

MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT IN A COMPLEX ORGANISATION

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ABSTRACT

Human resource development is an important function contributing to a country's growth potential. During periods of transformation, organisations are in particular need of an adequate supply of leaders and managers. In order to ensure the constant supply of qualified and experienced individuals with leadership and management skills, organisations design their own development interventions to suit their needs. A complex organisation prescribes specific characteristics that management development should facilitate. A complex organisation balances chaos and order by providing a vision that the manager is capable of exemplifying and communicating to all subordinates. This places an emphasis on the type of manager that would be required. This paper will focus on the planning, selection and evaluation of management development. The assumption is made that selecting the appropriate candidate for management development will sustain a complex organisation. Management development should take place based on the principle of formalised selection, which not only contributes to a more objective evaluation of development programmes, but also will ensure appropriate placement of employees in critical managerial and leadership positions. The paper will investigate the applicability of the proposed policy framework for management development, while focusing on the applicability of formal selection methodologies to ensure a sustainable pool of managers.

INTRODUCTION

If management development is to be achieved within a complex organisation, both organisational and individual goals and objectives have to be kept in mind. Complex organisations are known for their ability to adjust and adapt – they exist in the state between chaos and order, which has an obvious impact on the way in which their managers have to be developed. The benefits of management development will ensure that the organisation not only learns from itself, but is continuously adapting to the changes within the complex environment.

John Donne stated that 'No man is an island' and this becomes abundantly clear when managers are placed in positions of public accountability and service delivery. A public organisation will only be as strong as its weakest manager and this assumption places additional pressure on the competency and performance of public managers. During times of change the public manager will be required to act as a competent, effective and efficient resource to the department and this is the reason why the South African government has placed such an emphasis on public human resource development.

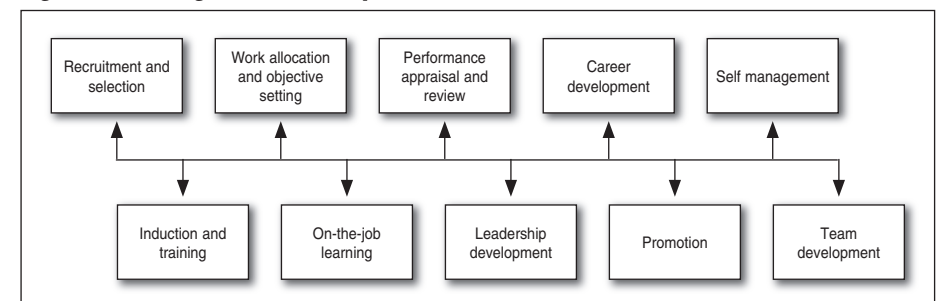
Human resource development is an important aspect contributing to a country's growth potential and in a world marked by globalisation, international competence is essential. In order to ensure the constant supply of qualified and experienced individuals with leadership and management skills, organisations design their own development interventions to suit their needs.

MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT, CHAOS AND COMPLEXITY EXPLAINED

Management development is aimed at making good managers out of good engineers or teachers or nurses (for instance). In today's competitive global environment, the public service needs managers who can develop business, and not just administer it. Margerison (1991:2-3) suggests a continuum for management development that comprises all aspects between recruitment and selection to self-development.

Management development is meant to improve productivity and performance. It is a learning process applied to all aspects of work from recruitment and selection through to the delivery of a service. Management development is an integrated approach to improving individual, team and organisational performance that will not take place in a coordinated manner if all the different components of the organisational system are not integrated. Management development is a key management function since continuous improvement of all organisational systems and products is a strategic reality for all organisations. Authors, such as Long (2004), Ready, Vicere & White (1994), Horwitz (1996) and Rousillon & Bournois (1997) refer to management development as executive development

Figure 1: Management development continuum



Source: Margerison C. (1991:2)

and define it as the planned and continuous process of learning to develop knowledge and skills to function effectively in realising organisational goals and objectives. Thus, the context of development plays an equally important role as the outcome of the development. Specifically in the South African context it is important to understand the context of Public Service human resource development.

Chaos and complexity theories are evolutionary in nature. It sees organisations as continuously transforming themselves and though the dynamic organisations may appear to be chaotic, they are guided by their identities, history and sense of purpose. The complex organisation lives on the *edge of chaos*, where the balance between freedom of operating and connectivity to environment is maintained (Bechtold 1997:194). Chaos theory is sometimes also referred to as self-organising theory, and although it incorporates elements of chance, its chaos does not mean random disorder, but rather a multidisciplinary approach to organisations based on the inclusion of diversity and guarding against the uncritical acceptance of traditional statistics as the yardstick for organisational effectiveness and efficiency (Murphy 1996:95-113).

Beyond chaos lies complexity. Lewis (1994:16) maintains that in complexity there can be no predictability. One cannot predict what the weather will be like in ten days, not because physical laws do not apply or mathematical equations would be too simple for such a complex phenomenon, but simply because one has to decide what data to gather and precisely how much of it to gather – therein lies the challenge for organisations. The challenge is not in identifying environmental influences or a human resource development gap, but rather in identifying the appropriate data that would facilitate appropriate learning and allow the organisation to maintain its balance on the *edge of chaos*. In this complexity zone (between stability and predictability on the one hand and chaos and unpredictability on the other) learning becomes imperative. When an organisation is too stable, nothing will change, but when an organisation succumbs to chaos, too many changes will take place and there will be no time or place for learning. Thus, in this complexity zone there is maximum potential for growth and development

THE SOUTH AFRICAN HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

Human resource development is described as the integrated use of training and development, organisational development and career development to improve individual, group and departmental effectiveness (Harris & DeSimone 1994:9). Harrison (1993:300) defines human resource development as the planned learning and development of employees as individuals and as groups to the benefit of an organisation as well as its employees. Simpson (1999:3) states that human resource development will place an additional challenge on human resource departments or units due to the fact that they will have to develop programmes that are practical, effective and appropriate to the needs of the organisation as well as provide for the proper information, training, tools and support to both managers and employees. Public managers have to implement policies that would increase productivity in terms of effective, efficient and responsive delivery of services. The only way to realise this objective, is through placing the appropriate

employee in the appropriate position, providing an enabling environment for development and ensuring that development efforts address current and future departmental priorities.

Human resource development in a complex organisation means that emphasis will be placed on very specific skills in order to sustain the growth relationship created in the complexity zone, as mentioned earlier. Prominence is given to those skills that will nurture and build relationships. Development is based on cooperation and not competition. Management development, specifically, will focus on teaching the future managers the ability to combine the *how to* with the *why* in order to capacitate them with the ability to create a vision while harnessing the creativity of their subordinates in realising the vision (Keene 2000:17).

With the above in mind the South African Public Service, during 1997, developed the *White Paper on Human Resource Management* which provides for a paradigm shift away from traditional personnel administration to human resource management and thereby placing focus on the effective and efficient utilisation and development of all public servants. It could also be stated that the public organisation's emphasis on human resource development stems from the indisputable link between effective and efficient service delivery and human resource development. Thus, human resource development becomes instrumental to organisational effectiveness and efficiency. Identifying the strategic link between appropriate individual placements and realising organisational priorities becomes an important duty of all public service managers. The assumption can, thus, be made that without the identification of the strategic link, human resource development might not address organisational priorities.

The *White Paper on Human Resource Management*, 1997 emphasises that employees are a valuable resource to any public organisation and should be developed to obtain the maximum benefit for both the organisation and the individual. Paragraph 5.10 of the *White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service*, 1997 states that employees who are prepared to devote their careers to the Public Service, should be given every opportunity to develop themselves and broaden their skills to benefit both the individual and the organisation. Effective career management will enable employees to maximise their career potential by supporting themselves through job opportunities, skills training and development while also enabling employers to develop their human resource capacity through supporting, as much as possible, the career aspirations of the individual employee.

Emanating from the above, the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) published its strategy on human resource development stressing the importance of human resource development while focusing on measures to improve the current training and development system. The principal aim of the strategy is to establish a clear vision and policy framework to guide the introduction and implementation of new policies, procedures and legislation aimed at transforming Public Service training and education into a dynamic, needs-based and pro-active instrument ensuring a 'new' Public Service.

The observation can be made that the above outcome will strategically link a new system of training to human resource development while ensuring the development of effective career paths for all public employees. This change indicates

that the DPSA realises the importance of strategically linking human resource development to organisational development. Through this strategy, the DPSA intends to develop the Public Service capacity to fulfill the demands of its ever-changing and complex environment.

In order for the managers to ensure that their organisation remains efficient and effective, they also have to ensure that the employees are competent and trained to such an extent that it would fulfill employee developmental needs. Herein lies the main challenge for human resource development – strategic alignment of individual employee development needs with the objectives and goals of the organisation. The *Public Service Review Report, 1999-2000* (2000:64) affirms that the key challenge facing the Public Service is the need to attract, develop and sustain capable managers.

Judging by the vision of achieving a dedicated, responsive and productive Public Service as proposed by the *HRD Strategy 2001-2006*, human resource development should be based on quality skills development linked to effective and efficient service delivery. The human resource development context prescribes a focus towards career management and retention of knowledgeable and experienced public servants within the complex organisation. Management development or executive development should become part of the strategic planning of any public organisation, while Ready *et al.* (1994:65) maintain that it has become a management tool for revitalising organisations and building learning-oriented competitiveness.

STRATEGIC PLANNING IN THE COMPLEX ORGANISATION

Planning is the process of determining the future course of action. In terms of the complex organisation, strategic planning would imply determining the extent to which the organisation and its senior management is able to formulate development goals and priorities as well the ability to describe the way in which the goals and priorities are to be achieved. According to Bechtold (1997:193) the evolution of strategic planning from an executive event to a large-scale participative process has been a step in the right direction. However, strategic planning in a complex organisation means that strategising needs to become part of everyday life and not an annual, once-off event. The organisational culture needs to support a strategising workforce, because living on the 'edge of chaos' means understanding how to maintain growth in the complexity zone. As the organisation grows, it should continuously adapt to its environment based on its intelligence and information – both of which could be fostered and promoted in a learning environment. The organisation needs to tap into the information and intelligence of all its employees to maintain its self-generating and self-organising abilities.

Strategic planning should be based on encouraging assumptions and thinking that demand of management to consider innovative and creative solutions to problems (Farago & Skyrme 1995:3). Shukla (1997:249) titles it *creating the strategic intent to learn*. The manager of the complex organisation is able to visibly and formally communicate his or her commitment to development to their subordinates. The ability to promote visionary skills should stimulate strategic planning. The sustaining of the growth factor in a complex

organisation should be a goal not only important to senior management, but also to all levels of the hierarchy in an organisation.

The complexity zone, which stimulates growth, is specifically important for the creation of a sustainable pool of managers for the Public Service. During 2003 the DPSA emerged with a report titled: 'Extension of the middle management competency framework: Research for proposals for sustainable pools of middle managers' (Sustainable Pools Research Report, 2003) which details a strategy for accelerated development of middle managers for the purpose of filling critical senior management positions. The Report takes into account the middle management competency framework and its alignment with senior management competencies. Furthermore, a study of international best practices in public sector management development was conducted to ensure that the process of acceleration did not undermine the principle a creating a competent senior management echelon. Specific mention should now be made of the management development model that is currently being promoted in the South African Public Service.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT MODEL

Fourie (2004:493) maintains that management development in the South African Public Service has changed from being action-oriented to being results-oriented. The focus of development is not on the design of delivery of training programmes but on aligning individual learning needs and competency requirements to organisational strategy. The purpose of development is to:

- improve performance;
- maintain performance;
- prepare for new job challenges on higher levels; and
- apply competencies.

Thus, in order to answer the question of what necessitates management development, Long (2004:701) states that a balance should be created between developing individual talent and adding value to the organisation. Managers will attend these management development interventions to gain new knowledge and models for managerial behaviour, to interact with the experts (facilitators and/or academics) and to interact with other participants. Management development is highlighted as a vital component of the strategic development of the organisation, specifically when taken together with the organisation's emphasis on continuous learning and improvement. Ready *et al.* (1994:65) state that an important prerequisite to management development is the realisation of commitment that is needed from both the participants as well as their managers. Horwitz (1996:14), based on the management development research of authors such as Human (1991) and Kiggundu (1991), proposes the following necessary attributes for management development, including *inter alia*:

- line management ownership and accountability to facilitate learning transfer;
- research and publications; and
- monitoring and follow-up

Since 2000 the DPSA developed their Senior and Middle Management Competency Frameworks. The Frameworks served as a guide to future development interventions and were one of the pillars upon which the Integrated Management Development Programme (IMDP) was built. The IMPD was developed by the South African Management Development Institute (SAMDI) and comprises:

- the Presidential Strategic Leadership Development Programme for senior managers.
- the Advanced Management Development Programme for middle managers.
- the Emerging Management Development Programme for first-line supervisors.

SAMDI's approach to training supports the development of employees in the sense that it places emphasis on the ability of the individual employee to implement their plan of action after completion of the development intervention. Focus is heavily placed on the provision of development interventions that are customised and a combination of theoretical and practical knowledge and experience. Their training approach also includes an assessment of learners that will be competency driven and not solely based on theoretical knowledge (SAMDI 2006). The approach to training does not specify any prerequisites for selection of candidates and that responsibility is placed with each individual department. Thus, SAMDI proposes a holistic approach to management development through their IMPD.

SAMDI's Training Directory (2006) states that their training methodology is based on the pillars of open or customised courses, pre-and post course work, assessment, evaluation and post training support. In the applicant profile for both the emerging and advanced management development programmes, SAMDI proposes that candidates should have an appropriate academic qualification (Matric or equivalent), be recommended for training by their supervisor and have a satisfactory performance assessment for the last 12 months. In the case of the Presidential Strategic Leadership Development Programme candidates should possess a degree or appropriate recognition for prior learning will be done by the accrediting tertiary institution.

For management development to reach its objectives within the complexity zone, specific factors have to be taken into consideration. Management development should be seen as a strategic and systematic process appropriate addressing not only the development of managers, but also their selection. Currently, evaluation of management development is done to determine its merit and to contribute to knowledge generation. Van Rensburg (2003) states that evaluation is done to feed into learning, decision-making and further research. The evaluation identified is part of the development programme cycle and takes the form of needs assessment, evaluability assessment, programme monitoring, impact assessment, cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit analysis and utilisation evaluations. An evaluation of selection of candidates is currently, not part of the formal evaluation framework. It is unfortunate that so much time and resources are spent on determining the outcome of the development intervention, without focusing first on the eligibility of the candidate.

The *Sustainable Pools Research Report*, 2003, provides a selection of candidates' framework that characterises modern management development programmes. This framework is based on the principles of selection through objective information that is linked

to organisational competency needs. Selection is also part of career development and succession management. The selection of the candidate is supported by evidence that the individual will be able to function at the next level and this evidence is obtained through the use of assessment and development centres. Applying for management development provides for selection based also on the submission of a role profile and a motivation and acceptance letter that is supported by the supervisor. Information of employee career development should also accompany a detailed employment record.

The argument can, thus, be made that even though the management development framework seems comprehensive, challenges are still experienced in providing effective and efficient service delivery and the cause of the problem is ascribed to a lack in management capacity and capability. If one is to acknowledge that management development should add value to the organisation itself, then selecting the appropriate candidate becomes even more important. Selection within specific international examples will not be evaluated.

INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES

In 1997 the then Canadian Centre for Management Development (now Canada School of Public Service) implemented the Accelerated Executive Development Programme (AEXDP) in order to address the important challenge of identifying the executives (middle and senior management) with exceptional potential in the Public Service and to advance their development and progress toward the senior management echelon. Since 1997 the AEXDP has been utilised to build new capacity in the federal Public Service of Canada. The AEXDP was necessitated due to various challenges that can also be attributed to the current South African Public Service, including (Public Service Human Resource Management Agency of Canada 2006):

- limited opportunities for transfer and promotion;
- revolution in technologies;
- new degrees of interdependence between national and global institutions and mechanisms;
- public relationship with private and civil society organisations; and
- diverse pressures to engage citizens in closer accountability and better service delivery.

Selection of AEXDP candidates is based on the assessment against the Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) competency framework in order to determine the potential for future career development. The assessment process comprises the use of a variety of tools, including a candidate's self-identification and self-report, reference checks, performance assessment and an interview by a selection review board comprising a deputy minister, two ADMs and a representative from the Public Service Commission. After this initial process an integration committee, comprising all the chairpersons from each of the different selection review boards will review and consolidate the list for presentation to the Committee of Senior Officials (COSO). The COSO, who is responsible for the overseeing

of the programme, selects their candidates keeping in mind overall needs and priorities and submits their list to the Public Service Commission for final review and approval (Canada School of Public Service 2006).

In an evaluation of the AEXDP conducted in 2002 it was determined that the programme ensured a continued availability of senior executives, while providing an important source of well-trained, future ADMs. The programme was said to be a visible demonstration of the Public Service's concern for and commitment to executive growth and development. The programme also aided in changing the representativity at senior management levels. The Canada School of Public Service (2006) also reported that the AEXDP enlarged the representativeness of the Public Service higher management, while strengthening the capacity of the Public Service to operate in the public interest.

However, the evaluation also highlighted that the programme candidates should be given a clear understanding concerning promotion within and beyond the programme. Thus, placing emphasis on learning and executive development and not so much on accelerated advancement (promotion) (Public Service Commission 2006). While the AEXDP is not the only mechanism for management development, it attracts managers who seek to broaden their abilities far beyond their current position.

In the United Kingdom the Civil Service College established the Civil Service Fast Stream Development Programme aimed at civil servants with a graduate qualification, who are selected on their potential to reach the Senior Civil Service. Employees that are allowed into the Fast Stream Programme are guaranteed a series of intensive job placements that will prepare them for senior management positions. The entire Fast Stream Programme comprises four separate schemes, namely the Graduate Fast Stream, The Economist Stream, The Statistician Stream and the Government Communications Headquarters Scheme (Cabinet Office 2006).

The Graduate Fast Stream is the largest and their selection process was modified during 2005. The application/selection process includes registering on the Fast Stream Website, followed by an on-line self-assessment comprising a situations test (in-basket exercise) and cognitive tests of verbal and numerical reasoning. Upon completion of the on-line tests candidates' applications are submitted to the Fast Stream. The bottom 50% of the on-line results is eliminated from the selection. Further tests are done at a regional computer test centre where verbal and numerical tests are completed to verify the on-line results. An electronic in-tray assessment presents the strongest 1000 candidates to be invited to the Assessment Centre. At the Assessment Centre candidates are presented with a group exercise, self-assessment of performance and a briefing exercise where candidates are challenged with a problem and their thought processes are tested through their proposals. All the above is further supported by a dossier analysis and written report. This thorough selection provides for effective mechanisms to discourage unrealistic applications (Cabinet Office 2006)

Recruitment standards for both programmes are very high and the graduates from the programmes are deemed experts in the field and practice of public administration and management. Specifically the use of assessment centres or interview panels could assist in identifying, not only persons with the right qualifications or competency profiles,

but also identifying those personality profiles that will be committed to building Public Service competence and service delivery. Rousillon & Bournois (1997:344) maintain that organisational commitment, personal ambition and ability to cope with complex situations characterise, what the DPSA also labeled, as high-flyers or high potential managers.

Thus, management development is a necessity if an organisation is to stay responsive and competitive. The delivery mode of management development programmes could also contribute to its success and will not be focused upon.

DELIVERY MODE FOR MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

Management development has since the late 19th, early 20th century taken on the form of either formal university education programmes or in-organisation equivalents. Most apparent from the two international practices cited earlier in this paper, is that both used the in-organisation model for implementation of management development programmes. Both use placements in departments as mode of delivery for development.

In the case of the AEXDP the process starts with a developmental assignment that lasts between 18-24 months. The assignment is carefully designed to address the needs of the participant as well as the operational demands of the host organisation. Assignments are chosen so that the development candidates are able to rapidly diversify their abilities and experiences. The assignments are built on five learning components, including personalised learning plans, participation in action learning groups, collective learning events, coaching other and being mentored. The intensity of the programme, once again, illustrates the importance of selecting candidates committed to management development (Canada School of Public Service 2006). The Fast Stream Programme is a 12-18 month posting where candidates are placed in different jobs within their organisations. Postings can also be obtained through secondments, which demonstrate the whole Public Service's commitment to management development. Candidates have to be exposed to the following career groupings, including corporate service delivery, operational delivery and policy delivery (Faststream 2006).

In the case of South Africa a non-degree management development programme model is followed. Tertiary institutions are responsible for providing the training covering a wide range of issues with material based on postgraduate course content. Through this method a significant amount of information is covered in a relatively short period of time. Crotty & Soule (1997:6-8) maintain that the use of this method is highly concentrated on time commitment and intense in format. Typically, managers are removed and placed in an environment away from the both home and office. These university programmes are aimed at developing managers as individuals to support organisational goals, However, the trend today is towards identifying individuals who will aid in changing the whole organisation and its culture while also ensuring that the skills development is facilitated throughout the organisation through strategies all the way down to the lower levels

The best mode of delivery could probably be found in a synthesis of the above. Crotty & Soule (1997:11) state that there has been a movement towards jointly designing

management development programmes that encompass both features of traditional university (although customised) and in-house specialised programmes. Obtaining a degree is not necessary and these non-degree purpose programmes (as is the case currently in South Africa) allow for more programme flexibility. The programmes are structures to cover functional topics, but the practical experience is supplemented with the wider theoretical insights that a university can provide. The advantages of such a delivery mode include that organisations can use the university's expertise and professional course design, while candidates obtain a broader perspective developed by academics that have knowledge covering more than one organisation. Candidates are allowed to network with persons they work with and this allows for the cementing of relationships and solving real organisational problems.

Management development is not an event, but a process and should be managed as a process. The input is equally as important as the outcome. Management development, according to Horwitz (1996:16), is conceptual, informational and experiential and the process should be designed to facilitate these important aspects. Management development is used to plan and direct organisational succession as a way to internally develop managerial functioning. An important trend in management development is that individual are taking the responsibility for their own learning and development, while the organisation is expected to play a supportive role in facilitating the learning and development.

CONCLUSION

Without appropriate focus on management development, complex organisations will be unable to maintain their ability to deal with change effectively. Management development allows complex organisations to continuously contribute to the economic well-being of the country as well as enable organisational strategy. Striking the balance between individual ambition and organisational achievement becomes possible through management development. However, it should be borne in mind that the above is only achievable if the participants to management development are selected on attributes that not only support organisational objectives, but support also the commitment to continuous learning and improvement.

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BRIDGING THE E-READINESS CHASM: ELUSIVE HUMAN FACTORS

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ABSTRACT

It is important to utilise existing structures, policy and legislation towards accelerated service delivery and determine the elements required to be present for service delivery of high quality. Human Resource Development and Training is *inter alia* one of the tools to be used to establish a capable, competent workforce with the eventual purpose to not only provide services of high quality to inhabitants, but also to speed up the process, thus accelerated delivery. In this respect the use of e-learning has become increasingly important in modern society. However, e-learning in itself is worthless without the support and commitment of public officials. This calls for change management to make the paradigm shift from traditional classroom learning to learning through electronic means.

In this respect the *change technology cycle* can be of use and assistance in determining an official's or department's level of e-readiness. It is important to determine the level of e-readiness before public officials are approached with new technology and training methods such as e-learning. According to the change technology cycle people adapt to change at their own pace. It is, therefore, necessary to do a situational analysis in practice to determine the e-readiness of a department and its officials. This paper aims at emphasising the importance of human factors in e-readiness and stimulating ideas with regard to aligning the work behavioural styles and personal profile patterns of public officials with a level of organisational participation in e-learning in terms of the technology adoption cycle.

INTRODUCTION

Globally governments modernise to improve service delivery. In South Africa with the emphasis on the developmental role of the state, a commitment to improved service delivery, socio-economic upliftment, the modernisation of government