

**Marketing strategies during the developmental and implementation phases of
an employee assistance programme in the public service (Gauteng)**

by

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DECLARATION

Full Name: Vincent Baloyi

I declare that this mini-dissertation is my own work and is based on my own practical experience in the EAP field. All secondary material used was carefully acknowledged and referenced in accordance with University requirements.

Mr Vincent Baloyi
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Dedication

This Master's dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Mrs L M Baloyi; my grandmother, Mrs M Khosa; my sisters, Masingita, Gladness and Nolly Baloyi, and my late brother, Derrick Baloyi.

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I would like to express my sincere gratitude and recognition to the following:

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Your positive contribution and efforts towards this study and support shown will
always be remembered

Abstract

EAP, as part of the organizational Human Resource Management services, assists employees in dealing with challenges that affect their productivity at work. It is offered according to different approaches, depending on the size, availability of resources and nature of the organization. Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) provide services designed to help employees, managers and organizations meet life challenges and remain healthy, engaged, and productive.

However, the services that an EAP offers in an organization need to be marketed to its users. This allows the users, who are the employees of that particular organization, to understand and familiarize themselves with those services. Various strategies are used to market EAP. However its influence differs from one organization to another. The study was conducted in the public service to determine the effect of marketing strategies by EAPs during the developmental and implementation phases.

More importantly, this study seeks to examine the most effective strategies for EAP marketing in the public service by means of the following objectives:-

- A description of marketing strategies for EAPs from a theoretical point of view;
- An exploration of marketing strategies which have been applied in the public service by means of an empirical study.
- Formation of guidelines on marketing strategies that may ensure effective marketing during the developmental and implementation phases of EAP.

The literature study outlines the processes and guidelines for implementation of the EAP during the developmental phases. This includes needs assessment, management consultation, EAP mainstreaming and EAP launch and management training. There is a direct link between the implementation plan for EAP and the marketing strategies to be employed. The main reason for conducting this study is

therefore to try to align the implementation plan for the EAP with the relevant strategies to be employed, for the benefit of the public service.

The empirical findings obtained from a sample of EAP practitioners and EAP heads in the public service have established the main purpose of the study, which will be conducted by following the mixed method research approach. The researcher applied the mixed method approach to find the general understanding by EAP practitioners of the subject being investigated and to verify such information with EAP heads in the public service. Data were presented by means of exact figures gained from precise measurement and the themes in chapter 3. This methodology was aimed at exploring the effective marketing strategies for EAP during the developmental and implementation phases in the public service (Gauteng).

The findings of the study and the analysis revealed the effective strategies that should be employed by practitioners when EAP is introduced into a specific public service department to ensure effective and efficient use of its services. The study also formulated guidelines on the effective use of the EAP in the public service. The research conclusions and recommendations served as a basis for the development of a guideline to effectively market the EAP services in the public service during the developmental and implementation phases.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Viewed against the background of the need to ensure a high performance among employees in the public sector, this study seeks to explore the marketing strategies used during the developmental and implementation phases of the Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) in the public service. The researcher argues that the strategies involved in marketing the EAPs play a critical role in the process, as they promote the delivery of services and form the foundation upon which the programme's effectiveness may be measured. The researcher further contends that such strategies must also be seen as important when promoting, among other things, the programme's assessment and referral services, announcing a training activity and advancing a new service component.

Terblanche (1992:25) concurs, arguing that the marketing strategies of the EAPs play an important role in determining the programme's development and acceptance in an industry. Consistent with this view, this researcher her claims that effective marketing strategies require practitioners who are well equipped in terms of whichever programme the industry seeks to adopt. Furthermore, the researcher acknowledges that the ineffectiveness of EAPs in some government departments stems from the fact that some of the practitioners lack knowledge of the appropriate marketing strategies needed during the developmental and implementation phases of the programme.

Against this background, this researcher seeks to explore the different marketing strategies that could be put in place during the initial stages of EAP in the public service. Such a proposition, this study suggests, will lead to the efficiency of, and control over, the effectiveness of the EAP in government departments, as is the case with private organizations. According to Maynard and Farmer (1985:31), part of the strategy needed to implement EAP (the bedrock on which all other implementation and operational activities are anchored) is the initial research conducted on the company, its

motives and the goals it hopes to achieve through the EAP. In the context of this study, the emphasis prior to implementing the EAP is guided by the following questions:

- What do we have to know in order to decide on the type of programme to be put in place?
- What does the company want from its programme?
- Who should be involved in the planning stages of the programme?
- How and where should the programme be integrated into the company's functions and systems?
- What specific implementation activities should be conducted during the entire process?

in an attempt to address the above issues, the researcher intends to establish the nature of the marketing strategies that could be developed and, in the process, form the basis on which the development of such strategies may take place. Most importantly, the study will assist in terms of equipping some departments in government and others in the private sector by providing them with possible marketing strategies to be used during the development and implementation phases of the EAP in their respective milieus.

Strydom (2005:207) points out that the field of social work is very broad, so people have tended to specialize. This tendency has led to an increase in the number of research projects undertaken by people trained in a specialized area or others who have long been active in a specialized field. In relation to the above findings, the following professionals were consulted in order to establish the extent to which this study may be relevant to the public service departments: Dr S.Senabe, Chief Director for Employee Health and Wellness, from the Department of Public Service and Administration. Asked about the importance of a study of this nature, Senabe (2009) maintained that "It is a good study to be conducted especially if one focuses on the four pillars outlined by the strategic guideline for employee health and wellness in the public service. I can also appreciate if this study can be followed by another study on evaluation of the marketing strategies after their implementation" (sic). Meanwhile, Sithole (2009), a professor of

Social Work at the University of Limpopo, pointed out that: "...although the topic looks a bit faded, the study seems to be a good one especially if it was to be followed by another study on various needs of assessment instruments in order to determine different EAP sub-programmes which we may need to market".

The researcher was employed by the National Department of Cooperative Governance, where the EAP was introduced in 2007 as mandated by the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA). As a custodian of EAP in all government departments, DPSA suggested that they should all introduce EAP into that context. It is worth mentioning that the practitioners who were hired to coordinate the EAP in government departments did not have the requisite knowledge in terms of encouraging their staff members to make use of the service. It is for this reason that the researcher intends to establish the nature of the strategies used for marketing EAP, especially during the developmental and implementation phases, and wishes to suggest new techniques that may be deemed appropriate when the programme is introduced into other departments. The findings of this study will be implemented first in the Johannesburg City Parks Department and will later be recommended to other departments.

1.2. PROBLEM FORMULATION

The EAP in the Department of Cooperative Governance is still in its developmental and implementation phases, which, according to Maynard and Farmer (1985:31), are the most critical stages of the EAP. The authors further reveal that, too often, EAP practitioners tend to overlook the importance of the initial steps in establishing the EAP. The activities performed and the approach taken during the initial phase of the programme will set the tone for a long time. These activities include, inter alia, management meetings or consultations, employee training sessions, writing training materials, and management or supervisory training sessions. These initial activities will in part determine who supports the programme. They will also establish the number of employees who will use the programme. Such activities will furthermore assist in establishing the nature of the problems for which the programme is designed, and

indicate the number of managers and supervisors who will benefit from the expertise and assistance of EAP staff. Most importantly, such activities will determine the extent to which the programme will contribute towards attaining the company's goals and objectives.

The researcher therefore maintains that the initial strategies for programme implementation must be exclusive and well developed if it is to earn support from the managers and supervisors, who will later recommend such strategies for their employees. The service must also be of a quality good enough to be shared among employees in the organization. It must be mentioned, though, that this investigation is not without challenges.

The research problem is thus the lack of an existing body of information pertaining to those marketing strategies applied during the developmental and implementation phases of EAP, which have resulted in the ineffective implementation of EAPs in the public sector.

1.3. GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.3.1 Goal.

The goal of this study is *to explore the marketing strategies applied during the developmental and implementation phases of EAP in the Public Service.*

1.3.2 Objectives.

The objectives for this study are:

- To describe different marketing strategies for EAPs.
- To explore marketing strategies which have been applied in the public service, through an empirical study.

- To formulate guidelines on marketing strategies that may ensure effective marketing during the developmental and implementation phases of the EAP.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTION.

The following research question will guide the study:

What marketing strategies were applied during the developmental and implementation phases of EAP in the Public Service?

1.5. RESEARCH APPROACH.

The study will be conducted according to the mixed method research approach to serve as a vehicle towards exploring the marketing strategies of the EAP that were applied during the developmental and implementation phases. Cresswell and Clark in Fouche' and Delport (2011:453) attest that mixed method research involves philosophical assumptions as well as the method of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the directions of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases of the research process. As a method, it focuses on collecting, analyzing and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. The researcher maintains that the approach is appropriate, as the study is intended to verify some quantitative data collected by means of questionnaires administered by EAP practitioners, as opposed to qualitative data collected during interviews with EAP heads in government departments.

1.6. TYPE OF RESEARCH.

The study can be described as applied research, as the results will be used for developing guidelines for marketing strategies to ensure effective marketing during the developmental and implementation phases of the EAP.

1.7. RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURES.

1.7.1 Research design.

The researcher adopted the embedded mixed methods research design, which, according to Cresswell and Clark in Fouché and Delpont (2011:443), is the type of design where “one data set provides a supportive, secondary role in a study based primarily on the other set of data. The premises of this design are that a single dataset is not sufficient, that different questions need to be answered and that each type of question requires a different type of data. This design is particularly useful when a researcher needs to embed qualitative data within a dominant quantitative experimental design by collecting qualitative data during interviews with respondents, in order to follow up on the results of the experiment”. The justification for selecting this design will be to verify the data that will be obtained from the EAP practitioners against the data collected from the heads of the different EAP units in the Public Service.

1.7.2. Research population, sample and sampling method.

Population.

The population for this study was 112 EAP practitioners in national government departmental offices and 34 heads of units and directorates where the EAP is located within a specific department.

Sample.

According to the information provided by the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA), there are 112 EAP practitioners distributed throughout all national government departments in Gauteng. The researcher handed over questionnaires to 40 EAP practitioners who met the requirements for inclusion in the study. The DPSA was also approached to provide information about the initial 10 government departments to implement EAP. There are 34 government departments and the Head of the EAP in each those departments will be selected.

Sampling methods.

The researcher drew the sample purposively, which is one type of non-probability sampling. According to Strydom (2005:202), purposive sampling is based entirely on the judgment of the researcher. Singh (2007:108) states that purposive sampling, as the term suggests, is done with a purpose, which means that selection of the sample can be very useful in situations where one needs to reach a targeted sample quickly, and where a random process of selection is not the primary concern.

The researcher preferred to sample EAP practitioners who were not new to the EAP field, as practitioners with longer service might be able to provide information drawn from their work experience during the developmental and implementation phases of the EAP. Babbie (2001:184) states that sometimes it is appropriate to select a sample on the basis of knowledge of the population, its elements and the purpose of the study. The following are the criteria for the population that formed part of the sample for this study:

Participants must be employed as EAP practitioners in any of the participating departments;

Participants must have been employed by the relevant department from the time of the introduction of that specific EAP (being involved in the developmental and implementation phases);

If this is not possible, then the EAP practitioner employed for the longest period must be selected.

Purposive sampling applied to the selection of EAP heads. The criterion was that out of the 34 government departments that are currently offering the EAP, the 10 heads of EAP units in government departments that had had an EAP for the longest period would form part of the study.

1.7.3. Data collection.

This study used a questionnaire, which, according to Jupp (2006:253), can be understood as a set of carefully designed questions given in exactly the same form to a group of people in order to collect data about certain topics in which the researcher is interested. Delport (2005:166) explains that quantitative data collection methods often employ a measuring instrument.

In this study, questionnaires were hand-delivered to the respondents to minimize cost. Delport (2005:168) states that sometimes fieldworkers deliver questionnaires by hand for respondents to complete in their own time, and then collect them later. The technique is appropriate for this study because the researcher intended to collect data from respondents who were EAP practitioners in various national office departments. Respondents had enough time to go through the questionnaire at their leisure, and the researcher collected it the following week.

However, data was also collected during semi-structured interviews held with different heads of EAP units in the sampled departments. The data was collected during May 2012. Interviews were digitally recorded with the participants' permission.

1.7.4 Pilot test of the data collection instruments

Strydom (2005:206) state that a pilot study is usually informal and a few respondents with the same characteristics as the main respondents are used. According to Neuman (2000:188), the purpose of pilot testing is to uncover aspects of the instrument that need refinement. This claim is further supported by Babbie (2001:250), who contends that no matter how carefully a data collection is designed, there is always the certainty of possible errors, and the surest protection against such errors is pre-testing the instrument.

The researcher pilot tested:

- the questionnaire with one selected EAP practitioner; and
- the interview schedule with the head of an EAP unit in a specific department in the population.

The selected respondent and participant were not included in the sample of the actual study.

1.7.5 Data analysis.

According to Kruger, De Vos, Fouché and Venter (2005:217), data analysis in the quantitative design requires the analyst to break data into constituent parts to obtain answers to research questions. This needs further interpretation of the analyzed data to find meaning and answers to such research questions. Babbie (2007:405) argues that quantitative data analysis is the numerical representation and manipulation of observations for the purpose of describing and explaining the phenomena reflected by those observations.

The researcher analyzed data manually. Depending on the researcher's preference and relevance, graphs, tables, pie charts and histograms were used to represent the data analyzed as these are the most common formats for practical illustration of quantitative data.

The researcher analyzed the qualitative data, after collected data had been transcribed. Themes and sub-themes were identified and supported with relevant quotes by the responses of the EAP unit heads.

8. FEASIBILITY OF THE STUDY

The feasibility of this study is based on the following:

A letter of authorization was obtained from the Chief Directorate: Employee Health and Wellness Programme, Department of Public Service and Administration. **See Annexure C.**

The researcher will carry all costs resulting from the study.

Access to respondents (EAP practitioners from different departments) and participants in the interviews (heads of EAP units) was possible and was arranged with the help of the human resource directors at the different government departments.

9. ETHICAL ISSUES.

According to Strydom (2005:57), ethics refers to a set of moral principles suggested by an individual or a group. Subsequently, these moral principles become widely accepted and offer rules and behavioral expectations about the most correct conduct towards, inter alia, experimental subjects, respondents and employers. Babbie (2001:438) understands ethics to be typically associated with morality and dealing with matters of wrong and right. Within the context of this study, ethics refers to specific standard rules that regulate the overall activities occurring during the whole research process.

The following ethical issues were considered when conducting this study and were discussed from a theoretical point of view, after which there was an indication on how specific issues were dealt with in practice.

9.1 Informed consent

Strydom (2005:59) claims that obtaining informed consent suggests that all possible or adequate information on the goal of the investigation, the procedure that will be followed during the investigation, the possible advantages and disadvantages, the

dangers to which respondents may be exposed, as well as the credibility of the researcher, will be rendered to potential respondents or their legal representatives. Bless & Higson Smith (2000:142) attest that participants have the right to know what the research is about, how it will affect them, the risks and benefits of participation, and the fact that they have the right to decline or withdraw from participating if they wish to do so. The principle of informed consent is important in this study since it assists the participants in making informed decisions before signing the informed consent form. The researcher handed over an informed consent form in a written form to the prospective participants with specific, detailed information about the study. **See Annexure B.**

9.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2006:143), confidentiality is an ethical requirement in most research. Information provided by participants, particularly sensitive and personal information, should be protected and made unavailable to anyone other than researchers. Thus, data collected from participants should at all times be kept under secure conditions. Bless and Higson-Smith (2006:145) state that anonymity is linked to confidentiality. A participant's data must not be associated immediately and obviously with his or her name or any other identifier. The researcher will assign a number to a participant's data to ensure that the data remain anonymous.

In addition to the above, Strydom (2005:62) states that confidentiality implies that only the researcher and possibly a few members of his/her staff should be aware of the participants' identity, and that his staff should also have made a commitment to confidentiality. Therefore, anonymity and confidentiality must be respected. The researcher ensured that the respondents' identities would remain anonymous.

9.3 Actions and Competence of the researcher

Babbie (2001:475) maintains that the researcher has an obligation to all colleagues in the scientific community to report correctly on the analysis of data and the results of the study. According to Strydom (2005:63), researchers are ethically obliged to ensure that they are competent and adequately skilled to undertake the proposed obligation. Bless and Higson-Smith (2006:145) maintain that the researcher has an ethical obligation to develop a well-designed project and execute it with care.

The researcher remained objective to avoid making judgments on the information provided by the respondents. The researcher was exposed to a research project during his fourth year of study towards a Social Work degree. He was also exposed to a research module in his first year of study for a Master's degree. Finally, the research project undertaken was under the supervision of a lecturer at the University of Pretoria.

9.4 Deception of subjects/respondents

Strydom (2005:60) states that deception involves withholding information or offering incorrect information to ensure participation by the subjects when they might otherwise have refused it. Bless and Higson-Smith (2006:144) state that deception implies that the researcher hides the true nature of the study from the participant. This is done to prevent the participants from altering their natural behavior if they know what is being observed. This principle is important because it would enable participants to see what they were becoming involved with, rather than receiving incorrect information that would actually prohibit them from making proper decisions on their involvement in the study. In this study, the researcher provided respondents with adequate information on the title, goal, objectives, purpose and how the results will be published, as well as who will have access to the research findings by means of the 'informed consent form'.

9.5 Release of findings

Babbie (2001:345) points out that the researcher is in the best position to realize the shortcomings of his/her study, and should state them clearly in the report. Furthermore, the researcher should inform the subjects about the findings without impairing the principle of confidentiality. Strydom (2005:65) states that the release of findings includes doing everything required to ensure that the report is as clear as possible and contains all the information necessary for readers to understand what the researcher has written. Bless and Higson-Smith (2006:146) asserts that the publication of research results is important, as it is a way of communicating the results to the scientific community. When research results are published, it is important that participants cannot be identified by name or in any other way that would make them recognizable. Publication credit must be given to all persons who have contributed to the research, in either the form of authorship or of acknowledgement. This principle is important, as participants need to be informed as to how the information will be published and what it will be used for.

The researcher will release the findings in the form of a written research report which will be compiled as accurately and objectively as possible in order to encourage its use by others. The principle of confidentiality was respected. The information will be available for use by EAP practitioners. Raw data resulting from this study will be kept at the University of Pretoria, Department of Social Work and Criminology, for a period of 15 years. **See Annexure D for data storage form.**

10. DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

10.1 Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

Attridge, Herlihy and Maiden (2005:3) define EAP as an organization's resource that uses specific core technologies to enhance employee and workplace effectiveness through prevention, identification, and resolution of personal and productivity issues. The researcher defines EAP as a support structure provided by the employer for

employees, to ensure that personal problems that adversely affect the employees' work performance are identified and resolved.

However, the researcher also supports the definition by Standard Committee of Employee Assistance Programme Association-South Africa (2010:1) as it has greater relevance for the South African situation. In addition, it has more recently been defined as follows:

'An Employee Assistance Programme is the work organization's resource, based on core technologies or functions, to enhance employee and workplace effectiveness through prevention, identification and resolution of personal and productivity issues. The researcher also views the EAP as a workplace programme that addresses all the concerns and problems associated with declining productivity on the part of employees in the workplace.

10.2 Marketing

Lamb, Hair, McDaniel, Boshoff and Terblanche (2008:77) define marketing as the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchange that satisfies individual or organizational goals.

According to Standard Committee of EAPA-SA (2010:16), the goal of marketing is to ensure that the EAP is highly visible and is presented in a positive light to encourage targeted beneficiaries to use the programme. On this basis, the researcher defines marketing as a strategy for encouraging buy-in or utilization of a specific programme or resource by employees in the workplace which will benefit such employees and eventually the organization.

10.3 Strategy

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary (1999:1475), a strategy is a plan to achieve a particular long-term goal. Walker *et al.* (1999:46) define a strategy as a fundamental

pattern of present and planned objectives, resources, deployments, and interactions of an organization which markets and competes

10.4 Marketing strategy

Kotler (1984:409) defines marketing strategy in the following way: 'Marketing strategy is the marketing logic by which the business unit hopes to achieve its marketing objectives. Marketing strategy consists of specific strategies bearing on target markets, marketing mix, and marketing expenditure level'.

A marketing strategy for the EAP relevant to this study should therefore focus on those activities that are typically part of the development and implementation phases of the EAP. According to Beidel (1999:91), marketing strategy can be referred to as techniques and activities that a programme can employ to market the EAP services. A marketing strategy may also include the review of traditional marketing techniques and newer marketing activities that have emerged with the advancement of technology and electronic media at the workplace.

10.5 Developmental phase

According to Standard Committee of EAPA-SA (2010:3-5), the developmental phase is referred to as the 'programme design' phase and consists of the creation of the advisory committee, the organizational profiling, service delivery models and procedures, as well as the costing models. This concept will be discussed in detail in the literature study.

10.6 Implementation phase

In this study, implementation can be defined as the process of putting planned action into practice.

According to Standard Committee of EAPA-SA (2010:6-7), the implementation phase consists of the policy, operational guidelines and the implementation plan. This concept is discussed in detail in the literature study.

11. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of the study are as follows:

- The majority of the EAP heads were not heading their particular EAP when it was introduced into their respective departments. Therefore they had no information on the various strategies used to market EAP during the developmental and Implementation phases of EAP. The researcher had to discuss beforehand with them what the study was about so that they could prepare themselves for the interview.
- EAP practitioners failed to adhere to time that was agreed upon to complete the Questionnaires that had been emailed to them. This created a situation where the researcher had to do telephonic follow-ups, at times travelling long distances to collect the questionnaires from practitioners who were taking too long to send them back.
- The researcher deviated from the approved procedure by the ethics committee that questionnaires will be hand delivered but instead the researcher opted to email them to facilitate a quicker distribution. However, the principle of confidentiality and anonymity was adhered to since the researcher collected questionnaires at their office and never had a chance to meet them.
- In most instances, EAP heads were not available for interviews, indicating that they had a busy schedule. Some said they were not interested in being interviewed and recorded. However, the researcher had to make arrangements with EAP practitioners in some departments for assistance in interviewing the EAP heads.

CHAPTER 2

MARKETING STRATEGIES DURING THE DEVELOPMENTAL AND IMPLEMENTATION PHASES OF EAP

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Beidel (1999:91) states that, for most Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP), marketing the programme and its services are a fundamental activity, not only in promoting the services to the workforce, but also in addressing expectations of how the programme's effectiveness will be measured. Programme effectiveness can exist in the promotion of assessment and referral services, the announcement of a training activity, or advancing a new service component in an organization where the programme is introduced.

The researcher believes that programme marketing should be an ongoing process during the developmental and implementation phases of the EAP. The researcher further believes that, if employees are to fully understand how the programme operates, the continuous promotion of its services is important in maximizing its visibility. According to Frost (1990:46), the ability to communicate with employees is essential to a successful EAP in order to establish the nature of the services available in the organization. It is also important for employees to know what steps to take if they want to access these services. Francek (1985:28) supports Frost's notion that a programme is not successfully implemented until it has been satisfactorily marketed in the organization. He states further that marketing strategies should address any existing incorrect expectations of EAP and the services rendered in the programme.

It is important for employers to ensure that employees are made aware of the programme once it has been introduced into the organization. They ought to know about the services available and, most importantly, how they can access such services. Furthermore, as employees will have different ideas about EAP, they should be told

what the programme is all about to avoid misunderstanding or ignorance. This is important in EAP marketing, because some people prefer to make use of a particular service once they know more about it. Francek (1985:28) states that, when the programme is introduced, marketing is valuable. According to this view, without effective marketing, the programme cannot be implemented and used successfully.

With this in mind, this chapter seeks to highlight the effective marketing strategies that can be used during the developmental and implementation phases of EAP. The chapter focuses on a number of issues, which will include, among others, the main goal and objectives of marketing the programme, the various strategies necessary for applying the EAP during the developmental and implementation phase, and the components of effective EAP marketing.

2.2 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE MARKETING OF EAPs

According to Standard Committee of EAPA-SA (2010:16), EAP professionals ensure the availability and use of promotional material and educational activities that encourage use of the programme by supervisors, managers, union representatives, peers, employees and family members. This suggests that responsibility for marketing the EAP lies with a professional who coordinates or drives the programme in a specific organization. Such a professional has to be acquainted with the goals and objectives of marketing as a developmental and promotional process.

Standard Committee of EAPA-SA (2010:16) also states that the goal of marketing the programme is to ensure that the EAP is highly visible and is presented in a positive light to encourage members of the organization to use it appropriately. The main objectives of marketing the programme as set out by the Standard Committee of EAPA-SA (2010:16) are identified as follows:

- To ensure that the programme is on-going and directed at all levels of the organization;
- To market the programme in such a way that everyone in the organization feels comfortable about using it;

- To provide regular information to employees aimed at increasing their awareness of whatever affects their personal well-being and ultimately impacts on their job performance.

To further compound this, Beidel (1999:91) states that, as with any other marketing process, marketing EAP has clear, distinct goals and objectives. Generally, those objectives can be set out in five primary areas:

- To increase employees' knowledge of the EAP and its services, activities and key components (for example, the confidentiality policy, referral procedures);
- To increase familiarity and comfort with the EAP operations and to enhance the acceptance and use of the service by employees, managers, labour representatives and the organization's leadership;
- To increase the use of the programme at all levels of the organization;
- To enhance the integration of the EAP in the host or contract organization, and to promote a sense of ownership of the programme on the part of the organization, its managers and the employees; and
- To maintain the visibility of the EAP and its presence as a vital contributor to the organization's productivity and efficiency and to the well-being and life-at-work in general for the employees and managers.

Viewing this against the above goals and objectives, the researcher maintains that the main aim in marketing the EAP is to ensure that the programme is known at all levels of an organization. Employees must have knowledge and information on the activities and services of the EAP. The goals and objectives indicate indirectly that there are certain specific activities on which the marketing process should embark in order to achieve the EAP's main goals and objectives.

Beidel (1999:92) states that it is important for an EAP to identify its goals for the overall marketing campaign, and its objectives for any specific marketing or promotional activity. A general information brochure on the programme might be the strategy of choice to introduce the EAP to the workforce or announcing a new service provider for

the EAP contract. Apart from this, the programme may consider a different activity and employ other materials if it is targeting managers and labour representatives to increase the rate of job performance, based on referrals to the EAP. Whether initiating or formulating the marketing effort by an established programme, the organization and the EAP are best served when the marketing strategies and activities are carefully planned and coordinated with other information dissemination efforts in the organization. These coordinating activities will themselves play an informal part in the programme's marketing campaign, as they will help bring to attention other operations in the organization. In this way, knowledge of and familiarity with the programme will increase among other key personnel who, by virtue of their liaison role, become an extension of the EAP's promotional efforts.

Given this, the author argues that the goals and objectives of the EAP should be set prior to the practitioner's involvement in any marketing activity. He further asserts that the goals and objectives also guide the activity on which the marketing processes ought to embark. These goals and objectives must also be projected in accordance with the phases of the EAP within that specific organization. For instance, when the EAP is still at the developmental phase, its goals and objectives must be based on these phases. One marketing strategy that might suit this phase is information dissemination session activities in which the ultimate goal will be to ensure that all employees have become aware of the programme that has been introduced into the organization.

In relation to this, Beidel (1999:92) contends that the key to an EAP's successful internal marketing plan is rooted in knowing not only where the programme is currently, and where the organization wants it to go or ultimately be, but also which carefully identified strategies and activities will take it there. The goals for the plan must be specific, whether it is expanding services, increasing client utilization, meeting specific service delivery goals or improving the image of the EAP among the workforce or within specific targeted populations. But the strategies for reaching those goals must be carefully defined as being targeted. Very often, the appropriate strategy is determined by the life cycle of the development of the EAP.

Thus, the researcher claims that practitioners need to clearly understand the position of the programme in an organization and be able to clearly define where they ultimately want the programme to be. This will assist in developing effective strategies during the developmental and implementation phase of EAP in the public service. It simply means that the projected goals of marketing must be specific in terms of identifying what has to be ultimately achieved. Clearly defined goals will help develop effective strategies and activities for marketing the EAP during the developmental and implementation phase.

In general, the programme moves through three distinct stages of development:

- I. The missionary stage: The principal objective of this stage is to sell the programme to the organization and its employees.
- II. The modification stage: The programme adapts to changes within the organization and trends among the organization's population.
- III. The maturity stage: The EAP has been brought to fruition and begins maximizing its influence as a significant change-agent within the organization (Beidel: 1999:92).

In the context of this study, one can conclude that the developmental phase of EAP becomes integral as it directs the goals and enables the coordinator of the programme to come up with effective and suitable strategies for marketing its activities in conjunction with a specific phase of the EAP's development. In this study, the goal of the marketing strategy will derive from the missionary phase. This is because the main goal here is to sell the programme to the organization, its employees and its managers.

2.3. STRATEGIES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EAP

Maynard and Farmer (1985:31) state that, too often, EAP practitioners have overlooked the importance of the initial implementation steps in establishing the EAP. The activities performed and the approach taken during the start-up phase of a programme set the tone for a long time to come and the first impression lasts. It is these initial activities that will, in the main, determine who supports the programme, how many employees will

make use of its services and for which type of problems, how many supervisors and managers will allow themselves to benefit from the expertise and assistance of the EAP staff, and what contribution the programme will make to the company's goals.

The initial steps of the EAP implementation are essential during the developmental and implementation phase of the process, as this gives a clear picture that will guide practitioners when it comes to the first and lasting impression. Organizations use different methods to launch EAP in their respective working environments. While some prefer an official launch in the form of an event and/or surveys and interviews conducted with employees, others make no particular effort during the first encounter with employees in the introduction of the programme.

The researcher believes that there ought to be specific activities such as events for wellness to attract the organization's employees when the programme is developed and implemented. This will enable the programme coordinators and the management to develop an approach to ensure that the programme will run continuously. If employees respond well in terms of accepting the programme, and even if the response is low, the coordinators and management will know where to start.

2.3.1 Background, research and planning

Maynard and Farmer (1985:31) state that the bedrock in which all other implementation and operational activities are anchored is the initial research into the company, and the motives and goals of the EAP. It is often true that cost reduction or productivity improvement is a motivating factor (both internal and external to the organization) that typically contributes to the decision to implement a programme. Any of these may be the predominant motivator for a given company. The set of motivators for establishing the programme's goals are seen as key decision-makers in the company. To survive and remain viable in the long run, the programme must be designed, implemented and operated in ways that are consistent with the practitioner's set of goals.

In light of the above, the researcher concedes that different companies introduce EAP for different reasons. For instance, while some organizations introduce the programme as a matter of compliance with the governing department or body for such organizations, others introduce the EAP because they need it. Research and clear background planning must be conducted so that organizations will be able to clearly base their programme on a specific motivation. While some government departments, on the one hand, base their programmes on their strategic planning whether or not there is a need for such programmes, private sectors, on the other hand, base their programmes on the company's goals to ensure that all employees are healthy and emotionally prepared to carry out their daily duties. For example, a clear background for establishing the EAP must be explicitly highlighted when the programme is introduced into an organization. This will assist in measuring its impact on an organization and in evaluating the programme itself.

2.3.2 Involving the right people

Maynard and Farmer (1985:32) point out that as soon as the goals for introducing a programme have been identified, key personnel in the organization must be chosen to run and coordinate the programme. Once such key personnel have been chosen, Maynard and Farmer continue, the next step is to learn how they feel about the programme, what they hope the programme can do for them and the company, as well as what they do not want it to do. This process allows the EAP coordinator to educate those key personnel about the possible benefits the programme can offer (which they may not have considered) and to evaluate their response to the benefits. Although these meetings may take time, they are an important step in the data-gathering process. When those key personnel are all sufficiently informed, the EAP coordinator will have a good understanding of who supports and/or does not support the programme and, in the process, will manage to establish possible reasons for such a support and/or lack thereof. The EAP coordinator must ensure that he/she quickly develops a working knowledge of company personnel policies and procedures and must find out all he/she can about how alcohol, emotional and other personal problems have been handled by the company in the past. Other general information on how cases that affected

productivity have been handled should also be gathered during the developmental and implementation phases.

All this fully highlights the important steps that have to be taken by EAP practitioners when the programme is introduced into an organization. Introducing the programme is not without difficulties relating to the employees' response to an interest in the programme. It is therefore important for the coordinator to be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to deal with challenges of this nature. Support from key personnel in an organization may play an important role in this regard.

An EAP cannot be effectively planned or successfully operated without the personal involvement of many people in the company. Becoming personally involved requires more than formal orientations or meetings; it requires careful listening and fostering of mutual respect and understanding between the EAP coordinator and other individuals. The involvement process begins during the initial research phase, as has already been discussed. The importance of the involvement of the chief executive officer (CEO) or chief operating officer (COO) and the top union representatives is widely acknowledged among EAP professionals (Maynard & Farmer, 1985:33). Involving the right people rests with the EAP coordinator, who should ensure that someone who has influence on decisions in the organization is chosen. It is also important to involve personnel with a good understanding of EAP and the right attitude towards it. The EAP practitioner must at this stage be prepared to deal with individual personal thoughts, feelings and attitudes towards the EAP. After all, there will be personnel who view the programme as insignificant to the organization.

Maynard and Farmer (1985:33) further state that the visible endorsement by officials opens many doors that may otherwise have remained closed to the EAP coordinator. Less frequently discussed, but of equal importance is the cooperation and involvement of many others in the organizational system. By virtue of their positions in the formal structure, those who are primarily responsible for production or operational activities are usually key individuals, such as the controller or chief financial officer. The executive

responsible for human resource management or employee relations always occupies a key position in the EAP.

Most EAP programmes are based in Human Resource management units in many organizations. The staff members in a unit might also be part of the EAP advisory committee, since most of their daily functions involve contacts with clients. These human resource personnel are therefore more likely to be well versed in the important elements of dealing with people.

2.3.3 Integrating the EAP into other company systems

The study treats the orientation phase as important in marketing the activities of EAP. The EAP coordinator should market the EAP throughout the training session. This is supported by Maynard and Farmer (1985:34), who point out many other aspects that need to be considered if the programme is to become an integral part of the way in which a specific company conducts its business. When newly-hired employees are oriented to the company, the EAP should be mentioned and its literature provided in the same way as other employee benefits. If the company uses group orientations during which a number of specific resource people make presentations, perhaps the EAP coordinator should also make one, or else the EAP should be defined by the person who normally conducts the orientations. A description of the EAP should be included in any employee assistance programme handbooks or other literature and should be written in the same style and format as other descriptions.

The study shows that the orientation session is part of organizational wellness, which rests with the EAP coordinator. EAP-related policy statements should always be presented as one of the basic company personnel policies. The format and style in which they are written should conform to the format and style in which other company policies are written. Company corrective disciplinary and grievance procedures should be revised to incorporate the EAP. This implies that employees may not be dismissed for misconduct that is the result of their personal problems. Instead, assistance, information, advice and training should be provided before dismissal takes place. EAP-

related practices should not be described separately as if they had been simply grafted on to the basic procedures as an afterthought. The EAP supervisory training should be integrated into regular company training practices. To integrate the programme fully requires the EAP coordinator to work with the regular trainers to have EAP principles incorporated at all relevant points in their courses (Maynard & Farmer, 1985:34).

The researcher concurs with the above and insists that the EAP should be fully incorporated into all activities in the organization as part of marketing. In other words, the EAP should always operate as consistently as possible with other company systems and procedures. It is also important for the EAP coordinator to note that, while the EAP activities are being incorporated into the organizational policies, the essential principles of EAP should also be taken into consideration to ensure that they are adhered to at all times. It is the responsibility of the EAP coordinator to ensure that policies related to the EAP service offerings are implemented and that the confidentiality principle is also promoted at all times.

2.3.4 Specific implementation activities

According to Maynard and Farmer (1985:35), a number of specifics are necessary for the successful implementation of an effective EAP. The responsibility of the EAP coordinator may include communicating the benefits of the EAP to various groups (for example, executives, supervisors, union representatives, employees, personnel staff) and their relevance to each specific group. Apart from this, the coordinator has to be responsible for addressing the needs and concerns of each group, as well as identifying influential networks and potential programme supporters or resisters and becoming personally visible and known.

2.3.5 Meeting with company person or supervisors

Whether the EAP coordinator is hired or represents an outside consultancy, he/she will have one primary person with whom to communicate regularly. Meeting and developing a relationship of mutual trust with this person is the first major step in implementing the

programme. At these meetings, the coordinator can supplement or begin research on the company and plan which other key persons should be drawn into the planning process. Arrangements could also be made for meeting with key executives and union leaders (Maynard & Farmer, 1985:35).

It is important for an EAP professional to meet with the most senior person in the organization; it could be the CEO or the human resource manager. This will assist the EAP representative in acquiring a clear understanding of the organization's profile and the status of almost everything to do with the company. Meetings also give the EAP professional guidance on when and how to start implementing the programme and from which angle this should be done.

2.3.6 Meeting with CEO/COO/Union leaders

To be effective, the EAP must be seen as an important and integral part of the management system in the company. This attitude can only be conveyed from the top. By meeting with the chief executive officer or the chief operating officer, the EAP coordinator can solicit their visible support and active assistance in setting up meetings with the vice-president, departmental heads, or other key executives. The focus in this type of meeting should not be a brief introduction but rather the development of a sense of personal confidence and trust in the coordinator of the EAP. If the company is unionized, the coordinator should also meet individually with top union leaders. The goal of these meetings would be the same: to develop a relationship of trust and confidence that will facilitate the use of the programme by troubled people from any level or section of the company. The essential ideas about inclusion in EAP-related company policy statements should be discussed and developed during these initial meetings (Maynard & Farmer: 1985:36). Once trust and confidence in the programme and the coordinator have been developed, employees will probably not hesitate to make use of the EAP service. These meetings and the inclusion of EAP operational activities in company policies will demonstrate acceptance of the programme in the company and employees will be assured that their confidentiality issues are guaranteed safe.

2.3.6 Brief managers, supervisors and union representatives

This is a very important activity for EAP practitioners, as most of the people who effectively make use of the service are not the top management but are also union leadership, supervisors and middle managers. The EAP coordinator should ensure that everyone present at that meeting has a clear understanding of why the EAP should be introduced, how it will be run and how it is going to be accessed by employees. Most of the EAP cases are formal referrals by supervisors and managers, so it is important that they fully understand the critical issues about the programme. Maynard and Farmer (1985:36) support these activities when they state that it is important (immediately after the meetings with top management and union leadership) to conduct quick briefings for middle managers, supervisors and representatives of forums. During these briefings, the chief executive or union leader should introduce the coordinator and request the audience's cooperation in setting up meetings and otherwise supporting the EAP. The coordinator or other company officials can explain the EAP concept and the company's rationale for establishing such a programme.

2.3.7 Assessment of the employees' needs

It is essential to include a brief assessment questionnaire as part of the orientation meetings. The questionnaire should be anonymous and designed to be answered in five minutes, simply by checking off various response alternatives. It is also essential to ask employees about the type of programmes they have experienced with their families and co-workers. All indications are that employees answer the questionnaires truthfully. Although it is helpful to have the data from the questionnaire, the real value lies in the process. Answering the questions helps define for employees the scope of the problems with which the EAP might be helpful. The individual feeling of participation in the design and implementation of the programme through completing the questionnaire increases the employees' own investment. It also helps towards the programme's success, as the coordinator will gain an idea of the next step to be taken in the continuation of marketing the programme. When summary results of the needs assessment are made available (e.g. 14 % employees report being affected by marriage or family problems), employees

who themselves are suffering from such problems feel less deviant and are therefore more likely to come to the EAP for assistance (Maynard & Farmer, 1985:38).

These activities assist EAP coordinators in becoming aware of trends in the problems that might exist in the organization so that they can be prioritized. They further assist the EAP coordinators in gaining an understanding of the problems on which the programme should focus. EAP coordinators would also learn where to focus their efforts in raising awareness of the EAP in the organization.

2.3.8. EAP addressing existing problems

Maynard and Farmer (1985:49) state that, during any of the implementation activities like needs assessment, COO meetings and supervisors' meetings, someone might bring to the attention of the EAP coordinator one or more situations with which the EAP could be helpful. It is important to capitalize on these early opportunities to demonstrate the effectiveness of the programme. A single example of a long-standing problem situation being corrected by the new programme will do a great deal to ensure its routine acceptance in the company. It will actually mean that augmenting the programme with real-world examples of its usefulness would multiply its impact and help to guarantee a successful programme implementation process.

The researcher views the above as important because discussions about issues with no practical demonstrations of the programme's effectiveness could make certain employees doubt its worth. The EAP coordinator should also bear in mind that the principle of confidentiality during these activities must be emphasized. This may also assist employees in developing trust and confidence in the programme.

2.4 CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE IN PROGRAMME MARKETING

According to Dickman (2003:47), there are elements core to the efficient and successful implementation of the EAP. The elements to be discussed below are not essential to the normal marketing of the programme, but are imperative in the implementation phase of the EAP in a specific workforce. When the programme is going to be developed and implemented, it is wise for EAP coordinators to ensure that the following elements are in place for smooth implementation.

2.4.1. Policy statement

According to Dickman (2003:48), every industry instituting an EAP must have a clear policy statement as to the philosophy and intent of the programme. The policy statement should make it clear that human problems are inevitable, that these problems often interfere with work performance, and rather than terminating the impaired troubled employee, the company would prefer to restore the employee to full capacity by providing the appropriate assistance in a confidential and professional manner.

The researcher views a clear policy statement as a strategy whereby managers of an organization acknowledge both the existence of the programme and its assurance to employees that human problems impacting on productivity are part of life and will be dealt with in a professional manner. The policy further assures employees that problems will be managed with complete confidentiality.

2.4.2. Labour endorsement

According to Sonnestuhl and Trice (1995:24), depending on the circumstances, union support and involvement can also dramatically increase programme acceptance and efficiency in unionized facilities. Support by unions and their involvement improve the effectiveness of EAP, especially when the union is involved in policy formulation. Organized labour at the national organizational level has wholeheartedly endorsed the

EAP concept and other experts in the field have expounded the value of labour management cooperation in implementing an effective programme (Dickman, 2003:47). The DPSA has also adopted the Employee Wealth and Wellness strategy in the public service. The strategy has been adopted by all relevant stakeholders, including organized labourers.

The researcher acknowledges the involvement of unions in programme planning and marketing, as this plays an important role in ensuring the effectiveness of the programme. Their support will show some sense of unity and avoid a situation where employees may contact the union as an alternative in order to avoid seeking professional assistance when they are in conflict with their employer.

2.4.3. Management endorsement

Dickman (2003:47) emphasizes that it is absolutely necessary for management at its highest level to endorse and actively support their EAP. Management endorsement and active involvement from the very top of the corporate structure is required if an EAP is to get off the ground. Top management backing could ensure that the following will happen:

- Doors will open to EAP personnel at all other levels of management;
- Adequate financial support to begin the EAP will be made available for mail, supervisory training, and initial diagnostic sessions;
- Enthusiastic support of middle and lower management will in all likelihood model and reflect top management initiative; and
- Support of local top management will be maximized.

The researcher views management endorsement as critical to ensuring programme effectiveness in an organization. The most important form of support is around the allocation of financial resources. Most EAPs require a budget that will ensure that all the activities associated with the programme are carried out. Programme marketing entails various activities that include the development of posters and brochures,

supervisory training, the distribution of promotional materials, awareness programmes and financial support from the top management.

2.4.4. Confidentiality

According to Dickman (2003:48), confidentiality is the cornerstone of an effective EAP. All employees have the right to seek help for their problems and know that their problems will be kept in the strictest confidence. In addition, when a worker is referred to the EAP by a supervisor, he or she needs to know that under no circumstances will clinical information be noted in official files. Further, every employee needs to know that nothing of the nature of his or her problem will get back to supervisors or anyone else. Unless absolute confidentiality is kept at all levels, the EAP will not be successful. Myers (2004:20) further contends that individuals considering using EAP must be certain that any information they provide will be treated as confidential except under special circumstances.

The researcher maintains that it is the responsibility of the EAP practitioner to encourage programme utilization by ensuring that the principle of confidentiality is adhered to at all times and actually uses this principle as one of the marketing strategies of the EAP. The practitioner should ensure that, as confidentiality is the cornerstone of the EAP, it should be raised at all formal occasions and meetings in an organization. Once employees are reassured that their information will be safeguarded in strict confidence, it will motivate them to make use of the programme, and that will enhance the programme's effectiveness in the organization.

2.4.5. Employee and family education

According to Sonnenstuhl and Trice (1995:20), employees must know about a company's policy and understand what the programme can and cannot do. Unfamiliarity with the policy and scope of the programme's efforts could keep employees from using the EAP, or lead to inappropriate and disappointed expectations. Furthermore, educational programmes also make employees aware of the

organization's commitment to helping those in need. Providing proper information, therefore, encourages people to step forward when necessary and proactively seek help.

The researcher supports the above statement and maintains that there should be a clear understanding by employees about the scope of the EAP services. This can only be facilitated through educational programmes for employees and their family members. The researcher further maintains that an EAP should communicate its services and emphasizes that even family members of employees in the organization are covered for it. It is not only the employee's problem that affects productivity but also that of the spouse, children and/or other family members.

2.4.6. The structure and the culture of the organization

According to Beidel (1999:94), the most important consideration for the EAP marketing plan is the culture of the organization itself; the unique and particular way that the organization functions gets things done on both a formal and informal level. Although this culture is difficult to assess, particularly for the staff of a newly-implemented EAP, it is nevertheless the most critical aspect of the EAP's ability to formulate its marketing strategies into the "language of the organization", a task that is vital to the integration and utilization of the programme in the organization. The difficulty is often that of identifying and understanding the components of the organizational culture. It is critical to look at the primary influences in the organization. The ability to formulate EAP marketing strategies that take into consideration the culture of the organization is therefore vital to the integration and use of the programme.

The researcher maintains that once practitioners have familiarized themselves with the culture of an organization, they will be able to formulate marketing strategies in line with that culture. Most departments have resources that enable them to communicate easily with staff members. For example, if an organizational culture makes use of e-mails to communicate with staff members, communication may be more effectively conducted this way than if it did not use this facility. The marketing strategy to be used in this case

would be electronic, to suit and comply with the culture of that specific organization. This will allow the practitioner to drive new systems and processes to adjust those that were available and were in use. It is important to follow particular steps if the organizational culture is to be changed. It is also important for the EAP coordinator to fully understand the current functions if he/she is going to be able to drive the organization in the new way of doing things.

2.4.7. The individual EAP professional as a marketing agent

Beidel (1999:106) states that, although traditional and non-traditional marketing strategies are valuable and essential for any successful EAP, the EAP professional is often the most critical marketing device within the organization. It does not matter how effective the material or electronic media are in consummate marketing tools. These marketing tools may even have the opportunity to reach customers and influence their perceptions in everyday operations within the organization, or to interact with any employee, manager, or family member. EAP professional represent their programmes in all their interactions in the workplace.

Myers (1984:183) agrees that, although top management, authority, structure, strong organizational policy and training are important, they will not ensure the EAP's effectiveness unless the EAP professional activates them to support this valuable programme. The EAP professional is a catalyst in an EAP, who fulfils multiple needs as a change-agent. Dickman (2003:52) concurs with Meyer's notion that the EAP coordinator needs to possess expertise in almost all the rehabilitation areas.

Given the points highlighted above, the researcher maintains that the professional should possess certain qualities, knowledge, passion and skills if he/she is to run the EAP services effectively. Their success requires some hard work and innovation. However, it depends on the culture, the type of organization and the location of the services in such an organization. The researcher believes that hard work and the necessary skills will ensure that the practitioner will facilitate effective strategies for the development and implementation of the EAP.

2.4.8. A defined role of management in EAP marketing

Sonnenstuhl and Trice (1995:18) point out that supervisors have traditionally played a major role in carrying out EAP policies. The responsibility for training and educating supervisors to perform necessary functions usually rests with the EAP practitioner. EAP practitioners can train supervisors to identify troubled employees through their deteriorating job performance, and to motivate these individuals to resolve their problems and improve their performance either on their own or with the EAP. When using intervention strategies, supervisors confront employees with evidence of declining work effectiveness, and thus provide suggestions on how to improve the service.

Dickman (2003:50) argues that supervisory training should be conducted at least once a year and certainly extensively, as the programme is initially instituted to clarify the supervisors' roles. Furthermore, it is a helpful practice to have labour stewards and supervisors in training groups together. This emphasizes that the EAP is a joint management-labour venture.

The researcher acknowledges that, in defining the role of supervisors, programme implementation can be made effective. Supervisors are the core personnel to encourage the use of the service. They work directly with employees and monitor their work performance. Supervisors are the first people to observe and identify a decline in work performance. They are therefore the first to confront the employee and get to know their individual problems. Supervisors know the essential background of the employee's problems and have enough facts to substantiate the employee's referral to the EAP. In this training, the 'dos and don'ts' for supervisors can also be identified. The focus of the service should be on their role which, in most cases, will be to identify a productive employee's problem and initiate proper referral.

2.5. STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE MARKETING DURING THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION PHASE OF EAP

Standard Committee of EAPA-SA (2010:15) maintains that appropriate marketing and promotion of the programme will encourage effective implementation of the EAP. There are various methods that can be applied to market the EAP services. These include mails and awareness campaign presentations. Companies prefer a variety of methods to market the EAP. The researcher seeks to highlight strategies for marketing EAP during the developmental and implementation phase. According to Beidel (1999:97), there are four components of organizational communication: written communication, oral communication, meetings and interpersonal communication. These four components provide a convenient framework within which to explore the promotional and marketing efforts of the EAP.

2.5.1. Written materials

Communication teaches people how to treat themselves and others; it influences others. Whether it is intentional or not, communication is persuasive. Communication enables one to operate on the basis of perceptions and feelings rather than on facts (Olson & Olson, 1993:6). This simply means that the way in which one communicates with others gives a good, clear indication of how imperative the issues under discussion are. There is a specific set of communication principles and objectives that guide EAP promotional material or marketing strategy. Table 1 provides a list of written materials and strategies that have been effective in several organizations and settings.

Table 1: EAP Traditional written promotional materials (Olson & Olson, 1993:6).

• Brochure	89%
• Flyers	67%
• Newsletter	45%
• Pay check insert	88%
• Posters	68%

• Stress cards	64%
• Rolodex cards	56%
• Tabletop information tent cards	78%
• Fact sheets	45%
• Faxed informational announcements	34%
• Training calendar	54%
• Seminar announcement	65%

Just how the EAP achieves these objectives remains a critical aspect of the marketing effort. Whether distributing an initial brochure on the programme or publishing an article in the corporate or departmental newsletter, the EAP needs to follow some basic guidelines for its written materials. Some basic rules on any printed promotional materials may apply. For example, the writer should keep the copy brief and have the intended audience in mind when laying out the format, content and design of the informational piece. The intention and aim of the material should be specific, targeted and simple. The writer should not try to accomplish too much in a brochure. An announcement to introduce the EAP could include the rationale for the programme, the confidentiality of the operation, the procedure for contacting the services and the definition of those who are eligible for the service (Beidel, 1999:98).

The researcher views written communication materials as one of the most effective strategies for marketing the EAP. However, he maintains that this type of strategy may turn out to be a challenge for employees who are possibly illiterate. Written materials cover a specific range of employees, but not all of them. The researcher further agrees that the principles of written communication should be followed in this process. The EAP coordinator must be sure that employees understand the language used in this type of communication. Written materials target only certain individuals, that is, those who can read and write, and do not cover everyone in the company/organization. All important information should be included, such as the location of the office as well as the contact details of the EAP coordinator.

2.5.1.1. Material distribution

According to Maynard and Farmer (1985:38), descriptive surveys explaining to employees what the programme is, why it has been established and how assistance may be sought from the programme should be distributed as widely as possible. Mailing brochures to employees' homes makes it more likely that spouses or other family members will learn of the programme. Brochures and other literature should be available throughout the worksite in places where employees will see them and have the chance to pick one up without necessarily being observed by others. Personnel and medical staff, managers, supervisors and union representatives should all have several brochures that they can hand out to specific employees. All EAP-related literature should stress the strict confidentiality and lack of stigma associated with using the programme.

While the researcher supports the above, it is worth mentioning that some of the management in organizations where EAP is introduced are not aware of the costs involved. Although the distribution of promotional materials to popularize the programme requires financial resources, some managers tend not to allocate a budget for the programme. In the researcher's experience, in organizations such as the South African Police Service, the programme is implemented effectively, because they are always prepared to spend on the distribution of promotional materials to market the programme (SAPS EAP Policy, 2000:3).

2.5.2. Orally transmitted information

Beidel (1999:110) points out that very often the most effective strategy for promoting the EAP and the acceptance of the use of its services involve some form of oral presentation. These efforts offer several advantages because the professional can use his/her persuasive skills and interact with the targeted population, thus fulfilling one of the intentions of communication and establishing or enhancing the relationship (Olson & Olson, 1993:6).

According to Beidel (1999:110), most of the oral promotional efforts employed by EAP occur as part of a formal training or educational programme or in the context of a structured or informal briefing to a targeted population in the organization. Table 2 gives a list of traditional forms of oral communication available to the EAP and examples of programmes and strategies that have been effective in a variety of labour management settings.

Table 2: Orally Communicated Promotion Activities of the EAP (Beidel 1991:110)

• New employee orientation sessions	92%
• Supervisory and Management training sessions	95%
• Shop steward	56%
• Brown-bag-lunch seminars	37%
• Health fair or wellness programme information booths or tables	67%
• Presentation to specific work groups (e.g. senior management, union officials, organization task force)	69%
• Ongoing educational programmes dealing with work and family issues; alcohol and drug awareness, smoking cessation; conflict resolution; transition and change management	82%

The researcher maintains that the strategies most commonly applied in the majority of organizations are the supervisory and management training and the new employee training sessions. Maynard and Farmer (1985:31) argue that training is essential in communicating to managers and supervisors that identifying and constructively confronting problem employees is a relevant and central supervisory function, and that the appropriate referral of problem employees to the EAP is a key aspect of their supervisory duties. It is important for management to get a clear understanding of how the programme works so that they give it their full support. Relevant policies and procedures should be brought to their attention to ensure smooth referral for their subordinates.

2.5.2.1. Orientation and training of management and supervisors

It is essential to communicate to managers and supervisors that identifying and constructively confronting problem employees is a relevant and supervisory function and that appropriate referral of problem employees to the EAP is a key aspect of their supervisory duties. When first implementing a programme in an organization, it is important to supplement ongoing integrated training with an orientation session to familiarize participants with the newly-developed EAP-related policies and procedures and to make them aware of the benefits of using the EAP as a tool to assist in supervising troubled or problem employees.

Ideally, each orientation session should include 20 to 50 supervisors or managers, with approximately the same degree of supervisory responsibility. Sessions should be conducted in a systematic way that promotes active participation by the supervisors and allows them to ask any question or state any resistance to the programme that they may feel. Examples used to demonstrate identification, confrontation and referral techniques should be totally consistent with the organizational style and structure of the participant's own department (Beidel, 1999:38). According to Myers (1984: 135), training and development communicate the EAP benefits through new-employee orientation and refresher training for existing employees and supervisors.

Myers (1984: 72) states that some key activities in these functions include training managers and employees in EAP goals, policies, and procedures. Consultation arrangements must be made to assist managers, supervisors, counsellors and others with the various problems that arise, particularly during the first few months of the EAP's operations. "Managed care concepts" (2000:01) state that supervisory training helps managers to supervise employees better. Managers are informed about the professional help that is available to the employees themselves and their family members. Furthermore, disciplinary processes run smoothly, as managers concentrate on managing while counsellors provide counselling. "Managed care concepts" (2001:01) further recommends and provides ongoing additional managerial and supervisory training in the following areas:

Table 3: Supervisory Training. “Managed care concepts” (2000:01)

• Identifying employees with problems
• Documenting performance
• Constructive confrontation
• Effective use of the EAP as a management tool
• Effective monitoring and follow-up to ensure continued performance
• Stress management for management and supervisors
• How to effectively develop employees
• Team building
• Conflict management
• Clarifying and simplifying the management or supervisory role
• Common mistakes or traps for managers and supervisors
• Effectively dealing with HIV/AIDS in the workplace
• How to appropriately and legally exercise authority
• Other relevant topics determined by need.

The researcher views supervisory training as an important tool for marketing EAP. It enables supervisors to better understand how the programme functions, assists them in identifying the behavioural patterns of troubled employees and defines their role in the EAP process of confronting a troubled employee, including the referrals process and policies guiding the programme. It further highlights what supervisors can and cannot do when dealing with or referring a troubled employee.

2.5.2.2 Conducting employee orientation meetings

The researcher believes that employee orientation will allow employees to gain a clear understanding of how the programme operates; enabling them to understand that the EAP is one of the company programmes that can be used to increase their productivity. Employee meetings further create exposure to the coordinator of the programme and makes people feel they can use it.

Maynard and Farmer (1985:37) concur that during orientation meetings the coordinator should be introduced by an appropriate company official known to the employees. The coordinator should briefly explain what the EAP is, how employees can use it, what they should expect after they have made an appointment, how confidentiality is protected and the statistical information to which the company has access regarding programme use. A brief explanation of the referral procedure should be offered. Examples of typical problems with which EAP could assist should be mentioned in a way designed to normalize and de-stigmatize the use of the programme by employees and their families. There should be an opportunity for employees to ask questions.

According to “Managed care concepts” (2000:02), employee orientation is generally delivered in seminars with a live presentation and discussion to ensure that the EAP is perceived as available, user-friendly and helpful. The desired outcomes of orientation sessions are outlined as follows:

- Educate the employees so that they can fully understand the benefits offered to them and how to use those benefits when necessary;
- Assist the employees in taking the first step towards using the benefits without feeling uncomfortable or stigmatized; and
- Begin the member/EAP relationship in the most positive way to promote both employee and company prosperity.

There is no point in offering an EAP if none of the workers knows what services are available. Judging from the responses of recent survey by the Life Office Management Association, Atlanta, the best way to get the word out about EAP benefits is to discuss them during employee orientation. Indeed, more than 90 percent of 92 firms polled, currently have an EAP in place and make use of orientation sessions to market their services (HR Focus, 1995:12):

The second most common promotional vehicle is the Employee Assistance Handbook, followed by presentations by EAP counsellors. More than 60 percent of surveyed

companies use all three methods. The following list includes the different types of marketing vehicles used by companies and the percentage of surveyed employers who use them to generate greater EAP awareness (HR Focus, 1995:12):

Table 4: Marketing 'vehicles' (HR Focus, 1995:12):

New employee orientation meetings	91%
Employee handbooks	85%
Presentations by EAP counsellors	69%
Company newsletters	65%
Bulletin boards	62%
Presentations by managers or HR	42%
Letters mailed to employee's home	32%
Payroll enclosures	27%
Brochures, memos, supervisory referrals	20%
Videos	16%

The researcher views the strategy of orally transmitted information as effective, as it covers a wide range of strategies that encompass it. It further covers a range of employees in different categories and levels of employment and operations within organizations. They seem to be employed by many organizations with an EAP in the company. It is an effective tool that will encourage the use of the programme.

2.5.3 Meetings and partnership with other organizational operations

According to Beidel (1999:101), most organizations offer other forums where an EAP can market its services and promote its image to the workforce. In their early development, many EAPs made use of advisory committees for liaison between the EAP and other functions and operations in the organization. These advisory committees still play an important role in the marketing of the programme because they promote, establish and enhance the relationship between EAP and other parties in the organization.

It is important for an EAP practitioner to engage with the internal organizational structure to market the programme's services. The Standard Committee of EAPA-SA Standards for EAPs (2010:17) states that the EAP, being an integral part of the organization, should network with various internal departments. It goes on to say that the goal is to ensure that the EAP operates at its optimum level by being fully integrated with internal organizational structures.

Standard Committee of EAPA-SA (2010:17) highlights the objectives of networking and meeting with other internal organizational structures as part of EAP marketing as follows:

- To identify all the relevant role players in the organization;
- To network with such role players in order to ensure a commitment to the EAP;
- To encourage other departments to recognize EAP as an integral organizational resource and to utilize the EAP appropriately;
- To seek clarification of EAP boundaries and authority lines in the organization in order to protect EAP neutrality and facilitate teamwork;
- To encourage appropriate referral to the EAP without revealing confidential information; and
- To participate in decision-making about organizational policies and programmes, such as strategic planning, design, and implementation of wellness programmes that may impact on the EAP.

These objectives emphasize the importance of networking as a platform for gaining employees' commitment to the EAP and facilitating effective utilization rates and appropriate use of the programme. The objectives further emphasize the issue of participation in meetings where organizational policies and decisions are taken as a platform to increase the visibility of EAP within the organization and further integrate the programme.

2.5.4 Surveys

Beidel (1999:104) states that surveys are an indirect and often subtle method of effectively promoting the EAP in the organization. In particular, needs assessment and satisfaction surveys have been exceptionally beneficial. Some EAPs have also employed focus groups to assess the need of the entire organization or of particular populations in the workplace. Needs assessments have traditionally looked at identifying new or emerging trends within the organization that may require the development of specific service components or training and educational programmes to meet such needs. The mere fact that an EAP is using a survey to gather information for further service development reflects its effectiveness and responsiveness to the changing needs of the organization – a critical promotional goal for any EAP.

Emener, Hutchison and Richard (2003:189) outlined the standard of surveys and stated that “programme design” would be based on an assessment of organizational and employee needs as they relate to their use of the programme. The background information and organizational data to be factored into programme design will include:

- An organizational profile;
- An employee needs assessment;
- Surveys of supervisors and union representatives; and
- A review of service delivery.

Standard Committee of EAPA-SA (2010:11) states that the goal and objectives of surveys or needs assessments include the following:

- To ensure that programme planning and development include an assessment of needs of the employee population and organization for which they work; and
- To help the organization determine the most appropriate effective method of providing EAP.

According to the researcher, surveys or needs assessment can be seen as an effective tool for marketing EAP. They encourage involvement and participation in the EAP by employees. Surveys are the first step during the developmental phases of EAP

establishment within the organization. Surveys clarify misunderstandings about EAP. Further, surveys provide an opportunity for employees to come up with ideas on the way they think the programme should be. A survey is an important tool for encouraging employees' general understanding of the programme during its development in an organization.

2.6. KEY COMPONENTS IN PROMOTING THE USE OF EAP SERVICES BY EMPLOYEES

According to Parchman and Miller (2003: 20), a well-designed, next-generation EAP integrates the following key components, with each contributing to an increase in the overall utilization of the programme. The following are recognized as the key elements in EAP marketing.

2.6.1. Communication

Today's Human Resource organization is responsible for coordinating communication on a number of programmes ranging from wellness to work life and EAP. While employee-focused communication, supported by education and training (in the form of seminars, workshops and individual counselling), has increased in recent years, the sheer diversity of services and service providers can lead to confusion and discourage use (Parchman & Miller: 2003:20).

Communication on programmes and services that promote well-being are effective to the extent that they are coherent, consistent and timely. The goal is to change employee behaviour from the passive reception of health care to informed and proactive consumption. Indeed, there is a paradigm shift taking place to service delivery models of wellness, work/life and EAP services that are integrated and centrally managed. In addition to ensuring a better choreographed communication, a single point of communication promotes familiarity, clarity and understanding, all of which increase utilization (Parchman & Miller, 2003:20).

The researcher's assessment of communication is that it is the core of EAP within a specific workforce. Communication drives the programme when it comes to marketing and services delivery. Communication is the one key programme that is central to the EAP. Workshops, seminars and counselling services, as already pointed out, can be rendered only by means of communication. It is imperative that drivers or coordinators of EAP in organizations strengthen the communication unit as well as ensuring effective partnership or relationship to establish proper marketing of the programme. Alternatively, EAP coordinators need to be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge for effective programme marketing as far as communication is concerned.

2.6.2. Access

According to Parchman and Miller (2003:20), delivering a service by telephone, the web or on-site delivery simplifies access and removes barriers to use. Worksite wellness programmes make it easier for time-constrained employees to participate. Rather than budgeting time to participate in an offsite programme, employees using on-site programmes enjoy reduced travel, while programmes can be arranged to fit their individual schedules. Moreover, the worksite provides easier access to educational material that can be shared and discussed among co-workers. For instance, most worksites have break rooms where materials can be made readily available.

Making wellness information and resources available on-line provides employees with 24/7 access at work, at home or on the road. According to Parchman and Miller (2003:20) in a recent study, 41 percent of EAP participants indicated that they would not have sought help had telephone counselling been available. Clearly, telephone access to a qualified professional provides employees with a discreet framework that encourages them to reach out and seek help or information. However, some employees remain uncomfortable with telephone support and find online access to wellness programmes and related information less daunting, affording them a greater degree of anonymity. Someone with high cholesterol or a weight problem might feel uncomfortable speaking with someone over the phone or at a public health fair, but would have little hesitation in accessing an interactive on-line programme on a range of

life-management topics that included material health, work/life and wellness (Parchman & Miller 2003:20).

The researcher views the accessibility of the programme as part of programme marketing. Accessibility should include the location of the office and an explanation of how services are offered. This will increase especially of telephonic counselling as one of the methods being used to render services. Most of the employees in various work settings prefer to talk to somebody whom they do not know and who does not know them. However, other people prefer the opposite. Clear communication and ease of access to the services increase the use of the programme. There are other organizations, however, that face challenges in making use of telephonic counselling, owing to financial constraints. In most cases, telephonic counselling may be rendered at the expense of the EAP of the organization, and, if they are financially challenged, employees turn to an EAP outside work for confidentiality purposes. Accessibility of the service also determines the confidentiality of the employee's information.

2.6.3. Integrated approach of EAP services

The researcher maintains that the integration of services is important, as it increases the use of the programme. The researcher also views programme integration as programme promotion. In a government department where EAP is being rendered to employees, as per the Department of Public service and Administration (DPSA) Employee Health and Wellness Strategy, there are services that do not capture the employees' attention. Such services are not used and departmental performance around EAP must be measured accordingly. These include services such as Voluntary Counselling and Testing and Disease Management in the public services. To ensure that such services are used, the coordinators need to be strategic by integrating them with the service most preferred by employees. For example, one can integrate VCT with a massage on a wellness day. Disease management can integrate with risk assessments activities. This strategy encourages employees to make use of both services because they may be interested in one that is included with other services. They are obliged in this way to use all of them, since they go together.

Parchman and Miller (2003:21) concur that the most compelling benefit of integrating these services is making the whole greater than the sum of the parts. For instance, the ability to efficiently locate qualified child care or care for the elderly frees up time to participate in a weight management or smoking cessation programme. The ready availability of one service promotes use of another.

2.6.4. EAP successful outcomes

According to Parchman and Miller (2003:22), positive experience promotes increased utilization. An employee who sees results from a given programme will be more likely to continue using the programme; this is also known to increase interest in the use of other programmes in the organization. Organizations that promote EAP through company newsletters or other communication channels will also see an increase in their use.

The author maintains that communication and dedication by professionals to providing EAP services increase the consistent use of the programme. This is determined by experience and the outcomes of the previous services offered to the employee. At some stage, the EAP professional as a marketing agent was mentioned as one of the marketing tools. This implies that the EAP professional plays an important role by providing one effective service to market the programme.

2.6.5. Personal coaching

According to Parchman and Miller (2003:22), health promotion programmes have been shown to be especially effective when the programme is matched with the health problems of a specific employee. It is made even more effective by personal coaches who can tailor regimens for that individual employee. Hands-on counselling, support, and treatment promote rapport with employees, who turn the activity or session into something they were actually expecting from the programme.

Special events: On-site health fairs and other events are high-profile and are widely advertised to the workforce. These raise awareness, build anticipation and create a sense of excitement, all of which result in increased use of whatever is being advertised. Events such as health fairs, road shows and wellness days expose the employee population to services of which they were unaware or were reluctant to use (a public showcase tends to demystify the services) (Parchman & Miller, 2003:22).

The author maintains that specifics are no more popular than others among all the services that are rendered to a particular workforce. Some turn out to be specific because their problems are unique. Once it has been realized that such problems happen to fewer individuals, the coordinator can organize special events to address the problem to determine whether any employees are affected or not. For instance, a support group service for HIV/AIDS employees could be introduced to all the employees at a special event held specifically to sensitize them about such a service. This kind of activity raises awareness about the existence of the service

2.6.6. Group programme

Much like the special event described above, on-site programmes (e.g. fitness) promote *esprit de corps* and increase use of the wellness service by making it into an eagerly anticipated group event. It should be noted that other factors may influence individual, gender, race, location, mental status and educational achievement or job type (Parchman & Miller, 2003:22).

Group programmes were seen to be increasing the use of the service, especially during awareness workshops, when employees share their individual life challenges or experiences. They tend to encourage one another by putting together their thoughts to address such challenges. EAP group programmes are usually run by EAP coordinators to motivate employees to address common challenges. It encourages some sense of commonality when it comes to workplace or life challenges. Employees tend to view themselves as one owing to the similarity of challenges they encounter despite their race, gender and rank. This, in turn, enables them to develop more interest in team

building exercises that may increase their use of the services (Parchman & Miller, 2003:22).

2.7. CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY PRACTITIONERS IN MARKETING EAP DURING THE DEVELOPMENTAL AND IMPLEMENTATION PHASES

2.7.1. Accessibility of the programme

According to Terblanche (1992:22), the physical location of the offices of the EAP personnel determines, to a great extent, the degree of support of the programme. Location should enhance participation in the programme, because confidentiality is assured. Keohale and Newman (1984:296) argue that a marketing plan should involve an idea of the feasibility of an EAP. The researcher maintains that the accessibility of EAP plays various important roles in determining the use of the programme. EAP marketing should clearly address the accessibility of the programme to ensure proper utilization. This should include the physical location of the offices, which will guarantee confidentiality, as well as travelling, time and costs involved in accessing the services.

While some organizations make use of telephonic counselling to ensure that employees access the services whenever and wherever they wish, others ensure that there are personnel on standby to reach employees wherever they are by the time they require a specific service. It is important for the EAP marketing to ensure that the accessibility of the programme is clearly addressed to encourage proper utilization and satisfaction by programme users.

2.7.2 Policy on EAP

According to Terblanche (1992:20), a policy statement is a crucial component of an EAP, which provides the opportunity to stipulate specifics relating to those aspects that need to be addressed. The Consad Research Corporation (1999:6) states that one

aspect of a successful EAP implementation is the adoption of a formal written policy, reflecting company commitment to EAP guidelines and goals.

The researcher views the EAP policy statement as important as far as management support is concerned. Management should be involved in the development and implementation of policies that will regulate and ensure the standardization and consistency of effective functioning of the EAP in an organization. Responsibilities and involvement by management to ensure confidentiality should be highlighted from the outset while the policy is being adopted. It is the responsibility of management to ensure that unnecessary deviation from the critical issues in the policy is always avoided when dealing with EAP matters.

2.7.3 Services offered by EAP

According to Keohale and Newman (1984:295), in order to market EAP, the organization must be prepared to market more clearly the product or services it is offering. The programme's less extensive package provides assessment and referral services. It's more elaborate package provides assessment and counselling. In addition to the basic counselling service, most companies want management and/or programme orientation. It is therefore an organization's responsibility to ensure that the model they decide on will be appropriate. The organization also has to determine whether it is willing to appoint on-site counsellors to provide services for employees during working hours. According to Terblanche (1992:19), an EAP should be introduced according to a specific model to meet the specific needs and demands of a particular organization. An ideal or suitable model could enhance an effective service to employees.

The study claims that employees need to be made aware of accessible services and this should be included when the programme is being marketed to a specific workforce. The programme would be marketed according to a specific organizational need, as pointed out above. It must also be made clear which services are provided internally, and which will be offered externally. Employees tend to feel dissatisfied when they are turned away because certain services cannot be offered in the organization. If the

organization is making use of the services of the external service provider contracted to the organization, such information should be made clear. It is also important to mention procedures to be followed when accessing the services, the appropriate times and the people who are entitled to the service.

2.7.4 Feedback by EAP professionals

Feedback plays an important role in facilitating and monitoring the progress of an employee who has been referred to the EAP. The author maintains that feedback should always be given to the referring manager or supervisor but only in the correct form. There have been instances when the referring official wanted an EAP professional to disclose a client's information without the employees knowledge. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed should such information be divulged. It is important for the EAP professional to identify the nature of the feedback requested by the referring supervisor or manager. The EAP should also identify the correct managers and supervisors to involve in such a case. This would guarantee that, when employees are referred, their confidentiality would be protected. The feedback given to managers or supervisors who referred employees is for the purpose of informing them what has been dealt with and how far the counselling has progressed. Clinical details of the case cannot be given, in order to protect the individual client.

Keohale and Newman (1984:297) concur that one of the challenges during marketing is the feedback offered after a service has been rendered. The feedback given by EAP to the management is usually statistical, which protects the confidentiality of the client's information. The exception to the practice of EAP confidentiality is a "job-in-jeopardy" referral, when a client is offered the opportunity of participating in the programme in an effort to improve job performance. In such instances, the client has to complete a form permitting the release of information. This allows the counsellor to discuss the client's progress with the appropriate company representation. However, these are clients who avoid this solution to prevent their supervisors or managers from knowing about their problems.

2.8. PRACTICAL STRATEGIES USED TO MARKET EAP IN ORGANIZATIONS

The literature discussed in this chapter highlights various strategies. However, some companies embark on practical marketing strategies in their own respective ways. They are offered various approaches and personnel, depending on the model that the organization has adopted to render its services. The following practical marketing strategies have been found to be in common use in various government departments during the development and implementation phases of EAP.

2.8.1 EAP marketing by externally contracted service providers

According to Peters (1999:101), to maximize EAP utilization, the contracted EAP consultants should provide ongoing promotions to management, employees and their family members. Promotional activities are designed to familiarize employees with EAP services. Programme promotion includes:

- EAP brochures with the name of the organization and logo;
- Newsletters for employees and supervisors;
- Posters;
- Magnets;
- Payroll stuffers;
- Educational pamphlets;
- Email announcements;
- Supervisory guidelines;
- Employee orientation;
- Supervisory training;
- Workshop; and
- Lunch and learning talks.

According to Masi (2000:43), “An external model is viewed as providing better accountability, lower legal liability, and ease of start-up and implementation”. The external model may also have a strong preventative component. Professional services

are rendered in several areas. This service provision represents a potential conflict of interest if the EAP is affiliated with the service providers, such as the residential care facility (Myers, 1984:89).

Those strategies market the programme using different techniques at all levels of the workforce, allowing all employees who are entitled to the service to better understand it.

2.8.2. Workshops

Peters (1999:110) states that EAP can also be marketed by conducting workshops given by consultants in a variety of seminars:

- Developing leadership skills;
- Managing your career;
- Coping with organizational change;
- Dealing with a problem employee;
- Dealing with difficult people;
- Communication skills;
- Stress management;
- Parenting skills;
- Diversity in the work place;
- Preparing for retrenchment;
- Money management;
- HIV/AIDS: myths and realities;
- More steam, in your self-esteem;
- Caring for the ageing family member;
- Coping with grief;
- Preparing a will; and
- Violence in the workplace.

If the EAP is to be effective, employees must be informed of its availability and services. Workshops are one of the services that can be used to inform employees about EAP's

services. Information is usually more effective and well received if it is presented during company time. Workshops ensure that account managers create proper guidelines for employees accessing the services (Masi, 2000:23).

In most instances, educational programmes are seen as proactive programmes. Employees are made aware of the services available and the way in which they are rendered. They are equipped with prevention strategies and early warning signs, as well as services recommended for addressing such challenges. These services constitute an important marketing technique by EAP in a specific workforce.

2.8.3. Employee orientation

According to Peters (1999:101), employee orientation introduces employees to EAP and explains the reasons for using the EAP and methods of accessing the programme. The training also builds trust and encourages self-referrals in the early phases of the employee's problem. The researcher maintains that employee orientation is the foundation of EAP marketing, especially to newly-recruited employees. During the training for newly-recruited police officers, for instance, there is a module dealing with all programmes that the EAP is offering. The module is facilitated by an EAP professional. It focuses on ensuring that newly-recruited police officers make use of the programme whenever they need. The model covers the range of services they could access by all forms of referral. The researcher views this as a platform for effective EAP utilization whenever it is going to be marketed.

EAP should be fully integrated into the company EAP orientation programme. It will be presented to all company managers and employees during a series of EAP orientation presentations held at all company sites. Orientation programmes offer employees general information about the EAP's range of services and means of assistance. Such sessions enable company employees to use EAP services more effectively. Employee orientation sessions should focus on the timely recognition of performance problems, dealing with and supporting troubled employees and effective referrals by managers and supervisors (ICAS & Johannesburg City Parks Service Level Agreement, (2010:6).

2.8.4. Supervisory training

According to Peters (1999:100), supervisory training teaches supervisors how to effectively use the EAP to help improve employees' performance when carrying out their duties. These programmes can be conducted live, and are also available on video tape and on the website. Supervisors monitor the employee's performance in the workplace and are ready to identify as early as possible any problems that are affecting productivity. Most organizations view supervisory training as the core of EAP utilization and marketing. Training can be offered in various ways. The recommended way to equip supervisors to identify a challenged employee is in workshops, seminars and pamphlets. Supervisors will be able to assist their subordinates once they are equipped with the necessary knowledge. Organizations contracted to external providers of EAP services normally make use of such external contractors by attending supervisory training at seminars. This enables supervisors to interact with each other and the facilitator to identify challenges and share experiences.

According to Klarreich, Francek and Moore (1985:183), once the EAP policy is in place, it should promote managerial and supervisory expertise in operationalizing the required process. The most effective way is to make sure that all the stakeholders are trained to understand their roles in the EAP. Scheneide, Colan and Googins (1991:41) point out are in a unique position to identify troubled employees and to intervene in a meaningful way. As a result, the supervisors' training enhances their skills in performing supervisory tasks in the EAP. Despite their managerial skills, supervisory training is still one of the important training elements managers need to improve their skills in running the EAP.

2.9. CONCLUSION

The literature suggests that programme marketing requires creative promotional activities to effectively achieve its objectives. The ultimate goal should be defined from the start by implementing effective marketing strategies during the developmental and implementation phases of the EAP. A great many activities are associated with the marketing of EAP in the organization. Other than the EAP coordinator introducing initiatives, support from management and clear guideline policies should be in place if marketing strategies for EAP are to be effective.

A number of the authors discussed in this chapter suggest activities that could be successfully implemented. The critical procedures and phases, such as targeting a specific population, should be followed as well. Use of the EAP depends on the initial marketing strategies implemented during the formation of the programme in an organization.

CHAPTER 3

EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION INTO MARKETING STRATEGIES DURING THE DEVELOPMENTAL AND IMPLEMENTATION PHASES OF AN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE (GAUTENG)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The main focus of this study is on exploring the marketing strategies applied during the developmental and implementation phases of the EAP in the public service (Gauteng). The rationale for this study emanates from the lack of knowledge and information pertaining to the marketing strategies required during the developmental and implementation phases of an EAP. The study aims to explore the different marketing strategies that might be necessary during the initial stages of the EAP in the public service departments. Central to the study is an argument that the lack of effective marketing strategies required during the developmental and implementation phases of an EAP could result in the programme functioning ineffectively. The findings of this study could be helpful in ensuring efficiency and efficacy in running EAPs in government departments.

3.2 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted by following a mixed method research approach in an effective exploration of the marketing strategies applicable during the developmental and implementation phases of the EAP. To realize its objectives, the researcher administered questionnaires and semi-structured interviews as instruments for data collection. During the collection of data, the ethical issues discussed in Chapter 1 were addressed. The ethical issues are presented below:

- **Informed consent:**

The researcher made sure that the informed consent form was completed by all the respondents participating in the study.

- **Confidentiality and anonymity**

The researcher assured the participants that the data collected for the purpose of this project would remain confidential and that their anonymity would be assured. The respondents in this project were informed that the questionnaires could only be read by the principal investigator and the authorized members of the research team at the University of Pretoria and, most importantly, data would be available only on request at the Department of Public Service and Administration. Raw data would be stored in the Department of Social Work and Criminology at the University of Pretoria.

3.3 DESCRIPTION OF EMPIRICAL STUDY: QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE STUDY

3.3.1 Procedure

In accordance with the goal of the study, the researcher collected the following information from the respondents: the managers from the Employee Health and Wellness Department and assistant managers with the longest service record in the EAP field from National Government Departments, as specified in the questionnaires.

3.3.2 Target group/population

- **Quantitative study: EAP practitioners**

The main target group for the quantitative study was comprised of EAP practitioners in the National Government Departments. The selection of these practitioners was informed in part by the fact that they possessed a great deal of experience in the field of EAP in the government departments. In the context of this study, the principal reason for such a selection was to obtain information on the marketing strategies that could be applied by

practitioners during the developmental and implementation phases of the EAP in the public service.

- **Qualitative study :EAP Heads of Units**

The main participants in the qualitative component of this study were the Directorate Heads of the EAP. These respondents were included because they were heading up the EAP in their departments. Their inclusion as the most senior people in their departments was necessary for this study, as it would assist the researcher in verifying the information obtained from the practitioners.

3.3.3 Sampling method

- **Quantitative study**

The researcher selected the respondents from the total number of EAP professionals in specific government departments. He requested the e-mail addresses of all EAP seniors in these different departments from the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA). An e-mail was sent to all senior members of the EAP to explain the rationale for the project as well as the extent to which its findings could be helpful to the public service. All senior members were requested to inform the researcher of the date, time and place for the completion and collection of the questionnaires. The researcher drew a sample purposively as one of the types of non-probability sampling methods and then selected those practitioners who had served the longest in the department.

- **Qualitative study**

The EAP heads of units were selected because they were the most senior persons in the government department when it came to their experience in heading an EAP. To be included in this study, the EAP in a specific department had to have been in existence for more than ten years. Although some members of the departments were not in charge of their units when the EAP was introduced, their experience in the position allowed them to give the researcher information relevant to the study.

3.3.1.4 Sample size and response

- **Quantitative study**

The total number of questionnaires issued was 32, all of which were returned to the researcher in a 100% response rate.

- **Qualitative study**

The targeted number of the EAP Heads of Units interviewed was 10 out of a total population of 11. The first 10 Heads of Units whose EAP had been in existence for more than 10 years were interviewed.

3.4. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

- **Quantitative study : Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was compiled by the researcher following the review of literature on marketing strategies during the developmental and implementation phase of the EAP in the public service. The researcher distributed the questionnaires to all senior practitioners of the EAP in an e-mail, which was seen as a convenient method for saving time, considering the participants' daily schedules. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the DPSA. All respondents were requested to sign the informed consent form before filling in the questionnaire, and to complete all questions objectively and honestly. The respondents were also requested to return the informed consent letter separately from the completed questionnaire to ensure confidentiality. However, some chose to fax or e-mail their scanned completed questionnaires, thereby sacrificing their anonymity. The questionnaire was comprised of close-ended questions, with an additional option for commenting where respondents saw the necessity.

- **Qualitative study: Interview schedule**

For data collection, the researcher used a semi-structured interview and a tape-recorder. The interviews took place on different days, times and places to accommodate the respondents' daily schedule.

3.5 PRESENTATION OF EMPIRICAL DATA

3.5.1 QUANTITATIVE STUDY

The research findings of this study are presented according to the sequence of the sections in the questionnaire. The relevant question numbers are indicated below:

SECTION A: Demographic information

The aim of this section was to obtain information on the profiles of the respondents. This information was presented in the form of tables, followed by a discussion of the data presented in the table.

Demographic information (Question 1)

Table 5. Highest qualifications of respondents

Highest Qualification	Number of respondents n = 32	Percentage of respondents
BASW	10	31.25%
MSW	6	18.75%
BA	2	6.25%
MASW	2	6.25%
MA IN PUBLIC HEALTH	1	3.13%
DIPL IN HIV	1	3.13%
DIPL IN COUNSELLING	1	3.13%
MA CLIN PSY	1	3.13%
MA CLIN PSY	1	3.13%
B TECH HRD	1	3.13%
BASS	1	3.13%
BA HRM	1	3.13%
MATRIC	1	3.13%

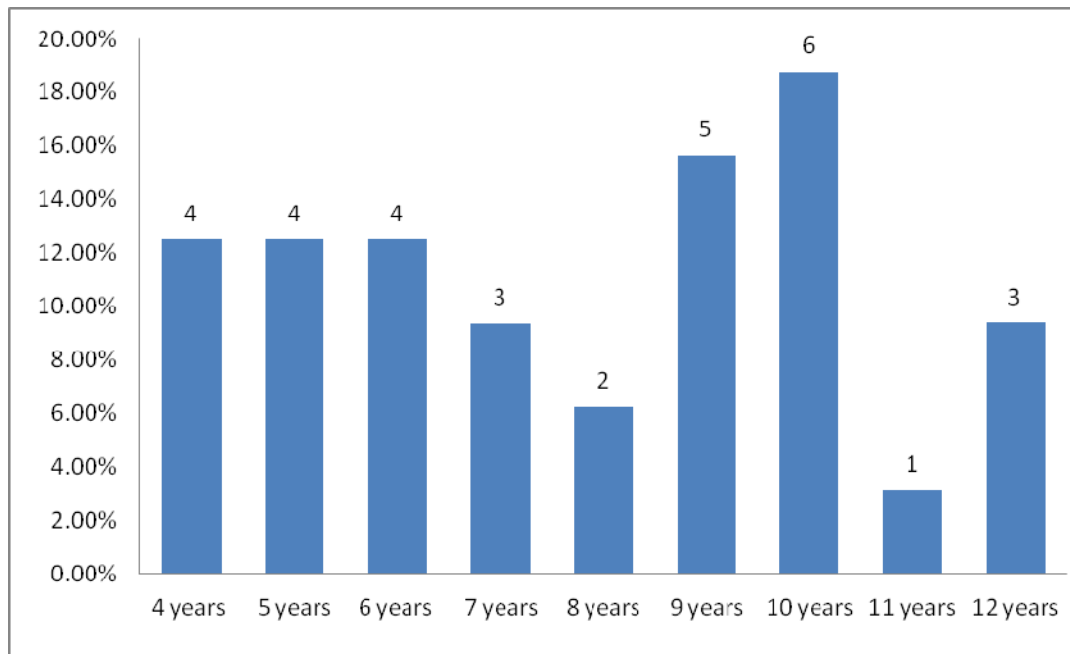
BSW	1	3.13%
B ADMIN HONOURS	1	3.13%
DIP IN INDUSTRIAL SW	1	3.13%
Grand Total	32	100.00%

Discussion of Table 3.1

As shown in Table 5, the majority of respondents, that is, 37.50%, hold a B.A. degree or a B.A. degree in Social Work, while 25% of the respondents possess a Master’s degree or Master’s degree in Social Work. It can thus be concluded that the majority (62.5%) of the EAP practitioners in the National Government Departments hold their qualifications in the field of Social Work.

Number of practitioners in the EAP field (Question 2)

Figure 3.1 Years of experience of respondents in the EAP field N: 32

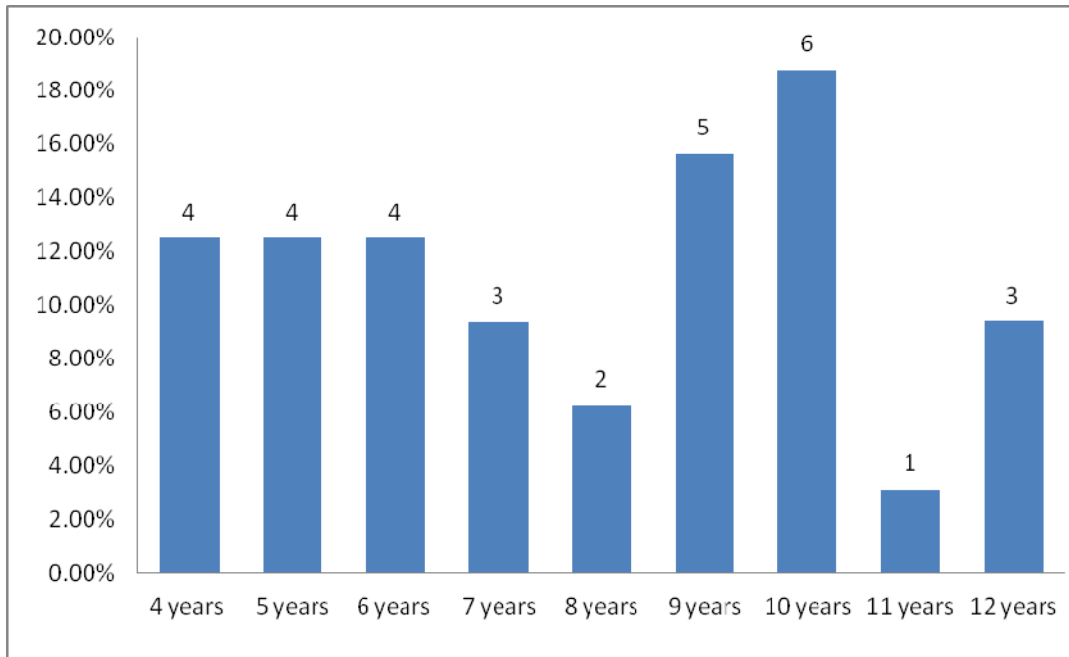


Discussion of figure 3.1

This figure indicates that only 11 of the respondents had been in the field of EAP for a period of more than ten years.

Number of practitioners in the public service (Question 3)

Figure 3.2 EAP experience of respondents in the public service N: 32



Discussion of figure 3.2

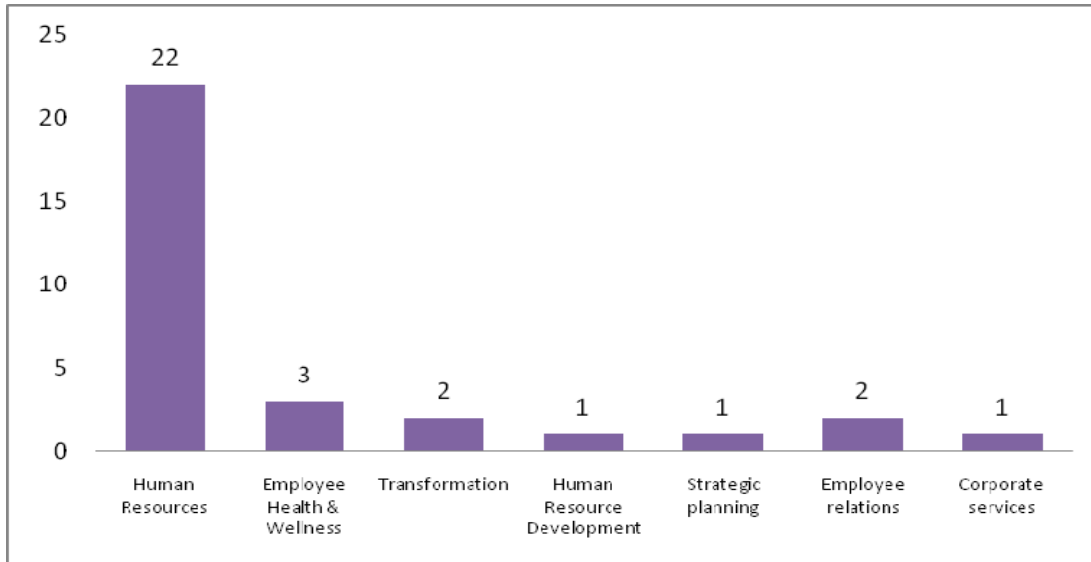
The figure illustrates that for the majority of respondents, their first experience in the EAP was in the public service, as their experience in the programme is the same as their number of years' experience in the public service. This implies that the majority of the respondents began to use the EAP where they are currently employed.

Section B: Employment details of respondents

Number of practitioners in different business units (Question 4)

Figure 3.3. Business unit of respondents

N: 32



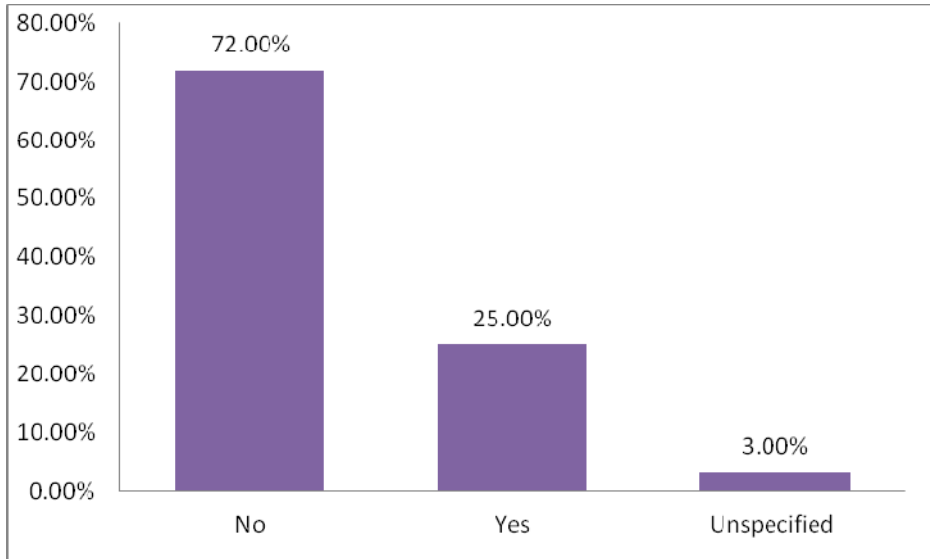
Discussion of Figure 3.3

The figure indicates that the majority of the EAP practitioners are placed in HR units, while others are located in other units in different government departments.

Respondents already employed when the EAP was implemented (Question 5)

Figure 3.4. Respondents already employed when EAP was introduced.

N: 32



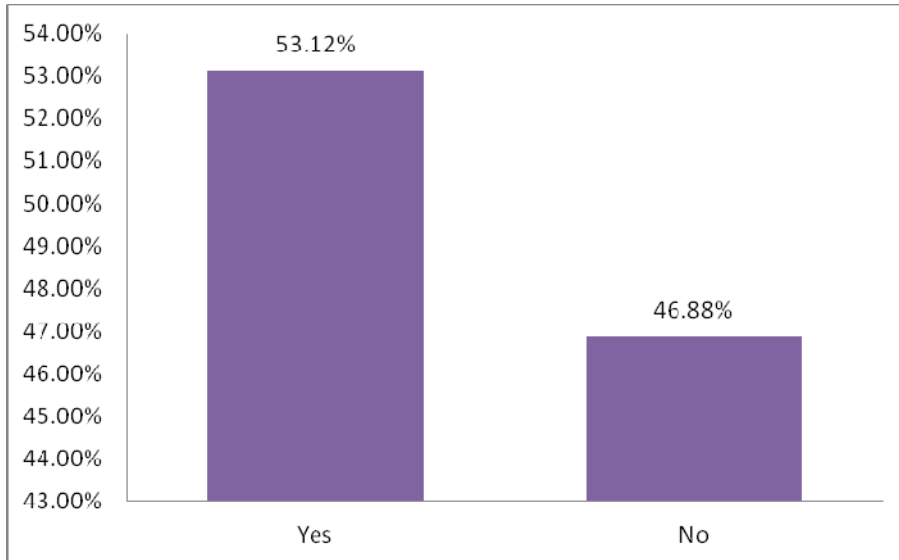
Discussion of Figure 3.4

The figure indicates that the majority of respondents, that is, 23 (72%), were not employed when the EAP was introduced into their respective departments. Only eight (25 %) of the respondents were employed during the time of the EAP's introduction, and could have made a contribution to the marketing strategies applied in the implementation phase of the programme.

Respondents who were directly involved in the marketing of EAP (Question 6)

Figure 3.5. Respondents who were directly involved in the marketing of EAP

N: 32



Discussion of Figure 3.5

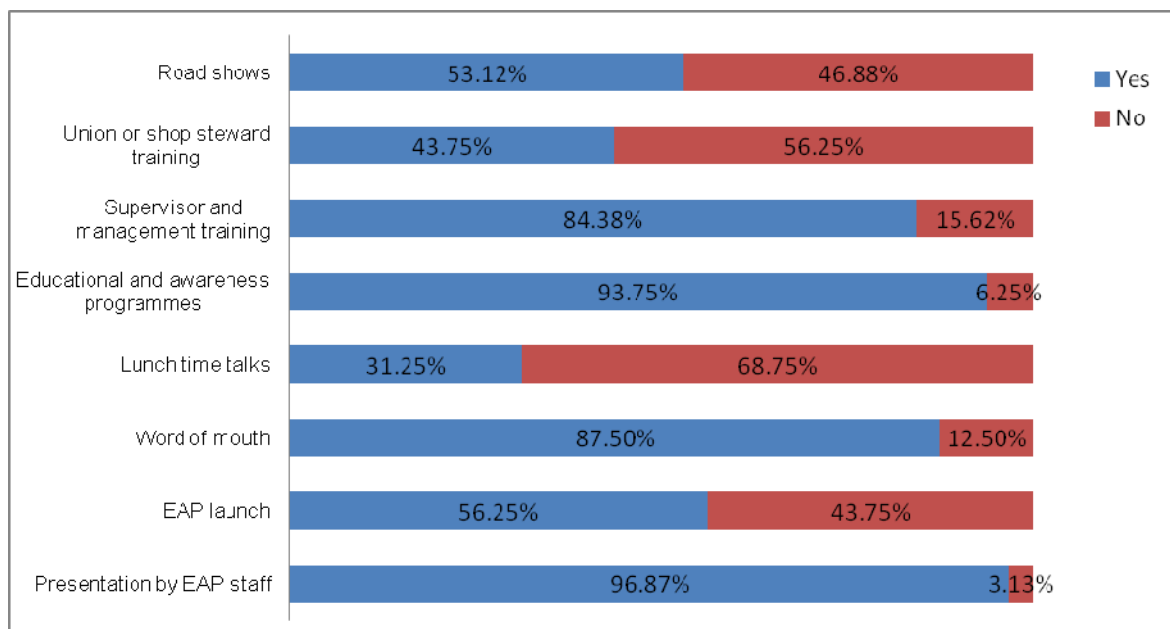
The figure indicates that the majority of respondents 17 (53%) were directly involved in the marketing of the EAP during its developmental and implementation phases. However, the respondents commented that, in most government departments, the EAP practitioners who were in the field when the EAP was introduced did not have the relevant qualifications. Practitioners also pointed out that the programme was not well-placed in other government departments which meant that it was not clear who was directly involved in its marketing.

Section C: Marketing of EAP

Select marketing strategies that were utilized in your department (Question 7)

Figure 3.6. Oral marketing strategies.

N: 32



Discussion of Figure 3.6

The above figure shows that the majority of respondents (96.87%) used presentations designed by the EAP staff as oral marketing strategies for the EAP services during the developmental and implementation phases. It is therefore evident that 'word of mouth' was an effective strategy preferred by the practitioners.

The above findings indicate that the EAP in the public service was well integrated into the departments' communication processes. This is based on the fact that a variety of strategies were applied including, although they were least used, the lunch time talks, reflecting 31.25% utilization. This evidence correlates with the earlier comment in the literature review that "corporate communication is the benchmark for the success of the organization's communication activities; hence EAP's marketing plan and promotional efforts can be measured" (Oher, 1999: 95).

However, the participants in this study have yet to show either their concern or their support for the programme in their respective departments. The benchmarks for the

EAP role of staff interaction is echoed by Oher's (1999: 100) assertion that "it is often easier to communicate this important EAP marketing message through these dynamic interpersonal communication exchanges than through the traditional written materials and formal presentations". Also, Myers (1984: 72) concurs with the findings of this study and argues that "some key activities in these functions include training managers and employees in EAP goals, policies, and procedures. Consultation arrangements must be made to assist managers, supervisors, counsellors, and others with various problems that arise, particularly during the first few months of the EAP's operations".

Figure 3.7. Written marketing strategies

N: 32

	Yes	No
Brochures	29 (91%)	3 (9%)
Flyers	26 (81%)	6 (19)%
Newsletter	28 (88%)	4 (12)%
Pay check inserts	(24) 75%	8 (25%)
Stress cards	25 (78)%	7 (22%)
Rolodex cards	3 (9%)	29 (91%)
Tabletop information tent cards	6 (19%)	26 (81%)
Fact sheet	10 (31%)	22 (69%)
Faxed informational announcements	7 (22%)	25 (78%)
Training calendar	16 (50%)	16 (50%)
Seminar documents	11 (34%)	21 (66%)

Posters	27 (84%)	5 (16%)
Circulars	18 (56%)	14 (44%)
EAP surveys	21 (66%)	11 (34%)

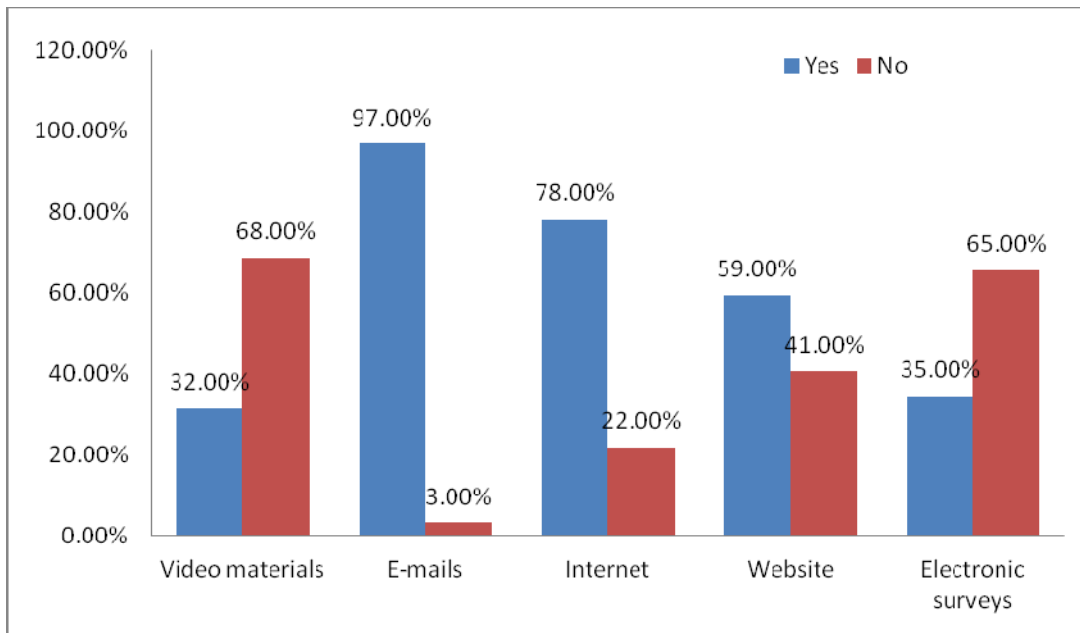
Respondents had multiple options.

Discussion of Figure 3.7

The above table shows that the majority of respondents (91%) used brochures as one of the written marketing strategies during the developmental and implementation phase. Further, the table makes it clear that both 'table top information' cards at 19% and faxed information at 22 % were not often used as marketing strategies. These findings are supported in the literature review section by the perspective that it is important for EAP practitioners to be equipped with the techniques available for achieving the EAP objectives. Discussing the dissemination of information in departments, Beidel (1999:98) contends that, whether it is distributing an initial brochure on the programme or an article in the corporate or a departmental newsletter, the EAP needs to follow some basic guidelines for coordinating its written materials with the culture and literacy level of the employees.

Figure 3.8. Electronic marketing strategies

N: 32



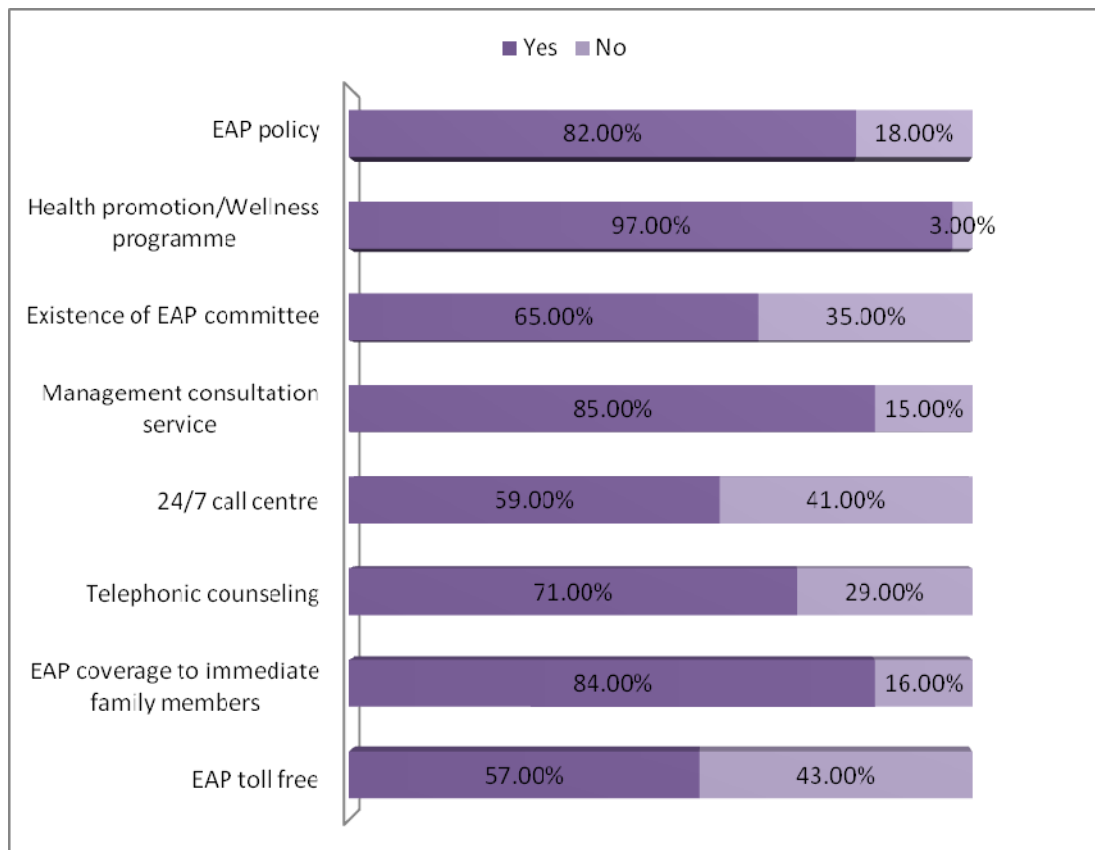
Discussion of Figure 3.8

The above figure shows that the majority of respondents (97.00%) used e-mails as the most commonly-used electronic marketing strategy during the developmental and implementation phase of the EAP. It is thus evident that electronic surveys, at 35.00%, were not really preferred as an electronic marketing strategy. This, however, could be on account of the paucity of knowledge on how to conduct electronic surveys.

Section D: Strategies to maximize the utilization of EAP services

Strategies to maximize the utilization of EAP services (Question 8)

Figure 3.9 Strategies to maximize the utilization of EAP services N: 32



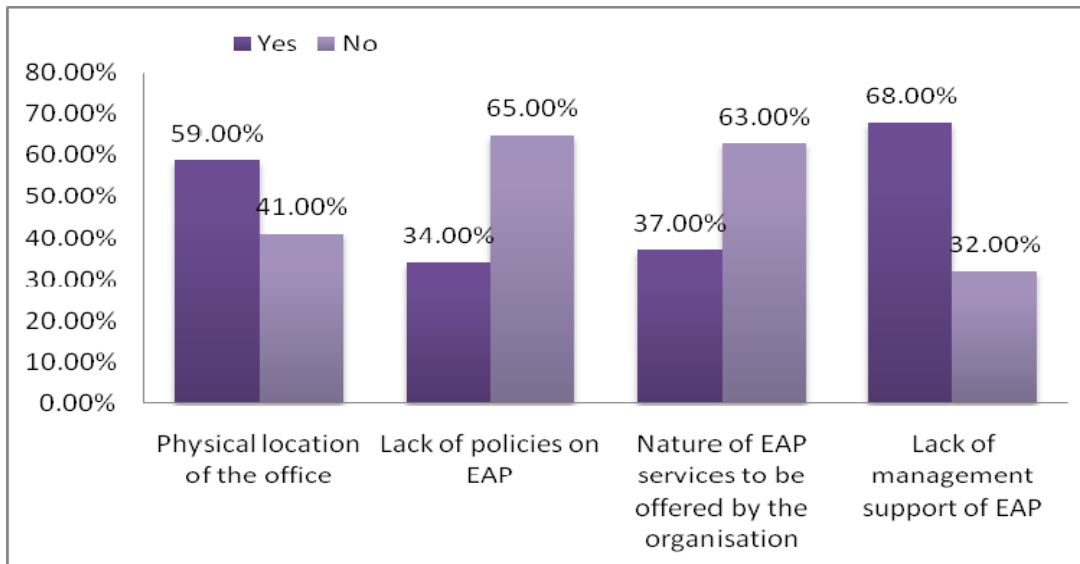
Discussion of Figure 3.9

This figure indicates that ‘Health promotion’ is the most effective strategy for maximizing the use of EAP services, as confirmed by 97% of the respondents. Given this, one can infer that the support from internal stakeholders (as opposed to external services, such as the 24/7 call centre (41.00%)) contributes to usage of the programme.

The above findings correlate with the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, which states that “training and development communicate the EAP benefits provisions through new-employee orientation and refresher training to existing employees and supervisors” (Myers, 1984: 135). It can thus be inferred that seminars and workshops for educating employees about EAP are effective strategies for marketing the programme’s services.

Section E: Challenges faced by EAP professionals when marketing EAP
Challenges faced by EAP professionals when marketing the EAP (Question 9)

Figure 3.10 Section E: Challenges faced by EAP professionals when marketing EAP
N: 32



Discussion of figure 3.10

While Figure 3.11 reveals that lack of managerial support (at 68.00%) was the most important challenge respondents experienced when marketing the EAP services during the developmental and implementation phase, the lack of policies was seen as the least of the challenges in the process of marketing the EAP (34.00%). However, it is interesting to note that policies for guiding the EAP practitioners in marketing the programme are in place. The findings in this figure are supported in the literature review, where it is stated that the physical location of the offices of the EAP personnel determines, to a great extent, the degree of support for the programme. In this case, location should enhance participation in the programme because confidentiality is assured (Terblanche (1992:22). Other than this, Chapter 2 also emphasised that a policy statement is a crucial component of an EAP, as it provides the opportunity for stipulating specifics on aspects that need to be addressed (Terblanche, 1992:20). To ensure a successful implementation of the EAP, Onsad Research Corporation (1999:6)

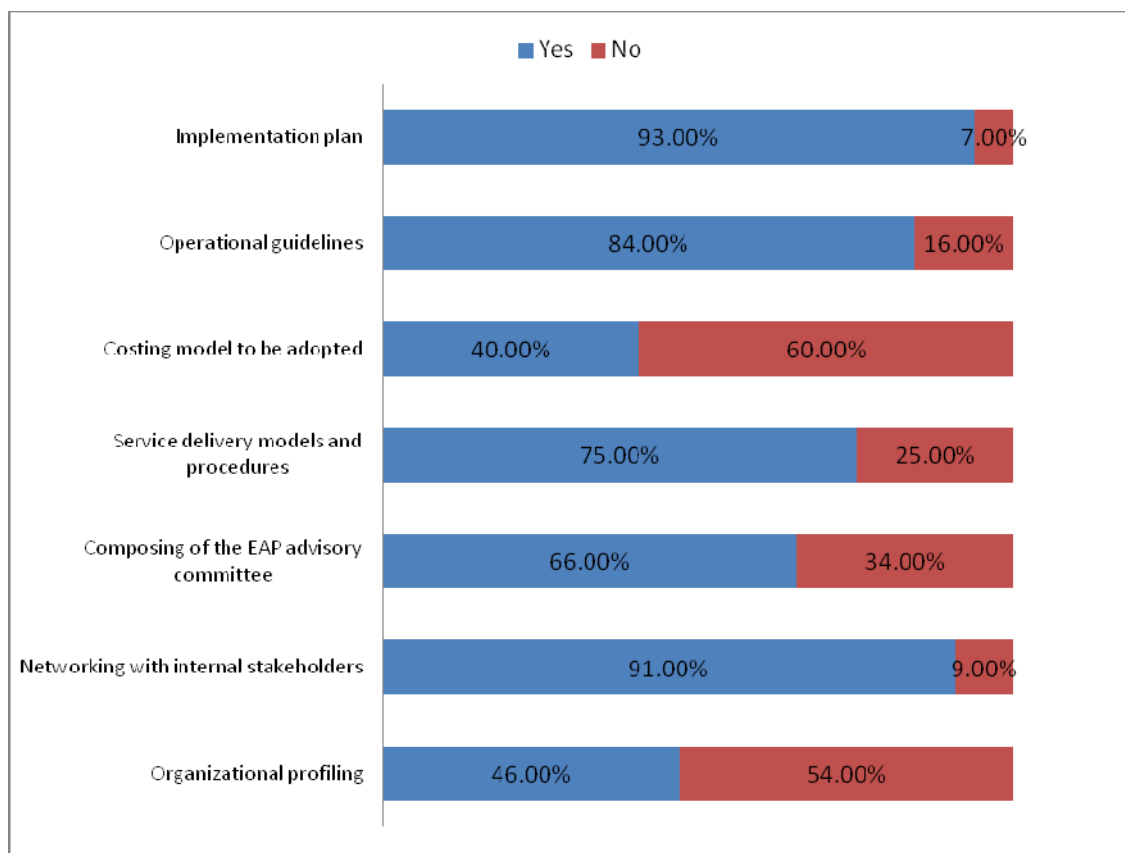
suggest that the adoption of a formal written policy reflecting company commitment to the EAP guidelines and goal is required.

Section F: EAP implementation standards

EAP implementation standards used to market services (Question 10)

Figure 3.11 EAP implementation Standards

N: 32



Discussion on Figure 3.11

The figure indicates that the implementation plan (at 93.00%) and networking with internal stakeholders at 91.00% were used extensively when employing the EAP services as opposed to the costing model and organizational profiling at 40.00% and 46.00% respectively. These findings are backed up by the literature discussed in Chapter 2, where it is stated that the EAP, as an integral part of the organization, should network with various internal departments. The main thrust here should be to ensure

that the EAP operates at its optimum level, and is fully integrated with the internal organizational structures (EAPA-SA Standards for EAPs 2010:17).

3.5.2 QUALITATIVE STUDY

Table 6: PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR DEPARTMENT (Question 1 to 4)

Participant No.	Business unit of participants	Position of participants	Year of introduction of EAP	Participant's involvement in the initial introduction of EAP
Participant 1	Human Resources	Director	2003	No
Participant 2	Human Resources	Director	2002	No
Participant 3	Human Resources	Director	2003	No
Participant 4	Human Resources	Director	2003	No
Participant 5	Human Resources	Director	2000	No
Participant 6	Human Resources (Organizational Development)	Director	2004	No
Participant 7	Human Resources and	Director	2002	No

	Transformation			
Participant 8	Transformation unit	Chief Director	2003	No
Participant 9	Human Resources and Transformation	Chief Director	2000	No
Participant 10	Human Resources	Chief Director	2000	No

3.5.1.1 CENTRAL THEMES

Theme 1: Initial introduction of the EAP

All the respondents indicated that they had not been EAP heads when the EAP was introduced into their respective departments. Questions 5 and 6 were therefore not applicable to them. The majority of EAP heads hold directors' positions and are heading the EAP in their Human Resources Management unit.

Theme 2: Strategies that were used to ensure utilization of the programme by employees (Question 7).

Sub-theme: Written material

Several participants stated that information pamphlets, brochures, flyers, newsletters and awareness campaigns were preferred strategies to ensure utilization of the programme by employees (**Participants 1, 2, 4,5,6,9 and 10**).

Sub-theme: Supervisory and management training

However, Participants **1, 7 and 8** maintained that "Supervisors and management training, Union and shop steward training, as well as the EAP launch and the Internet..." are the strategies necessary to ensure the effective utilization of the programme by employees.

Sub-theme: EAP launch and the Internet

Specific activities when launching the EAP and use of the Internet have also been cited as efficient ways of ensuring use of the EAP.

Discussion of the theme and sub-themes

It is evident that EAP heads in government departments prefer a written form of marketing strategy to ensure successful use of the EAP by employees in those departments. This is also highlighted in Chapter 2, where it is stated that training for supervisors, management and shop stewards is one of the effective strategies for marketing the EAP. Shop stewards play a major role in the functioning of Human Resources, serving as mediators and modes of communication between employees and management.

Theme 3: Challenges experienced when marketing the EAP (Question 8).

Sub-theme: Lack of funding

Most of the participants indicated that lack of funds or a proper budget, and lack of managerial support and interest on the part of the employees were some of the common challenges experienced (Participants **1, 2,3,4,5,6,8,9** and **10**).

Sub-theme: Lack of management and employee support

The lack of managerial support and interest from the employees themselves were seen as some of the challenges during marketing of the EAP.

Sub-theme: Lack of policy and the limited scope of services

Participants 7 and 8 indicated that the lack of proper policies giving guidelines for the programme was a challenge. While Participants **1** and **2** said that “the location of the offices was a challenge since all employees visiting the EAP office are stigmatized...” Participants **2, 7** and **8** pointed out that “the limited scope of services that were offered was also a challenge during the marketing of the programme...”.

Discussion of the theme

Under this theme, the most common challenges experienced included budgetary limitations and employees' lack of interest in the EAP services. For example, Participants **2**, **7** and **8** indicated that the limited scope of services was also one of the challenges experienced when marketing EAP services during the developmental and implementation phases.

Theme 4: Strategies used for ensuring buy-in by management, supervisors and employees (Question 9).

Sub-theme: Management consultation and training

All the participants indicated that management consultation, training and presentation ensured buy-in.

Sub-theme: Comprehensive scope of services

Participants **7** and **8** stated that the departments should “ensure that there is a comprehensive scope of EAP services...”.

Sub-theme: EAP ‘launch’

If the EAP is launched effectively, there will be buy-in to the EAP. There were various suggestions on this. It was supported by Participants **7**, **8**, **9** and **10**, who suggested the “EAP launch to ensure that employees understand different services offered road-shows and wellness days, as well as available relevant policies as strategies to facilitate buy-in among members of staff”.

Sub-theme: Formation of an EAP advisory committee

Participants **7** and **8** maintained that the “formation of an EAP advisory committee will also ensure buy-in...”.

Discussion of the theme

The majority of the participants believed that consultation with management and presentations would ensure management's buy-in to the programme. They also felt that the EAP launch, road-shows and wellness days were strategies that would ensure buy-in by management, employees and supervisors

Theme 5: Strategies to be applied to ensure utilization of the programme (Question 10).

Sub-theme: EAP orientation and management training.

The majority of participants maintained that EAP orientation, and management training and involvement were strategies that could be used to ensure utilization of the programme (Participants 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10).

Sub-theme: EAP mainstreaming activities

However, some of the participants stated that the "EAP mainstreaming activities can ensure the utilization of the programme" (Participants 9 and 10).

Sub-theme: Visibility and professional conduct on the part of practitioners

Some of the participants argued that "the visibility and conducts of the unit on issues such as maintaining of confidentiality can ensure the effective utilization by employees..." (Participants 1, 2 and 4).

Sub-theme: Use of posters, brochures and flyers

The participants stated that "the use of posters, brochures and flyers can ensure the effective utilization of the programme" (Participants 3, 9 and 10).

Discussion of the theme

This theme makes it evident that the majority of participants believed that management training and involvement as well as EAP orientation were the most effective strategies for ensuring the successful and effective utilization of the programme. However, some participants pointed out that the use of posters, brochures and flyers could do the same.

3.7. CONCLUSION

While the study selected 32 EAP practitioners for the qualitative component, 10 EAP heads in the public service were chosen to participate in the quantitative component of the study. The findings of the study showed that most of the EAP practitioners are in the HR Directorates. The majority of them have been practising EAP for more than 10 years. It was also found that most of the practitioners were taken into employment when the EAP was introduced into their department. They were therefore directly involved in marketing the services, as they joined the departments during the developmental and implementation phases of the EAP. The study also found that, according to the EAP practitioners, presentations to employees was one of the preferred oral marketing strategies. In addition, brochures were also seen as a preferred written marketing strategy, while emails were used as one of the most effective electronic marketing strategies.

The study further revealed that health promotion, management training and consultations, as well as EAP orientation, were effective strategies in maximizing the use of EAP services in the public service. The study also found that lack of management of the EAP and lack of policies were the most common challenges experienced by the majority of practitioners when marketing the EAP services during the developmental and implementation phases. The study further revealed that the majority of practitioners believed that networking with other stakeholders was an effective implementation plan applied during the developmental and implementation phases. The study also found that the majority of EAP heads in the public service held the position of director but that they had not been EAP heads in their respective departments when the EAP was introduced, which might have influenced their responses.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 SUMMARY

The data analysis of this study showed some of the effective marketing strategies employed by different government department during the developmental and implementation phases of the EAP. The study revealed that one of the most commonly used strategies in the marketing of the EAP in various government departments was that of oral presentation. While the analysis showed that the use of posters as a marketing strategy was an effective written strategy, communication via emails was considered to be an effective, electronic mode of marketing the programme during the developmental and implementation phases.

The study showed that management training and consultation were among the most successful strategies that practitioners employed during the developmental and implementation phases to maximize use of the EAP. The researcher also showed that the absence of policies, managerial support and interest in the EAP services by employees, as well as inadequate budgets, were some of the challenges experienced by practitioners when marketing the EAP. Conclusions and recommendations on the study are discussed in the next section of this chapter.

4.2 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.2.1 ORAL MARKETING

- **Conclusions**

The findings of this project showed that presentations to employees by EAP staff, word-of-mouth and educational and awareness programmes are the most effective ways of marketing the EAP during the developmental and implementation phases. It is also found that the use of lunch-time talks, as well as union and shop steward training were less frequently used as oral marketing strategies for the EAP in the public service.

- **Recommendations**

On the basis of the findings of this study, it is recommended that the EAP should improve its oral marketing strategies by focusing on the following areas:

- **Utilization of the EAP by union representatives:** The EAP practitioners should engage with the union representatives in consultations, implementation of the programme and its marketing strategies to improve its use by union representatives. Masi (1992: 5) supports this recommendation by stating that “union stewards should be capacitated about EAP in order to refer troubled employees for assistance, thus subsequently breaking denial barriers. The joint training sessions seek to empower the organizational relevant stakeholders on EAP.”
- **Utilization of the EAP as a critical support tool:** It is recommended that EAP should maintain and further improve its supportive role for employees in the public service. Also, the EAP should play a critical role in supporting individual employees in their personal issues, emotional and family challenges, financial problems, HIV & AIDS challenges, substance dependency, public service dynamics and workplace difficulties in order to enhance their productivity and job performance. Emener *et al.* (2003: 68) also call for integrated EAP, work-life, and health and wellness programmes to help employers provide services and support so that employees can successfully deal with problems, enjoy a healthy work/life balance, and be more productive and satisfied at work.

4.2.2 WRITTEN MARKETING STRATEGIES

- **Conclusions**

The study revealed that newsletters, brochures, posters and flyers are viewed as effective marketing strategies during the developmental and implementation phases of the EAP in the public service.

- **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the following should be considered part of written marketing strategies of the EAP.

- **Utilization of the EAP by employees' family members:** The EAP should be introduced to employees' family members by means of pamphlets, brochures, electronic media and social networks. Emener *et al.* (2003: 107) concede that EAP should also address domestic counselling, preparation for retirement and family health promotions. They further state that a "healthy work-place promotes healthy family and community living, and conversely, healthy family living promotes healthier workplace performance". Good marketing strategies should carry the roles and benefits of the EAP to staff members and play a supportive role for family members. The programme should highlight some of its family benefits, such as dependency care services support; flexible working hours to the entire public service employees; child-care support and family health programmes such as weight-loss and work-life balance. The marketing messages should also contain information on the role of the family members in providing support for employees undergoing rehabilitation and/or those suffering chronic ill-health.
- **Awareness of the EAP service provider:** The EAP service provider should vigorously market the programme in the public service using different marketing strategies. The advantageous aspects of the service provider should cohere in theory and practice with the fact that the advantages of "using EAPs outside the employer organization lie largely in the availability of a greater breadth of expertise and in diminished concern about confidentiality" (Oher, 1999: 66).

4.2.3 ELECTRONIC MARKETING STRATEGIES

- **Conclusion**
- According to the findings of the study, emails and the Internet are the preferred electronic marketing strategies during the developmental and implementation phases of the EAP.

- **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the following should be noted as part of the electronic marketing strategies of EAP.

- **Electronic surveys:** Electronic surveys help practitioners to know the level of understanding of different services that the EAP offers and, in the process, demonstrate views by employees on other services that they think are needed. Beidel (1999:104) states that surveys are indirect and often subtle methods of effectively promoting the EAP within the organization. In particular, needs assessments and satisfaction surveys have been exceptionally beneficial. Emener, Hutchison and Richard (2003:189) outlined the standard of surveys and state that “programme design shall be on an assessment of organizational and employee needs as they relate to the utilization”.
- **Website:** The organization’s website should market the various services that the organization offers its employees. Furthermore, it should contribute to the use of services since employees are reminded about the services that the EAP offers whenever they visit the site.

4.2.4. STRATEGIES TO MAXIMIZE THE UTILIZATION OF EAP SERVICES

- **Conclusion**

The findings of this study revealed that EAP practitioners believe that the existence of EAP policies, health promotion programmes, management consultation services, EAP coverage to immediate family members and the visibility and professionalism conducted by EAP practitioners influence the use of services by employees in an organization.

- **Recommendation**

To increase the use of the EAP services by employees, the following are recommended:

- ***The scope of services:*** The nature of services offered contributes to the ineffective and less frequent use of the service. The EAP services should be offered in accordance with the employee's needs. According to Keohale and Newman (1984:295), in order to market EAP, the organization must be prepared to present the product or services it has to offer more clearly. Terblanche (1992:19) points out that an EAP needs to be introduced according to a specific model to meet the specific needs and demands of a specific organization. An ideal and suitable model could contribute to the enhancement of an effective service to employees.

- ***EAP coverage to family members:*** The extension of services to immediate family members contributes to the use of EAP services. Some of the challenges that employees experience are psycho-social. This might imply that other family members should be involved as parties to assist in resolving the issues. In turn, this contributes to the use of the programme since employees will be aware that the primary cause of the problem will also be taken into consideration.

4.2.5 CHALLENGES FACED BY EAP PROFESSIONALS WHEN MARKETING THE PROGRAMME.

- ***Conclusion***

The findings of the study showed that the location of the offices, and the lack of managerial support, funds, and policies, as well as the limited scope of services were challenges experienced when marketing services during the developmental and implementation phases of the EAP in the public service.

- ***Recommendation***

In order to deal with the challenges faced by EAP practitioners when marketing the programme in the public service, the following should be given considerable attention.

- ***The location of offices:*** The location and accessibility of offices determines the use of the services. When offices are not accessible, employees do not make

use of the services. When the location of offices contributes to employee's vulnerability and the risk of stigmatization, employees do not use the services. According to Terblanche (1992:22), the physical location of the offices of the EAP personnel determines, to a great extent, the degree of support for the programme. Location should enhance participation in the programme by guaranteeing confidentiality.

- **Lack of managerial support:** Management is the core of the organization. It is therefore important that they support all the activities taking place in the organization, including the EAP activities. Support from management reflects the importance of the programme to the employees, whose use of the programme demonstrates its value. Dickman (2003:47) emphasizes that it is absolutely essential to have management's endorsement and active support at the highest level.
- **Lack of funds:**
 - No EAP can operate effectively and efficiently without proper funding. It must be funded if it is to deliver its services to employees according to their needs. Most of the EAP services require adequate funding to meet all their objectives. According to Dickman (2003:47), adequate financial support to start an EAP must be made available for mail-outs, supervisory training, and initial diagnostic sessions.
- **Lack of a policy on EAP:** A policy on EAP gives guidelines on how the programme is offered in an organization. A wide range of guidelines assist the end-users of the programme in understanding the services offered. At times, it becomes difficult for practitioners to advocate and market services that have no proper guidelines on such information. This could also lead to a decrease in the use of the programme, and it might ultimately seem without purpose to retain the services without a policy. According to Terblanche (1992:20), a policy statement is a crucial component of an EAP, as it provides the opportunity of stipulating specifics when it comes to the things that have to be addressed. Onsad Research Corporation (1999:6) states that one aspect of a successful

EAP implementation is the adoption of a formal written policy, reflecting company commitment to EAP guidelines and goals.

4.2.6 EAP IMPLEMENTATION STANDARDS

Conclusion

The findings of the study show that a proper implementation plan, networking with internal stakeholders and operational guidelines are the key implementation standards used by practitioners in the public service.

- **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the following implementation standards receive attention during the developmental and implementation phases of EAP in the public service:

- **Costing model to be adopted:** The costing model that the organization adopts determines the use of the service by employees. If other services that are most needed by employees are not covered by the costing models adopted (e.g. a substance abuse rehabilitation programme), it may also jeopardize the use of those services that are covered by the costing model. Employees might find it difficult to pay other services independently, so they might decide not to use them. Sharar and Hartenstein (2006:2) state that EAP is the first entry point for millions of employees seeking professional assistance predominantly provided for employees by outsourced vendors. It is therefore important that an organization opt for a costing model that would cover all the costs as per the needs of employees to ensure effective use of the services.
- **EAP advisory committee:** According to Beidel (1999:101), most organizations make use of organizational forums to market their EAP services and to promote their image to the workforce. Many EAPs in their early development often make use of advisory committees to provide liaison between the EAP and other functions and operations in the organization. These advisory committees still play an important role in marketing the programme because they promote,

establish and enhance the relationship between EAPs and other parties in the organization.

4.3. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- There should be appropriate and relevant policies that will provide proper guidelines on how EAP services are offered in the public service. This would ensure proper marketing of EAP services during the developmental and implementation phases. Also, there should be clear goals and objectives for what the EAP is seeking to address in an organization. Beidel (1999:92) states that it is important that the EAP identifies its goals for the overall marketing campaign, as well as its objectives for any specific marketing or promotional activity.
- There should be regular consultation with management to discuss all the operational activities of the EAP. This would ensure proper support for the programme and the allocation of adequate funds to allow the programme to respond to the needs of the organization. According to Maynard and Farmer (1985:36), when meeting with the organization's management, the EAP coordinator could seek management's visible support and active assistance in setting up meetings with the vice-president, department heads, or other key executives. The focus in that kind of meeting should not be a brief introduction to the programme but rather the development of a sense of personal confidence and trust in the coordinator of the EAP. If the company is unionized, the coordinator should also meet individually with top union leaders. The goal of these meetings is the same: to develop a relationship of trust and confidence that will facilitate the use of the programme by troubled people from any level or part of the company. The essential ideas to be included in EAP-related company policy statements should be discussed and developed during these initial meetings.
- The location and accessibility of offices in most public service offices must receive attention when marketing the EAP services during the developmental

and implementation phases. Most of the employees who wish to make use of EAP services prefer their colleagues not to be know that they are using the services. Most of the EAPs are located at the buildings where the other offices are to be found. Other employees always assume that whoever enters the office of the EAP does so because he/she is experiencing problems. As employees would rather not be labelled when they have issues, they may not use the services because they fear victimization. Keohale and Newman (1984:296) argue that a marketing plan involves an idea of the feasibility of an EAP. All the issues that are covered in the marketing of EAP should be practical.

- The EAP should be integrated into the other operations in each government department. The EAP mainstreaming will display both the value of the programme to the employees and how committed the management is to ensuring efficient use of it by employees. This implies that EAP should be an integral part of the departmental processes, operations and values. Oher (1999: 96) supports the recommendation by stating that “EAP should represent a service striving to become better integrated into the organization’s culture and position on the established table of organization”.

4.4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH STUDY

The following areas of study are recommended for future research:

- In view of the lesser focus on the new marketing strategies to be employed to increase its use when marketing the existing EAP in various organizations, future research needs to address the following:
 - What are the marketing strategies to be used in marketing existing EAP programmes to facilitate their use?
 - What are the major roles of management in marketing EAP?
- Future research must also focus on the evaluation of the Employee Health and Wellness strategic framework of the public service, which includes a variety of programmes in the workplace. It should determine whether the

inclusion of those programmes contributes to better use of EAP by employees in the public service. The public service EAP is guided by the framework, but whether or not the additional programmes are more valuable in terms of EAP usage has never been evaluated.

- Research on the use of off-site models must be conducted to establish whether or not they influence the use of the EAP. Should they be found to do so, they should be included as one of the strategies for marketing the services. The off-site model should be mentioned, as well as how it works and how employees could benefit from the model.

4.5. CONCLUSION

The researcher identified various effective marketing strategies that are used during the developmental and Implementation phases of the EAP. The objectives of the research were achieved, as the study explored the effective marketing strategies in the literature review in Chapter 2. They were confirmed by the findings in Chapter 3. After the analysis of data, the conclusions and recommendations on the effective marketing strategies during the developmental and implementation phases of the EAP in the public service were formulated.

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