



It gives me great pleasure to present to you the official inaugural edition of *Public Sector Manager*.

Over the past few months, we have been, through the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS), hard at work conceptualising, publishing trial editions, consulting, conducting research and refining this publication. After many days of behind-the-scenes work, we have produced what you hold in your hands.

Particularly gratifying to all of us is the fact that this magazine is produced, editorially and in terms of layout and design, in-house by GCIS. It is encouraging to see civil servants tackling such a project by themselves without outsourcing it to contract publishers. Well done to the GCIS team.

GCIS plays a critical role in ensuring that the public has access to information on the programmes and plans of government that are meant to empower them to attain a better life. But in our consideration of “the public”, we sometimes forget that public servants are part of that public. They too have information needs which, if met, can empower them to perform better in their jobs, improve their lives and indeed become better ambassadors for government.

This magazine, the first of several media platforms targeting public servants, will seek to meet the information needs of government managers in particular and public sector

managers in general. Speaking of other platforms, an on-line version of *Public Sector Manager* is being planned and it will complement rather than replicate the print version. Once launched, it will make this the one-stop news and information service for public sector managers, delivering stories and articles that will enable them to perform better and stay on top of the issues impacting on their careers and service delivery.

Ultimately, this magazine is about contributing towards improving the performance of senior managers in government and the public sector in general. And this it will do by providing a platform for the sharing of best practices and running case studies of departments and state entities that have shown innovation in the way they do things. And here I find an interesting intersection between communication and the work we do within the Department of Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation (PM & E).

Stories about performing individuals and departments need to be communicated so that they can inspire those who are underperforming or averagely performing. Similarly, they could also encourage performers to excel even more in their work. *Public Sector Manager*, among other platforms, will be ideal for showcasing such performers.

The results of our monitoring and evaluation of government’s performance, especially in relation to the five national approaches and how they find expression in the 12 outcomes, will also need to be communicated. Again, the magazine will be a perfect platform to communicate the quarterly reports which will be published by PM & E.

In this regard, I am looking forward to the magazine helping us to build a performance-oriented public service, particularly at middle to senior management – a critical detachment of the civil service. Without the support and buy-in of this layer of public servants, our contemplated reforms on changing the way government works will be illusory. Again, it is in this context that we welcome this initiative, especially as it seeks to address public sector middle and senior managers as its target audience.

I will take the opportunity, as Minister responsible for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation, to consistently communicate, through this magazine, development and progress we are making.

I am also encouraging you to be full participants and write about issues in your line of work you wish to share with fellow public servants.

Enjoy your read and let us build a performance culture we can all be proud of.


 Minister Collins Chabane
 Minister in the Presidency: Performance Monitoring, Evaluation and Administration

Meeting the information needs of **public sector managers**

It is a source of vicarious pride for me to join the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) at a time when it is officially launching the *Public Sector Manager*.

This project has long been in the pipeline. It is clearly a well thought out product that will go a long way towards meeting the information needs of middle and senior managers within government.

In this edition, we carry an interview with President Jacob Zuma where he expounds on the Public Service and how it can improve service delivery. The role of public servants in our country is a matter close to the President's heart. You will remember the interaction he had with school principals in Durban in 2009 where he shared with them government's vision for basic education and listened to their challenges and suggestions on how to improve education in the country.

Then there was the meeting in Pretoria, in the same year, with more than 1 000 police station commanders. There the President shared his law enforcement vision, got a firsthand account of work at the coalface and discussed how to take forward the fight against crime.

The President also met in 2009 municipal managers, accompanied by Mayors, from all over the country and discussed with them the state of local government and service delivery at local level. In April last year, he met Directors-General and Deputy Directors-General from national and provincial departments to discuss his vision of changing the way government works. He followed up that meeting with another in October 2010 where he met with a task team representing Directors-General. There he was presented with a comprehensive report on the work being done to solve the problems identified during the April meeting.

We bring to mind all the above-mentioned meetings to show



one thing: President Zuma is serious about changing the way government works and wants civil servants in general and top managers in particular to change the Public Service machinery to ensure faster delivery. The interview with him emphasizes this point.

Then, of course, we have interesting articles that reinforce the President's message. There is the article by Busani Ngcaweni on how public servants played their role during the hosting of the FIFA World Cup and what lessons we can draw from that event. The article by Mbulelo Baloyi on the Centre for Public Service Innovation emphasizes the need to

unlock innovation for the kind of efficient and effective public service delivery envisaged by the President.

Equally fascinating is the idea of 'public entrepreneurship' by Professor Shahida Cassim of the University of KwaZulu-Natal which seeks to introduce innovation and competitiveness to government. In an era where citizens are mandating more public services and where governments are expected to do more with less, ones does not see how we can escape the concept of public entrepreneurship in our job settings – intimidating as it may sound. In order to stretch the public rand and achieve more with less, a degree of entrepreneurship and innovation within government is necessary.

We also have a special focus on development finance institutions and the role they play or can play in helping us achieve some of our national priorities.

Lastly, we do have a fair dose of light reading which includes car reviews, food and wine, real estate, and grooming and style. Enjoy the read!

Jimmy Manyi
GCIS: CEO
Cabinet Spokesperson

"... President Zuma is serious about changing the way government works and wants civil servants in general and top managers in particular to change the Public Service machinery to ensure faster delivery."

A breath of fresh air

Sir, I just wanted to commend you for breaking new ground with the recently published *Government Executive* and *Public Sector Manager*. As someone who has always detested public service publications because of their dull content and irritating rhetoric, I rejected the two [trial] magazines when a friend gave them to me. He urged me to check their content and I am so glad I did. Wow, what a breath of fresh air! I loved the "Dress for Success", "Food and Wine", "Last Laugh" pages as well as the overall spunk of the magazine. You have brought some cool swagger to public sector publications.

You have proven that there is skill, effectiveness, efficiency and competence within the Public Service.

Ongezwa Manyathi deserves a pat on the back for the lead story "Leading from the front", not only is the piece smartly written but it flows and is light reading – something usually difficult to achieve in a lead story. It was certainly not the usual stereotypical hard interview littered with political jargon. Now I know how DG Lubisi spends his free time and that he has a role model.

The variety is so awesome and creates balance. Chris Breen's "The art of noticing" was another hit for me as well as the "Trailblazers" section. You have presented Advocate Mthunzi Mhaga in such an "approachable" way and I am so thrilled to know his lighter side. I hope to see more of such. Well done guys!

– *Nonhlanhla Yvonne Mondlane, Witbank*

Excellent content and design

Your trial editions were excellent and contained a number of interesting articles. The designs, which I must say are unusual in government publications – were an even better presentation of the content. Issues that might have once seemed dry – the ideal Public Service cadre, performance monitoring and evaluation, government communication were presented in a very refreshing manner. I hope you will do



the same in exploring other public sector topics. Your eclectic mix of commentators offered useful insights into some of the debates within the Public Service. In this regard, Busani Ngcaweni's article on public service mandarins stood out. Well done GCIS!

– *Peter Mthembu, Pietermaritzburg*

Keep up the good work

I have been reading the publication and wanted to drop you an e-mail to say congratulations on an

excellent edition! This is definitely a first in the public sector and I look forward to future editions. Keep up the good work.

– *Skhumbuzo Mona, Nelspruit*

We hear your views!

More provincial news

You have outdone yourselves on this one! Congratulations, we have been waiting for such opportuni-

ties in the public sector. I hope you will have space for capturing provincial news also. Personally, I am excited and would like to form part of the contributors to the stories. In the future, I would like to see some provincial appointments being published, for instance we have a new Director-General, Ms Rachel Modipa, for Limpopo – a woman for that matter. We also have another new appointment, again a woman, in the person of Ms Nana Manamela, who is the

new Deputy Director-General responsible for Shared Services in the Department of Local Government and Housing. – *Dieketseng "Tseng" Diale, Acting CIO: Department of Local Government and Housing, Limpopo*

Ed's reply: *Thank you Tseng. We would welcome contributions from your province and are pleased that you would like to be a contributor. That is the idea. Government communicators such as you should shape the content and information.*

Great but here's advice

Great and insightful magazine. In general, I like the magazine – it is of good quality, especially the texture of the pages, which are the same standard as *O* magazine or *GQ*. Few things I would like to highlight:

- n The letter from the editor – to introduce the reader to the publication e.g. why the new government magazine, frequency of the magazine and the benefit of having this publication (the uniqueness of it).
- n The appearance of the magazine is more masculine – unless if we say that most of our readers are males then it is okay. Maybe we should balance the number of interviews by featuring both males and females where possible. In addition, one has noticed that most of the adverts featured in the magazine were masculine and only pages 40, 41 and 57 catered for females.
- n The last thing is to have some soft issues or I should say some emotions in the publication. I am referring to things like how to maintain the balance between family and work as a manager, personal financial management, some tips and so on. – *Solly Molayi, Gauteng*

Please continue to help us make each issue better than the last by writing to the Editor, e-mail: Vusi Mona, vusi@gcis.gov.za. Don't forget to include your name and the city, town or village where you live.

Experience doesn't have



The conceptualisation and implementation of *Public Sector Manager* is proof that strategic alignment of the enthusiasm of young government employees and the experience of the older generation is possible, writes **Vusi Mona**.

How does an institution as big as government, with a multigenerational and hierarchical workforce, get the best out of its employees?

It is a question one has been reflecting on ever since we started working on the project of a magazine for middle and senior managers in the public sector. For the record, the magazine you hold in your hands is the product of relatively young managers and employees within the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS).

Those of us who are at the upper echelons of the organisation simply planted the idea and provided guidance but it is our young managers and employees who have made it happen. And they did so without much of the tension and misunderstanding that often characterise relations between employees from different generations and/or ranks.

The lessons we have learnt during the conceptualisation and implementation of this project are particularly instructive, especially if we want to manage young government employees' enthusiasm and desire for career growth in the public sector while passing on our experience to them.

Enthusiasm versus experience

Having worked in the publishing industry and bringing one's experience as a former magazine editor, I discussed with colleagues within GCIS (after analysing our target audiences) the idea of starting a magazine for public sector managers. With the kind of responsibilities one has, there was no time to focus on the project. I delegated responsibility for it to Dorris Simpson, who is a director within the organisation (I will not divulge her age but she is certainly below 40!).

...e to kill enthusiasm



The PSM team

She and her team took up the project with great enthusiasm. Within days, they walked into my office with two layout and design concepts which could stand their own in any magazine publishing environment. Since both concepts were brilliant, we decided to publish two pilot magazines and let the target audience decide which one they preferred. Needless to say, the results were very close and that is why in this final layout and design you see elements of both.

When Dorris and her team came to present to me, she brought the two young colleagues (Ntsiki Mputamputa and Rachel Mloi) who had done the design and layout – and there and then smashed the wall that often exists between senior

managers and junior employees. To put things in perspective, there are five levels between me and the designers. Ntsiki and Rachel were very forthright in their articulation of the design concepts they had chosen.

Whatever I questioned had to be based on merit – and not on their age or rank. This might have been a bit of a “culture shock” to senior managers who were schooled to respect one’s seniors and “pay your dues” before you could earn your right to be invited to a meeting with your boss, let alone to speak up in his or her presence. But had I insisted on rank, I might have killed their enthusiasm, creativity and the individualistic streak in them.

And so, what was the lesson? Just because they are young or junior in rank, it does not mean they don’t know anything or have no opinion. Today’s young government employees want to work in an environment in which their ideas, often analytic and out-of-the-box, are heard and valued. They desire to work in

an environment that is more linear and less hierarchical. Younger government employees' frustration is often exacerbated by being judged on age or rank and having no access to their senior managers.

One has heard of employees in government being refused access to certain meetings on the basis of rank (a director-general does not allow directors in his/her meetings, only chief directors and deputy director-generals). What a load of balderdash! (to borrow from Inkosi Mangosuthu Buthelezi's rich vocabulary). Admittedly, there may be valid reasons as to why public service chief mandarins want to keep juniors out of their offices or meetings but when this is overdone, that is when experience kills enthusiasm.

This dynamic between enthusiasm and experience did not only play itself out between me and the junior team within my branch. It also manifested in my relationship with Themba Maseko, the former Chief Executive Officer of GCIS. Whereas I have experience in publishing, my experience in the Public Service is limited. So, it was natural that I would have more enthusiasm for the magazine than Maseko but he brought to the project public service experience. For example, it was his idea that we should do a limited readership survey before we launch the magazine.

As we were discussing and rolling out the project, Maseko never felt or gave the sense that I and my enthusiastic troops were moving in on his turf much too quickly, without having paid our dues. Some senior managers find it difficult to supervise newer or younger employees who are not afraid to challenge the status quo and who strongly value creativity and independent thinking. Not Maseko. The team pays tribute to his leadership.

He gave us space on the project and we allowed him space, as leader of the organisation, to highlight the possible drawbacks of the new things we were proposing. The lesson? Experience does not have to kill enthusiasm. The two can coexist.

Finding the balance between enthusiasm and experience

Finding the balance between the two, though difficult, is not impossible. The South African Public Service has faced similar, if not bigger, challenges in the past and tackled them successfully. For example, the creation of a single public service involved the integration of different former homeland-based public administrations, which came with their own cultures, values and

idiosyncrasies. That was a bigger challenge than how to align the enthusiasm of younger government employees with the experience of the older generation.

And so, what are the steps that younger and older employees within government can take to narrow the divide between their values and outlooks? First, younger (and I would include newer though they may be older) government employees should demonstrate respect for the institutional knowledge and experience that already reside within government.

A lot of government resources would be saved if the younger or newer can ask more senior and/or experienced colleagues about what has or hasn't worked in the past. When I proposed the idea of this magazine, the intention was to wholly outsource it to contract publishers. After all, that is a model a number of departments use. However, long-serving employees pointed out to me that there is capacity within GCIS. What you hold in your hands is proof that indeed there is.

What is the role of older employees and senior managers in this equation? They need to take advantage of the enthusiasm and creativity of younger or newer employees. They must demonstrate an interest in the views of the younger or newer employees – who by the way may have innovative ideas or suggestions to some of the Public Service challenges that have come to be accepted as unshakable. Senior managers in particular must constantly give feedback to younger employees and not just during the formal performance reviews. When the team that worked on this magazine produced the trial editions, we let it be known to them and the organisation in general that they had done a fantastic job.

Conclusion

This project has taught us, among other things, how to harness the enthusiasm of the young with the experience of the older generation. It has also demonstrated how new employees and their ideas can blend into an organisation by focusing on the common mission and vision rather than personalities. It has taught us to look within rather than outside government for innovation. Finally, it has shown us that whatever differences are there among government employees – be they rank, generational or experience-based – they are surmountable.

Vusi Mona is Deputy CEO: Communication and Content Management at the GCIS.