

May 23rd, 2019.

A BORING STORY ABOUT PENSION

At the end of the day whether you're a client, techie, tax professional, or even an intern; you should spend more time creating new solutions instead of going through the motions. Oh wait, sorry that's meant to be my closing paragraph... Ok ignore that and let's start again. My name is Joseph Udonsak and I'm a software engineer at Taxaide Professional Services Limited (By God that's a terrible opening statement, I don't think I've thought this through). Alright forget the introduction, let's just get on with the story.

So, it's November 2017 (or is it October- does this really matter?) and I'm refactoring some code out back, damaging my ears (and innocence) with Hopsin's new album. BD calls me to see him in his office (Joseph they don't know who BD is, where are your manners?). BD (Bidemi Daniel Olumide) is the managing director/CEO of Taxaide Technologies Limited, managing director/CEO (or something like that) of Taxaide Professional Services Limited, named partner at A02 Law, senior something something at Human Rights Foundation, I could go on but you get the point right (Yes Joseph he doesn't sleep, we get it. Please can you tell the story already). As I was saying BD calls me to his office and he has that look on his face. What look? I don't know how to describe it, but I think that's the look he would give me before asking me how long it takes to automate the Nigerian Stock Exchange (you realise he's going to read this right?) generation of pdf receipts on our payment gateway, TaxiTPay.



His table is unusually cluttered with SO MANY CHEQUES. Here's the thing, Taxaide handles payroll for 25 -30 organizations (I knew I should have paid more attention during orientation). One of the (required) payroll remittances is pension and this usually goes to a Pension Fund Administrator (PFA). There's 24 or so PFAs currently (don't quote me, ask PENCUM) and an organization could be remitting to one, some or all of them. Turns out on average for each client, we had to disburse pensions payments to 4 PFAs so that's around 50 – 60 cheques a month for BD to sign (Are you sure it was 60? I think so... 17 organizations with 5 PFAs is around 60, right? Yes, Joseph it is. All your Maths teachers must be glowing with pride).

At this point I know BD is serious but I'm struggling not to laugh because it sounds like life is playing some cruel cruel prank on him (you want clients to pay retainer yeah? Oya sign sharp sharp... Don't forget PAYE, ITF and NHF are due next week). Don't get me started on Semiloore (head of payroll, then head of business development, then head of client relations, then head of some funny department – does anybody have just one role in this organization? That's a good question actually, I'll talk about it later). It's either she wanted the ground to swallow her so she wouldn't have to go to the bank, or she wanted the ground to swallow her so she wouldn't have to be a part of the next project BD was about to christen. I never asked her, but I think it was the former because I'm pretty fun to work with (Whatever helps you sleep at night... bloody narcissist).



I'm learning how to write better code, so I'll give you the KISS version of what BD said. He went "I'm not doing this again; I have a million and one things to do – I don't understand what you're doing if you can't help me with this" (Context Joseph. Oh sorry, during my interview I told BD signing my employment contract would be the most difficult thing he would have to do where I was concerned. How can you walk with such a swollen head? I don't know, my ego keeps me balanced I guess).

Now I'm good at what I do (of course you are) but BD's feature list is longggggggggg... At some point before this year runs out, I'll have implemented all the features he asked for in 2018 so I just threw this requirement somewhere on the list and went back to doing some serious stuff - you don't get to level 4706 on Candy Crush (JOSEPH HE'S GOING TO READ IT!!!!) win employee of the year by lazing about.

Anyhow, it's January 2018 and we're all buzzing with new year new me vibes. BD's first charge for the year is as good as they come – "...Value, Innovation, Grit..." (I bet you can't remember anything else – of course I can't, I was thinking of Attack on Titan the whole time, what were you doing?) and when I sit down to look at my sprint schedule for the year I'm thinking of the single task I can work without (any) external interruption – GB is on sabbatical so it's just me and me in the office. Gbenga Michael Sile is Daddy Wa of Taxtech, he was recently coronated as the Stallionic One (that's not a job description).

It's not? Ok just put COO in everything I mentioned about BD apart from AO2 and HRF). I'm scanning the list and I see pension. I groan at first but then I say to myself "wait a minute, we actually have all the pieces of the puzzle, you just need to spend a week, or two tweaking things and you can have this feature done in no time. Besides, how long do you think BD will buy the concept assessment excuse?".

At this point, I say a prayer for Oluyemi Kayode Olususi (Yemiwebby), Moses Adebayo (Moscodev), and every other developer that contributed to building TaxiTPay. It's the best foundation I've seen (he's actually not lying, it's really really outstanding). It took 3 weeks to talk to all the PFAs, get the necessary details and add them to the db, and write the code for everything in-between. Another two weeks for testing and I was sitting on a really good feature (BD I'm just joking, you know it really took two months but if I say that, we don't get new clients. I'm doing this for you). Wait, you thought I was going to talk about the code? Have you learnt nothing from reading this story? If this isn't enough to convince you that I'm terrible at writing, you should see my last two articles (I hope this one outdoes them so that BD and GB tell me to stop). But I digress, let's get back on track.



At this point I'm done. Semiloore thinks it might be good enough to keep BD engrossed for the next quarter and our workload might even out for a bit (boy was she wrong) and we're talking about how much we should charge for the service. I remember BD gave us a revenue target and I don't see us making any newer features, so I suggest ₦2000. Again, I never asked why she didn't stop me, but we took it to Peter (Peter is the all round

tax assassin. CIT, VAT, PAYE, PPT – dude stop spewing random bs. What he's trying to say is that Peter is probably my biggest supporter after BD but loves to hide under the shadow of criticism). True to nature, Peter goes off and tells me how he'll never use my product if he can spend less taking a bike to the bank. I tune out of the negotiation but when I'm back on planet Earth, we're charging 500 bucks for it. On second thought, the revenue target wasn't in my KPI for the year so why not? Wait doesn't my salary depend on our revenue growing? Peter what did I let you make me do? I really need to start paying more attention to stuff like this if I'm really going to get that apartment on Ministers' Hill anytime soon.

Wow Joseph, you rambled for this long to tell us a pointless story – you never listen to me and that's why we can't agree on anything to pay attention to (hold on are we meant to be talking in present or past tense in this part of the story?). We built a really nice solution, in just over a year we hit 100,000,000.00 in pension remittances (those zeros can't be right. Dude you saw the query yourself. See why I said you never pay attention?)

```

mysql> select sum(amount) from payment where paymentFor = '003' and status = '01';
+-----+
| sum(amount) |
+-----+
| 126331843.7735523 |
+-----+
1 row in set (0.00 sec)

```

The pension remittance process time has dropped from over 2 hours in a bank queue, to just under 4 minutes with crappy internet and a dreadfully slow laptop. BD doesn't have to sign all those cheques anymore (I don't think he cares about that Joseph; didn't you hear what he was saying about Effective Tax Rate? I swear you're just trying to get us fired) and Semiloore doesn't have to spend hours in the bank anymore (she always sends the interns young man. Are you trying to say the interns don't matter? How classist of you!)

Ok let's be serious here. I think one of my favourite things about working at Taxaide is that there's an instant impact- I release a feature today and I've dissolved a burden for someone – not reduced, dissolved. And it's a great team we have here, there's no shortage of opportunities here. I don't doubt that tax is the new oil. I've seen how we handle oil as a nation and we're not exactly handling tax any better (Joseph that's a story for another day, can we wrap this up before people get bored?). Sorry, what I'm trying to say is that at the end of the day whether you're a client, techie, tax professional, or even an intern; you should spend more time creating new solutions instead of going through the motions (Why does it feel like we wrote this somewhere? It's a conclusion Joseph, we haven't written it anywhere, save the damn document and go home).

-By Joseph Udonsak-



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