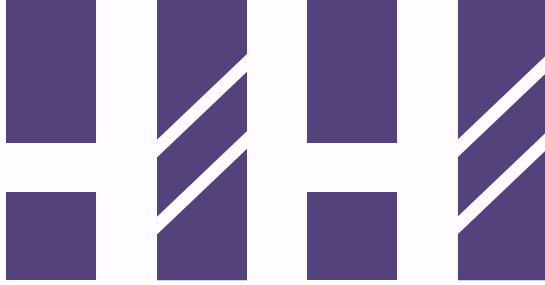


Journey to the C-Suite



Reflections
September 1, 2025

A Transformational Journey

In my application to The Journey to the C-Suite, I concluded my personal statement as excerpted below:

The above positions me as a shadow of my bosses and a competent candidate for succession planning an opportunity so desired yet challenging. Leaders are not born but made especially the kind that aspires, mentors and empowers others while building goal congruence for the organization. The "Journey to the C-Suite" program presents such a transformational journey in my pursuit to the table where decisions are made, and I believe the time is now as this program will help me bridge the gap between operational leadership and the broader demands of C-Suite. It will expose me to the thinking, structures, values and culture that drive sustainable organizational success.

Have I achieved this? My journey indeed entails.

Iga Henry Matovu

Senior Internal Auditor - Uganda Airlines



On 16th June 2025, I got an acceptance to join the inaugural cohort of The Journey to the C-Suite program with an invitation to the launch ceremony on 26th June 2025. A session on recognition of the Cohort participants officiated by the Kenyan High Commissioner, the CEO - Capital Markets Authority, The Algerian Ambassador, and the CEO Multichoice Uganda excited me as I got a photo moment. I, however, was not prepared for the upcoming three (3) months of baking.



I have had to unlearn and relearn what I thought I knew from the basics of how to dress up, writing a CV and social media to tackle leadership challenges, meaningful connections, and positioning for influence.

Through the journey, I have had to outgrow my fears to delegate; to break the ice; to quickly thick and respond. For long I found it easy to say in a meeting that "I have nothing to say" or rather to simply agree with submissions of others for the fear of embarrassing myself but I can now confidently challenge. Thanks to

- Sylvia Mulomi who encouraged me to be comfortable with the way I am and allow it to define me while fixing my limitations and
- Dorcus Muhwezi to whom if everyone has the same opinion in the room, then you are so many in that room. There's need for diversity.

Each Hi-Tea, photo moment, session, speaker, and assignment has contributed to a deeper understanding of leadership, executive presence, and personal growth.

Key Lessons Learned & Personal Growth

Personal Growth Areas

- **Delegation:** I have predominantly been the kind that likes to do it and to do it my way, but Pamela Natamba paused the question; “so if you do the work of others, who will do your work?”, leadership is about results. Since then, I have purposed to trust others and empower them to deliver.
- **Breaking the Ice:** Meeting new people especially those that appear to be of a higher standing in conferences or events and going away with only saying “hello” is comfortable. It reminds me of my red-carpet moment at Makerere’s 64th graduation ceremony in January 2014 when the Vice Chancellor asked me whether I had a job and what he can do for me, and I froze unconsciously saying yes despite my wish to be retained by the university.



Through the Hi-teas before JTC sessions, I have had to build confidence in initiating conversations and learnt to step out of that comfort zone. Quoting Jessies’ wisdom bite – if it doesn’t stretch you, it doesn’t grow you. Janet Navugga has for one been a testament as all the guests we have quenched from were because she was courageous enough to break the ice. Coach Lynda took it to another level and challenged us to “Kwetegga” and I for one if not the whole cohort have exploited this. I had the confidence to interview my group’s Icon – Mr. Baker Magunda who ended up challenging me to pursue a CEO role.

- **Delegation:** I have predominantly been the kind that likes to do it and to do it my way, but Pamela Natamba paused the question; “so if you do the work of others, who will do your work?”, leadership is about results. Since then, I have purposed to trust others and empower them to deliver.
- **Breaking the Ice:** Meeting new people especially those that appear to be of a higher standing in conferences or events and going away with only saying “hello” is comfortable. It reminds me of my red-carpet moment at Makerere’s 64th graduation ceremony in January 2014 when the Vice Chancellor asked me whether I had a job and what he can do for me, and I froze unconsciously saying yes despite my wish to be retained by the university.



Foundational Lessons

- a. **Your Values Are Non-Negotiable** – They define your brand and will be tested. According to Jenifer Musisi, “If you stand your ground with integrity, professionalism, and respect—and you succeed—you gain a platform for your next support.”
- b. **Blow Your Trumpet** – Celebrate your achievements.
- c. **Be Valuable** – Continuously seek ways to add value for “Applied knowledge is real power.” – Mr. Wisdom. Be technically astute.
- d. **Live for Alignment, Not Applause** – Authenticity matters.
- e. **Excellence Is Timeless** – Master the basics and deliver consistently – Mr. Wisdom
- f. **The dots always connect** – Janet Navugga.
- g. **Trust is a currency, and it is based on character (integrity) & competence (intent, capability, results)** – Elizabeth Ntege.
- h. **Leadership is a calling to embrace with a price (sacrifices & resilience) to pay and a reward (fulfillment, legacy, impact) awaiting.**
 - i. “Perpetual optimism is a force multiplier but only if backed by substance, otherwise its just hot air.” – Hassan Saleh
 - j. **No success can compensate for your failure at home** – Joseph Kagwa, and Jenifer Musisi
- k. **As we aspire to lead, defining our executive value proposition becomes essential — the unique skills, knowledge, and capabilities that organizations recognize and reward ~ Sylvia Mulomi.**
- l. **Growth requires champions - Surround yourself with a mentor, a Godparent, or a boss who believes in you. Without someone advocating for your growth, you may stagnate ~Hassan Saleh.**

Highlights of Key Moments

Top 5 Sessions

1. Gestures of Kindness by Hassan Saleh
2. Leadership Fireside Chat with Jenifer Musisi – Integrity, professionalism, and family values.
3. Leadership as a calling by Elizabeth Ntege
4. Executive Value Proposition by Sylvia Mulomi
5. Strategy Formulation, Execution and Monitoring by Alfred Brian Agaba



Guest Speaker

JENNIFER SEMAKULA MUSISI

*First City Leader, Bloomberg
Harvard City Leadership Initiative*

A masterclass in executive leadership.

"If you stand your ground with integrity, professionalism, and respect—and you succeed—you gain a platform for your next support."



Guest Speaker

HASSAN SALEH ALI

*Managing Director, Uganda
MultiChoice Group*

whose story is not just inspiring but deeply practical. He shares his journey with a fatherly wisdom that's rare and refreshing.



Guest Speaker

SYLVIA MULOMI

*Head People & Culture -
Stanbic Bank Uganda*

Her insights were a timely reminder that leadership is not just about position — it's about influence, adaptability, and delivering measurable value.

Significant Turning Points

CV Rewriting

When we were tasked to share our CVs, with excitement, I shared mine but after a session with Elizabeth Ntegge, I realized I did not have a compelling CV. Elizabeth challenged us to fill the below blanks in our CVs and I am proud of the CV I now possess for it's a reflection of my leadership journey and capabilities.

- Leadership trajectory (results plus scope growth)
- Strategic projects led quantifying results
- Value to the organization (innovation, cost savings, team development)
- Demonstrate & have experience in strategic thinking & decision making, stakeholder management & influence, emotional intelligence & resilience, executive presence

Hosting Sessions

When I was given a chance to co-host a session but also present about my organization and industry. I realized that inherently I am a salesperson because I sold the Airline and the aviation industry to a community that did not know well about the industry. I felt like a Chief Commercial Officer of Uganda Airlines – a proof to Jessies submission of Robert Kiyosaki's recommendation on skills needed of which was sales and public speaking



Group assignments

Throughout the journey, I belonged to the group - B&M Co. Ltd. In this group I have seen ingenuity. To deliver on an identified topic of "Character and Competence" aligned with the groups' icon – Baker Magunda, the group agreed to use the beer brewing process, mapping each of the five stages (*malting, mashing, fermentation, conditioning and packaging*) to leadership and a reflection of our journey to the C-Suite.



Our energies, egos, competences and abilities were tested but had to align for the greater good. At some point each had to let go of their ideologies and adopt that of another, we had the pushers that were always in the neck, we had the challengers, we had all kinds of group dynamics, but these ended up yielding a great delivery. I never knew I had theoretical abilities until this group assignment.

In this assignment, I was given a chance to talk into office politics in a panel setting and I am proud of the fact that the class appreciated my delivery on the same. I called it "The game you must learn to play - Office politics" and here are some key takeaways from our discussion:

- It's about egos - power plays, relationships, and personal interests. Every workspace has: Hard workers (technically competent but technically naïve) Smart-workers (who understand visibility and influence) and non-workers (who rise without merit)
- Social skills are your currency. Learn to map influence, not just hierarchy. Understand who truly wields power - sometimes it's not the person with the title, but the one they consult.
- Practice selective honesty. Emotional intelligence often matters more than brutal truth.
- Be a smart worker. Take credit for your work but never outshine your boss. Avoid the non-workers — they drain energy and offer little value
- Control your narrative. Speak in ways that protect your reputation even when you're not in the room.
- Align with like-minded colleagues. Collaboration with the right people amplifies impact.
- Understand the open-door policy. It's not a license to report everything — discernment is key.
- Stay grounded in your values. Without clarity, the organization's culture can easily shape you.
- Choose your battles wisely. Not every hill is worth climbing.
- Play the game to change the game. When you understand the rules, you can influence what gets rewarded — shifting the compass toward positive behavior.

- Seek the third way. Beyond "my way" or "your way" lies a path where everyone wins.
- Embrace conscious leadership. Know yourself, speak your truth, inspire love, expand awareness, and activate mastery.
- There's room for everyone at the table. Even the meekest have power — if they pay attention and make their contribution.

Group Presentations on a key leadership challenge

My Group B&M Co. Ltd was the last to present in a past assignment and thus had exactly one week to present the final presentation unlike other groups. This was a true test and that's how we agreed to tackle a challenge that we already talked about but customize to an organization experiencing it. I am proud that we put out the most unique presentation depicting with a chessboard and its pieces to reflect office politics. The Queen thrives on informal networks and wields the most influence. The Pawn, underestimated, can become powerful upon crossing to the other side symbolizing hidden influence and unexpected rise. The journey, however, is full of hurdles, and every move has consequences (*positive or negative*) - a reflection of both the healthy competition and toxic politics that shape organizational culture



LinkedIn Engagement

Before JTC, my first and last LinkedIn post was three (3) years ago when MTN listed on the Uganda Stock Market and my perception of linked in was that it was a platform for job hunting. It's only until JTC that I intentionally post at least twice a week. I was challenged by the fact that the CV is not enough space to tell your story and that with all the years of experience, I possess a mass of knowledge that only I know and can't impact until I put it out there.

Hi-Tea Networking

The Hi-Tea turned out to be such an important part of my stepping out of the shell when it came to networking. I have had to hold a conversation with each cohort participant as well as guest speakers and I have amassed meaningful connections and relationships - a social capital I need.



Monday & Saturday Routine

Often the evening of Mondays feels like an accomplishment being the hardest day of the week. Saturdays are often the most desired day because they are restful and allow for personal errands. However, these turned out to be the JTC class days and commitment to them inculcated discipline and consistency. As a leader, there comes a time when you are required to put in the extra hours or days to meet a deadline.

Looking Ahead: Continuous Learning & Strategic Growth

Inspired by the journey, I aim to pursue certifications in digital transformation, innovation, and strategic leadership. My commitment includes:

- a. Deepening Executive Presence
- b. Leading with emotional intelligence
- c. Driving performance culture and stakeholder influence

Gratitude & Final Thoughts

When you tell me, I will listen; when you show me, I will see; when you allow me experience, I will learn ~Lao Tzu. I am grateful for the opportunity to have experienced the Journey to the C-Suite and to the founder - Janet Navvuga, the facilitators, speakers, coaches, and fellow cohort members—thank you for the shared wisdom, support, and inspiration. The dots have indeed connected, and the journey continues