



OCTOBER 2018 NEWSLETTER

Featured
Literacy
The Key to
Business Growth



COYA AWARD WINNER
Best in Customer Orientation
and Marketing
2015 - 2016



Voted No. 1
Top Mid-Sized Company In Kenya
and The Best In Real Estate
2014.





ABOUT OPTIVEN GROUP

Optiven Group is a leading brand in the African real estate sector. The Group's main objective is to empower property investors and transform the Society. The Group has a number of flourishing Strategic Business Units (SBUs).

These are subsidiaries that include Optiven Construction and Optiven Water. Captained by its Founder and CEO, George Wachiuri, the Group is rightly living up to its mission, which is to create an environment that positively transforms its staff, customers and all its stakeholders through offering state of the art products and services.

Optiven's flagship product is Value Added Plots, which are particularly enhanced to suit immediate residential settlement, commercial purposes and futuristic capital gain. Optiven is a one-stop shop offering a two-step model for home ownership solutions to its customers.



Superbrands East Africa
2017 - 2018



Number One Company in
Kenya and the Best in Real
Estate Under Top 100 Mid-
Size Company Awards 2014/15



Best Company in Customer
Orientation & Marketing in
Kenya (COYA AWARDS)

Word from the CEO

“ CREATING A GOLDEN PATH TO SUCCESS



Success, according to leading motivational speaker and author Hilary Hinton “Zig” Ziglar, comes when opportunity meets preparation.

Here is how you can prepare yourself as you walk towards the golden path of your individual success:

1. Choose and Display the Right Attitude

The Right attitude determines your altitude. The choice is personal and you need to make a decision today for this change. You need a 360 degrees transformation to change your story to success. Choosing right attitude leads to better relationships, promotion at place of work, success in business, solid relationships and attracting the right people in your circle

2. Determine and Act on the Right Priorities

Life is full of choices and zillions of competing priorities. Develop a habit of saying no to issues that add no value to your main goal. Delegate what can be done by your juniors and focus on the best priority. Plan yourself today and let's meet at the top. You cannot be everything neither can you be everywhere. Avoid to be people pleaser as this is recipe for terrible failure.

3. Be conscious of What You Eat and Follow Health guidelines

Yes, you are what you eat and your body is vital to you. Just put some effort to make it better. If you are above 40 years, it becomes utmost important to verify what you eat and what you do. Health living is mandatory in the world we are living. Find out where your greens comes from. Do not just buy and cook. Food tracing is going to be a very vital activity in coming days. Where I work, at Optiven Group, we are doing organic farming to improve the health of our people www.kfarm.co.ke. This will help you know what you eat

4. Communicate with Care

This is the beginning of healthy relationship. Good communication means healthy social life that reduces Depression tendencies. You need a peaceful mind at all times. Just use good words. You receive what you give. Practice & develop good thinking is the origin of all global innovation and creativity. Create time to think and you will see the solutions you will offer to our society. Personally, I spare 20 minutes to just think & plan every day. This has given birth to books, businesses, mentorship lessons, talks plus more support to the society through one of the biggest foundation in Kenya www.optivenfoundation.org

5. Make and keep proper commitments

Be authentic on what you plan to do. This is not easy and sometimes is very costly to keep your word. I committed to be FB live every Friday and I can assure you it's not that easy. We have however done it by the Gods grace. These shows are always available on George Wachiuri YouTube Channel.



Mr. George Wachiuri
C.E.O Optiven Group

Customer Service

THE OPTIVEN WAY



Do customers have the power to bring down a company? Perhaps a better question would be, what are some of the factors that lead to companies closing their operations? Apart from bad corporate governance, a lack of ethics and lack of clear strategies for growth, one of the key factors is people... mainly staff and customers. Any business and especially those that are successful understand the intensity of the important contributions that staff make to their success. No company is great where its staff are not the bearers of its vision and first ambassadors of the brand they represent. These are the go to people when a crisis hits the company and the whole world then runs to the staff of the said company.

Recently, there are a number of companies locally that have undergone challenges including one of the one-time leading supermarkets in Kenya. And even in the thick of things, a visit to the supermarket saw the skeleton staff there doing what they do best... wiping empty shelves, showing customers where to find what they are looking for, doing their best to smile and yes, being at work even when a number of their branches were closing down. This is the team that despite the challenges still stayed focused, hitting goals, working to salvage the brand and supporting the management in its hour of trial by giving support the best way they know how.

Another contrast to the supermarket story is the despicable

handling of customers by any entity purporting to be in business. Take the case of a transport company that intentionally provides its customers with dirty vehicles... some that are actually infested with cockroaches! The staff at the transport offices have attitudes that make one wonder how about I just walk like the early man before the introduction of coal-run steam engines. The filth and infestation notwithstanding, the curt way in which they handle questions from customers is appalling. Then there is the social media space where questions asked by the public with regard to the products and services, receive an offhand response akin to demeaning the customers.

This brings to the picture the importance of customer service and it's centrality in the sustenance of brands. There have been many definitions of what is customer service but where Optiven Limited is concerned, the customer is the centre of everything we do. We are grateful that our customers are the reason we have been awarded for our customer service during the COYA Awards.

By anticipating the needs of our customers and seeking ways to meet these needs, we are sure to continue in our stride of achieving customer expectations. This brings to mind the story of Richard Branson, and his intentions to not just create Virgin as a brand, but to take on challenges that the big boys in business could not give a second look. Many consider him an out of the box think tank –an expression he despises—but Branson asserts that “you’ll never have to think outside the box if you refuse to let anyone build one around you.” The analogy is the antidote for what Customer Service is all about. Letting the customer free and meeting their needs before they even speak, that way we do what they want and in return they keep us in business.

To all our customers, this is for you, from all of us at the Optiven Group, WE SINCERELY VALUE YOU!



OPTIVEN FOUNDATION

Transforming the Lives Of Vulnerable Older Citizens



1st of October marks the observation of two important global days that are at the core of Optiven Groups transformational agenda. According to the United Nations Calendar, the day is the International Day of Older Persons, and has been observed since October 1, 1991. This year the day coincides with the World Habitat Day that is observed every year on the first Monday of October throughout the world. It was officially designated by the United Nations and first celebrated in 1986. The purpose of the day is to reflect on the state of our cities and towns and the basic human right to adequate shelter. So for this year, the two days will be observed concurrently albeit with different expected outcomes.

The two days remain at the center of the Optiven Group agenda, through its soft arm, the Optiven Foundation. The company with a foot print in the real estate sector, has in the last few years invested heavy resources in making life better for the less fortunate centering on older persons. More specifically, the Optiven Group has given out residences for the forgotten older generations of Kakululo. To date, this remains unprecedented as well as transformational for the recipients of the houses. The chairman of the Foundation, Mr. George Wachiuri says, 'The Optiven Foundation first ventured out to Mwingi South in Kitui County and made it possible to build houses for the forgotten senior citizens. The handover of the homes was made on the 7th February 2015 with beneficiaries having been those that were neglected, and abandoned with no proper shelter; food and no hope in life.'

The Optiven Foundation has partnered with different organizations both locally and abroad to better the lives of the older citizens but also the widows and orphans. In 2018, the

Optiven Foundation partnered with the Nation Media Group who donated fundamentally to the Soweto Children's Home in Kayole, as well as the Cometogether Widows and Orphans organization headed by Dianah Kamande and Shiloh Afrique Foundation, headed by Christine Muchene. Speaking in Atlanta Georgia in August 2018 following the signing with Shiloh Afrique Foundation, Ms. Muchene noted that, 'the organization's vision is involved in key philanthropic initiatives, including donation of wheel chairs among others.' On their part, Ms. Kamande noted that 'Cometogether widows and orphans organization has a big vision of social justice, happiness and prosperity of widows, survivors of gender violence and orphans in Kenya.'



Cometogether widows and orphans organization's Dianah Kamande and Mr. George Wachiuri, Chief Executive at the Optiven Group during the signing ceremony in Raleigh, North Carolina, USA.



Shiloh Afrique Foundation's Christine Muchene and Mr. George Wachiuri, Chief Executive at the Optiven Group during the signing ceremony in Atlanta, Georgia, USA.

And as the world celebrates the International Day of Older Persons, and the World Habitat Day, the Optiven Group through its foundation is keen to transform the lives of Kenya's older citizens through provision of decent housing. Already this has been done in Mwingi South, Kitui County and the momentum to reach out to other counties is growing. Wachiuri says, 'We remain grateful to our partners and can only expand the space for further co-operation with other stakeholders, understanding that if we are to go fast – we could go alone, but if we are to go far, we must go with others.' His sentiments are heralded by Mary Wacuka, a trustee of the foundation, who says 'the homes cannot be done purely by the Optiven Foundation, that is why each and every person can support in one way or another to make the journey to transformation a success for the older citizens of Kenya.'

Optiven Group

SCOOPS BEST DIGITAL INCLUSION AWARD



Leading East African real estate firm, Optiven Group has scooped the number one prize in the year 2018 Digital Inclusion Awards as Best in use of Digital Solutions by Land Agents category.

This award is in recognition of Optiven’s efforts towards putting in place robust Digital system that runs through all its processes both at its Headquarters in Nairobi and throughout all its branches.

“At Optiven, we are committed to always upping our game on digital innovation and excellence front. We are fully cognizant of the fact that in the next couple of years, organizations that do not stay ahead on digital innovation will simply be elbowed out of existence,” said Mr George Wachiuri, by the sidelines of the Digital Inclusion Awards ceremony in Nairobi.

Optiven has consistently continued to empower its entire staff on the area of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and by extension enhanced its capacity to socially and economically transform the society.

The new award recognizes and awards the key players in various sectors that have adopted digital technology in their daily business so as to offer their products or services in a more convenient manner and have changed the lives of their clients.

Optiven Group is a leading real estate firm whose flagship products is Value Added Plots particularly enhanced to suit immediate residential settlement, commercial purposes and futuristic capital gain.

The Group is ranked as the Number One Real Estate

Firm in Land Selling and Number Four in the general (inclusive of homes) real estate industries in East Africa by SuperBrand East Africa 2017/2018.

As a market leader in the property sector, Optiven was crowned the overall winner in Top 100 Mid-Sized Companies Survey, 2014/2015 by KPMG and Nation Media Group. Optiven was also crowned the Best Company in Customer Orientation & Marketing in Kenya (COYA AWARDS) - 2015.



LITERACY IS KEY

If Businesses Are To Grow

The Optiven Group celebrates its Platinum or China anniversary this year, after serving stakeholders in the Real Estate sector for the last 20 years. The company's growth has been pegged on a number of values – coupled with our purpose which has been to socially and economically transform our staff, customers and other stakeholders. This, the Optiven Group has done through the provision of state of the art products and services. Over the years, we have continued to build on our experiences by sharing our knowledge with stakeholders.

The group Chief Executive Mr. George Wachiuri, has taken the lead in information sharing through authoring his experiences in his first book, 'Soaring like an Eagle' published in 2014 and his second master piece 'Unleash your Full Potential' published in 2015. This is addition to empowerment platforms that Mr. Wachiuri has held with the aim of empowering future entrepreneurs, those from disadvantaged backgrounds and being a force for transformation under the Optiven Foundation. Wachiuri says, 'self-improvement through learning should be a continuous goal for everyone and a habit that must be encouraged.'

The journey to this status has been largely due to an intentional decision to impart knowledge to all concerned. The Optiven Group, has a goal of providing employment opportunities to some 30,000 people by the year 2030. Of those already on board, the company provides training opportunities on a continuous basis. In the last decade, the Optiven Group has continued to improve its presence in the digital space. The team has also invested in its technology infrastructure meaning that the skills of the digital team

further enhance the performance of the company to ensure efficiency. For those who have engaged with the Optiven Group and its Strategic Business Units, it does not come as a surprise that such engagements are indeed technologically savvy. According to Mr. Wachiuri, 'the continuous use of technology in its operations, systems and engagements with stakeholders, is what enables the Optiven Group to meet customer needs.' He adds that the place of literacy is the key that will enable businesses to grow. The company has been feted both locally and internationally for its role in the use of technology mainly as regards customer engagement, from feedback to other key communication. And it is now looking to further engage in improving its systems to better efficacy of operations with the goal of meeting its targets and pace setting in the Real Estate industry.

All this then comes in the frame as the world celebrates the International Literacy Day on 8th September 2018. The global celebration is a reminder to stakeholders and indeed the general public to consider the status of the literacy and learning, mainly for adults, locally, regionally and globally. The observation of the day under the leadership of UNESCO, provides insights to propel literacy as a right for all to an education. Under the 2015 Sustainable Development goals adopted by the United Nations, stakeholders must then improve literacy if efforts to eradicate poverty and bridge the inequality gap globally is to be achieved. This year, the celebrations are special because they come with awards recognizing excellence and innovation under the 2018 theme, Literacy and Skills Development.



“Literacy is a tool for daily life in modern society. It is a bulwark against poverty, and a building block of development, an essential complement to investments in roads, dams, clinics and factories.”

KOFFI ANNAN;
Former UN Secretary General.



HUMILITY AT THE HEART OF MENTORSHIP

Lessons From John Maxwell



John Maxwell, in the foreground signing books for leaders at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Nairobi on 28/9/2018. Mr. George Wachiuri (far right) when he attended the event.

The power of mentorship cannot be underestimated. Through this I have learnt that what I do more often than not affects people in places far and wide. As many of you are aware, I have been an ardent reader and follower of John Maxwell. In fact, many of his books guide what I do as a person and I have endeavored to share the same with those whose lives I have impacted.

It was therefore a heartwarming idea to hear that the John Maxwell would be in Nairobi albeit for a short while. My wife and I were delighted at the prospect of having a chance to meet this great man who in many ways continues to inspire generations not just in leadership but including spiritual growth and empowerment.

The opportune meeting at a Nairobi hotel also provided a great chance to meet up with various leaders many of whom have left their footprint in society. The soft spoken Bishop Phillip Kitoto who was recently appointed the General Secretary of the Kenya Assemblies of God continued to inspire me as a down to earth leader.

He had opened the space not just for those who go to his church which is the ICC Ministries, but the wider majority

A portrait of John Maxwell, a middle-aged man with light-colored hair, smiling broadly. He is wearing a dark pinstriped suit jacket over a light blue collared shirt. The background is a blurred office setting with bookshelves.

John Maxwell

including the Reverend Judy Mbugua of the Homecare Spiritual Fellowship and Rev. Ambrose Nyangao the Senior Pastor at Parklands Baptist Church, just to name but a few.

Looking across the room, I saw people who through what they do daily, have the capacity to transform individuals, families, the society, the nation and even the entire world. Then the man of the moment finally stood up to speak and at first one imagines that with all the impact he has had on society over the years, he would be imposing and obnoxious! But Maxwell is nothing like the magnet that he is.

I have read at least 10 of John Maxwell's books and for sure they have transformed my life. It would not be fair to know something that empowers as is the case with the wisdom I have got from his books. This is what advised our decision to also share the 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership at which Maxwell is at the center of because his book with the same title has sold over 1 million copies and still selling.

Of course I have also chosen a great mantra to live by that is on the most part guided by the leadership principles of John Maxwell. As you may have seen from my profile I intend to also move the mountain by authoring at least 45 books in my

lifetime. A small fete, once achieved, if I am to compare myself with Maxwell who has written many books – his first being authored in 1979 titled, 'Think of These Things'.

For a man as humble as Maxwell, it is hard to believe that he has achieved so much in his 71 years of life! A quick preview of some of his greatest achievements include the fact that he speaks annually to Fortune 500 companies, international government leaders, and organizations as diverse as the United States Military Academy at West Point and the National Football League. A New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and Business Week best-selling author, he was one of 25 authors named to Amazon.com's 10th Anniversary Hall of Fame. Maxwell serves on the Board of Trustees at Indiana Wesleyan University and has a building named after him there, the Maxwell Center for Business and Leadership. In May 2014, Maxwell was named the No. 1 leadership and management expert in the world by Inc. Magazine.

Leaders must be close enough to relate to others, but far enough ahead to motivate them

- John Maxwell



WACHIURI: EVERY DAY IS WORLD FOOD DAY

The World Food Day is celebrated on the 15th day of October under the theme, “OUR ACTIONS ARE OUR FUTURE. A #ZERO HUNGER WORLD BY 2030 IS POSSIBLE”. In my opinion, this is a day that should be celebrated daily with the focus being on how to make the future food secure. The responsibility to do this is for everyone because to live all of us must eat, although some of us are dying from eating the wrong food – but that is a discussion for another day. The truth is mitigation to ensure food security should be core to all stakeholders and it helps to know that through the K-Farm initiative – the future clearly seems brighter. Action must be taken now if the damning report by FAO 2018 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World report which says today, over 820 million people are suffering chronic undernourishment, is anything to go by.

Which brings me to a life changing experience I had. In the midst of a cold July morning, I had the most eye-opening experience in the recent past. You see, I love farming and not in the way

that the bourgeoisie colony talk of their hobbies. For me this is a passion inborn and to some extent passed on from way back when I was just a little lass. My grandfather was a lover of plants and in his older years he made a point of growing any type of new tree that he came across. I did not travel much with him seeing that he his plate was almost full from his work as the Mayor of Kitale then. And it did not help that my own mother needed me to help her with my little brothers and sisters and then there was school to go to. The lanky man with a steady stride and baritone voice was smitten by flora and fauna. I see his house filled with all kinds of potted cactus and I remember my first taste of raspberries from his self-grown tree. The taste of the avocados from the trees in my grandfathers how were nothing to describe. An aperitif on its own, silky and smooth, and overly beautiful enough on the outside not to want to eat it. But what is an avocado for anyway? My grandfather was that kind of a person...and at one time almost got in trouble with the village elders who had heard that the umbrella tree was a bad



Green house farming at the K-Farm Demonstration Farm in Ngataek.

omen to have in ones home. And then I met Lazarus, a brilliant mind on matters agronomy whose knowledge translates to the brazen barrenness of the hot ground near Namanga to a literal piece of paradise. Standing in the shade of pigmy mango trees amidst a wind breaker I listen to his advice wishing I would have brought along my camera.

You see, the landscape here is somewhat harsh and if the dust is anything to go by, it may be foolhardy to conclude that the land is barren. Yet with a bit of work and the correct guidance as is with the case of Lazarus, one can turn their lives around. As I walk in the midst of the green leaves of the onion farm, the pines of the passion fruit vines seems to usher in a salient breeze. Then it is my turn to smell the chlorophyll that makes the small mango trees so green and sometimes a tad brown. It is here that all these things grow – a garden of Eden – right in the middle of nowhere. Then there are the bananas almost falling over themselves to showcase their beauty – succulent, stunning and oh so sweet! Further across, there are a number of pawpaw trees dotting the farm with intermittent trees of juicy oranges not to mention the pomegranate tree, right in the middle of the garden. Did I mention why we christened it Eden? My company are all afloat with ideas of why it possibly must have been the tree of the forbidden fruit! But the best answer to this all is that

if you put your mind to it, you are sure to get rewarded. And with that my hope rises again today as an investor at Kilimo knowing that it is time for the idea to grow - a new – but, only if my eyes will choose to see a different approach to the goal of my economic transformation agenda. Power to the farmer.

By George Wachiuri. CEO, Optiven Group



Whether you are a farmer, a builder or an engineer, the opportunities are equal: just add a little innovation.

- *Strive Masiyiwa*

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