

# Recommendations

## Personnel and Training

### CREATING A PROFESSIONAL STREAM OF COMMUNICATORS:

#### *The development of new standards*

The relatively low ranking and status of government communicators is in part responsible for the relatively poor quality of work in the current system.

The effectiveness of the proposed system will depend, in large measure, on the criteria set for personnel and the quality of training offered to them. The principle, as has been stated, is for a stream of highly professional communicators. This means that new criteria must be developed against which both performance and training can be measured.

#### SKILLS AND PERSONNEL AUDIT

##### **Recommendation 54**

It is proposed that an audit and evaluation of existing skills be conducted in order to identify problems and build capacity. This should be combined with overall restructuring and allocation of resources for training and development throughout government.

#### PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATION

It is recommended that a set of professional employment criteria be developed for the new stream of professional communicators. The criteria will be tailored to the position in question, but will be based on experience in the communications field, training and completion of a qualifying course where necessary. People applying for senior posts will be required to demonstrate an understanding of the policy objectives of the government and to have some familiarity with political processes.

##### **Recommendation 55**

A set of professional employment criteria be developed. These criteria will have the status of policy.

#### EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

- The position of head of communications will be created in each structure. It is noted that, in some structures, this position already exists.

Where it does, a professional assessment according to accreditation procedures developed by the Communications 2000 is recommended, followed by training if necessary.

This, however, will be viewed as capacity building over a period. Should existing personnel not meet the required standards, they will be given an opportunity to develop their skills and capacity.

- The head of the GCIS should be a senior public servant able to relate to heads of departments and other senior officials at a level of equality.
- The rank of other heads of communications will be decided on the basis of their responsibility according to the new criteria. It should, however, reflect the fact that this is a key role.
- Top communication appointments may be made on a contract basis
- Appointments will take place within the relevant structure (for example, by the minister) and will be governed by established criteria.
- Other appointments will be made by the structure in question (assisted by the head of communications in that structure) according to established criteria.

It is therefore proposed that:

#### **Recommendation 56**

The appointment of head of communications should be made according to the established criteria, and training pursued where necessary.

#### **Recommendation 57**

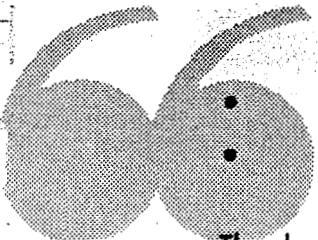
The rank of the head of communications shall be of a sufficiently senior status to reflect the key nature of the communications function. The appointment may be made by contract.

At a provincial and local level, communications staff will be employed according to the new professional criteria. Provincial and local structures will also have access to training and support.

## STANDARDISED TRAINING COURSE

Communications 2000 will work with the communications sectors to develop a qualifying course which shall contain the appropriate areas of expertise, with special emphasis on the following:

- Media Liaison: an understanding of how Television, radio and newspapers work and how to prepare information for and liaise with media.
- Marketing: an understanding of marketing and advertising, including the briefing process;
- Public Relations;
- Research: an understanding of research and how and when to commission it;
- Policy Education: a broad understanding of governance.
- Information Technology: the ability to use and access Internet and other communication networks

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- Familiarity with the techniques for effective communication on TV and radio
  - Any other area identified in the Communications 2000 development of training criteria.

The development of improved capacity and effective affirmative action across the board in the communication profession requires that new partnerships be established between the various role players. There is great potential for the government to initiate this process and involve the relevant schools of communication in the universities and technikons, specialised bodies such as the IBA, the SABC and the private sector. Both PRISA and AAA, and a number of newspapers which are already funding training, have indicated their willingness to join a collaborative effort with government. In this way, government resources could be matched with the private sector, and programmes developed which assist the government and non-government sectors. If this is to happen, the funding stakeholders should be involved in the development and governance of such schemes, and special joint-funding arrangements established, although the process should be activated through, and ultimately owned by, government.

**Recommendation 5B**

It is proposed that the CSA manage a National Training Programme with the participation of stakeholders and experts to make recommendations on joint funding of activities