

COMPETITION AUTHORITY OF KENYA

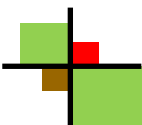
KNOWLEDGE HUB

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YOUNG PROFESSIONALS' EXIT INTERVIEW

In this sixth issue of the Knowledge Hub, we get to learn from three Young Professionals; Ms. Ivy Gikonyo, Ms. Doris Matu and Mr. John Thoni. They share their experiences at the Authority; how they carried out research and used information and knowledge resources, and, finally challenges and lessons learnt during their period at the Authority as a Young Professionals in the year 2022.



Ivy Gikonyo

What roles did you undertake at the Authority?

I worked in three departments. The first was the Consumer Protection Department (CPD), where I got to be fully masked in the roles of an investigation officer. I would handle a case from when it's reported to the authority and do the whole investigation up until doing a closing report. We'd have meetings with complainants, and most of the time I'd be taking minutes. There would be instances where complainants or the accused would be accompanied by their lawyers, in such instances since I was the only lawyer present from the Authority I would easily engage them from a legal perspective.

At the Mergers and Acquisitions Department (M&A), I did merger reviews and assessment reports. Much of what I did were the COMESA cases and reports. The Legal Department gave me another opportunity to handle issues from almost all departments, since I attended meetings with almost all departments, and this gave me an understanding of what the Authority does as a whole. I also did legal opinions, attended court, and did reports.

Which resources (hard copy and/or web based) did you first turn to when looking for information to enable you perform your tasks?

Google was number one especially in CPD, because sometimes for accused parties, and in order to get their contacts, or to get to know what they do and what products they sell, you had to visit their website, so we got a lot of information from there. In M&A, when you are analyzing a merger and a company has informed you what they do, you had to verify if that is reflected in their website.

The other resources of course were the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, the Competition Act, and other accompanying regulations. I would also make reference to documents from the OECD, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and I would use cases from those reports. I would also make reference to the US competition Law cases because they're well documented.

There are several cases that the Authority has handled previously. Did you ever make reference to these cases?

In CPD cases that had already been handled, were very useful mostly because I didn't know everything and I needed to know exactly what to look for, hence these were a useful reference point. In the Legal Department, this was inevitable since you had to use previous cases the Authority had handled, so mostly they're documented in Kenya Law Reporting and the ones that also not at Kenya Law Reporting, were available in the registry.

In an instance where you did not have critical knowledge or information what was your first source?

The officer I'm working with closely. So just to know whether they, have interacted with the information I'm looking for or whether they can point me in the right direction.

Which additional knowledge or skills did you gain during your stay at the Authority?

On consumer protection, this for me was also a class, it added to my legal knowledge of these two areas. I also, got a clearer picture of the workings of the Authority. I got to understand how the government works, how the Authority staff interact with one another and how the Authority itself interacts with other state agencies writing, team work, and interaction with clients. In addition to economic analysis, I understood the financial elements by analysis of financial records and also being able to extract relevant information from financial statements, so that was very new. The more reports I did, the more I got to understand, got the hang of it and learnt to analyze these big statements in order to quickly look for what's relevant to what you're doing.



Did you face any constraints in accessing or sharing knowledge?

In sharing what I knew, there were no constraints, in accessing information I'd say it's just that sometimes you don't know where to start. You don't know where everything is, so it just takes a lot of time to know where, what is found.

What recommendations do you have to improve knowledge sharing and access at the Authority?

Its not just for YPs, but maybe a kind of a catalog that just gives an overview of the location of sources.

Did you find any challenges navigating the CMS/DMS?

No, I did not. In C P D, I was properly inducted, which was my first station. I went to Mergers and it was quite different. The use of it was very different. That was a challenge because you don't use it as you did in the previous department. There are times I would send a file, you think you have sent it because you've just done what you used to do in CPD, only to later realize it hasn't gone. So that was a challenge because, there's a time I did an assignment and forwarded the file, turns out I still had it and I didn't know. We almost had a delay there with that. And also now the normal once in a while, when CMS system would be down.

In your opinion, which critical knowledge is at risk of being lost in the departments you worked in and what should be done to ensure that this knowledge is accessed and shared?

The information was well documented in all the three departments, the only adjustment is that sometimes you find that the reports which would be necessary when coming up with other reports in future and instead of maybe having to go to look for those closed cases, because you might not know what it is. Maybe just having a separate folder that has the key reports that had like detailed research done on them. In maybe one folder for the department to easily access and put them maybe under a heading.

What gaps/areas of improvement have you identified in yourself and how do you plan to fill this gap?

The gap is in research, I need to be faster, I would like to improve on my, research skills, quality and speed. I am good at research, but I have found people who are also very good, really good, and who challenged me to be and do better. Another area of improvement is also how to take correction. When you don't like failure sometimes correction can come as failure being pointed out but its all about knowing that it's a learning process.

Which training and development or knowledge exchange session did you find helpful?

There was one on Mergers that was going to be presented to Judges. Hearing the feedback given by

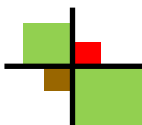
colleagues on the research itself and on the presentation delivery was key for me.

Which training and development would you have liked or needed that you didn't receive?

I would've have loved to know more about the Buyer Power Department. I never did, so that even in the Legal Department where I interacted with many other departments it wasn't easy getting a chance to handle any Buyer Power assignments.

Do you have additional comments?

For the YPs, have an open mind here will be a lot of learning so be ready to learn and meet great people. I am grateful to the management for coming up with the program, that it's a good one. The three months period in the departments is however inadequate since when you are getting to understand the procedures, you are moved to another department. My proposal would be to have four months in a department.



Doris Matu

W

hat roles did you undertake at the Authority?

I worked in Legal, Mergers and Acquisitions and lastly at the Consumer Protection Departments. I undertook activities in research, analysis, report writing and advisory services.

How often did you use each of the following as you carried out your assignments?

Information Resources at the Resource center

Quarterly

Document Management System

Daily

Department operated database such as the network folder or files

Daily

Organization policy/ procedures manual or guidelines

Monthly

Department- specific procedures manual or guidelines ?

Monthly

How did you source for information to assist you complete a task where you did not have critical knowledge or information? What was your first source of information?

For research work, I would do desktop research and went to the registry/library, once in a while, to look up further sources. For similar assignments done by other officers, I would look up the case files on DMS, or talk to the officer for guidance and discussion on any outstanding issues.

Which additional knowledge or skills did you gain during your period at the Authority?

As a professional, I was able to gain new knowledge in competition regulation and consumer welfare protection practice in Kenya. I saw first-hand the enforcement practice of the Competition Act. In addition, I enhanced my analysis and writing skills.

Did you face any constraints in accessing or sharing knowledge?

I did not face any constraints. The resources mentioned earlier were readily available for my use during the program.

How did you find your way around the CMS and DMS

I had induction sessions at the start of every rotation period in each department. I could reach out to fellow

officers for follow up questions whenever questions arose in the day to day.

What recommendations do you have to improve knowledge sharing and access at the Authority?

Consider beefing up resources at the repository to ensure a wider variety especially on the legal aspects of competition and consumer protection law and enforcement, particularly in the Kenyan and African space.

What gaps/areas of improvement have you identified in yourself and how do you plan to fill this gap?

I realized I have limited expertise and this gap is to be filled by continuous professional practice

What do you think the Authority would have done differently to fill this gap?

Increase of the rotation period in each department to enhance the length of time taken to master the procedures and work at one department.

Which training and development or knowledge exchange session did you find helpful?

The Annual Workshop and Symposium

Which training and development would you have liked or needed that you didn't receive? We were involved in

many training and development activities, and they enhanced my knowledge in the area of competition law and consumer protection



James Thomí

What roles did you undertake at the Authority?

Being a training program that encompassed four technical departments in the Authority, I was exposed to research, investigation, analysis, report writing, surveys, Corporate social responsibility (CSR) and normal office operations.

Which resources (hard copy and/or web based) did you first turn to when looking for information to enable you perform your tasks?

I used web based resources since most of the Authority's resources and processes have been automated. In addition, most of the researches that I was part of were desk top hence the reliance on secondary data from online platforms.

How often did you use each of the following as you carried out your assignments?

Information Resources at the Resource center

– Weekly

Document Management System-Daily

Department operated database such as the network folder or files –Daily

Organization policy/ procedures manual or guidelines

-Daily

Department- specific procedures manual or guidelines ? -Daily

How did you source for information to assist you complete a task where you did not have critical knowledge or information? What was your first source of information?

I prioritized colleagues, past reports, internet, and library resources respectively.

Which additional knowledge or skills did you gain during your period at the Authority?

The program enhanced my analytical skill, improved my engagement capability but enhancing my ability to confidently and easily build rapport.

Did you face any constraints in accessing or sharing knowledge?

In sharing, yes. Though with the help of the colleagues who proved to be good team players, and the mentorship program, I overcame the challenges and was able to be part of the plenaries and even represented the Authority in a conference.

How did you find your way around the CMS and DMS?

In every department that I served, I was assigned a mentor who took me through the CMS and DMS operations, this eased my navigation abilities.

What recommendations do you have to improve knowledge sharing and access at the Authority?

Within the Authority, each department can be having brainstorming sessions amongst themselves in order to improve understanding of the current issues/occurrences within their scope of operation.

In your opinion, which critical knowledge is at risk of being lost in the departments you worked in and what should be done to ensure that this knowledge is accessed and shared?

The cases that the Research and Policy Department shares, are key for the technical departments, however its uptake can be enhanced by ensuring that the other technical departments are engaged in compilation of the cases.



What gaps/areas of improvement have you identified in yourself and how do you plan to fill this gap?

Planning and Prioritization of my activities. I will work with set timeline for achieving specific goals/duties.

Which training and development or knowledge exchange session did you find helpful?

Plenary sessions were my best, sharing of papers or reports being prepared a good platform for critiquing the work done hence enriching the Authority's output.

Which training and development would you have liked or needed that you didn't receive?

Though time is a limited resource and most competition cases take long to be concluded, I wish the time taken in specific departments could have been extended, to allow one to run through a whole process e.g. cases (investigation), field work/research.

Do you have additional comments?

I must say that the mentorship program introduced was a well thought initiative that indeed came in handy in shaping my career and social life (work life balance).

