



Jobs for Chommies

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Do you think that it's important to receive a 'leg up' to further your career? Would this include accepting nepotism? How about jobs for family and friends? We have all had this conversation with ourselves or close colleagues. We see it happening daily. We despise it if it does not include us. We may accept it if it helps us. We ask: If they can, why can't I?

This **KWIK series** aims to start conversations amongst individuals, social groups, and in organisations. We share practical knowledge – built up over decades, and which would have helped us if we knew it earlier. We believe that people between 25 and 45, if they have access to this knowledge, are ideally placed to lead in rebuilding South Africa.

Think About

- What type of organisation do you work for (family or small business, large corporate, listed company)?
- Do you see signs of nepotisms and favouritism in your organisation?
- How does that make you feel?
- Do you feel you can take this up with Human Resources or Management?
- Does your organisation's culture allow for open conversations on nepotism and/or favouritism?
- Does your organisation have values, a code of conduct, an ethics policy, etc.?
- Does your organisation have an anonymous "tip-offs line" that you can call to raise your concerns?
- Do you fear victimisation in your organisation?
- Do you **#leadwhereyouare**?

We all need a break sometimes. However, if you are put in a position that you have not earned and maybe not even qualified for or ready to do, everyone suffers – including the person who created the gap for you. The fact is, such appointments catch up with everyone. It becomes the weakest link or, if it happens regularly, several weak links in the organisation. The entire team suffers – because others must take up the slack created by the incompetent person. Overall service delivery and productivity suffers. There is lack of accountability and consequence management, especially if such a person was appointed by senior leaders in the organisation. If such practices are prolific, they reach a saturation point where most people cannot be held to account – and the organisation becomes unsustainable. The organisational culture suffers. People who deserved the job feel hard done by and become demotivated. The team feels frustrated, especially if they cannot speak up. The incompetent incumbent also loses in the long run, because he/she does not benefit from the experience of working their way up the ladder: learning essential lessons, gaining insights, maturing professionally and emotionally, and becoming an experienced individual that can lead others. Should they be a senior leader, they do not enjoy the experience and benefits of leading a team. Fear, politics, and backstabbing become the order of the day. The organisational culture becomes toxic. The "highfliers", the more experienced and employable people, leave the organisation – which is then left with the "dead wood" and those that benefit from nepotism and favouritism. This problem is created due to poor hiring practices and can also bleed into other areas, such as promotions and incentives. In the short term, the organisation may not feel it, however, in the long-term things tend to catch up. These practices eat away at the organisation like a slow, malignant cancer – ultimately leading to financial implosion. In the broader economy, this then leads to more value being destroyed than created – making everyone poorer in the long run. Therefore, we should avoid nepotism and favouritism at all costs. Any hiring should be done on merit. In family businesses, it may be unavoidable but should be managed responsibly, in the best interest of the business.

Practical Tips

- Check if "fairness" is one of the values in your organisation.
- Ensure that hiring practices provide a fair chance to all potential candidates.
- Declare any conflict of interest and recuse yourself from interviews involving family or friends.
- Apply the same rules for all employees, specifically regarding remuneration, incentives or promotions.
- Hire on merit only.
- Deal with any complaints regarding favouritism swiftly, fairly, and transparently.
- Give credit where its due.
- Manage real or perceived instances of unfairness swiftly, fairly, and transparently.

- We provide coaching and mentoring sessions for young leaders wishing to equip themselves with knowledge to make a difference in society.
- Coaching takes place face-to-face or online, one-on-one or groups – as suitable for participants.
- Requests for topics to be covered in this series are welcome.
- Other Lucidum Learning resources are available on our website at www.lucidum.africa.

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