



Friday, 21st December, 2012

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TOP FORTY MEN UNDER

40

Three blue silhouettes of men in business attire are positioned in front of the large number '40'.



TOP 40 men under 40

FINANCE

39

Charles Njendu, 38

ASEAN BUSINESS CUSTOMER, TECHNOLOGY/ STRATEGY LEADER

Charles Njendu, 38, IBM's ASEAN Business, Customer & technology strategy leader

If the Top 40 Under 40 Men's list was based on the quality of education one has received, Charles Njendu would easily be at the top. He is an alumnus of the US Ivy League colleges - having trained at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) where he got his masters in civil engineering and the Wharton Business School where he got his MBA in Finance.

The two experiences enabled Mr Njendu to lay a solid foundation on which he has developed a distinguished career in strategy and management.

Born and raised in Mombasa, Mr Njendu spent the past two decades studying and working abroad with leading global corporations. Currently based in Singapore, Mr Njendu oversees the computer maker's business development, strategy and engagement delivery in six South East Asian countries; Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines and Vietnam.

Mr Njendu's career at IBM was preceded by an equally solid stint at McKinsey & Company - the New York City office of the global management consulting firm and at Toyota's US headquarters in Los Angeles, California.

Mr Njendu began his career as a graduate management associate at the Wharton Business School where he authored and implemented the enterprise corporate intranet portal strategy, walking straight into the arena of innovation.

So what makes him tick? "It is a mix of luck and hard work, I have exploited every opportunity that has come my way, including attending some of the best schools," he says. He is married with two twin sons aged four.



Charles Njendu
COURTESY PHOTO



Jay Kimmelman

EDUCATION

40

Jay Kimmelman, 35

CEO, CO-FOUNDER BRIDGE INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIES

Jay Kimmelman was born and raised by a primary school teacher who passed on her passion for education to her son. A product of public schools whose pupils tend to trail their counterparts in private schools, Kimmelman set out to find a middle-ground that would bridge the gap and help children from poor families have a fair chance of competing.

After completing his university education, Kimmelman started an education company that helps schools find better ways to improve delivery of lessons and attain maximum results. He later travelled to China, India and Asia where millions of children cannot afford quality education. This is also where he deepened his understanding of what it meant to live on 70 dollar cents daily and how that quality of living affects education and the future of children.

Using financing from venture capitalists and other financiers, Kimmelman co-founded the Bridge International Academies in mid-2008 with him as the chief executive officer. Bridge International is a chain of 85 low-cost schools that are located in low-income neighborhoods. A total of 23,000 pupils are currently enrolled in these schools and are taken care of by 1,100 employees. "If you can make a kid read, write and think critically you've changed their future," says Kimmelman.

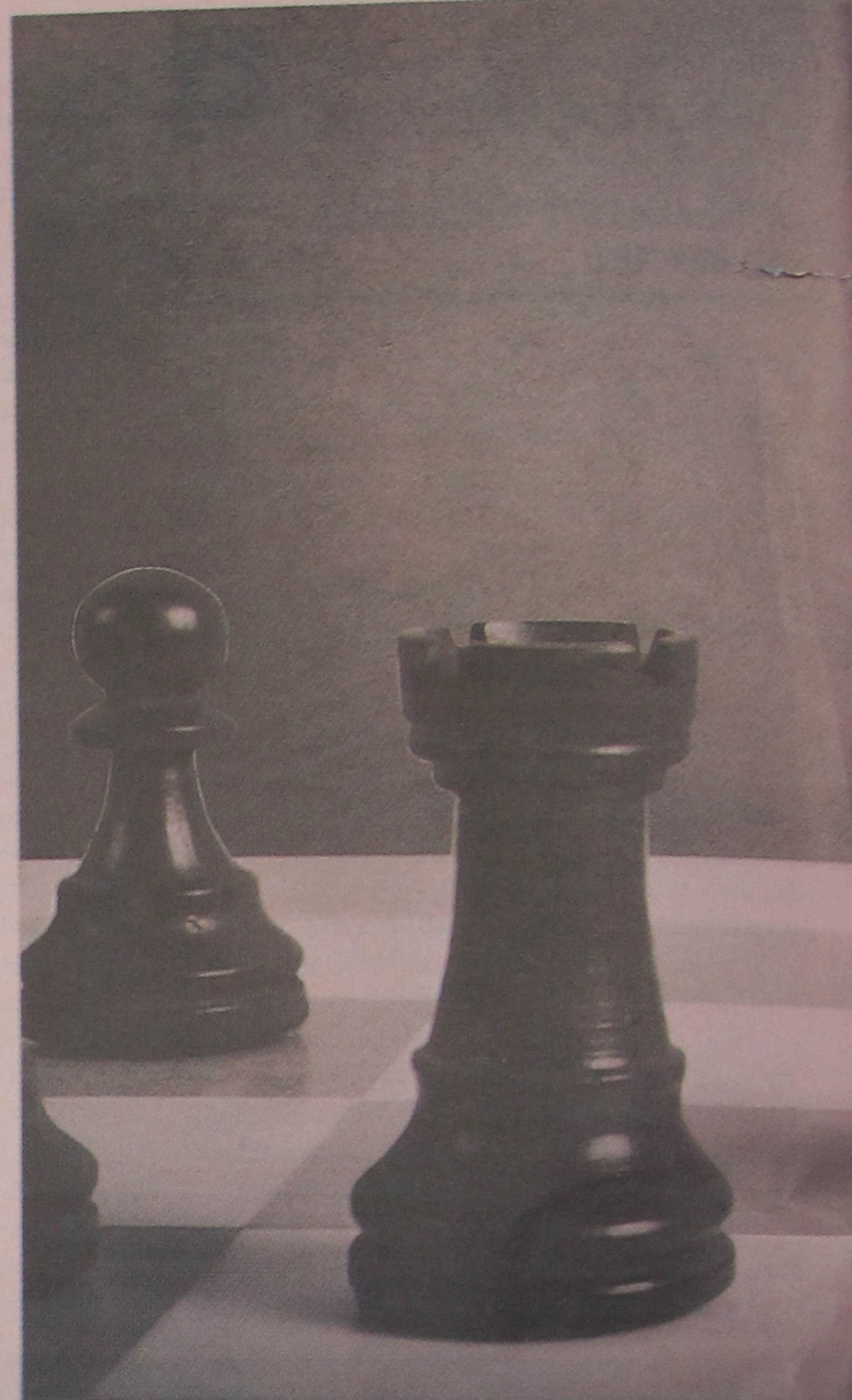
Every kid pays Sh500 a month to attend the schools, making them accessible to most slum children.

Kimmelman attributes his success to the passion that has seen him work in difficult environments such as Mathare and Mukuru slums. What drives him is the fact that he is giving poor children an opportunity to compete with those from well-to-do families.

"Children are the same all-over the world. What they want is the same. A good education to help launch their future dreams," says Kimmelman.

His dream is to provide quality education to 10 million children across the world starting with Kenya. He has a two-year-old daughter with his wife, the co-founder of the company.

The fact that he shares a dream with his wife makes his job part of his private life. He plans to expand the program to countries such as India where poverty has put millions of children at a disadvantage.



▶ **MANAGEMENT** Some of the most successful MWB leaders we have worked with have ended their kick-off event almost overwhelmed by the experience

Peter Killing and Thomas Malnight are professors of business strategy at IMD, the Switzerland-based business school, and Tracey Keys is a consultant. In their book, *Must-Win Battles: How to Win Them, Again and Again*, published by Wharton School Publishing, they argue that rather than spreading their resources too thin, companies must focus on three to five key challenges - must-win battles (MWBs) that are crucial to achieving their business goals. A well-chosen MWB, the authors say, must make a real difference, be market focused, create excitement, be specific and tangible, and be winnable. This excerpt from the book's conclusion highlights what can be learned from successful and failed MWB journeys.

Lessons from Successful MWB Journeys

Lesson 1: View a successful MWB kick-off event as only the starting point of your journey. Real success will be determined by what happens back at the office.

At more than 90% of the kick-off events we have attended, the leader and the team left the event feeling enthusiastic and committed to the must-win battle agenda and a new way of working together. With proper preparation and facilitation, and by drawing on the good will of participants, most executives are able to run effective events. But the real test is after the kick-off. The choices and promises made at the event must now become reality and shape the organization's actions and ways of working. And that is the more difficult part!

Some of the most successful MWB leaders we have worked with have ended their kick-off event almost overwhelmed by the experience. "What have I gotten myself into?! Will we really be able to follow through with all this? Am I up to the task?" But, perhaps driven by their unease, these same people have shown