

## Stepping Up to Lead



Over the past three months, I've had the privilege of participating in the **Journey To the C-SUITE** Leadership Training Program (**#JTC2025**).

Journey to the C-SUITE' (**JTC**) is a 3-month leadership development program designed to equip high-potential middle managers with the strategic insight, executive presence and leadership capacity required to excel in C-SUITE roles.

It is a sister brand to 'Journey to the Boardroom' (**JTB**), a corporate governance brand focused on grooming the next generation of corporate leaders and board members using the power of mentorship.

Joining the program has been a transformative journey for me and has challenged me to grow, reflect, be bold and step forward as a stronger and more impactful leader.

**"Leadership, whether born or made, needs continuous shaping."**



I currently serve as the Finance Manager at the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority, a government agency.

As Finance Manager, I play a pivotal role in ensuring the financial viability of the organization.

My responsibilities span from executing financial strategy, overseeing budgets, and ensuring effective treasury and cashflow management, to putting systems and policies in place to facilitate compliance and adherence to internal controls.

Beyond the “numbers”, I focus on team building and inspiring a high performing finance team, enabling them to deliver insights that inform decision making and support the organizations overall strategic goals.

Joining the JTC 2025 cohort was very timely for me as a technical manager trying to become a better leader. I wanted to learn how leverage networks (office politics) for career growth, how to be more visible at the organization and how to be impactful in the lives of my subordinates.

Some of the key lessons I learned during the training program were as follows;

| LESSON                                                                                           | KEY INSIGHTS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
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| ■ Leadership starts with leading self                                                            | <p>This is a very powerful lesson and the bedrock of leadership. The lesson centers around the aspects of awareness, in particular, self-awareness. This can be summarized through the 3-step success formula;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Better awareness</li> <li>2. Better choices</li> <li>3. Better results</li> </ol> <p><i>[Leadership lessons from Mr. Paul Senyomo's presentation]</i></p>                                                         |
| ■ The story of the Chinese Palm tree                                                             | <p>Slow, steady growth: The Chinese Palm tree story highlights the need for persistence and unseen effort. The Palm grows for years underground before a period of rapid growth, developing a strong, extensive root system first. This lesson highlights the value of strong fundamentals patiently cultivated overtime, which later on become the foundation of a successful leadership journey.</p> <p><i>[Leadership lessons from Mr. Paul Senyomo's presentation]</i></p> |
| ■ Who you know determines what you get to do, and what you do will determine who you get to know | <p>A key lesson I learned is the importance of understanding office politics and using it to build meaningful networks of influence. While cultivating such relationships requires time, effort, and intentionality, the rewards are immense. Strong networks not only enhance one's understanding of organizational goals but also create opportunities to grow, thrive, and achieve lasting results.</p>                                                                     |
| ■ Leading with Empathy                                                                           | <p>Emotional intelligence means understanding what drives people. As Jennifer Musisi shared, even small daily interactions with support staff can be powerful in building respect, connection, and readiness to lead.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| ■ Strategic Thinking                                                                             | <p>How to effectively translate excellent strategies into impactful results at the execution and tactical level. Balancing the big picture with day-to-day actions.</p> <p>These were key insights from Mr. Alfred Brian Agaba</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| ■ As a C-SUITE leader, you need to be a business leader                                          | <p>In his session on Leadership in a Digital Age, Mr. Robert Mutebi emphasized that while technology drives the digital age, business fundamentals remain paramount. For C-SUITE leaders, technology should not replace strategy but serve as an enabler of a well-grounded, value-driven business model.</p>                                                                                                                                                                  |



The true value of this journey lies in both its transformative impact and its practical applicability. The delivery was exceptional — with sessions led by top thought leaders, seasoned professionals, and highly respected business executives.

Equally impressive was the program's design. It took a holistic approach, addressing both personal and professional development, and was carefully structured to support the transition from mid-level management to C-SUITE leadership.

Throughout the program we were blessed to have excellent and highly knowledgeable leaders address us, among the various sessions during the course of the program, these were my favorite and most memorable;

| SESSION                                                            | HIGHLIGHTS THAT SHAPED MY LEADERSHIP JOURNEY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
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| <b>■ C-SUITE Orientation by Mr. Paul Senyomo</b>                   | <p>The opening session by Mr. Paul Senyomo encapsulated everything I aspire to embody as a leader; knowledge, wisdom, humility, thoroughness, simplicity, effortlessness, inspiration, impact etc.</p> <p>One phrase of wisdom from him will stay with me forever:<br/> “Do not fatten your cow on the day of the market.” – Paul Senyomo</p> <p>This resonated deeply with me. Successful leaders are the product of countless hours, days, even years of being excellent. Preparation, not chance, is the foundation of achievement — because luck always favors the prepared.</p> <p>Without a doubt, Mr. Senyomo was my top speaker, and his orientation session was my standout moment of the program. It set the bar high, inspiring me to strive for excellence both personally and professionally. His depth of insight left me truly awestruck.</p>                  |
| <b>■ Inclusive Leadership and Managing across generations</b>      | <p>We often think of ourselves as effective communicators, yet rarely do we experience what true mastery looks like in practice.</p> <p>Mr. David Kaggwa’s session was exactly that - a masterclass in communication. Though his topic was not specifically about communication, his delivery itself demonstrated the very essence of engaging, impactful messaging. It was a powerful reminder that how we communicate can be just as important as what we communicate.</p> <p>Beyond this lesson, a key takeaway I am already applying in my workplace is the theory of the Inverted U Curve. As a leader, it taught me the importance of applying the right balance of pressure and urgency enough to drive results and productivity, but not so much that it becomes counterproductive.</p> <p>Mr. David Kaggwa was another top speaker for me during the JTC program</p> |
| <b>■ Building and sustaining a high performing executive bench</b> | <p>The best leaders are often defined by the strength and capability of the teams around them. Success in leadership requires an eye for excellence, as much of a leader’s impact is realized through others.</p> <p>The ability to identify, recruit, and retain exceptional team members is therefore a critical skill. Qualities such as attitude, adaptability, resilience, and a willingness to learn often outweigh technical competence, forming the foundation of high-performing, dependable teams.</p> <p>In her session, Ms. Pamela Nantamba underscored not only the importance of selecting the right people but also the need to motivate and retain them. This, she emphasized, is essential for ensuring the long-term success of both the leader and the organization.</p>                                                                                   |

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| <p>■ <b>Professional Hygiene</b></p>        | <p>This session, led by Ms. Janet Navuga, founder of JTC/JTB, shed light on often-overlooked aspects of both professional and personal leadership. She frequently reminded us that “what might seem like common sense, might not necessarily be common to all” - and she was absolutely right.</p> <p>Professional hygiene was a completely new area of focus for me. While I had been subconsciously applying some elements, I also realized there were many areas I had been overlooking or doing incorrectly.</p> <p>Ms. Navuga’s insights were both practical and profound, reflecting her wealth of experience. Key takeaways for me included the importance of financial reputation, personal branding, and continuous learning - all vital elements for any leader striving for long-term growth and credibility.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <p>■ <b>Leadership in a digital age</b></p> | <p>In one of my standout sessions, Mr. Robert Mutebi emphasized that while technology is reshaping businesses globally, true growth begins with strong personal leadership and sound business fundamentals.</p> <p>To open his session, he introduced us to three timeless business principles from Benjamin Graham’s The Intelligent Investor:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Know your business;</b> You must understand how the business creates value before making any investment decisions.</li> <li>2. <b>Do your due diligence;</b> Never enter a business without first determining how profits will be generated, even before considering costs.</li> <li>3. <b>Invest personal time and effort;</b> No one is as committed to your business as you are. Entrust its management to others only if you are confident their goals fully align with yours.</li> </ol> <p>The session was memorable and full of valuable insights. Robert challenged us, as C-SUITE leaders, to focus on the value-generating areas of our organizations rather than being consumed by cost-centric functions.</p> <p>He was undoubtedly one of my top speakers in the program. His breadth of knowledge - extending well beyond his area of expertise into business strategy and global issues - was truly impressive and demonstrated the versatility and depth expected of today’s C-SUITE leaders.</p> |

### Top cross-cutting topics covered during the program

- Self-Leadership
- Continuous learning and development
- Emotional Intelligence
- Effective Communication and personal branding

## ■ Reflection & Next Steps



I am deeply grateful to Ms. Janet Navuga Bugembe (Founder of JTB and JTC), the facilitators, my fellow JTC2025 cohort members, and my organization for supporting my growth and granting me this invaluable opportunity in my leadership journey.

Looking ahead, I am committed to applying the lessons learned over the past three months to my daily work. I plan to adopt more mentorship practices within the office and remain open to new leadership opportunities - both within my organization and beyond - as I continue to grow and contribute.