

## OPINION

Department manager  
or glorified clerk?

**I'm the manager of a small company with about 200 regular workers. We have seven department managers reporting to the chief executive officer (CEO), the patriarch of the family corporation. We don't have any independent authority to sign for petty cash even if we have the funds for it. The CEO must approve everything. My wife who's working as a manager in a major corporation, can sign for much larger amounts. She teased me about it and called me a glorified clerk. Can you help me understand my situation? — Toothless Tiger.**

"Management is the least efficient activity in your organization," American strategy expert Gary Hamel wrote in his *Harvard Business Review* article "First, Let's Fire All the Managers" (2011). "Most managers are hard-working; the problem doesn't lie with them." The problem is in the "inefficiency" of a "top-heavy management model that is both cumbersome and costly" that requires even minor decisions to be made by the CEO.

Even in major corporations, I've experienced the same thing issue with lack of authority to disburse petty cash. That's the reality.

I remember being offered a rewarding job by a medium-sized bank owned by a Chinese-Filipino family. Its CEO offered to triple my current pay and cash allowances, plus a car plan, interest-free housing loan, hefty health maintenance package and guaranteed bonuses equivalent to 17 months' pay.

I was tempted to accept the job until the CEO set one condition — to stop writing this column. I turned it down right away as I saw this condition as a sign of what management style to expect. At the time, I was working for another bank but our CEO never imposed such conditions. Neither did my previous employers.

Why should I accept a job that limits my independence and stifles my creativity even after office hours? I thought it was a major red flag.

## LEVELS OF AUTHORITY

I'm not saying you should follow my example. You have to define and understand your personal values before making a big decision. Evaluate your long-term professional success based on what's important to you, not the material things that are being offered to you.

Every organization has levels of authority. The typical hierarchy is a pyramid: At the apex are the CEO, president, general manager, and chief oper-

ating officer, with full and exclusive authority to sign almost any transaction.

Next in line is middle management. Many of them don't have exclusive and independent authority to sign, but are required to perform due diligence. All transactions must be reviewed and recommended by them prior to the CEO's approval.

At the bottom of the pyramid are non-management or rank-and-file workers, team leaders, unit supervisors and to some extent — managers without any exclusive signing authority.

Much depends on the management style of an organization. At times, a small, family enterprise with strong control procedures may not be able to change its ways even after becoming a big company. The old way has become so ingrained that delegation to professional managers is hardly practiced.

This failure to delegate is what Hamel describes as "the reality of empowerment (falling) far short of the rhetoric" contained in the corporate vision, mission and value statements.

## PROFESSIONALISM

Nobody likes working for a person who can't trust anyone. That doesn't mean leaving your job. You just need to show you're the kind of person who can be trusted. Do the best you can as a professional. Take the time to foster positive interactions with your top management, who may not see your situation as a problem.

Approach your work as if you're the business owner. If you believe you have as much to gain even without being an authorized signatory to a petty cash disbursement, you'll have a significant impact by paying attention to bigger, strategic things that are often missed by top management. That is the way to prove your worth.

Be a trouble-shooter rather than a complainer. If you continue with a complainer's mindset, chances are you'll commit mistakes when you try to address things that are beyond your control. Rise to the challenge of high-profile projects that demonstrate your competence rather than seeking the status that comes with signing authority.

Doing your job without grumbling makes you come off as more professional.

Chat your workplace questions with REY ELBO on Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter or e-mail them to [elbonomics@gmail.com](mailto:elbonomics@gmail.com) or via <https://reyelbo.com>

IN THE  
WORKPLACE  
REY ELBOELBONOMICS: Don't  
try to solve things you  
can't control.DTI says employers need  
to be more open to hiring  
K-12 program graduates

TRADE Secretary Alfredo E. Pascual said most employers are still stipulating university degrees in their hiring requirements, adding that the Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) program needs to ensure that its graduates are really work-force-ready.

"When the K-12 was introduced, I recommended that (companies) review the qualifications for hiring because there is no need for a college degree (for many jobs)," Mr. Pascual said on DZMM Teleradyo.

"When you check the job descriptions nowadays, almost all require college degrees. This should change because we already have the K-12 program. But it's still not enough to say that having the program is enough. We need

to prove that the K-12 program is able to produce holistically-developed individuals," he added.

K-12 extended the basic education cycle by two years at the secondary level. It was designed to make students employable after completing the program.

In July, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. gave the Department of Education one year to review on the program and make recommendations on continuing it or not.

According to a Pulse Asia survey, 44% of 1,200 respondents were reported to be unhappy with the current system. It found that the main concern of families was the financial burden while not boosting employability.

"When K-12 was formed, its purpose was to produce holi-

stic Filipinos. This means if you graduate from the program, assuming it was implemented properly, then you are ready to join the labor force. You don't need to go to college," Mr. Pascual said.

He said that there is a deeply ingrained expectation that workers be college-educated.

"The mindset of people is that you cannot fully prepare for work when you don't have a college degree, which is totally an erroneous mindset," he said.

"Whoever is in charge of reviewing the educational system needs to pay close attention (so that) we have all the ingredients for running a K-12 program that's well designed and well implemented," he added. — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocsos**

Australia PM focused on workplace  
reform as he marks 100 days in office

SYDNEY — Prime Minister (PM) Anthony Albanese said his government was focused on jobs and workplace reform as the country faces economic challenges in the recovery phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a speech in Canberra to mark 100 days in office, Mr. Albanese said his government had a growth agenda that was pro-business and pro-worker. A government-hosted jobs summit this week will bring together key employer and union groups to discuss wages growth, productivity, migration and workplace reform.

"The biggest single outcome I am hoping for is the beginning of a culture of cooperation," Mr. Albanese told the National Press Club. Mr. Albanese said

widespread skills shortages were acting as a handbrake on the economy, and it was unwise for the previous government to tell temporary visa holders to leave Australia during the pandemic as borders closed.

In addition to discussions on lifting Australia's migration intake, the government would look at creating "more paths to permanent migration" to attract foreign workers back in areas including nursing and engineering, he said.

The government's immediate priority is shoring up the economy to give families and businesses security and certainty, he said. "Australia is already in the 'recovery' phase — and that's presenting its own economic challenges.

Including significant and unpredictable supply and demand imbalances which are driving up costs, for businesses and families."

The pandemic was a race that Australia wasn't ready for, he said. "We were left vulnerable — not just by complacency and a failure to plan, but by years of cuts and willful neglect to the very services and skills we needed most. We found ourselves economically exposed, hanging on the end of the global supply chain."

Nurses, teachers and aged care workers were exhausted by the pandemic and there was a need to boost employment in these sectors for the decade ahead, he said. — **Reuters**

## China may have committed crimes against humanity in Xinjiang, says UN

CHINA'S "arbitrary and discriminatory detention" of Uyghurs and other Muslims in its Xinjiang region may constitute crimes against humanity, the outgoing U.N. human rights chief said in a long-awaited report on Wednesday.

U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet, who has faced criticism from some diplomats and rights groups for being too soft on China, released the report just minutes before her four-year term ended. She visited China in May.

The U.N. Human Rights Office said in its 48-page report that "serious human rights violations have

been committed" in Xinjiang "in the context of the government's application of counter-terrorism and counter-'extremism' strategies".

"The extent of arbitrary and discriminatory detention of members of Uyghur and other predominantly Muslim groups ... may constitute international crimes, in particular crimes against humanity," the U.N. office said.

She recommended the Chinese government to take prompt steps to release all those detained in training centers, prisons or detention facilities.

"There are credible indications of violations of reproductive rights

through the coercive enforcement of family planning policies since 2017," the office said.

It added that a lack of government data "makes it difficult to draw conclusions on the full extent of current enforcement of these policies and associated violations of reproductive rights."

Rights groups accuse Beijing of abuses against Uyghurs, a mainly Muslim ethnic minority that numbers around 10 million in the western region of Xinjiang, including the mass use of forced labor in internment camps. The United States has accused China of genocide.

China has vigorously denied any abuses in Xinjiang and issued a 131-page response to the U.N. report, which Beijing's mission in Geneva described as a "farce" planned by the United States, Western nations and anti-China forces based on false information and the assumption of guilt.

Speaking ahead of the report's release, China's ambassador to the United Nations in New York, Zhang Jun, said Beijing had repeatedly voiced opposition to it. He said the U.N. human rights chief should not interfere in China's internal affairs.

"We all know, so well, that the so-called Xinjiang issue is a completely fabricated lie out of political motivations and its purpose definitely is to undermine China's stability and to obstruct China's development," Mr. Zhang told reporters on Wednesday.

"We do not think it will produce any good to anyone, it simply undermines the cooperation between the United Nations and a member state," he said.

Dilxat Raxit of the World Uyghur Congress, a group based abroad, said the report confirmed "solid evidence of atrocities"

against Uyghurs, but wished it had gone further.

"I regret that the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights did not characterize these extreme atrocities in China as genocide," he told Reuters in an email.

Reuters reported last month that China had asked Ms. Bachelet to bury the report, according to a Chinese letter that was confirmed by diplomats.

Ms. Bachelet confirmed last week having received the letter which she said was signed by about 40 other states, adding her office would not respond to such pressure. — **Reuters**

Vegetable prices spike in flood-hit  
Pakistan amid looming food crisis

LAHORE, Pakistan — Vegetable and fruit prices have soared in markets across Pakistan as devastating rains ruin crops and disrupt supplies, an early sign of how the worst floods in decades are creating food shortages at a time of financial crisis.

Pakistan's 220 million people are already facing rampant inflation, with consumer prices up 24.9% year-on-year in July. The economy is in turmoil, with fast-depleting foreign reserves and a record depreciation of the rupee against the US dollar.

That leaves the country particularly vulnerable as it counts the cost of extreme monsoon rains through August that have killed more than 1,100 people.

Damage to homes and infrastructure will run into billions of dollars, while losses in the key farming sector have yet to be fully assessed.

In the eastern city of Lahore, close to the border with India and far from the worst floods in Sindh province, prices of some vegetables have tripled.

"Last week, I sold onions for 90 rupees a kg and today the government price is 300 per kg," said vegetable seller Ahmad Ali. The Pakistani government sets prices for some fresh produce, although traders often ignore the guidelines.

Tomatoes and onions are among the most common ingredients in Pakistani cooking, and tens of thousands of tons of each are consumed each month.

"The supply of vegetables and fruit to Lahore is getting lower day by day because of the flood, rains and destruction to roads," said Malik Salim Awan, a supplier at Lahore's fruit and vegetable market.

"Before the current scenario, we were receiving over 100 trucks (of fresh produce) daily. Now, we receive 10 to 15 trucks only," Awan said.

Officials say that more than two million acres (809,371 hectares) of agricultural land have been flooded, destroying most standing crops and preventing farmers from sowing new ones.

## WAREHOUSES EMPTYING

Hundreds of kilometers (miles) from Lahore, people must clear up flooded homes at the same time as worry about where the next meal will come from.

"Tomatoes were 60 rupees a kg, and now they are more than 200 ... even the price of flour is double now," said Sain Bukash Husain, 20, whose home in the village of Garhi Yasin in the southern province of Sindh has been badly damaged.

"What can we do?" Sindh, with a population of 50 million, has been hardest hit, with 697 mm of rain

thus far in the monsoon period, or 466% above the 30-year monsoon average. Pakistan as a whole has seen nearly 190% more rain than the 30-year average.

In Dera Ismail Khan, in central Pakistan along the Indus River, warehouses storing vegetables are already emptying out.

The government of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is scrambling to secure supplies.

"The rice crop has been washed away," Sharif told reporters after visiting northern Pakistan. "Fruit and vegetables are gone." He said flood waters had swept away 700,000 livestock.

Pakistan's agrarian sector powers the economy and feeds the people, accounting for more than a fifth of the country's output, employing up to 40% of the workforce and producing goods worth around \$80 billion annually.

Commerce Minister Naveed Qamar said on Wednesday that the government was close to an agreement to import vegetables and other edible goods from Iran and Afghanistan, and an urgent request had gone to the cabinet to approve it.

"Prices are up already. If you go to buy onions you wouldn't get it. If you go to buy tomatoes you will get it at a much higher price," Qamar told a news conference, citing the fallout of the floods. — **Reuters**

IMF provisionally agrees  
on \$2.9-B loan for Sri Lanka

COLOMBO — Crisis-hit Sri Lanka has reached a preliminary agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a loan of about \$2.9 billion, the international lender said in a statement on Thursday.

"The objectives of Sri Lanka's new Fund-supported program are to restore macroeconomic stability and debt sustainability," the statement said, outlining the 48-month long arrangement under the IMF's Extended Fund Facility.

The agreement is subject to approval by IMF management and its executive board and is contingent on Sri Lankan authorities following through with previously agreed measures.

The IMF also requires receiving financing assurances from Sri Lanka's official creditors, besides ensuring efforts are made to reach a collaborative agreement with private creditors.

"Debt relief from Sri Lanka's creditors and additional financing from multilateral partners will be required to help ensure debt sustainability and close financing gaps," the statement added.

The IMF program will aim to raise government revenue to support fiscal consolidation, introduce new

pricing for fuel and electricity, hike social spending, bolster central bank autonomy and rebuild the country's depleted foreign reserves.

"Starting from one of the lowest revenue levels in the world, the program will implement major tax reforms. These reforms include making personal income tax more progressive and broadening the tax base for corporate income tax and VAT," the statement said.

Sri Lanka needs to restructure nearly \$30 billion of debt, and Japan has offered to lead talks with the other main creditors, including India and China.

It will also need to strike a deal with international banks and asset managers that hold the majority of its \$19 billion worth of sovereign bonds, which are now classified as in default.

The debt-laden country has been seeking up to \$3 billion from the IMF in a bid to escape its worst economic crisis since independence from Britain in 1948.

Sri Lankans have faced acute shortages of fuel and other basic goods for months, leaving it in political turmoil and hit by runaway inflation, which is now at almost 65% year-on-year. — **Reuters**

Crypto app  
mistakenly  
transfers \$7M  
to woman owed  
\$70 refund

CRYPTO.COM, the digital currency app that was fronted by Matt Damon in a Super Bowl TV ad, is seeking the return of about \$A10.5 million (\$7.2 million) it accidentally transferred to a woman in Melbourne.

But some of it has already been spent, including on a \$A1.35 million five-bedroom property in suburban Melbourne.

The firm discovered during an audit in December that it had made an error in processing a \$A100 refund seven months earlier, according to court documents first reported by Channel 7. An account number had been accidentally entered into the payment amount field, according to the court.

The state of Victoria's Supreme Court has ordered the home, which was bought by the woman's sister, to be sold and the money returned to the company. The case is expected to return to court in October.

Crypto.com didn't immediately comment when contacted by email. — **Bloomberg**