffer high levels of poverty, mainly in the African community. Secondly, as we approach the end of the third decade of the euphoric advent of democracy, we remain a highly unequal society, with low confidence in market-driven economics to solve this challenge. Thirdly, according to Stats SA, the official unemployment rate was 32,6% in the first quarter of 2021. Government has failed to satisfactorily resolve other underlying conflicts in our society like repeated burning of trucks on the N3, which is a vital route for the economy; xenophobia; and land reform.

Added to this is the unexpected whammy of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has exacerbated the poverty and unemploy-ment by the lockdowns and slow government vaccination rollout.

Successive ANC economic policies have not created meaningful social equity in our society. Corruption has undermined government's capabilities to govern or enforce its policies. The damning evidence of this provided at the Commission of Inquiry into State Capture has further dented the credibility of the ANC and by extension of the country as an investment destination. Even domestically, the economy has been battered.

Two of the major players in reviving the economy are government and the labour movement. Our political leaders are opportunistic and indecisive and have failed to bring about any sort of social cohesion, nation-building and national pride; while the labour movement is fractured.

Against this background, the recent continuation of the lockdown amid the challenges of reviving the economy; as well as former President Zuma's jail commencement and the looting, arson and violence that was allowed to fester in its wake, created the perfect trigger for the anarchy and looting that we find ourselves in.

This social upheaval is not a narrow moral support for the former President. Neither is it an exclusively ethnic revolt, as has been suggested by President Cyril Ramaphosa.

While some would interpret the developments in the wake of the looting as a vote of confidence in the current President, he needs to act more speedily and decisively in implementing several issues to avoid a recurrence and restore some level of confidence among the citizens.

Going forward, several things need to happen to address the situation, in a sustainable way.

These include an urgent short-term poverty relief program; an unequivocal commitment to a market-driven economy; a meaningful and accelerated social equity development programme, for which BBBEE alone is not enough; a decisive security cluster driven by effective human intelligence and supported by an effective criminal justice system; and a commitment to nation-building, as former President Mandela espoused and practiced.

The current race-baiting on social media, blaming and moralising is unhelpful at this time. What we need is to rather focus our energies to constructively deal with the realities that face us as a nation.