

Discovery CEO Adrian Gore was the Sunday Times Top Business Leader in 2010. TJ STRYDOM caught up with him ahead of this year's Top 100 awards.

'Time is gold; don't waste it'

Q: How does buying a movie ticket cheaper help people to be healthier?

A: It's not the movie ticket. It is in earning the points. The other things you need to do to earn the points help you to live healthier. People tend to overspend on health care and underspend on wellness. Our incentive programmes are geared to increase your wellness.

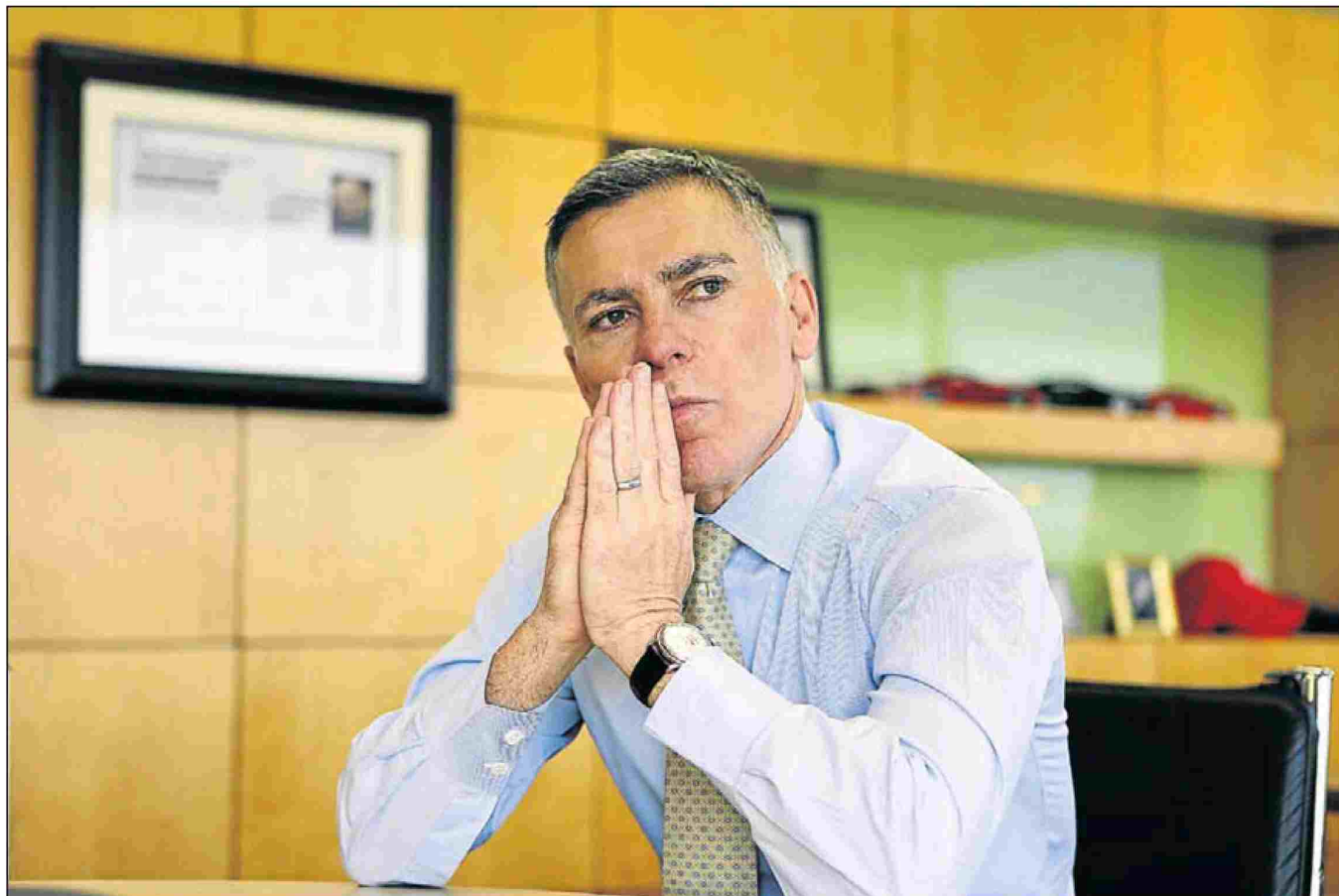
Q: Do people stop in the street and start talking to you?

A: People do. Health care is the most personal of businesses and I have been involved and associated with it for a long time. But hey, I'm no Kardashian. People don't approach me like a celebrity, more to talk about business. I like it. It's a treat.

Q: Do they pitch business ideas to you?

A: Sometimes they do. I know how to manage that. But you never know where the next big thing will come from.

The goal is not to be the biggest, but to be the best



Q: What do you like to do?

A: I keep fit. I also enjoy reading.

Q: What are you reading at the moment?

A: Actually I don't really read books during the year. I mostly keep up to date with journals. So I'd read articles about health advances and something from The Economist here and there, and I do believe in reading widely. But I'm not much of a novel reader or a business book reader.

Q: And television?

A: I like it, but I hardly ever get around to it. I love *Game of Thrones*, but I'm a bit behind at the moment.

Q: So what do you do to keep a balanced life?

A: Balance is overrated. You need to decide what you're doing and then get into it. It depends a lot on where you are in your professional life and how much you need to put in to achieve what you set out to do.

I haven't had to make any tough sacrifices. I love spending time with my wife and children. But I'm not at home every afternoon

HEALTHY MINDSET: Adrian Gore, CEO of Discovery Holdings Limited, says we need to believe that the future is ours

Picture: MOELETSI MABE

at 5pm where there is a dog waiting, holding a newspaper.

Q: So you work hard. How long will you still be at it?

A: I'm only halfway through. Discovery is internationalising and it could take decades to get a foothold everywhere we want to. Where is it going? We want to be the best health insurance company in the world. Not necessarily the biggest, but the best.

Q: Is South Africa a tough place to do business?

A: There are no easy environments. The better your product and services are the better you will do.

There is a trade-off. In developing markets such as South Africa, regulations are still forming and markets are not that well defined. But the competitive forces are easier to navigate than in places like the US.

Q: What are our biggest challenges?

A: I'm getting a reputation for



being naively positive. But I think the environment in the country is better than we give it credit for. Don't get me wrong, there are some very real and massive challenges, but one of our biggest challenges is attitudinal.

It is not only the environment that influences you. You can also influence the environment around you. It is more than having business confidence or consumer confidence, it is being positive. Like the people in Brazil and China, we need the strong conviction that the future is ours.

Q: A few years ago you said publicly that if South Africa wants to solve its unemployment problems it simply needs another 40 companies like Discovery. Have things changed?

A: Some things have changed, yes. But this is still what I believe. Jobs are created through businesses that start small and become large — like Discovery did.

Q: You made those comments at the

Leadership Summit your company has hosted over the past few years, bringing in international speakers for a highly publicised one-day event. There was no summit this year. Have you cancelled it after the opposition Tony Blair's participation evoked last year?

A: No, no, no. It has not been cancelled, only postponed. We'll probably do it early next year.

Q: You are an actuary by training. Why does it feel as if every year flies by quicker?

A: Well, I give this talk at our induction programme every month as well.

Simply put, as you get older, a year becomes a smaller proportion of your life to date. And a smaller part of your total experiences.

So if you are 10 years old, a year will be 10% of your entire life. But when you are 50, a year will be only 2% of your life. So every year, it feels as if time is flying by quicker. You think you have time, but you don't. You need to use what you have.