



THE COURAGEOUS VOICE OF HR

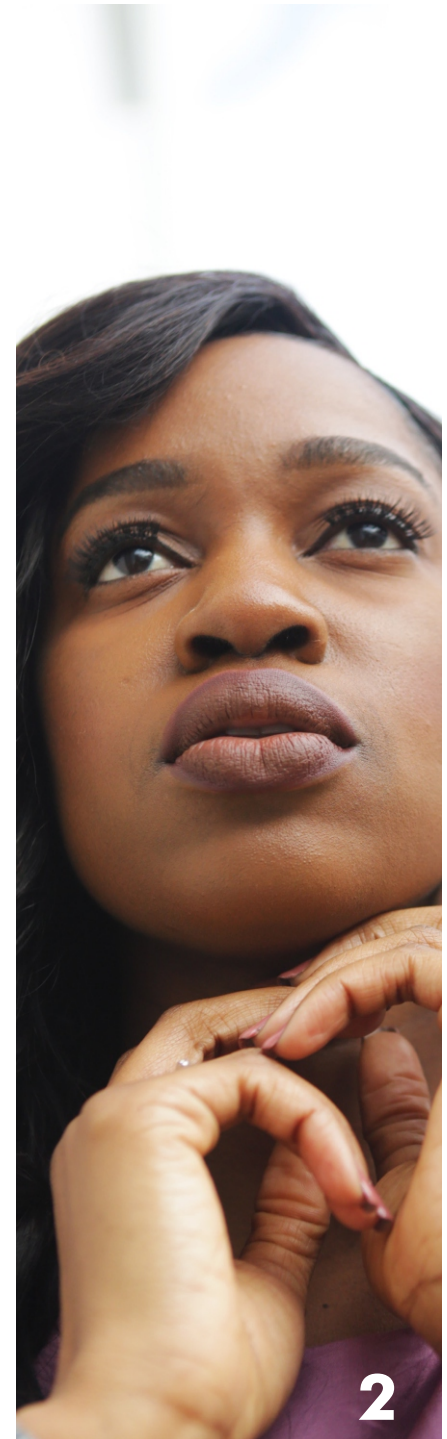
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According to Jeff Haden (2013), when we think of courage, oftentimes what comes to our mind is its manifestation as physical bravery. For him, courage is required in our organisations and it manifests when someone decides to take a chance when others will not; standing up or speaking up for what we believe in, especially when our beliefs are unpopular; or simply doing the right thing even though easier options exist.

In the course of work, one encounters employees and HR practitioners from many organisations and one of the issues that stand out for both employees and HR practitioners alike is the absence of courage in many of those who are in practice.

Employees would tell you how the HR Lead has either been battered into submission by the key Business Leads or instances where HR has because of personal gains and benefits become complaint, uncourageous and voiceless. HR Leads on the other hand, will tell a tale of how business leads are too domineering and would allow them no opportunity to advance the cause of the people, even when these conversations are advanced in a strategic manner; they will speak of a highly people averse CEO who believes strategy and company objectives can be achieved without people's buy-in.

Scholars of decision making propagated that organisational decision making is naturally laced with good intentions in the interest of the company or that the best course of action, amongst available options is what 'Business Leads' always or most often choose.



If you have been around long enough, especially as a HR practitioner, you will realize that in the world of business; most often than not, this is not the case. Most decisions are taken, not based on organisational interest but for the sole reason of managing stakeholders, assuaging existing power blocs and influential parties as well as for the self-interest of the business leads. People, who are one of the key factors of production, the most important factor, are often impacted by this warped decision-making model adopted by business; and this is where courageous HR comes to play.

HR is an advisor to business and some scholars have been known to even describe HR as the conscience of the organisation because HR is the function that embodies the values and idealist personae of the business. This means that if the reputation of your CEO and your Lead HR is in good standing, one can almost assume that the organisation would be a healthy workplace; where it is not, the organisation is viewed with some suspicion.

Being an advisor to business means that no matter how highly placed HR is within a business; it cannot act without the required approvals and agreements from key stakeholders within the business. Be that as it may, this should never stop HR from representing the profession responsibly. HR must always stand for what is right, do what is right, speak what is right and do so tactfully as well as courageously. **Where you find a HR Lead without a voice, you inadvertently find an organisation without a conscience.**





About the author:

Mrs. Phil Maduagwu - (ACIPM, CIPD, SHRM, MITAD, AMIOD, OAA, ANCIM, WLBA, BSA)

Phil Maduagwu is a generalist human resources practitioner and a seasoned consultant with over 18 years experience providing HR solutions, leading HR Teams and consulting to companies across Nigeria and the West African Coast. She is a passionate Modern Human Resources Management Advocate, a Transformational Talent Manager and a Leadership Advocate. Phil is a leadership and feelings blogger.