

Adopting an appropriate leadership approach to improve Public Service Delivery in South Africa

G Naidoo

Department of Public Administration and Management
University of South Africa
South Africa

ABSTRACT

The major challenge is that despite intense endeavours directed at improving public service delivery, lack of, or mediocre delivery continues to plague South African communities. Within the growing literature on public service delivery in South Africa (SA), it has become evident that the root causes of many service delivery problems are critical shortages of upcoming leaders, lack of appropriate leadership skills, underperformance, and the adoption of inappropriate leadership approaches, with no or little consideration to local needs and context. These factors have affected the leaders' ability to ensure that policy should lead to expected outcomes. This article explores leadership approaches adopted in SA's public service departments and highlights the reasons for its inability to promote effective service delivery outcomes. It explores which leadership approaches tend to be associated with effective organisational performance and service delivery outcomes. It suggests the adoption of an appropriate leadership approach that is relevant to the SA public service needs and context. Given the needs of the SA public service, it is argued that no single leadership approach would be appropriate in addressing the diverse needs of SA communities. This leadership approach suggested entails a combination of appropriate multiple leadership approaches that are critical in improving service delivery in the South African public service.

INTRODUCTION

Effective leadership is more critical than ever before in the South African (SA) public service. One could argue that in SA, lack of or mediocre public service delivery are

at least in part attributable to ineffective leadership, lack of strategic direction, lack of accountability to the public and lapses in ethics. The Auditor-General has uncovered R26,4bn in unauthorised, irregular and fruitless expenditure in the audit of government institutions for the 2010/2011 financial year (De Lange 2011). Thirty-four percent of departments awarded contracts to officials and their close family members. The three national departments and their provincial equivalents (health, education and public works), which together accounted for 70 percent of all state expenditure had failed to achieve a single clean audit among them. While 76 percent of national and 55 percent of provincial departments had adverse findings made against them that related to predetermined objectives or the goals, departments set for themselves, were not achieved. This is attributed to poor management and ineffective leadership. Wheeler (2011) in De Lange (2011) indicates that with the departments of Defence, of Correctional Services, of Social Development and of Sport, those in leadership positions were not giving adequate attention to monitoring departmental goals; were not completing the required reports regularly and timeously; and were often providing unreliable information to auditors. The issue here is that unless leadership within the SA public service is given proper attention, this trend of non-performance, impacting on service delivery will continue in the public service.

Luthuli (2009) argues that the role of leadership and the leadership approaches adopted in the South African public service have received little attention or analysis, which impacts on effective service delivery. To contribute to the discussion on leadership, leadership approaches and public service delivery in SA, the research on which this article is based, reviewed current public service delivery trends in SA and reflected on the relationship among service delivery, leadership and leadership approaches. Based on the findings, ways in which service delivery can be improved are proposed. It is argued that service delivery will not be successful without sound leadership and the adoption of an appropriate leadership approach. Therefore leadership development is not just about developing leaders, it is about creating a culture of performance. The practice in the SA public service is to import Western leadership approaches and models for implementation. However, cognisance of the SA context is often neglected. Furthermore, there is little evidence so far, as to the effectiveness of these imported approaches and models. It is argued that the situational variables are critical in designing a unique leadership approach for the South African public service. This article, therefore, suggests the adoption of a suitable and relevant leadership approach to improve service delivery. The article further points to the reason why a particular model of strategic South African leadership is suggested in relation to its validity and with respect to the impact on factors that affect employee performance, productivity and service delivery outcomes for the SA public service.

The article is structured as follows. *Firstly*, a broad overview of public service delivery in SA is given. *Secondly*, the need for public service delivery improvement in South Africa is highlighted. *Thirdly*, the leadership approaches adopted by the SA public service and the effectiveness of this and other leadership approaches are explored. *Fourthly*, the article concludes by suggesting the critical need for the adoption of a strategic South African leadership approach for the improvement of public service delivery and the development of the leaders involved.



OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Dauids, Theron and Maphunye (2005:37) argue that service delivery in the national, provincial and local spheres are not always effective and do not always reach the intended beneficiaries. The slow pace or lack of service delivery by the South African public service, especially by municipalities has led to growing impatience and discontent, especially among poor communities. The poor feel betrayed because their active participation in government-provided opportunities, such as elections, ward committees and Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), have not resulted in visible improvement in the delivery of the promised services (Theron 2007:36).

Kaplan (2011) states that the SANDF “is not capable of manning all their military frigates and submarines or fighter jets.” Kaplan (2011) also found state that people who are incompetent get appointed and promoted.” These claims are supported by research undertaken by Kahn and Naidoo (2011) in the SANDF. Appointments and promotions are based on nepotism instead of merit. The result is a *clogged system*, especially at the top where under-performing senior non-commissioned officers have been appointed to posts and upward mobility is limited. Experienced military leaders were overlooked and less qualified ones were appointed to senior positions (Department of Defence 1994:3; Zwane 1995:33; Links 2010). The appointment of former non-statutory Force (NSF) contract soldiers to permanent appointments, while excluding former South African Defence Force (SADF)-contracted Statutory Forces (SF) (Department of Defence 2009a:1), resulted in persons being excluded who had contributed to the military leadership, professionalism and formidability of the SADF (Kahn 2009:85, 89). However, the former SADF members not only mentor NSF members, but also, in certain instances, perform functions on a senior level (Yon 2010). This means that leaders at lower levels of the organisational hierarchy are finding themselves in situations where they must make decisions previously reserved for more senior members (Reed and Sorenson in Morse *et al.* 2007:130). According to Lourens (2010), and Tucker and Russell (2004:3-4) members were rewarded without performance or meeting the leaders’ expectations.

On a different note, the SANDF has no exit strategy for its existing personnel and is obliged to retain the untrainable, ill-disciplined and poorly motivated members within their ranks until they either resign or reach retirement age (Kaplan 2011:4). The report found that many members were idle. Discipline is a major issue identified in the interim National Defence Force Service Commission report. Troops reported for duty at 08:00 and left the base at 09:00 with the knowledge of officers. Morale is extremely low, as troops indicated that senior leaders were not concerned about their subordinates. Soldiers spent less time on the military base than they normally should do.

Since its inception in 1994, the SANDF has changed its human resource (HR) system three times. The majority of the change imperatives identified in the 1996 Constitution, the *White Paper on Defence*, and the *Defence Review* have a direct or indirect influence on the SANDF’s human resources (Department of Defence 2001:9-11). Retrenchment (Voluntary Severance Package (VSP), Employer Initiated Package (EIP) and Mobility Exit Mechanism (MEM) of employees have resulted in excessive loss of intellectual capital and knowledge management negatively affected succession planning as well as mentoring and coaching in the SANDF, particularly at the infancy stage of the integration (Yon 2010) and (Mdululwa 2010).

Considering two peacekeeping operations in Burundi, firstly in 2005 and again in 2008, the collective efforts of soldiers disintegrated, thus affecting the success of the operations. This indicates that there are challenges when soldiers are deployed in real battle situations. The experience of real operational action is often jarring for soldiers (Kaplan 2011). Furthermore, the report indicated that there is a substantial amount of dishonesty and corruption in the SANDF. In view of the above-mentioned, it is evident that the lack of effective leadership, lack of clear direction from its leaders and no clear strategy has had an effect on the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department. This in turn has a clear effect on the Department in carrying out its mandate effectively and achieving the necessary outcomes expected of them. This poor performance by government departments has clearly affected the satisfaction levels of South Africans regarding the SANDF.

The literature consulted suggests that some public service departments in South Africa adopt relatively effective leadership approaches, while the approach of others is simply appalling (Wright, Noble and Magasela 2007). Furthermore leaders who lead amongst the levels of self, others, and organisation, is clearly the missing link in the SA public service. The SA public service has leaders who lack commitment and drive to make a difference to society.

Kaplan (2011), Kahn and Naidoo (2011) in studies on the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) found that non-performance by its leaders has definitely had a negative effect on service delivery. Eckert and Rweyongoza (2010) argue that the reason for non-performance is that leaders do not receive the structured support for developing their full leadership potential in the South African public service.

Other factors that contribute to the lack of public service delivery in SA are according to Naidoo (2010) and Kahn and Naidoo (2011): lack of leadership and managerial skills in the different spheres of government; non-performance by the leaders and lack of accountability and responsibility by the leaders to deliver on its mandate. Mngxitama (2011:online) states that there are various moral failings of public service leaders as a result of corruption which in turn affects service delivery performance. It is evident that leaders fail to make strategic decisions concerning service provision to communities. The selection of senior leaders in the organisations is mainly based on nepotism and not merit. There is a lack of the allocation of resources to major organisational components in departments. The clear formulation of organisational goals and strategy is clearly missing in most departments in the public service. There is a lack of clear direction for the organisation with respect to the organisation's domain. The conceptualisation and installation of solid organisational designs and major infrastructures, such as human resource management (HRM), information, and control systems are clearly missing or weak. The representation of departments to critical constituencies such as the electorate is missing. The alignment of three interrelated areas: environment, strategy, and organisation are clearly missing in the SA public service.

LEADERSHIP APPROACHES ADOPTED BY THE SA PUBLIC SERVICE

Most departments in the SA public service adopt some elements of the managerial (transactional) leadership approach (Kahn & Naidoo 2011; Naidoo 2010; Fraser-Moleketi 2007:3) and Naidoo 2006:257). However, departments in the SA public service such as the



South African Revenue Services (SARS), adopt the visionary (transformational) leadership approach. The South African Revenue Service (SARS) is known to be more performance oriented and performance driven than other government departments. However, for several reasons, the South African public service implicitly and explicitly trains public servants to be managerial (transactional) leaders.

With regard to other departments such as the police and defence, the leadership approaches adopted, vary according to the situational requirements of the department. For example, the leadership approaches currently adopted in the SANDF, varies from autocratic, (Mafheda 2010), to accommodative (Rudman 2010), and participative (Veldtman 2010). These leadership approaches adopted by the SANDF are contrary to the predominant managerial (transactional) leadership approaches that are mainly adopted by other public service departments in SA (Department of Defence 2009c: D1-1; Kahn and Naidoo 2011). However, the leadership approaches adopted by the SANDF have resulted in a less combat-oriented defence force, which is also reflected in the interim report of the National Defence Force Service Commission (2011). The adoption of inappropriate leadership approaches and the lack of direction by leaders have certainly affected the capability and performance of the SANDF (Kahn & Naidoo 2011).

Nonetheless, the bureaucratic nature of the SA public service enhances the use of a mainly managerial (transactional) leadership approach and curtails other leadership approaches such as visionary (transformational) leadership (Naidoo 2010). What then is managerial leadership, and is it effective in promoting organisational performance?

Managerial (transactional) leadership

Managerial leadership is actually transactional leadership (Naidoo 2004:148). Transactional leadership refers to exchange theories, which deal with any exchange between leader and followers, for example, managers who make monetary rewards for employees' extra performance (Burns 1978; Bass 1985; Northouse 2001 in Humphrey and Einstein 2003:85). Transactional leaders establish a relationship with followers in which exchanging one characteristic for another is the basic mode of interaction. Stone and Peterson (2005:6) add that the transactional leadership theory focuses on ways to maintain the *status quo* and manage day-to-day operations of an organisation. Managerial (transactional) leaders focus on the task and person-oriented behaviours as they attempt to provide guidance, support, and feedback to subordinates. Hitt, Ireland and Rowe (2005:20) argue that the majority of leaders in public service organisations exercise transactional leadership. Their argument is that leaders sometimes use coercive power to influence followers through bargaining, negotiating or using punishment or rewards.

Challenges in adopting a managerial leadership approach

According to Rowe (2001:86) transactional leaders adopt an impersonal, passive attitude towards goals. Goals in an organisation develop out of necessities rather than desires and dreams, and are deeply embedded in the history and culture of an organisation. A leader using a passive form of leadership intervenes only after it has been proven that set standards have not been met or problems have arisen (Northouse 2001:140). Transactional leaders

need order and are regulators and conservators of the current state of their organisation's affairs, and personally identify with the existing order (Rowe 2001:84).

The weakness of the contingent reward system is that it may be viewed as a tit-for-tat system, where accomplishments are rewarded. Furthermore, it rewards individual performance and not group achievement; it limits leaders' options when financial resources are scarce and institution's needs are increasing (Van Wart 2008:78). To sum up, this leadership approach has characteristics of exchange theory which include rewards (Luthans 1981:320), and leaders do not promote above-average performance in an organisation (Naidoo 2010 and Rowe 2001:86).

This type of approach becomes problematic when leaders fail to promote performance for their organisations, such as the case is in some departments in the South African public service. It is therefore critical that leaders focus on crucial aspects of transformation of its leaders, followers, the environment and the promotion of above-average performance. The question is: Is the visionary (transformational) leadership approach the ideal approach for the SA public service to improve service delivery performance?

Visionary, transformational and charismatic leadership approaches

At a time when leadership research was beginning to appear especially dull and lacking, the work of Bass and his associates (Bass 1985, 1998; Bass & Avolio 1994; Hater & Bass 1988) promoted visionary transformational, and charismatic leadership approaches (Bennis and Nanus 1985; Conger and Kanungo 1987) and (Bryman 1992; Hunt 1999). Visionary, transformational and charismatic leadership approaches are categorised under the *neo-charismatic* leadership paradigm, which form the single most dominant leadership paradigm over the past decade (Derue *et al.* 2011:16) and (Ozaralli 2003:335) by providing a common paradigm for these approaches. It sets them apart from the earlier and more traditional task, person oriented and cognitively oriented managerial leadership approach as already discussed.

Tikhomirov and Spangler (2010:47) state that theorists of the visionary, transformational and charismatic leadership approaches agree on essentially the same leader behaviour. These include Bass, (1985); Conger and Kanungo, (1987); House, (1977); Kouzes and Posner (1987); Tichy and DeVanna (1986). Leadership occurs when people follow someone because he or she is "considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities" (Levay, 2010:128).

All of these approaches in the neo-charismatic paradigm assert that exceptionally effective leaders articulate visions that are based on normative ideological values, offer innovative solutions to major social problems, stand for radical change, and are more effective under conditions of crises (Antonakis and House 2002) and (Northouse 2001:141). The vision of the institution occupies a central position in these leadership approaches (Freedman and Tregoe 2003:1). All of the approaches of this paradigm emphasise leader expectations for follower self-sacrifice and for performance beyond the call of duty. While all leadership approaches imply an underlying theme of performance improvement, the approaches of this leadership paradigm focus primarily on followers' emotional attachment to the vision; mission and values espoused by the leader, and heightened self-esteem in the leader. The leader should have the ability to create trust and confidence, as without trust, it would be



almost impossible to communicate the vision to co-workers (Lourens 2001:35). All of these approaches assert what leaders describe as charismatic, visionary, or transformational. It generally has positive effects on followers and organisations that exceed those of leaders described in approaches of the non-charismatic leadership paradigm.

Hitt, Ireland and Rowe (2005:22) stipulate that those leaders that adopt the neo-charismatic leadership paradigm develop and manage people. Leaders are always objective because they take risks in order to maximise productivity of their respective organisations. Visionary (transformational) leaders motivate followers by raising the levels of consciousness of followers to do more than is expected. Visionary (transformational) leaders get followers to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the team or organisation (Naidoo 2004:148). Visionary (transformational) leadership creates an atmosphere of change and has visionary ideas that excite, stimulate and drive other people to hard work, creativity and innovation. An emphasis is placed on employee empowerment, commitment and achievement of results (Rowe 2001:85).

There are several positive features of the neo-charismatic leadership paradigm. It goes beyond traditional leadership approaches to include the growth of the followers. Northouse (2001:139) postulates that individuals who exhibited this leadership paradigm were perceived to be more effective leaders with improved productivity and the achievement of outcomes than individuals who exhibited only managerial leadership.

Challenges facing adopting visionary, transformational and charismatic leadership approaches

Unfortunately leaders adopting visionary, transformational and charismatic leadership approaches are not readily embraced in the SA public service, unless they are supported by managerial (transactional) leaders (Miller 2004:125). Furthermore, most managers do not deem visionary (transformational) leaders appropriate in the SA public service (Naidoo 2004:307). However, Kahn and Naidoo (2011) argue that public service organisations in South Africa need visionary and transformational leadership approaches to ensure their long-term viability. The environment in the South African public service is one of constant change and complexity (Naidoo 2004:8). The South African public service needs leaders to cope with change and managers to cope with complexity. It is argued that leaders who embrace visionary and transformational leadership approaches (neo-charismatic leadership paradigm) and a managerial (transactional) leadership approach are vital for long-term viability and short-term stability of the South African public service.

The adoption of the visionary and transformational leadership approaches (neo-charismatic leadership paradigm) and managerial (transactional) leadership can be accomplished by the co-existence of the different organisational mindsets. Rowe (2001:86) argues that organisations will be more viable in the long term and better able to maintain stability in the short term, if the strategic leadership approach is prevalent.

Service delivery improvement by adopting a strategic leadership approach

Is a strategic leadership approach, appropriate to the unique needs and demands of each department in the South African public service (Davids, Theron and Maphunye 2005:137)

(State of the Public Service Report 2010:2)? It is important to explore what is strategic leadership and to determine its appropriateness for the SA public service.

Strategic leadership is a synergistic combination of different leadership approaches mainly, the visionary and transformational leadership approaches (neo-charismatic leadership paradigm) and managerial (transactional) leadership approaches. Strategic leaders are concerned with the future viability and present stability of their organisations, they therefore make decisions that promote organisational efficiency and achieve above-average performance, and therefore accelerate service delivery.

Exploring strategic leadership for adoption by the SA public service

Bass (2007:36) suggests that Sun Tzu's *Art of War* (ca.400 B.C.) was the earliest source of strategic leadership which was applied to war at that time. According to Hambrick (1989:5) in Crossan, Vera and Nanjad (2008:570) and Hambrick & Mason (1984), strategic leadership focuses on senior leadership such as executives and directors-general, who have overall responsibility for an organisation, based on the principle that "ultimately, they account for what happens to the organisation". Boal and Hooijberg (2000) in Crossan, Vera and Nanjad (2008:570) differentiate *transactional* leadership from *strategic* leadership by arguing that the first is about leadership *in* organisations, while the second is about leadership *of* organisations. According to Ireland & Hitt (2005:63) strategic leadership is defined as "a person's ability to anticipate, envision, maintain flexibility, think strategically, and work with others to initiate changes that will create a viable future for the organisation".

Strategic leadership includes making strategic decisions concerning services that are to be delivered to communities by departments, as is critical in the SA context (Ireland & Hitt 2005:63). It entails the selection of key strategic leaders based on merit in organisations. This is clearly not the case as is evident in the SANDF. It involves the allocation of resources to major organisational components in departments. The budgets are not adequately managed in SA departments as reflected in the Auditor-General's Report (2011). The formulation of organisational goals and strategy are a critical aspect of strategic leadership. Strategic leadership involves providing direction for the organisation with respect to the organisation's domain. The lack of a clear strategy and direction are outlined earlier in the article. Conceptualising and installing organisational designs and major infrastructures, such as HRM, information, and control systems are other important aspects of strategic leadership. There are clear weakness in terms of the organisational design and infrastructure in SA's public service departments. This is especially reflected in the SANDF. The representation of the organisation to critical constituencies, such as the electorate is a key factor in strategic leadership. These are all the characteristics affecting service delivery negatively that are clearly missing in the SA public service.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A STRATEGIC LEADER

A strategic leader is a person who leads within and amongst the levels of self, others, and organisation (Crossan, Vera and Nanjad 2008:570). Leadership of self is an emerging area



in the leadership literature, while leadership of others has been the dominant focus of leadership research. Leadership of the non human elements is built upon by incorporating the organisational level, including describing leadership of the three levels, insights from approaches such as (among others) transformational–transactional leadership, charismatic leadership, participative leadership and authentic leadership are incorporated. The role of a strategic leader includes making strategic decisions, creating and communicating a vision of the future; developing key competencies and capabilities; developing organisational structures, processes, and controls; managing multiple constituencies; selecting and developing the next generation of leaders; sustaining an effective organisational culture; and the infusion of ethical value systems into the organisation’s culture (Boal and Hooijberg, 2000) in Boal and Schultz (2007:411).

Strategic leaders focus on the creation of meaning and purpose for the organisation (House and Aditya 1997 in Boal and Schultz 2007:411). Strategic leaders are “marked by a concern for the evolution of the organisation as a whole, including its changing aims and capabilities” (Boal and Schultz, 2007:412). Strategic leaders play a more active role in developing ideas and vision, while more traditional management roles work toward implementing them in the structures and processes of the organisation (Locke, 1999; Zaleznik, 1977 in Boal and Schultz 2007:412).

Providing strategic leadership is an important role for the leader of an organisation (Boal and Schultz 2007:412). Strategic leaders are challenged by the need to honour the past and present while considering the future of the organisation and its environment. They need to support both continuity and change. After scrutinising their organisations and its environments, strategic leaders formulate the goals and directions of the organisation and communicate them to their employees. Based on consultation, intuition, and a long-term perspective, they make strategic decisions that affect organisational performance. Strategies can follow a variety of approaches ranging from purely economic considerations to emphasis on good human and customer relations.

Strategic leaders emphasise ethical behaviour (Rowe 2001:89). They oversee day-to-day operating and long term strategic responsibilities. Strategic leaders influence others to voluntarily make day-to-day decisions that enhance the long-term viability of the organisation (Rowe 2001:81-82). Strategic leaders formulate and implement strategies for immediate effect and the preservation of long-term goals to enhance organisational efficiency and viability. They use strategic and financial controls (Freedman and Tregoe 2003:18). Strategic leaders have strong, positive expectations of the performance they expect from their managers, public servants and themselves. They utilise and interchange tacit and explicit knowledge on both the individual and organisational levels. They use both linear and nonlinear thinking patterns. They believe in strategic choice. They promote organisational effectiveness for enhancing future performance by using different leadership and management theories, approaches and models in their organisation. Strategic leaders, therefore, need to understand what many managerial and visionary leaders bring to the organisation, and utilise skills and knowledge. Rowe (2001:83) further acknowledges that strategic skills evolved to include managerial skills, such as management and administrative skills. Strategic leaders make work related decisions on daily basis as they interact with each other and the public.

The decisions voluntarily made and the actions voluntarily taken by managers and employees on a day-to-day basis eventually determine what strategy emerges (Naidoo 2004:156). Strategic leaders understand and use this process to ensure future viability of their organisations. Strategic leaders presume a shared vision of what an organisation is to be, so that the day-to-day decision-making, or emergent strategy process, is consistent with this vision (Ozaralli 2003:335). Strategic leaders presume agreement among senior management on opportunities that can be taken advantage of, and threats that can be neutralised, given the resources and capabilities of the organisation. Strategic leaders presume visionary leadership on the part of those with a willingness to take risks. They presume managerial leadership on the part of those with a rational way of looking at the world. Strategic leaders presume that multiple leadership approaches (mainly visionary, transformational and managerial leadership) can coexist, and that strategic leaders, synergistically combines the different leadership approaches for the benefit of the organisation.

Influencing public servants to voluntarily make decisions that enhance the organisation is the most important part of strategic leadership (Freedman and Tregoe 2003:24). Managers should trust public servants in this regard. The manager should be able to influence subordinates, peers, and superiors. Managers should also understand the emergent strategy planning process for organisational performance. Strategic leaders presume a shared vision of what an organisation is to be, so that day-to-day decision-making, or an emergent strategy process, is consistent with the vision (Naidoo 2004:154). They focus on the opportunities that can be taken advantage of, and the threats that can be neutralised, given the resources and capabilities of the organisation.

The effect of strategic leadership on organisational effectiveness and above-average performance is far greater than adopting one or another leadership approach. The key questions to ask: Are these decisions in accordance with the strategic direction of the SA public service, while they enhance the future viability of the public service? Will they enhance the future viability of the SA public service as well as meet short-term goals?

DEVELOPING AN APPROPRIATE LEADERSHIP APPROACH

Strategic leadership presumes visionary leadership on the part of those with a willingness to take risks. It presupposes managerial leadership on the part of those with a rational way of evaluating an organisation. Strategic leadership presumes that different leadership approaches such as visionary (transformational) leadership and managerial (transactional) leadership can coexist. Strategic leadership thus synergistically combines different leadership approaches. Public managers should therefore make decisions that benefit the public service. This means that management will not have to expend as much effort on monitoring and controlling subordinates, and will have more capacity to examine what the organisation needs to be, both in the short and long term. Leadership is not static, but develops over time. However, it can be argued that there is not always one suitable leadership approach for any situation (Mfene 2008:211). Each leader should therefore take cognisance of the situational variables in every organisation.



Benefits of adopting a strategic leadership approach

The rewards of adopting a strategic leadership approach are worth it, as those with whom the leader works becomes energised and more productive, accomplishing more in less time (Rowe 2001:87). They come to enjoy work more, as they become more creative and innovative, and more prone to taking risks because they know this is what it takes to enhance long-term viability. Working through the paradox of leading and managing is demanding and difficult, but is achievable for a critical mass in public service organisations, that have lost strategic control. Effective managers accept and merge visionary, transformational and managerial leadership in their organisations. They understand the concepts of explicit and tacit knowledge and linear and nonlinear thinking and how to integrate them, for the benefit of the organisation. The rewards will often increase organisational performance and result in above-average performance. To effectively manage and lead in times of crises and complexity, leaders need multiple types of development, including financial management, strategy, communication and leadership development.

CONCLUSION

A number of empirical studies indicate that effective strategic leadership enhances above-average organisational performance. If applied effectively, managerial (transactional) leadership will be likely to lead to average organisational performance at best, but is most likely to have a positive effect on outcomes. Organisations led by visionaries (transformational) who are supported by a strong management, may have a positive effect on outcomes, even more quickly than organisations led by managerial leaders. Without effective strategic leadership, which includes the adoption of multiple leadership approaches (mainly visionary, transformational and managerial leadership), the probability that public service organisations in South Africa will only achieve under average or even satisfactory performance when confronting the challenges of service delivery will be greatly reduced.

The continued lack of service delivery by the South African public service organisations suggests a lack of an appropriate leadership approach, and at best the presence of only some elements of managerial (transactional) leadership. The lack of strategic leadership and the prevalence of only some elements of managerial (transactional) and visionary (transformational) leadership are some of the most important issues facing the South African public service. It is, therefore, important for management in the South African public service to be trained in order to become more productive managers to meet the increasing demands of their position. There should be a concern for strategic, visionary (transformational) and managerial (transactional) leadership to promote organisational effectiveness and above-normal performance and thus accelerate public service delivery in South Africa. The management in the South African public service should be trained so that they incorporate multiple (strategic, visionary, transformational and managerial) leadership approaches in their managerial role. However, it is pointed out that there is not one correct approach in leadership but the situation and developments influence the approach to be adopted. Hence, leaders should be trained to adopt linear and non-linear thinking patterns to address the diverse challenges pertaining to the SA public service.

REFERENCES

- Antonakis, J. and House, R.J. 2002. An analysis of the full-range leadership theory: The way forward. In Avolio, B.J. and Yammarino, F.J. (Eds.) *Transformational and charismatic Leadership: The road ahead*, 3-33. Amsterdam: Elsevier Science/JAI.
- Antonakis, J. and House, R. 2002. *The Full-Range Leadership Theory: The way forward. Transformational and charismatic leadership: The road ahead*. New York: Elsevier
- Bass, B.M. 1985. *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. New York: The Free Press.
- Bass, B.M. 1998. *Transformational leadership: Industry, military, and educational impact*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Bass, B.M. 1983. *Organisational Decision Making*. Homewood, Ill.: Irwin
- Bass, B.M. 2007. Executive and Strategic Leadership. *International Journal of Business*, 12(1):33-52
- Bass, B.M. and Avolio, B.J. 1994. *Improving organisational effectiveness through transformational leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Beatty, K. and Quinn, L. 2002. Strategic Command: Taking the long view for organisational success. *Leadership in Action*, 22 (2):3-7
- Bennis, W.G. and Nanus. 1985. *Leaders: The Strategy for Taking Change*. Cambridge Mass: Harper and Row.
- Boal, K.B. and Schultz, P.L. 2007. Storytelling, time and evolution. The role of strategic leadership in complex adaptive systems. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 18:411-428.
- Bryman, A. 1992. *Charisma and leadership in organisations*. London: Sage.
- Botes, L., Lenka, M., Marais, L., Matebesi, Z. and Sigenu, K. 2007. The cauldron of local protests: Reasons, impacts and lessons learned. Centre for Development Support, Free State University <http://www.uovs.ac.za/apps/yearbooks/index.php?id=57>.
- Burns, J.M. 1978. *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Business Day. www.businessday.co.za/article/content/apsx?7d=135464.
- Conger, J.A. and Kanungo, R.N. 1998. *Charismatic leadership in organisations*. London: Sage Publications.
- Cronje, H. and Willem, P. 2010. *A collaborative leadership process for sustainable development*. Pretoria. Africa Leadership Development Initiative Lecture (unpublished paper).
- Crossan, M., Vera, D. and Nanjad, L. 2008. Transcendent leadership: Strategic leadership in dynamic environments. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 19:569-581.
- Dauids, I., Theron, F. and Maphunye, K. 2005. *Participatory Development in South Africa. A Development Management Perspective*. Hatfield, Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- De Lange, D. 2011. "State blows R26,4 bn in spree of waste". *Pretoria News*. 20 October.
- Department of Defence. 2001. DODI Pol & Plan 52/2001: DOD HR Strategy 2010 (Ed 2 dated 17 March 2003). Pretoria: Department of Defence.
- Department of Defence. 1994. Senior appointment in the National Defence Force. *SANDF Internal Communication Bulletin* No. 20 of 1994.
- Department of Defence. 2009a. Translation of former NSFs to the LTS. CHR/DHR SS/R/104/31/2/P dated 28 January
- Department of Defence. 2009b. Annual report FY 2008/2009. www.info.gov.za/view/DynamicAction (accessed on June 3 2010).
- Department of Defence. 2009c. Report on Department of Defence gender conference: 26-28 August 2009. CHR/CDTM/R/522/1 dated 31 August.



- Department of Defence. 2009d. *Transformation in the Department of Defence*. CHR/CDTM/106/301/1/P. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Derue, S.D., Nahrgang, J.D., Wellman, N. and Humphrey, S.E. 2011. Trait and Behavioural Theories of Leadership: an integration and meta-analytic test of their relative validity. *Personnel Psychology*, 64:7-52
- Dorosamy, N. 2010. The impact of the global crisis on ethical leadership: a case study of the South African public sector. *African Journal of Business Management*, 4(10): 2087-2096.
- Drucker, P.F. 1993. *Managing for the future*. London: Butterworth Heinemann.
- Freedman, M. and Tregoe, B.B. 2003. *The Art and Discipline of Strategic Leadership*. United States of America: McGraw-Hill.
- Eckert, R. and Rweyongoza, S. 2010. Leadership Development in Africa. Centre for Creative Leadership. Downloaded at www.ccl.org. December 2010.
- Fraser-Moleketi, G. 2007. *Keynote address for the Public Service and Administration. Senior Management Service Conference*. 13 September.
- Hambrick, D.C and Mason, P.M. 1984. Upper Echelons: The Organization as a Reflection of Its Top Managers. *The Academy of Management Review*, 9(2):193-206.
- House, R.J. 1977. A 1976 Theory of Charismatic Leadership. In Hunt, J.G. and Larson, L.L. (Eds.) *Leadership: The Cutting Edge*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Humphreys, J.H. and Einstein, W.O. 2003. Nothing new under the sun: Transformational leadership from a historical perspective. *Management Decision*, 41:85–95.
- Hunt, J.G. 1999. Transformational/charismatic leadership's transformation of the field: A historical essay. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 10:129–144.
- Hater, J.J. and Bass, B.M. 1988. Superiors' evaluations and subordinates' perceptions of transformational and transactional leadership. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 73:695-702.
- Ireland, R.D. and Hitt M.A. 2005. Achieving and maintaining strategic competitiveness in the 21st century: The role of strategic leadership. *Academy of Management Executive*, 19:63-77.
- Interim Report of the National Defence Force Service Commission (2011). <http://www.pmg.org.za/report/20110526-interim-national-defence-force-service-commission-recommendations-bri>.
- Kahn, S. 2009. Military museums enhance the organisational culture of the South African National Defence Force. *The International Journal of the Inclusive Museum*, 2(1):83–92.
- Kahn, S. and Naidoo, G. 2011. Transformational leadership: case for the South African National Defence Force. *Administratio Publica*, 19(3):1015-4833.
- Kaplan 2011. *Pretoria News*. 11 May.
- Kouzes, J.M. and Posner, B.Z. 1987. *The Leadership Challenge: How to get extraordinary things done in organisations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- Lane, J.E. and Wallis, J. 2009. Strategic management and public leadership. *Public Management Review*, 11(1):101-120.
- Levy, C. 2010. Charismatic Leadership in resistance to change. *Leadership Quarterly*, 21(1):127-143.
- Locke, E.A. 1999. *The essence of leadership: The four keys to leading successfully*. Lexington Books.
- Lourens, J.F. 2001. *Change centered leadership and various correlates*. University of Pretoria: South Africa.
- Links, B. Brigadier General. 2010. Director Logistics, South African Army Logistics. 12 April.
- Luthuli, T.B. 2009. From compliance to performance: a leadership challenge in the South African Public Service. *Journal of Public Administration*, 44(3).
- Luthans, F. 1981. *Organisational Behaviour*. (Third Ed). London: McGraw-Hill International Books.

- Mafheda, J. Colonel. 2010. Senior Staff Officer Part-Time Forces at the South African Army. 5 August.
- McLennan, J.K. 2007. *How to gain competitive advantage through the virtual workplace*. Information Age Publishing: United States of America.
- McLennan, A. and Seale, O. 2010. An integrated leadership development style. Paper presented at Annual Winelands Conference, Stellenbosch, March.
- Mdlulwa, S. Colonel. 2010. Officer Commanding, South African Army Headquarters Unit at the South African Army. 2 December.
- Mfene, P.N. 2008. Administrative leadership and public policy implementation in the public service. *Journal of Public Administration* 43(3.1)
- Molopo, A. 2003. *African traditional leadership and governance*. University of South Africa (UNISA): Pretoria. 26th November.
- Mngxitama, A. 2011. SA's poor must shun the polls. Online Available: <http://mg.co.za/article/2011-04-29-sas-poor-must-shun-the-polls>.
- Miller, K. 2004. *Public Sector Reform. Governance in South Africa*. Glasgow: Caledonian University.
- Naidoo, G. 2004. *Leadership and governance for a sustainable Public Service. The case for selected South African Public Service Organisations*. University of Pretoria: South Africa, October 2004.
- Naidoo, G. 2006. Development of senior leadership in the South African Public Service for accelerated Service Delivery. *Journal of Public Administration*. Conference Proceedings. September.
- Naidoo, G. 2009. *Leadership and Good Governance in Public Administration. A critical need for transformative African leadership and good governance for Adoption by the South African Public Service*. USA. VDM Verlag Muller Aktiengesellschaft & Co. KG.
- Naidoo, G. 2009. Strengthening Senior Management Skills in the South African Public Service: A Rationale for Strategic Leadership. *Journal of Public Administration*, 44(1).
- Naidoo, G. 2010. The critical need for effective leadership to promote service delivery by local government in South Africa: The case of Ramotshere Moiloa Municipality. *Administratio Publica*, 18(1):106-123.
- News24. 2010. Zuma to check on service delivery. Online Available: <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/Politics/Zuma-to-check-on-service-delivery-20100926>.
- Northouse, P G. 2001. *Leadership Theory and Practice*.second edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Nuzvidziwa, V.N. 2001. Making a difference: African traditions, cultural values and leadership. Social Anthropology and Sociology Department, National University of Lesotho. Paper presented to the leadership Project IEMS Maseru
- Ozaralli, N. 2003. Effects of transformational leadership on empowerment and team effectiveness. *Leadership and Organisation Development Journal*. June: 335-340.
- Parry, K.W. 1996. *Transformational Leadership: Developing an Enterprising Management Culture*. Melbourne: Pitman/Woodslane Publishing.
- Public Service Commission. 2010. State of the Public Service Report: Integration, Coordination and Public Service Delivery.
- Reed, G. and Sorenson, G. 2007. The changing leadership landscape. In Morse, R.S. and Buss, T.E.
- Republic of South Africa. 2010. State of Public Service Report. Public Service Commission. Pretoria
- Republic of South Africa. 2011. *Auditor General's Report*. Pretoria.
- Rowe, G.W. 2001. Creating wealth in organisations. The role of strategic leadership. *Academy of Management Review*, 15(1):80-90.



- Rowe, W.G. 2001. Creating wealth in organisations: The role of strategic leadership. *Academy of Management Executive*,15:81–94.
- Rudman, L. Major General. 2010. Chief Director Corporate Services at South African Army Headquarters. 4 August.
- Setsabi, A.M. 2001. *African values and the leadership partnership project: What some African scholars say.* IEMS/CCL Leadership Partnership Programme, Maseru, Lesotho.
- Stodgill, R.M. 1974. *Handbook of Leadership: A Survey of Theory and Research.* New York: The Free Press.
- Sternberg, R.J. 2007. A systems model of leadership: WICS. *American Psychologist.* 62(1):34-42.
- Stone, A.G. and Peterson, K. 2005. The history of leadership focus. *Servant Leadership Research Roundtable.* August: 1-23
- Stone, A.G., Russell, R.F., and Patterson, K. 2003. Transformational Versus Servant Leadership – A Difference in Leader Focus. *The Leadership & Organisation Development Journal,* 25(4):349-361
- The Republic of South Africa. 1997. *The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery.* Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Theron, C. 2007. Development of a questionnaire for assessing work unit performance. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology,* 30(1):19-28
- Tichy, N.M. and DeVanna, M.A. 1986. *The Transformational Leader.* New York: Wiley.
- Tikhomirov, A.A. and Spangler, W.D. 2010. Neo-Charismatic Leadership and the Fate of Mergers and Acquisitions: An Institutional Model of CEO Leadership. *Journal of Leadership & Organisational Studies,* 17(1):44–60
- Tshikwatamba, N.E. 2003. Editorial. *Journal of Public Administration,* 38(3):i-ii.
- Trotier, T., Van Wart, M. and Wang, X. 2008. Examining the Nature and Significance of Leadership in Government Organisations. *Public Administration Review.* March/April: 319-333.
- Tucker, B.A. and Russell, R.F. 2004. The Influence of the Transformational Leader. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies,* 10(4):103-111.
- Van der Walt, P.W. and Du Toit, A.S. 2006. Developing an information model for an enterprise: a South African case study. *South African Journal of Information Management,* 8(2).
- Van Vugt, M., Hogan, R. and Kaiser, R.B. 2008. Leadership, followership and evolution. *American Psychologist,* Vol. 63(3):182-196.
- Veldtman, S. Brigadier General. 2010. Director Human Resource Management, South African Army. 8 June.
- Vroom, V.H. and Jago, A.G. 2007. The role of the situation in leadership. *American Psychologist* 62(1):17-24.
- Wright, G., Noble, M and Magasela, W. 2007. *Towards a democratic definition of poverty: socially perceived necessities in South Africa.* Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Yon, E. Colonel. 2010. Senior Staff Officer Human Resources at Defence Headquarters. 25 May.
- Zwane, P. 1995. Challenges facing the SANDF: from integration to affirmative action. *African Security Review,* 4(1):31–37.

AUTHOR'S CONTACT DETAILS

G Naidoo
E-mail: naidog@unisa.ac.za