

**ENSURING CORDIAL RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN COURT EMPLOYEES, HEADS OF COURT  
AND OTHER JUDICIAL OFFICERS**

**BY**

**BENSON ANYA ESQ**

CHIEF REGISTRAR

HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

ABIA STATE

## **ENSURING CORDIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COURT EMPLOYEES, HEADS OF COURT AND OTHER JUDICIAL OFFICERS**

Let me start by thanking the almighty God for making it possible for no other person but my humble self to have an opportunity to stand before you today to discuss this topic which is aimed at exploring the way to ensure good working relationship between

1. The court employees
2. The Heads of Court
3. Other Judicial Officers.

I must also declare that I am impressed and appreciate the National Judicial Institute, its management and staff for all the effort and sacrifice being made to meet the objectives of setting up this, statutorily 'Nigerian Judiciary University known as the national Judicial Institute.

I thank you immensely for finding me fit to discharge the duty of leading in the discussion on the above topic.

## **FACTORS THAT PROMOTE GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP IN THE JUDICIARY**

### **1. Team Work**

It is recommended that the Administrators of the Judiciary, should raise a committed staff, in their respective jurisdictions, who are ready to work in conjunction with one another to promote the functions of the judiciary. The main function of the Judiciary is to settle disputes and interpret the law. At the Head of the Judiciary is the Head of court, the Chief Justice of Nigeria, the president, court of Appeal, the Chief Judge of eth Federation High court, the Chief Judge of the Federal Capital Territory, the Grand Kadis of the various Sharia Court of Appeal of the Federal Capital Territory and the states of Nigeria, the President National Industrial Court, the President Customary Court of Appeal of the States. The Head of Court is the policy maker of the Judicial establishment. He needs his Brother Judges, the Chief Registrar and other supporting staff to run his administration and help execute his policies. It is the duty of the Head of Court to raise the Team to help him succeed in office.

Putting together a Team involves some hard decisions by the Head to accomplishing The Team's goal. Not everyone who wants to be on a Team should be included, and some individuals should be forced out. The Head of Court must ensure that other stake holders are pursuing the same agenda with him. You don't assemble people who are likely to work at cross purposes if you want to succeed. It is important that there is harmony in the execution of the mandate of the Judiciary by all.

J. Richard Hackman, in his book "*Leading Teams*", sets out five basic conditions that leaders of companies and other organizations must fulfill in order to create and maintain effective teams:

- (1). ***Teams must real.*** *People have to know who is on the team and who is not. It's the job to make that clear.*
- (2) *Teams need a compelling direction: Members need to know, and agree on, what they're supposed to be doing together. Unless a leader articulates a clear direction, there is a real risk that members will pursue different agendas.*

- (3) *Teams need enabling structures: Teams that have poorly designed tasks, the Wrong number or mix of members, or fuzzy and unenforced norms conduct invariably get into trouble.*
- (4) *Teams need a supportive Organization: The organizational context – including the reward system, the human resource system, and the information system - must facilitate teamwork.*
- (5) *Teams need expert coaching: Most executive coaches focus on individual performance, which does significantly improve teamwork. Teams need coaching as a group in team processes - especially at the beginning, midpoint and of a team project.*

## **2. Best Performance**

The result for any work should be performance. The best performance is the achievement of the goal set for any particular court. The goal of the court is to dispense justice, make it easy for people to access the Judicial services of the court observe impartiality in eth dispensation of justice and to ensure that people ventilate their grievances with minimal burden or stress. The stakeholders in the judiciary must be

made to know what is expected of them and how important that they give their best in terms of performance.

For the Head of Court, performance should be in terms of formation of policy, administration and adjudication duties. For other judges, cooperation with and understanding of the Head of Court and adjudicatory duties. For the staff of the judiciary, administration, keeping – records, clerical duties, processing of court documents and supporting the judicial officers in the performance of their adjudicatory duties.

### **3. Common Target and Goal**

The Head of Court must set a target for his Judges, Magistrates and Staff. It is very difficult if not impossible to measure performance if there is no set target or goal.

The Head of Court needs to take interest in how many judgments a Judge is able to deliver over a particular period of time. Setting targets for the Judicial officers help to determine extent of performance. It is not only for Honourable Judges that goals and targets should be set. There is also the need to set achievable goals and targets for the Judiciary staff.

## **4. Leadership**

Good working relationship among the stakeholders of the Judiciary mostly depends on the leadership. The Head of Court, His Brother Judges, other Judges of the lower courts, management and staff of the Judiciary must show leadership qualities in their respective sphere of influence in the court without leadership, the Judiciary will be like sheep without a shepherd.

According to Warren Buffett's Management secrets, leadership is really what a good manager is about. The letters of the word represents the qualities that a good manager should have:

**L** is for loyalty and

**E** is for enthusiasm

**A** stands for attitude, and

**D** is for discipline.

**E** stands for example – you have to set a good example – and

**R** is for respect.

**S** represents scholarliness, and

**H** is for honesty

**I** and

**P** stand for integrity and pride.

Every Head of Court staff and Management should possess these attributes of leadership.

## **5. Mentorship**

It is very important that we feel the pain and joy of other people. For a good working relationship those at the Head must show interest in those below the ranks. When you show interest in the affairs of other people and in their progress, other people will definitely reciprocate and show interest in your own affairs.

Every human being has his or her area of personal strength and area of personal weakness. It is your duty to try to support the powerful and accommodate the weak. When a superior person extends the hand of assistance to help junior in age or in the office, that is called mentorship. It is the duty of the mentor to teach, guide, advise, help and support to attain a higher position or to perform a difficult task. When you mentor somebody, the act of mentorship creates a good working relationship.

## **6. Loyalty**

Any person who wants to progress in the office must serve with loyalty. Your loyalty must not be in doubt. You must show it in everything you do. Disloyalty does not make for a good working

relationship with anybody. Therefore it is required that every staff of the judiciary be loyal to the Head of Court and his lieutenants.

## **7. Obedience**

There are rules in the judiciary service which everyone is expected to obey faithfully. The Heads of Court are to obey the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Code of Conduct for Judicial officers. The other Judicial Officers in the Judiciary must obey the same rule in addition to the public service rules. Staff of the Judiciary is also expected to obey the extant rules relating to their work. If you are in the habit of not following the rules and instructions of the work, this will cause stress and friction in the system and affect good working relationship adversely.

## **8. Honesty**

In the Judiciary, more than any other Government establishment, honesty, truth and integrity are valued and admired. If you feel that the judiciary is not ideal in this way, do not lose heart but try to be honest and trustworthy yourself. What can go wrong? You get fired for being such a person? It is far better to be fired for being honest than to be fired for lying. However, I do hope that you are never put in such a difficult situation.

Remember that it starts with small things, avoiding those little untruths that so easily creep into our working day. When you are late for a meeting, be honest and avoid fictitious excuses. When you have not finished reading a report, avoid pretending that you have. When you feel that your annual performance evaluation by your boss is not fair, say so (diplomatically).

And, finally remember above all to be true to yourself. It is fine to act and to pretend that something is okay, but always admit the truth to yourself.

Honesty and truth will give you a successful working life and ensure that there is a good working relationship between the stakeholders in the Judiciary.

**9. Hard work and Result**

**10. Application of Good Management Skill**

**11. Peaceful co-existence**

**12. Mutual Respect**

**13. Promotion of the Welfare of the Management and Staff of the Judiciary**

**14. Availability, Reliability, visibility and Dependability.**

**15. Healthy Association and Companionship friends and family and morality.**

**16. Proper funding of the Judiciary: Financial and Judicial independence.**

Adherence and obedience to the Bangalore principle is very important in ensuring good working relationship.

*In summary, the Bangalore principles provide for ethical standards that shall crystallize the six (6) sterling qualities of a reliable and incorrupt Judiciary, namely: (1) Independence (2) Impartiality (3) Integrity (4) Propriety (5) Equality and (6) Competence and Diligence.*

*We shall briefly discuss them as follows:*

### ***(1) Independence***

*Judicial Officers (including Court Administrator) must be free of any extraneous influences, inducements, direct or indirect, from 'any quarter' or for any reason.*

*A Judicial Officer may be INDEPENDENT - but that is insufficient, because what matters also is the perception of others. In this*

*wise, a Judicial Officer shall not only be free from inappropriate connections with, and influence by the Executive and Legislative branches of Government, but must also appear by the perception of a reasonable observer to be free therefrom.*

*A Judicial Officer, whether serving as a Judge, Magistrate or an Administrator, shall exhibit and promote high standards of judicial conduct in order to reinforce public confidence in the Judiciary which is fundamental to the maintenance of judicial independence.*

### ***(2) Impartiality***

*Judicial Officers must in their conduct, both in and out of court, maintain and enhance the confidence of the public, the legal profession and litigants in the impartiality of the Judge and of the Judiciary.*

### ***(3) Integrity***

*Judicial Officers shall ensure that their conducts are above reproach in the view of a reasonable observer.*

*The behaviour and conduct of Judicial Officers must re-affirm the peoples' faith in the integrity of the Judiciary, In that, justice must not merely be done but must also be transparently seen to be*

done.

#### **(4) Propriety**

*Judicial Officers must avoid situations which might reasonably give rise to suspicion or appearance of favouritism or partiality.*

#### **(5) Equality**

*Judicial officers are not to use the prestige of their offices to advance their private interests, that of a member of his or her family or of anyone else, nor shall a Judicial Officer convey or permit others to convey the impression that anyone is in a special position to improperly influence the Judge in the performance of his judicial duties.*

#### **(6) Competence and Diligence**

*Judicial officers shall not engage in conduct incompatible with the diligent discharge of their duties.*

### **A Summary of the Revised Code of Conduct for Judicial Officers 2016**

#### **Rule 1**

*Judicial officers should avoid impropriety and the appearance of Impropriety in all his activities.*

*He should obey the laws of the land and shall for no reason become member of organizations that practice discrimination on basis of -race, sex, religion or ethnic group. He shall also not join organizations whose objectives are incompatible with the functions or dignity of his office.*

## **Rule 2**

*A judicial officer should be patient, dignified and courteous to legal practitioners, accused persons, litigants, witnesses, assessors and others with whom he has to deal in his capacity as a Judicial Officer, he shall also demand similar respect from them and his staff.*

*He shall be bound by professional secrecy and shall refrain from making comments about matters that are pending before any court.*

## **Administrative Duties**

*(1) A judicial Officer should diligently discharge his administrative duties, maintain professional competence in judicial administration and facilitate the performance of the administrative duties of other Judicial Officers and court officials.*

- (2) *Judicial Officer should require his staff and other court officials under his direction and control to observe the standards of fidelity and diligence that applies to him.*
- (3) *A Judicial Officer on becoming aware of reliable evidence of unethical or unprofessional conduct by another Judicial Officer or a legal practitioner should immediately take adequate steps and report same to the appropriate body seized with disciplinary powers on the matters complained of.*
- (4) *In the exercise of his administrative duty, a Judicial Officer should avoid nepotism and favouritism.*
- (5) *A Judicial Officer must refrain from engaging in sexual harassment.*
- (6) *A Judicial Officer shall not be a member of a tenders' board or engage in the award of contracts.*

➤ ***Disqualification***

*A Judicial Officer should disqualify himself in a proceeding in which his impartiality might reasonably be questioned or proceedings in which he has personal bias or prejudice concerning a party or has personal knowledge of the fact in dispute.*

### **Rule 3**

*A Judicial Officer should regulate his extra – judicial activities to minimize the risk of conflict of interest with his judicial duties,*

*A Judicial Officer shall not take or accept Chieftaincy titles while in office.*

*Judicial officers may engage in the Arts, sports and other social and recreational activities if such vocational activities do not adversely affect the dignity of his office or interfere with the performance of his judicial duties.*

#### **Business and Financial Activities**

*Judicial Officers may own investment or real property provided that in the management of his investments he shall not serve as an officer, director, manager, general partner, adviser or employee of the business.*

*Otherwise permissible investment or business activities are prohibited if the:*

- (a) Tend to reflect adversely on judicial impartiality,*
- (b) Interfere with the performance of judicial duties.*
- (c) Exploit the judicial position, or*

*(d) Involve the Judicial Officer in frequent transactions with legal practitioners or with people likely to come before the judicial office.*

### ***Acceptance of Gifts***

*A Judicial Officer and members of his family shall neither ask for nor accept any gift, bequest, favour, or loan on account of anything done or omitted to be done by him in the discharge of his duties.*

*(1) A Judicial Officer is, however permitted to accept;*

- (i) Personal gift or benefits from relatives or personal friends to such extent and on such occasions as are recognized by custom;*
- (ii) Books supplied by publishers on a complimentary basis;*
- (iii) A loan from lending institution in its regular course of business on the same terms generally available to people who are not judicial officers;*
- (iv)** *A scholarship or fellowship awarded on the same terms applied to other applicants.*

*A Judicial Officer should not practice law nor act as an arbitrator.*

## **FACTORS THAT MILITATE AGAINST GOOD WORKING RELATION IN THE JUDICIARY**

1. Abuse of court duties.
2. Abuse of office
3. Injustice
4. Corruption
5. Lack of loyalty
6. Insubordination
7. Discrimination and favouritism
8. Bad Attitude
9. Wickedness and maltreatment
10. Lack of inspiration, motivation and Reward.
11. Bad conduct and misconduct.
12. Inhumanity
13. Poor keeping of personal records.
14. Bad Association, cultism and Drunkenness, Drug Abuse and Immorality.
15. Keeping bad habits.
16. Tyranic unionism
17. Failure to attend to the welfare of staff and or the Management of the Judiciary.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. Mind your manners:**

According to Usain Bolt "Manners is the key thing. Say for instance, when you're growing up, you're walking down the street, you've got to tell everybody good morning, everybody. You can't pass one person".

It is said that good manners can open more doors than a good education.

Good manners are ageless, classless and priceless and everybody should have them. Bad manners by anybody irritates and offends other people.

Beloved with courtesy towards other people, respect is reciprocal. Offer seat to pregnant mothers and elderly people. Do not seat down unless you are offered a seat by your senior.

**Be civil** in your interaction with your co-workers, Head of Departments, How Judges and the Heads of Court. You are expected to stand up when your superior enters your office or arrives at an occasion.

You are also expected to hold a door open for them to go through it. These are common courtesies one can observe to show regard for others.

Respect customs that promotes Good Manners.

Mind your fashion, dressing, colours, make – up, hair and nails. Every profession, office and class have their manner of dressing and appearance. You must know the correct manner of dressing as a court official. Failure to observe this is likely to cause you and you office some embarrassment.

### **Mind Your Posture**

Stand and sit tall – walk. With purpose as somebody who ahs a destination. When entering a room or office announce your presence. Do not jump into any office without announcement. Always look straight ahead at the people you are meeting. Close the door gently behind you and put on a smile, look happy. You don't turn your back on your superior as you are approaching him or leaving his presence.

Address people correctly and try not to forget the names of your co-workers and superiors.

I wish you can imagine the embarrassment you are liable to suffer if you are seeking a favour from somebody, and the first thing you do is to address the person wrongly.

Develop a means suitable to you for remembering names of people. If you claim to come from Katsina State and you are

asked the name of your Chief Judge and you reply Justice Bello Masari. You did not get it only wrong, you also told me that you are likely to be a ghost worker.

Be careful how you use technology.

- a. Computer
- b. Phone
- c. Internet
- d. Social media.

Whatever you do with these modern age Technology make sure you protect your private and public image. Do not give impression that you have nothing doing with your time other than, twitting, facebooking, watsapping, Utube and many more.

### **Improve Yourself**

You can do this by acquiring additional qualification so that you can be useful to the judiciary or any office you find yourself. Today you find yourself in NJI. Take your course here seriously. It has been programmed to benefit you and make you a better person in the court system and anywhere.

Do not be mentally stagnant. Read, learn and pursue knowledge and experience. Remember that knowledge is not only power but it gives you confidence.

### **Be kind to everyone**

You need to develop a kind attitude and habit at all times. Try to make things easy for people who approach the court. The court is like a hospital. Only the sick go there. While not compromising the existing court rules, always make sure that you adopt a kind attitude to people co-workers, judges, registrars, litigants and in fact everyone. Do not be a burden to anyone. Ask yourself what you can do to make things better. Make kindness the home of your relationship with others. Wicked people do not go far. You may enjoy hurting people today, when you have finished hurting everyone, you will have yourself to hurt. When you do, there will be no one to pity you.

Do not take everything personal. Live, love and show compassion and affection to people.

We come from different backgrounds, we are exposed to different knowledge and experience. Yet we come together to work in the judiciary. Every day we meet different manner of people. Whatever we do, we must develop positive attitude to everyone.

There is nothing personal about our work in the Judiciary. There are laid down rules of court we must obey in relation to our dealings with everyone to people everyone. Try to understand people. Do not close your door against anyone. Have an open lovely mind. Get angry with dignity but forgive with compassion. Avoid hating anyone. Hatred is of no use. It serves no purpose. Do not allow your emotions, feelings and disposition to affect your work. Relax at all times and avoid stress.