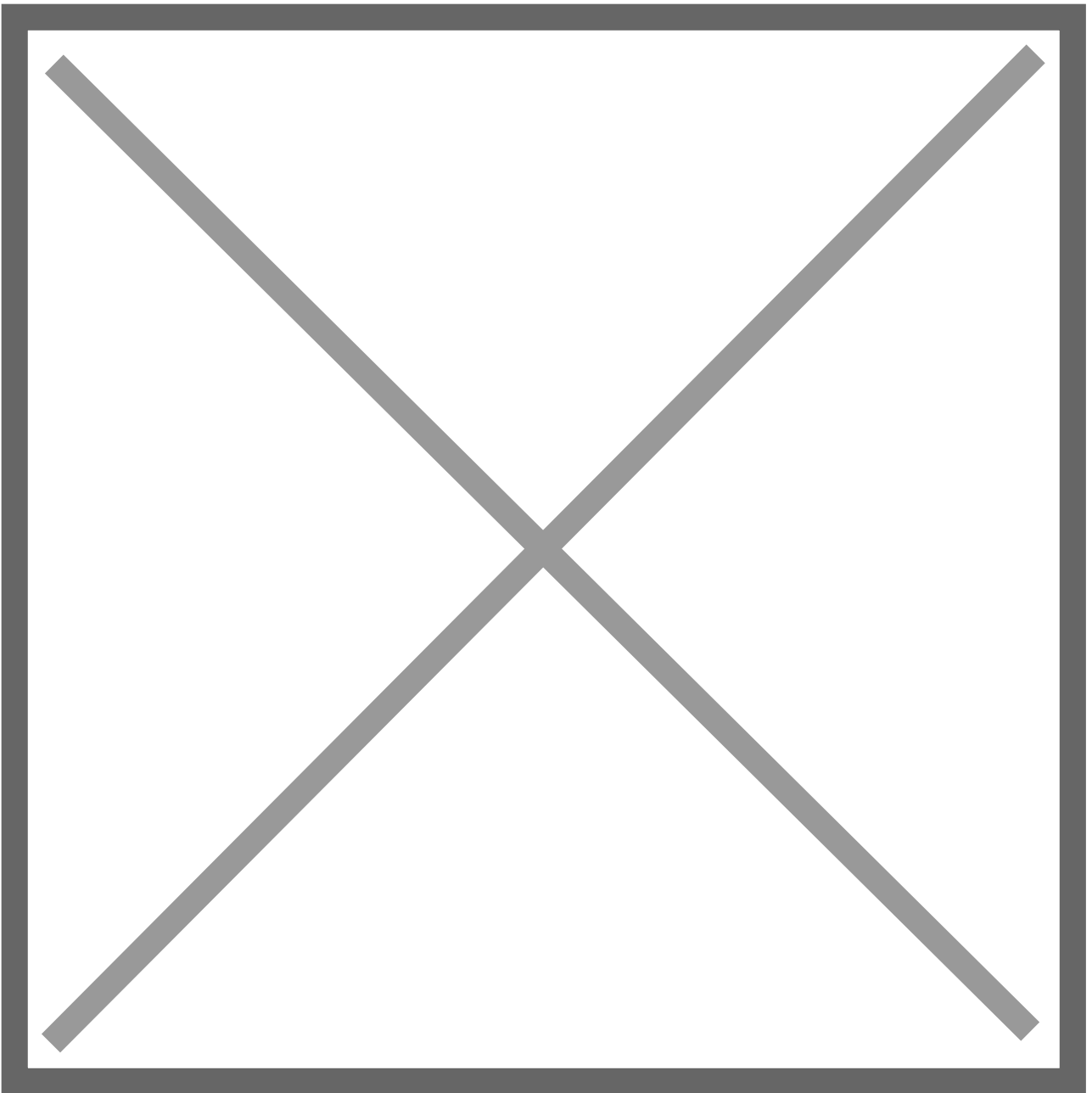


The Three Teaboys

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The Three Teaboys Perspective

There are many like Kini, Nuk, and Giwi. I hope we continue to recognise and appreciate people for their work, not their titles.

Kini, Giwi, and Nuk

As we head back to work, I thought it was timely to share this piece. Three gentlemen whose influence far exceeded their job titles.

Kini, Giwi, and Nuk were teaboys of my former employer, but not at the same time. By the time I came to know them, they were already in their forties and fifties.

Kini was from Tatana Village. Nuk from Morobe and Giwi from Popondetta.

On paper, their roles were small. In reality, they shaped the rhythm of the office from the moment you walked in.

Kini was the loudest of the three. He had a rough, unmistakable voice and a firm sense of order. He knew his role, knew the boundaries, and wasn't afraid to remind staff of them, especially when cups were left in the wrong place. I'll admit, I was guilty more than once. But there was no malice in it. Just pride in doing things properly.

Nuk and Giwi were different. Quiet men. Didn't raise their voices. They simply did their work - consistently, without fuss.

The photo I've shared isn't of them, but it reflects how they carried themselves: neatly dressed, old-school perhaps, but always respectable. They tucked in their shirts too :)

They were punctual to the minute. You'd arrive at your desk, settle in, and within minutes your tea would appear, exactly how you liked it. Milk or no milk. Sugar or no sugar. Somehow, they had memorised everyone's preferences. No spreadsheets. No notes. Just attention.

Looking back now, I realise the lesson they left behind.

Pride in work, regardless of title.

Consistency.

Respect.

Even at Christmas parties, they never brought their families. It was as though they drew a clear line between work life and personal life - a quiet form of respect for the workplace.

Now, the firm knew these men were nearing retirement. Inevitably, one by one, they stopped coming in.

Kini was the first to retire. Yet something curious happened.

Long after his official retirement, I kept seeing him every Friday, standing at the reception area. It puzzled me.

One day, I asked the receptionist at the time, the lovely Isaia Hitolo, who was of a similar age to the three men.

“Why is Kini still coming in every Friday?” I asked.

“The Partners give him an allowance,” she replied. “So he comes in himself to collect it.”

There was dignity in that arrangement.

It spoke volumes about the Partners of the firm. But it also spoke volumes about Kini.

He had earned that respect, through years of punctuality, pride in his work, and knowing his role and carrying it well. I have no doubt the same was true for Nuk and Giwi.

Regardless of title, they rolled up their sleeves and did what was required of them, and did it well. Often beyond expectation.

There are many like Kini, Nuk, and Giwi. I hope we continue to recognise and appreciate people for their work, not their titles. But perhaps more importantly, as a quiet resolution for the year ahead, may we all roll up our sleeves, do what is required of us, and beyond expectation.

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