

GovComms

A newsletter for government and public sector communicators

APRIL 2011

HIGHLIGHTS



PUBLIC SECTOR MARKET POWER

Cutting through the clutter



MEDIA BUYING

Government makes media booking via GCIS



RESEARCH INSIGHTS

Government in touch with its people

When did the State of the Nation Address (SoNA) stop being about the nation?

Hitting the right target audience at the right time

By Vusi Mona
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One of the unpardonable sins in communication is to have the right message but miss your target audience. President Jacob Zuma understands this basic communication principle (probably better than some of us communicators!).

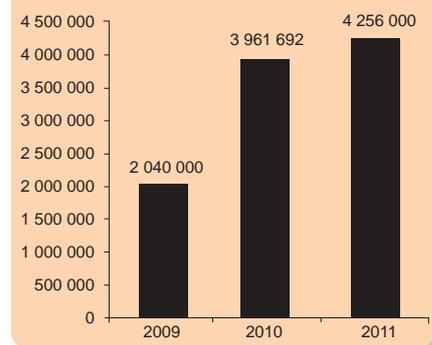
In a break from tradition in February 2010, he delivered the SoNA for the first time in the evening to give more South Africans an opportunity to view the proceedings and to listen to the address. It is a simple logic: if the address is about the nation – the target audience – then the nation must be listening or watching.

And what better time than 19:00 when all South Africans, especially workers, students and school children are at home to watch the proceedings live on television. The big screen venues set up in rural communities also ensure those communities are able to watch and listen to the President's speech. The reach is bigger and the event becomes truly national and more inclusive.

In 2009, when the SoNA was delivered at 11:00, e-tv viewership was 487 000 and SABC2 viewership totalled 1,5 million. In 2010, SABC2 viewership at 19:00 shot up to 2,6 million and e-tv rose to 1,3 million. This year, the e-tv viewership was still 1,3 million while the SABC's figures rose to 2,9 million. The total number of people who have watched the SoNA since President Zuma assumed office increased year on year from about two million in 2009, to 3,9 million in 2010 and 4,2 million in 2011.

Whereas some criticised the decision to move the SoNA to the evening, results show otherwise.

Total TV viewership of SoNA



The nation loves it. At this point, it may be appropriate to ask: when did the SoNA stop being about the nation? We may not know exactly but President Zuma has put the nation back into the State of the Nation Address.

The lesson for public servants: put the public back into the Public Service.

The lesson for politicians, especially those who frowned on the SoNA moving to the evening: put the citizens back into the shindig. The show is bigger than you.

The lesson for government communicators: think carefully about how, where and when to reach your target audience.

** Vusi Mona is a Deputy CEO of Government Communications.*



government communications

Department:
Government Communication and Information System
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Cutting through the clutter

By Bua News



This rare platform offers a window of opportunity for marketers looking to zone into the upper end of the market.

Aimed at middle and senior managers in the Public Service and the public sector in general, *Public Sector Manager* speaks to the largest audience of government decision-makers. It has a print run of 10 000, which is distributed among the Senior Management Service within the Public Service.

This category of public servants collectively earn R6 billion per annum, which translates into R500 million per month. They are a powerful consumer audience in their own right. And yes, they do have a taste for the finer things in life (houses, travel and holidays, cars, dining and wine, clothes, jewellery, gadgets and all the other titbits you can think of). Therefore, marketers looking at reaching this niche audience have no better platform than *Public Sector Manager*.

Public Sector Manager, a new GCIS publication, is hot off the press and offers unmatched government marketing capabilities.

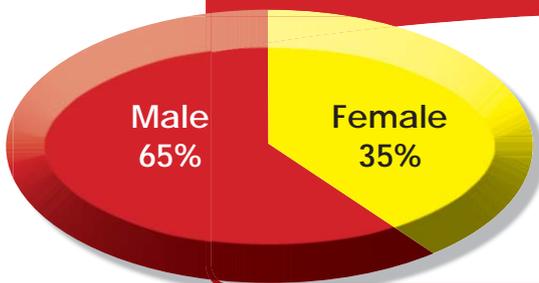


As a group, they preside over a procurement budget of more than R150 billion per annum. Their procurement decisions range from acquiring technology solutions, legal services, performance tools, audit services, communication solutions, catering services, security, office equipment, buildings and facilities, environmental products, waste-management solutions to general products.

To take advantage of these opportunities, companies and their marketers need to be smarter in how and where they reach government decision-makers. More than ever, they have to cut through the clutter and differentiate themselves toward senior public service managers.

And more is still to come as the magazine extends its reach to middle managers in the Public Service whose collective earning power is R23 billion per annum, which is R1,9 billion per month. Add to that the magazine's foray into the public sector in general, and you have a premier media platform for reaching the Government and public sector marketplace!

Public Sector Manager readers



- Male: 65% and female: 35%
- 100% earn (before tax) more than R400 000 per annum
- 18% earn more than R700 000 per annum
- 90% fall within the LSM 8, 9 & 10 groups
- More than 90% have either a three-year diploma or degree
- SMS collectively earns R6 billion per annum
- MMS collectively earns more than R23 billion per annum
- Collectively presides over a procurement budget of more than R150 billion per annum.



Planning a publication for your department or organisation

By Dorris Simpson
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QUANTITY

How many copies will be produced per edition? This is a very important question to answer. Too many government store rooms are overflowing with newsletters and magazines that cannot be distributed as too many were printed. Quantity is also important to determine upfront due to its link with the method of production and the quality of paper that will be used.

go for your publication – your readers should “ask for it by name”.

In the case of the magazine for middle and senior managers published by GCIS, we conducted research on the title, from two trial editions, on what would be the most preferred by the target audience.

The majority said they preferred *Public Sector Manager* instead of *Government Executive* as they felt the former was more inclusive, whereas they saw the latter as “keeping out” especially middle managers. Interestingly though, many felt the title design of *Government Executive* was distinctive and characteristic. So, we settled for the title *Public Sector Manager* but gave the masthead character and distinction.

FREQUENCY

How often will the publication come out? Sometimes you may take the ambitious route of publishing monthly. Problem. You discover later that you don’t have the capacity to carry that through. A prudent route then might be to have considered a quarterly publication instead.

The key, however, is that despite whatever frequency you decide works for you. Make sure it is REGULAR and the publication date is PREDICTABLE. Readers get annoyed, and lose interest when the publishing frequency is unpredictable.

LAYOUT AND DESIGN

This is an area where more often than not government publications come in short. The look and feel of a publication is often the deciding factor, whether it will be the talking point among readers or perfect fodder for the dustbin. The use of colour, columns, typography, pictures and illustrations all contribute to the appearance of the publication.

Research on current trends and on what the target audience would like to see visually is key. After all, they say it’s your eyes that decide first whether a meal is delicious or not, before it even reaches your palette!

CONCLUSION

Apart from the above factors, there are other considerations such as whether the publication will be free or sold at a cost; whether it will carry advertisements or not; and how it will be distributed. Of course, cost is a big factor, especially if you do not have the skills and have to outsource the entire publication to a contract publisher.

At GCIS, we chose to avoid the route of contract publishers and are putting out the magazine in-house, except for advertising sales and printing. We realised we could procure most publishing skills in-house such as the editorial, pictures, layout and design. Look deeper within your departments and you might just find the skills too! Before rushing off to contract publishers, do a careful skills audit within your department or organisation.

* Dorris Simpson is the Managing Editor of *Public Sector Manager* and *Vuk'uzenzele*.

Outsourcing government publications is big business and comes at a huge (sometimes unnecessary) cost to the State.

Some of us are still reeling with shock at a certain government department, which shall remain nameless, that was charged R18 million for the production and publishing of eight editions of just one magazine.

Whether it’s internal staff or external audiences you want to talk to, you’d be wise to consider the following long before you can say “printer”:

READERSHIP

Who will read the publication? Sometimes different publications are necessary for different readers. For example, what you publish for management may be different from what you produce for junior and lower-ranked staff. The readership has to be recognised and understood for its unique characteristics and information needs.

In short, the reader is king!

When we analysed the Public Service as one of the target audiences GCIS has to reach, we did a market segmentation, which clearly showed that middle and senior management (levels 11 to 16) have different needs from levels one to 10. That is why we came up with the magazine, *Public Sector Manager*, targeted at middle and senior managers. Discussions are going on about a product for the Public Service in general.

The principle here is that it would be a mistake to attempt to make one publication address or serve too many grades or kinds of staff.



TITLE

“What’s in a name?”, Shakespeare once asked. That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet, right? Wrong. The name of the publication is as important as the content that dwells between the covers.

The title must speak to the reader. Think about it this way: when you walk past your favourite mag on the shop shelf, how many times have you actually bought it (even if it was foil packed to keep the “casual browsers” out), without quite knowing what was really inside? The same should

CSA – media buying power at its best

By Bua News



In comparison to 2009, the in-house system has handled 90% more campaigns at 24% less of the cost.

If media is the proverbial hand that rules the world, claiming your space in it is as important a task, if not more so, as the message you want to send out.

Any media guru worth their salt will tell you that a craftily assembled strategy of how an organisation gets its piece of the media pie is a sure fire way of getting the best value out of any communication campaign.

Media presence, whether it's on the Internet, in newspapers or on television, is a crucial part of effective communication in the 21st century. Buying space in any one of these platforms is one of the biggest challenges facing communicators today, and this is no different for those in government.

For a machine as big and complex as the Government to stay well-oiled while

talking to the people, a seamlessly synchronised communication approach is needed. ENTER the Communication Service Agency (CSA) – a unit of the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) – purposefully built to coordinate centralised media buying for government.

In the past, outside service-providers such as Mercury Media handled this function for us – but it's now done in-house, and the perks are unrivalled, at a time when government is moving swiftly to eliminate wastage.

The GCIS in-house centralised media bulk-buying model does exactly that – it ensures that government communication contributes to cost-saving measures; eliminating wastage, while delivering value to clients.

The CSA lives, talks and breathes government, so its dedicated staff members know exactly what needs to go into a government communication campaign. Moreover, we go out of our way to get the best skills, enabling us to deliver superior services in media buying.

The personalised relationships we build with our clients and their accounts ensure that our clients – being the various gov-

ernment departments – are always number one.

Centralised media buying presents astronomical cost savings, as aggregated buying means that discounts are negotiated on behalf of government which can be ploughed back into other communication campaigns.

Since GCIS went in-house, 90% more campaigns have been handled this way, and best of all, at 24% less of the cost – making effective use of the taxpayer's rand.

A further net saving of 54% has been projected over a five-year period.

GCIS Deputy Chief Executive Officer Vusi Mona sees the in-house route as a win-win situation: "The CSA team's remit is to build strategic relationships with client departments and develop the best possible understanding of their mandates and activities so that GCIS can offer effective advice and delivery across all marketing and communication disciplines."

So, next time you think media buying and how to get more than one foot in the door, think CSA.

Governments Corporate Identity: The national Coat of Arms

By Lynette Rippel
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The national Coat of Arms comprises 11 distinct colours, reflecting South Africa's diversity and the 11 official languages.

BACKGROUND

The Coat of Arms was launched on the sixth anniversary of Freedom Day, 27 April 2000. The national Coat of Arms forms the basis of government's Corporate Identity and pays tribute to all the diverse people of South Africa. The national Coat of Arms is the state emblem and is the Republic of South Africa's highest visual symbol. It is what differentiates us from other countries. It is the singular identity that spans all spheres of national government.

A uniform national Coat of Arms allows the Government and all its agents (the various departments, foreign missions and entities) to project a uniform, consistent and coherent corporate identity to the public. This makes government departments more visible and accessible to the public. All communication from government or any of its entities or projects bearing the national Coat of Arms implies an unequivocal endorsement by the State.

DESIGN

The national Coat of Arms is designed within two overlapping ovals. The lower one is known as the Circle of Foundation and the upper is known as the Circle of Ascendance. The national Coat of Arms' structure is made up of different elements, each with its own symbolism. The national Coat of Arms comprises 11 distinct colours, reflecting South Africa's diversity and the 11 official languages.

COPYRIGHT

The national Coat of Arms and its motto are the property of the State. The national Coat of Arms endorses the seal of authority and should not be used for any unauthorised purposes. It has considerable legal protection arising from various Acts of Parliament and international agreements and protocols.

Corporate identity guidelines were developed by the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) in collaboration with the Department of Arts and Culture and can be sourced from GCIS.



SOME DO'S AND DON'TS

- Always leave enough free space around the Coat of Arms.
- Only use the Coat of Arms on a light monochrome background (preferably white).
- Do not use the Coat of Arms smaller than 20 mm across.
- Nothing to be placed on top of the Coat of Arms
- The Coat of Arms must always be used in full (do not use any elements of the Coat of Arms separately).
- The Coat of Arms may be used in black on a white background or in white on a black background.
- The Coat of Arms must never be used in a primary colour.
- The Coat of Arms may not be animated.
- The Coat of Arms may not be used with a drop shadow.
- The Coat of Arms may only be used in its original proportions and must not be distorted in any way.

A government in touch with its people!

By Dr Marietjie Strydom
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When asking South Africans about the most pressing problems that government needs to address, responses from extensive research indicate that these include unemployment, housing, crime, corruption and poverty. In his State of the Nation Address on 10 February, President Jacob Zuma identified these, especially job creation, as some of the most important priorities government will attend to in the coming year.

This is a clear indication that government is not merely in touch with the needs of citizens, but also attending to them as matters of priority.

In order for the citizens to access the opportunities that government policies and programmes can bring to improve their lives, government communicators have an important responsibility to inform South Africans about these and how to access them.

A real challenge is posed to government communicators in that the majority of South Africans indicate that they do not receive enough information about what government is doing. An analysis of data indicates that the need for government information is especially high among people who can potentially benefit most from government initiatives – e.g. the unemployed, the less educated, those from rural areas, and people from Living Standards Measure groups one to three (especially) and four to six.

The majority of respondents indicate that they receive information and news about government from TV news, radio news, newspapers, magazines and online – and not from government role players. It is meaningful to note though, that nearly two-thirds of adult South Africans (63%) trust government to do or say the right thing about issues which affect people’s lives – higher than the trust in the media (58%), business (57%) and political parties (35%).

While government’s priorities are in line with the needs of the people, it is only through effective communication that the public can hear about and understand more regarding government initiatives that can contribute towards a better life. The public has confidence in government as a communicator, but expresses the need for more information about what government is doing.

Government communicators, let’s talk to our people! Let’s empower them through effectively communicating the benefits of democracy, to access opportunities that can result in a better life for all.



Government media analysis

By Nkele Sebasia
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Now that President Jacob Zuma has delivered the State of the Nation Address and the Budget speech has been presented, implementation of various government policies and programmes will begin in earnest. As we go about communicating these programmes through various campaigns, the media will constantly question how we go about doing what we do as government. What the media reports about these programme shapes and creates perceptions among ordinary South Africans.

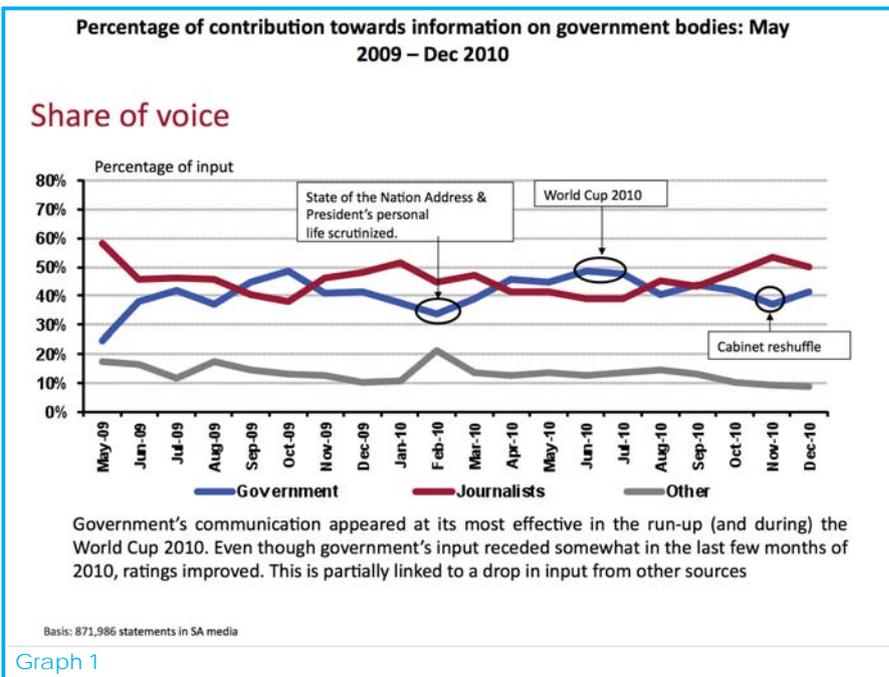
The Government Communication and Information System is at the forefront of monitoring and assessing national and international print, broadcast and online media coverage on the country and government. This forms the backbone for the production of extensive reports and analyses, which keep communicators informed about issues covered, inform proactive and reactive communication and are used to monitor the impact of government communication on the media environment.

One of the tools that we use to check the effectiveness of government messages is the Share of Voice. This can be used to benchmark government's share against other players such as commentators and the media.

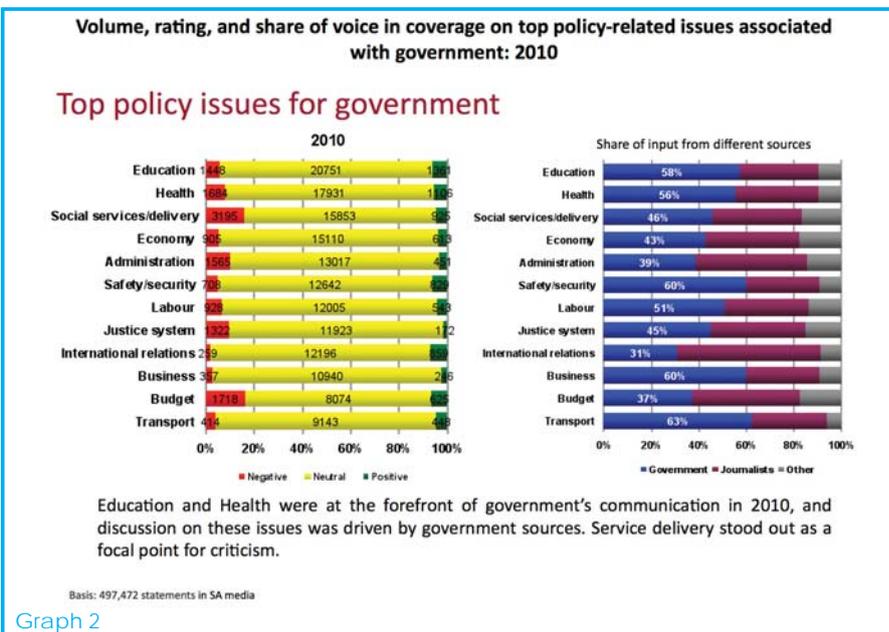
Graph 1 on the right shows that during the 2010 FIFA World Cup™, government surpassed other voices as a source of information about the event.

The media also kept a watchful eye on a number of policy-related issues. The graphs on the right show that of the top five issues which dominated media coverage in 2010, two (education and health) are part of the five national priorities. Also of significance, is that the coverage of all the issues was largely neutral. Also important to note is how government accounted for more (above 60%) share of voice on issues of safety/security (60%), business (60%) and transport (63%). Even those departments that accounted for more than 50% share of voice did relatively well given the multiplicity of voices and sources in a vibrant democracy like ours.

Education was at the forefront of the top policy issues that attracted interest from the media in 2010. Protests happening at local government level and a number health issues, including the launch of the voluntary HIV Testing Campaign and the death of babies in various hospitals, continuously dominated coverage throughout the year. These are policy issues that are likely to continue attracting media scrutiny this year.



Graph 1



Graph 2

Excellence in communication is tied to actual service delivery

By Victor Dlamini

No amount of excellence in public sector communication will work if the organisation does not deliver on its mandate.

However, it remains surprising just how many communicators fail to ask if their organisation actually can deliver on the promises made. Unfortunately, great communication only serves to highlight delivery weaknesses instead of masking them. In the real world, no amount of spin will appease stakeholders.

The most effective communication engages citizens by “narrowcasting” tailored messages to specific audiences instead of the “broadcast” approach of sending out a message without consideration as to its target. Conversely, there’s nothing worse than correct messages that miss the mark purely because they are delivered via an inappropriate media platform. This is not only costly, but doubly problematic because the organisation in question will labour under the illusion that it has communicated when in fact it has merely gone through the motions of doing so.

Given that the bulk of public sector organisations have to deliver their services or products to an enormously diverse population, it is important for them to communicate smarter but for a lot less. Public expectations and requirements differ according to many social factors. In designing communication strategies, it is important to take these into account. Crucially, no communication strategy that is not backed up by tangible delivery of the promises made will ever be successful. Organisations must simply “walk the talk”.

In the terms of the above criterion, the Department of Home



Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma
Minister of Home Affairs

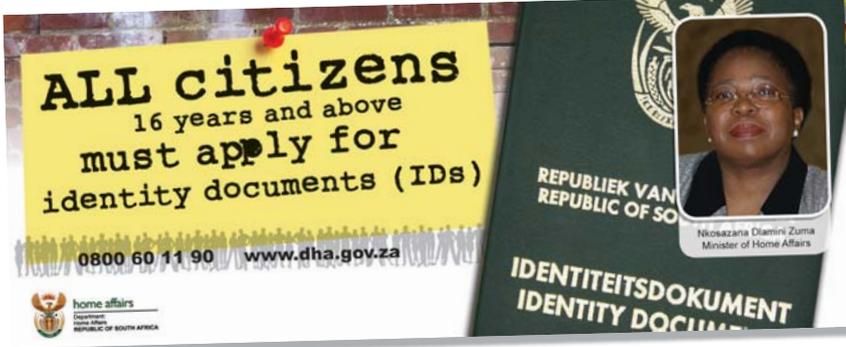
Employing technology is one of the best ways to solve communication problems faced by public sector organisations.

her department’s communication. The campaigns stand out from others in the way they focus on solving the most pressing issues the department faces instead of raising her profile. It is the work, and how it is communicated, that raises her profile rather than personality profiling as we know it in public relations.

humane face, something that was previously missing from the set of values usually associated with it. Visiting Home Affairs offices today, one sees practical and effective communication, such as official wearing bibs emblazoned, “Can I help?” The queues have become shorter and because of clear signage people do no longer waste time standing in the wrong queues. The change in staff attitudes at many Home Affairs offices has been remarkable. The old lethargy has given way to a new buzz that contributes to a more pleasurable experience for citizens.

Employing technology is one of the best ways to solve communication problems faced by public sector organisations. However, success requires simple solutions. Home Affairs has led the way in using information and communications technology in its daily interaction with citizens. Nowadays, SMSs are used to communicate the progress of applications for various documents. This saves citizens time and money as they do not have to travel to Home Affairs offices to check if their documents have been issued.

Yes, it is possible for leaders of public sector institutions to improve their organisations’ reputations by focusing on getting the basics right. The South African Revenue Service did it first and Home Affairs is following suit. Where frustration and hope-



Affairs must be acknowledged for its success within a relatively short space of time. Since her appointment, Minister Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma has brought about a marked improvement in the speed, quality and relevance of

Whenever the department has faced a crisis, she has stepped forward to take both the blows and the responsibility for solving specific problems. The Department of Home Affairs now portrays a more

lessness once accompanied dealing with Home Affairs, now there is a sense that the department is listening and capable of solving citizens’ problems. It is a shining example of how excellence in communication cannot be divorced from the actual experience people have in interacting with a department/organisation.

** Victor Dlamini chairs the Chillbush Group of Companies, an integrated communications agency. This is an edited version of an article which first appeared in a publication called Public Sector Excellence.*

BuaNews makes global inroads

By Bua News

BuaNews, government's online news agency, is on the move, making inroads into the international media space.

Established in 1998 to provide government news and information to local community media, BuaNews (www.buanews.gov.za) has since cast its net further, entering into the mainstream media fray and in recent years claiming a share of the international media space.

An alternative voice in the media environment, BuaNews provides media with ready-to-use news stories and feature articles that profile the work of government.

To add to the number of partnership agreements that it already has with international news agencies, BuaNews recently signed a cooperation agreement with Turkey's Anadolu Agency (AA). Founded in 1920, AA is Turkey's semi-official news agency with bureaus in that country and in several other countries throughout the world. It provides news to daily newspapers, radio, television and online media.

The agreement, signed by Government Communication and Information System Deputy CEO, Vusi Mona, and the AA's Deputy Director-General, Tahsin Akti, will see an exchange of news and feature articles, photographs as well as mutual visits and training opportunities between the two agencies.

Mona said both South Africa and Turkey were two important countries attracting the attention of the world, with Akti adding that Turkey was pursuing a policy of opening up to Africa – even increasing the number of its embassies on the continent.

Partnership and news cooperation agreements of this nature ensure that the work of the South African Government reaches international shores.

International pick-up of BuaNews stories has been noted in, among other countries, the United States, Switzerland, China, the United Kingdom, Latin America, Turkey, Brunei, India, Pakistan and Bulgaria. Large, influential agencies such as AFP (France), the Press Trust of India and Bernama (Malaysia) utilise BuaNews regularly.

In addition to the newly signed agreement with the Turkish news agency, BuaNews also has international news agreements with the Nam News Network (Malaysia), Xinhua (China), Prensa Latina (Cuba), Tanjug (Serbia), UPI (Washington), Telam (Argentina), IRNA (Iran), SANA (Syria), the Cyprus News Agency (Greece), The Ukrinform (Ukraine), Azertac (Azerbaijan) and Agenzia Giornalistica Italia (Italy).



Deputy Minister Pule on tour to introduce monitoring and evaluation

By Bua News



Dina Pule is a woman on a mission. Her goal? To visit most of the nine provinces in two months to make sure performance monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) is successfully implemented at provincial level.

As the Deputy Minister in The Presidency responsible for PM&E, Pule is more than ready to crack the whip when it comes to fostering a culture of accountability at all levels of government.

Her tour of the provinces started on 9 March and will end in late April. To date, she has been to Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal, where she saw first-hand the service-delivery challenges encountered by government officials and the public. This only strengthened her resolve to carry out President Jacob Zuma's instruction for more refined monitoring in the provinces.

"We are confident that this endeavour will help government reward good performance and detect bad performance as early as possible, to ensure that corrective measures are implemented," said Pule during a recent visit to KwaZulu-Natal's Northdale Hospital.

As part of the visits, Pule will meet with the provincial executive councils to:

- share the approach and process to be followed in monitoring and evaluating performance
- communicate institutional arrangements for the effective implementation of the PM&E system, with emphasis on government's five key priority areas, as identified by the President in the State of the Nation Address (SoNA).

The meetings are essentially about getting provincial executives to commit to performance contracts on which they will be judged.

They will now be expected to provide The Presidency with a programme of all planned projects, and these have to cover the five priorities of government: job creation, fighting crime, rural development, health and education.

The Deputy Minister's visits are in line with President Zuma's pronouncement in the 2011 SoNA that ministers will go to the provinces to outline the details of what needs to be done to achieve South Africa's service-delivery targets.

The jet-setting Deputy Minister will next visit Gauteng and the Eastern Cape.

Pule is responsible for, among other functions, the Government Communication and Information System.

Government communicators to join PR body



Public Relations and Communication Management, PRISA. The corporate membership entitles government communicators to individual membership.

Communicators will now be able to keep abreast of all the latest developments in the profession and brush up their skills through seminars and conferences. An added bonus is that the PRISA membership comes with an automatic affiliation to the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management (<http://www.globalalliancepr.org>), which is one more avenue for communicators to get connected with their fellows.

Deputy CEO of GCIS, Vusi Mona, is upbeat about what this membership means: "We look forward to working with PRISA. I have no doubt that partnerships like these will help us build our communication skills base and bring forth government's message with a high standard of professionalism."

PRISA's Susan Richardson echoes his sentiments: "Government communicators will be able to take advantage of the oppor-

Networking opportunities, rubbing shoulders with the captains of industry – some of the benefits government communicators will now have – thanks to the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) signing up a corporate membership with the Institute for

tunities we offer for continuing professional development through our programme of seminars and workshops. Plus, they will be offered discounts for all these, including our annual conference."

In a country where there isn't enough material on the subject of communication, PRISA's library – with a wealth of magazines and over 400 titles on public relations and related topics – will also come in handy for government communicators.

PRISA membership gives government communicators access to a series of courses from Basic Principles, Public Relations Practice to Public Relations Management. Courses are offered part-time, full-time or as in-house training for large organisations, and will complement GCIS' own efforts of upping professionalism in government communication.



Answering the call

By Bua News

When government said: "Let there be more light at the end of the communication tunnel," who else ought to be more ready and willing to answer that call other than the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS)?

When presenting its strategic plan covering three years to Parliament's Committee on Communications on 9 March, GCIS was clear in its intention to cut even deeper through the communication fabric that weaves government and the people together.

"At GCIS, as the nerve centre of government ... we will do everything in [our] power to ensure that government continues to communicate regularly, consistently and ensure that we are a bit more proactive in terms of our communication. So, we are saying to the President of the country that the call to action [has been] heard, and as GCIS, we will execute," said GCIS CEO, Jimmy Manyi, at the presentation.

Above and beyond government's five key priority areas, GCIS is well positioned to make good on government's promise to communicate better with South Africans.



"Let there be more light at the end of the communications tunnel,"

door for more engagement – which is more than welcome if we are to meet our strategic goals of more frequent, consistent communication.

Our sterling record of eight clean audits from the Auditor-General means we are well placed and ready to take on the challenges presented by finding effective and transparent ways of talking to the every day man in society.

And the committee agrees, even though they would like for us to have more sting in our bite.

"The problem with GCIS is that you are barking too much, but you don't have teeth. So you need teeth ... If Cabinet agrees with your proposal, they need to be your teeth that you can use to go down to the other layer for implementation," said committee chairperson Eric Kholwane.

Kholwane emphasised the need for Cabinet approval for GCIS to forge ahead with its plan, and opened the

Government Communicators' Awards (GCA) – not over by a long shot

By Legadima Leso
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Award season is over. The Oscars, Grammys and SAFTAs are done and dusted, and those shiny, career-making pieces of metal are without doubt the most talked about in the rich and famous circles – but where are the Government Communicators' Awards, you might ask.

No, the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) – custodians of the GCA – has not forgotten all the hard-working government communicators. It's just that sometimes, a well deserved regroup is exactly what the doctor ordered, and 2011 is precisely the year for the GCIS to stop and take stock of what's needed to successfully reposition the GCA. And yes, we promise to come back bigger, stronger and better.

After eight years of recognising the best communicators in government, the GCIS has decided to review the award ceremony, opting to forego it last year and this.

The sabbatical is one way for the GCIS to redefine the objectives of the awards, and to breathe new life into the usual way of doing things.

We acknowledge the importance of communicators and the role they play in ensuring people understand government's Programme of Action. The temporary cessation of the awards is by no means a way of dimming the light of those who work so very hard to make this a success.

Communicators take heart: your role in 2011 is as important as all the years the awards ceremony has taken place. The people still look to your passion, dedication and commitment as the beacon that guides this ship to shore through the many developments that define our government and democracy.

To the next level may we grow, through the same values that have never let us down: professionalism, innovation and a commitment to excellence in all we do.

As the lights dim on all the glitz and glam, and the dresses and designer suits are stored away for the next big occasion, don't pack yours too far back in the closet because come March 2012, the GCA will be back!



Spotlight on communication

By Bua News

The President has spoken. And now, it's up to us communicators to deliver.

President Zuma did not mince his words when he said early this year that communication "should be a primary task in 2011."

The President's call is a clear acknowledgement of the importance of speaking to and maintaining strong links with the nation.



Communication is clearly at the top of the President's mind and his backing for communicators could not have come at a better time, as 2011 promises to be a busy year for government's "talkarazzi".

With a premium placed on communicating government's five key priorities, communicators have their hands full with getting the message across to a very large, diverse and dynamic South African audience.

We need to let the nation know how government is doing, and one of the best ways to build up interest is to get people involved.

"We need to remember that the essence of this administration is (among other things) the following: how do we mobilise other sectors such as business, labour, youth, traditional leaders and women to be part of our programmes and activities? How are we mobilising public servants to work better, faster and in a more caring manner?" These were pertinent questions posed by the President during January's Cabinet Lekgotla.

The question to ask yourself as a government communicator this year, is how do we formulate messages that reverberate across all these sectors in society?

Although there might not be a neat textbook answer to this question, ponder these words by the President as a point of departure: "Government will need to communicate regularly and more consistently, and set the agenda, instead of responding to the media all the time.

"This is a very important aspect, as the people need to know what services are being delivered, how, where and by whom, and we can inform them through meaningful and regular communication."

The challenge is quite clear cut. We need to be at the helm of all that is innovative to spread government's message. And with all the nifty inventions such as Facebook or Twitter, not even airtime is the limit.

There's a new man in town

By Vusi Mona
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He's called a "corporate animal" and insists on being referred to by his first name, and not his serious title. But the GCIS CEO shoe fits and Jimmy Mzwanele Manyi, who is wearing it, is determined to put his best foot forward.

With an impressive CV in a no doubt stylish filofax, and resolve to live up to President Jacob Zuma's call to assist government, Jimmy turned his back on all the glitz, huge salary and big bonuses that come with the private sector.

"For me it was about responding to that call by the President to serve one's country," says Jimmy.

He is well aware the job comes with challenges that require nerves of steel and an extra thick skin for those "just in case" moments (we strongly suspect years in corporate have given him both!).

Part of being the GCIS CEO means taking on the responsibility of Cabinet spokesperson. And that means the entire nation looks to you to tell them what was decided in Cabinet.

"It is a heavy responsibility. Talking on behalf of the entire Cabinet is a daunting task. But I will give it my best shot as I've always done in whatever responsibility I get given," he says.

It's no secret Jimmy speaks his mind and is known for his outspokenness. We asked him what his worst fears were about the Public Service.

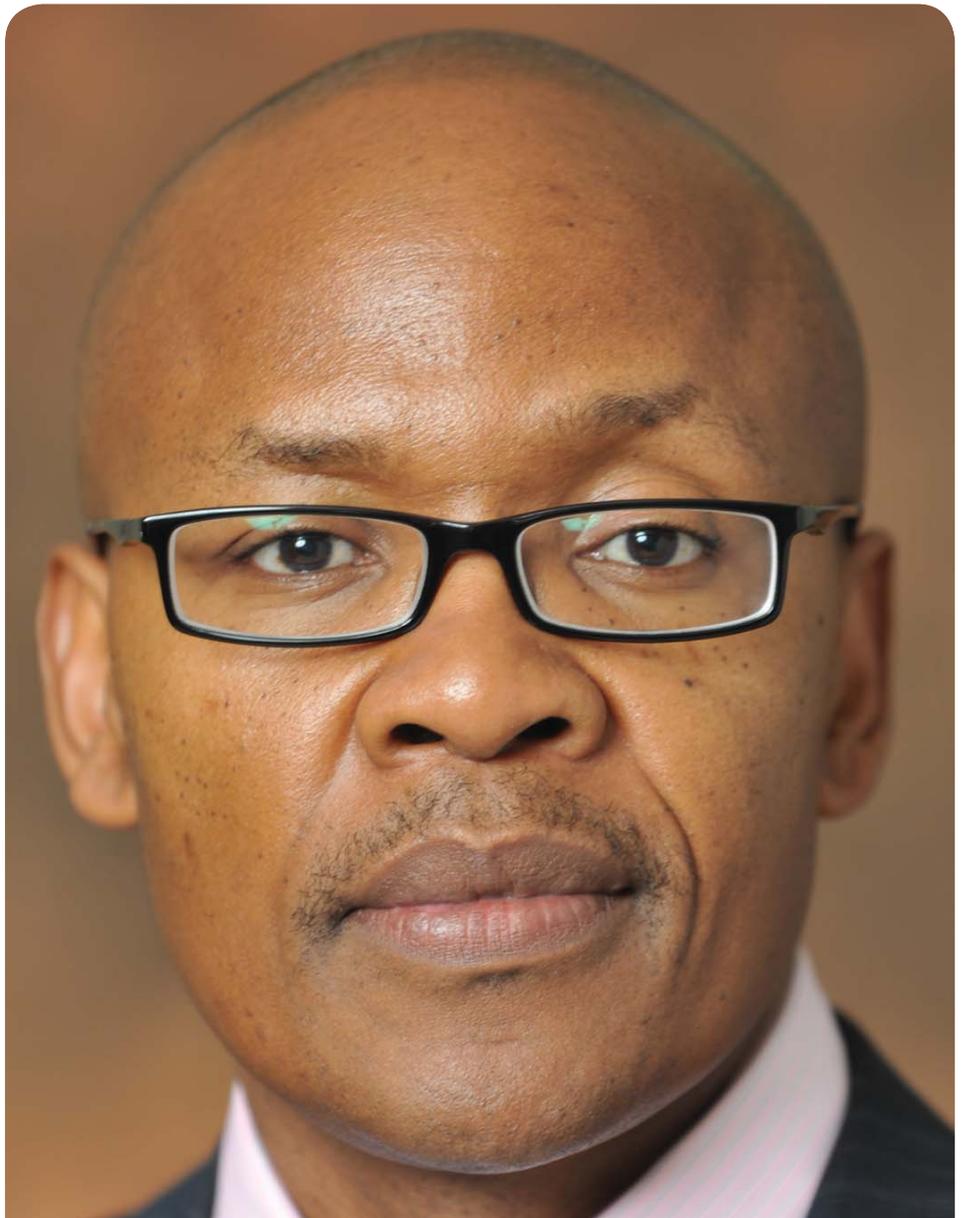
"There are many people within the Public Service that I have respect for. But having said so, I am anxious about getting 'transformed' and turning into a typical government bureaucrat. I am here to add value and to serve my country."

The working man

Jimmy's career spans decades and his CV is laced with the stuff that makes you look at your own achievements and go, "Wow! One day when I grow up ..."

He is a Chartered Marketer by profession. He is both the former Director-General at the Department of Labour and an overall convenor of government in the National Economic Development and Labour Council. He was also once the chairperson of the Commission for Employment Equity.

Apart from being a Chartered Marketer, Jimmy also holds a National Diploma in Economic Geology and is a Harvard University alumnus where he attended



a Senior Executive Programme. He has participated in the drafting of various transformation charters, including the Financial and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Sector Charter and Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) Codes of Good Practice.

Jimmy has over 20 years' experience in the corporate world, mainly in blue-chip companies and multinationals. His corporate experience spans key sectors of the South African economy.

In the banking sector, he spent nearly seven years at executive level for companies such as Barclays Bank PLC and Nedcor Group (People's Bank). In these companies he served in various roles, including running the business banking

division, marketing, business development, BBBEE and government relations.

Jimmy also has experience in the automotive sector, having worked for about four years at Toyota SA in sales. At the time of his departure at Toyota, he had risen to General Manager and had visited Toyota's vehicle manufacturing plants in Japan.

He also spent nearly 10 years at Anglo American as both mining and exploration geology professional. He also has experience with the ICT sector as he was once Director: Corporate Affairs at IBM. As if that's not enough, he was also involved with the food and health sector when he worked for more than three years at Tiger Brands/Adcoc as Group Executive: Corporate Affairs.

Professional bodies where Jimmy serves and other roles

- President of the Black Management Forum (BMF)
- Chairperson of BMF Investments Company
- Director of Computershare
- Member of the BBBEE Advisory Council Subcommittee.