

IMPROVING SERVICE DELIVERY: THE GOOD GOVERNANCE PROCESS

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BACKGROUND

Public servants in South Africa have been subjected to criticism from almost all quarters regarding their poor performance and lack of customer focus.

To date very little has been invested in terms of time or resources to equip state employees with the means to allow them to adopt private sector work principles, procedures and customer focus. With the launch of the Batho Pele white paper and the introduction of the Good Governance Programme by Government the scene was now set for positive action by Departments in all spheres of Government.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Management of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport (KZNDOT) recognised this programme as the appropriate tool to transform the Department in all forms of activity. As a result all members of staff were trained in the principles of the programme and instructed to apply these eight (8) principles in their work environments.

The White Paper on the transformation of the public service stipulated eight basic principles to be implemented and adhered to in order to improve service delivery and become customer focussed: These principles are: (1) Consultation: Public servants need to consult with their customers in order to understand their needs. (2) Service Standards: Introduce service standards so that the customer will know what to expect in terms of delivery. (3) Access: To allow customers easy access to information they may require. (4) Courtesy: To ensure all members of staff treat customers courteously at all times and irrespective of the customer's standing or position in society. (5) Information: To provide information to the public on activities performed by each Department. (6) Openness and Transparency: To be open about all programmes being performed and to be transparent in terms of decisions made. (7) Redress: In the event of customer complaints do we have a methodology for him or her on how to deal with such complaint. (8) Value for money: To reduce wastage, inefficiency, non-productivity, etc.

Each component was required to develop service delivery improvement programmes to guide them in the application of the principles in their fields of expertise. Obviously, some components adopted the programme with more enthusiasm than others and as a result these components achieved excellent results. With the support and encouragement of management most front-line components excelled and below is a summary of what was achieved by these.

INITIAL RESULTS

Provincial Motor Transport

Pool vehicles for all government departments are managed by the KZNDOT. All the acquisition and hiring of these vehicles are controlled by staff of the Provincial Motor Transport component. Since the adoption and implementation of the programme, this component has transformed itself into a lean, customer orientated and efficient vehicle supplier.

Item	Before	After
No. of vehicles in fleet	10 000	5067
No. of staff deployed	516	184
Cost per month	R12.5m	R6.5m

In May 2000 this component won the coveted Premiers Good Governance Gold Award for the phenomenal success achieved. The Premiers Good Governance awards was initiated by the office of the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal in order to acknowledge and reward excellence in the implementation of the Batho Pele principles. This competition is run annually and non-monetary awards are given to leaders at a very prestigious dinner held at the International Conference Centre.

Motor Licensing Bureau

The registration of motor vehicles in KwaZulu-Natal has been streamlined and made customer friendly with the introduction of 34 new private licencing agents throughout the province. Traditionally vehicle owners could only licence vehicles or renew vehicle licences at departmental offices. With the introduction of the 34 new agents licences can be renewed at some Post Offices and magistrates offices allowing much improved access to the service. The introduction of personalised number plates, a first for South Africa, and the availability of standard documentation in three languages resulted in the Motor Licensing Bureau winning a Silver Award during the Premiers Good Governance competition in 2000 and 2001.

Development Directorate

This component developed fully representative, democratically elected rural transport forums throughout the province in 30 geographical areas. Rural Road Transport Forums, RRTF's, are democratically elected forums representing all sectors of public life in rural areas. As a result, for example, emerging agriculture, established agriculture, the taxi industry, commerce, the youth, etc are all represented. Members of these forums meet monthly with staff of the Department to advise on road construction, programmes, the maintenance of local road infrastructure and road safety and related items.

It also established a poverty relief programme through the maintenance of the rural road network by people living in the vicinity of such roads. The poorest of the poor living in the vicinity of the road are recruited for this gravel road maintenance programme. These individuals, mainly women, are trained, provided with basic tools and required to work for two days a week on the 1km to 1,5km stretch of road allocated per individual. Out of 300 similar programmes throughout South Africa the Department was awarded the Impumelelo Award for the most outstanding programme.

SUSTAINING THE PERFORMANCE

Mission Directed Work Teams

Again the KZNDOT has taken the initiative to become the first government organisation to adopt this world-class competitiveness through innovation and continuous improvement of quality, speed and cost effectiveness programme.

The programme focuses on simultaneous improvement of quality, speed and cost-effectiveness. It also ensures that close links are established with customers and suppliers. Linear (incremental or gradual) and non-linear (innovative or once-off major) improvement initiatives are promoted and all forms of waste eliminated with value flow a key objective. Leadership practices that promote teamwork, participation, continuous learning and flexibility are promoted using world class performance as the benchmark.

The most important modules of this programme have been implemented fully in three of the four regions in the province spanning all activities being executed in these "one stop shops". One stop shops have been created in all the regional offices of the Department where all the services being offered by the Department can be accessed without having to commute from one office to another in a different location. As a result, staff involved with road building, road maintenance, traffic policing, fleet services, mechanical support and administrative support have been trained in the programme and are fully operational in this regard.

It is a visual based system and does not rely on sophisticated computer software and hardware thus enabling semi literate members of teams to participate and monitor their own progress. Participating teams set their own goals on a daily, weekly or monthly basis and measure actual performance against these targets. These are then plotted on graphs in their office and below target performance plotted in red and on par or above required performance plotted in green. Illiterate members of staff can thus at a glance establish their performance. The programme is sustained through the training of all levels of supervisory staff and monthly independent audits of performance.

Teams are required to identify for themselves what their purpose is in achieving the overall vision of the Department and are free to choose their own targets for achievement. These targets are benchmarked against world best practice and the outputs of similar components in the organisation and industry.

Below are a few examples of the successes achieved to date: -

Productivity increase	=	24%
Attendance	=	From 94% to 98%
Suggestions for improvements	=	From 0 in 2000 to one per person every two months.
Plant utilisation	=	Up by 8%
Team involvement in target setting.		
Ownership of outputs by teams.		
Tidy places of work.		
Workflow improvements.		

These achievements are sustainable because it is as a result of teamwork and buy-in by all members of staff. The system has sensitized management and workers to the identification of problem areas or bottlenecks, which result in them not meeting the targets, set by themselves. In this manner pressure is applied to the supervisory structure and leaders in the organisation. The performance of suppliers are closely monitored and suppliers are audited with regard to speed, quality and cost of supplies and any deviation from the accepted norms rectified with these suppliers before it can result in targets not being met.

Similarly; regular audits of customer satisfaction is performed in order to establish what their perceptions are with regard to each component's service delivery. Questionnaires are sent to customers to establish their needs and satisfaction with services being delivered. By doing this these teams have rescheduled their priorities to ensure they deliver as per customer requirements.

The fact that teams (mini-businesses) are audited monthly by in-house auditors to gauge the level of implementation and compliance with the system ensures a high standard of compliance and that the system is implemented fully leading to world class output.

A large portion of the workforce is unskilled or semi-skilled. As a result any form of computer-based feedback or monitoring of output will be of no value to these individuals. The fact that the system is visual based and all performance or output is shown graphically and in different colours enables the illiterate members of staff to see at a glance whether targets are met or not. Even if the measurement of quantity or quality is beyond the comprehension of these individuals they are able to see at a glance whether targets were met (in green) or not (in red).

CONCLUSION

Privatisation of State functions are perceived by employees as a major threat for many reasons but amongst them also the fact that public servants know that they are not equipped, trained or experienced to compete in the private sector.

The implementation of this programme ensures that the culture of measurement is established, ownership of performance is created and world class management principles and processes are applied. As the programme is an international programme pitched against world best practice, employees know that if they earned a silver sticker or gold sticker for their performance then their performance is on par with a silver or gold sticker earned by any of the companies, also on the programme, in Australia, Germany, Switzerland or the United Kingdom.

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Curriculum Vitae

BSc Civil Engineering from University of Natal in 1974. Pr. ENG in 1978. MBL from UNISA in 1983.

Spent entire career as a civil engineer with the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport in various capacities: Design, Construction, Maintenance, Materials, Technical PR and Development.

Presently a Director heading for Monitoring and Evaluation directorate which is part of the Chief Directorate: Strategic Planning.

This is his 4th paper to be presented at ATC. Previous titles were:

- Coping with the financial crisis-the Natal Roads Branch Strategy.
- The Natal Roads Branch approach to public participation in road maintenance programmes.
- Productivity improvement in road maintenance activities: the NPA Roads Branch strategy.