



GOVERNMENT EXECUTIVE

THE MAGAZINE FOR PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGERS

January 2011

**Government
communication
in an era of
accountability**

**The
Presidency's
new DG, Dr Lubisi,
is leading from
the front**

**Minister Baloyi on
the new public
sector cadre**

*Salary structures
and remuneration
in the public sector*

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on business

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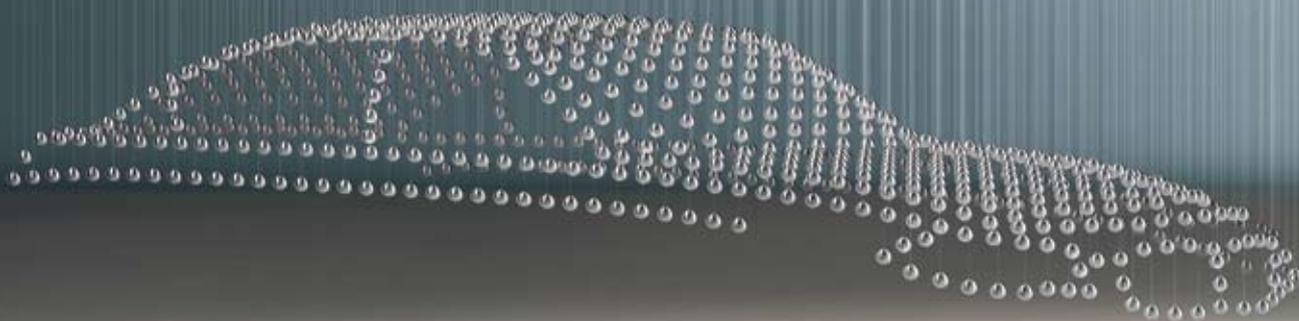
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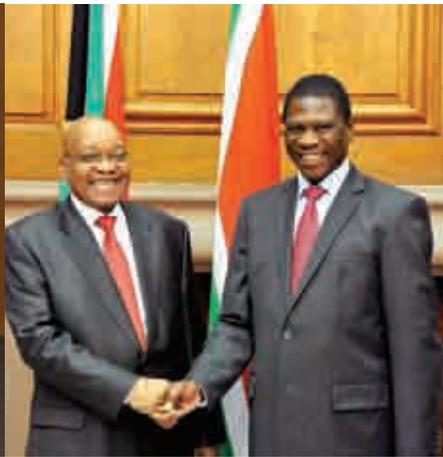


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Publishers:	Government Communication and Information System Information enquiry service: +27 (0)12 314 2211 Switchboard: +27 (0)12 314 2911 356 Vermeulen Street, Midtown Building, Pretoria Private Bag X745, Pretoria, South Africa, 0001
Head of editorial and production	Vusi Mona vusi@gcis.gov.za
Content manager	Tyrone Seale tyrone@gcis.gov.za
Copy editor	Delien Burger
Contributors	Nina Bhaktawar Louise van Niekerk Ongezwa Manyathi Samona Murugan Elias Tibane
Cover picture	Elmond Jiyane Ntswe Mokoena
Production manager	Dorris Simpson
Designer	Rachel Moloi
Advertising coordinator	Dorris Simpson
Distribution	Frank Theunissen frank@gcis.gov.za

Chief Executive Officer	Themba Maseko
Deputy CEO: Corporate Services	Phumla Williams
Deputy CEO: Government & Stakeholder Engagement	Nebo Legoabe
Deputy CEO: Communication & Content Management	Vusi Mona
Chief Financial Officer	Lediana Amaro

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all staff work to their full capacity and treat state resources with respect. Public Service and Administration Minister Richard Baloyi, featured in this edition, elaborates more on this subject. For there to be a public service that is envisaged by the President and his Executive, a lot depends on the performance of public managers. Without appropriate top managers, the Public Service cannot achieve its optimum. With second-rate and non-performing public managers at the top, the whole performance of the Public Service becomes poor.

One Swedish middle manager captures the importance of public managers aptly when he says: "My experience of bottles tells me that the bottleneck is always at the very top of the bottle." I would hate for our senior public managers to fit this description. Their being at the top should not result in government services getting blocked or delayed – the bottleneck phenomenon.

Public managers at all levels have a crucial role in unblocking service delivery to the people. They have the responsibility, within the administrative context, to improve the quality of their work output so that ordinary citizens' lives can change for the better.

MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY MINISTER

It is an honour for me, having been recently given responsibility for the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS), to present to you this trial edition of *Government Executive*.

This initiative comes at a time when President Jacob Zuma's administration begins to focus rigorously on the performance, not just of the Executive, but also of senior managers within the Public Service. This rigour is not happening for severity's sake but because government wants to improve service delivery.

The President recently had a meeting with directors-general (DGs) to review progress in changing the way the Public Service works. This followed the April meeting he had with DGs and their deputies in Kempton Park where agreement was reached to change the way government works in a manner that will lead to citizen satisfaction.

Currently, the experience many of our citizens have with government is a frustrating one. People wait for long hours for services in hospitals, at pension pay points, municipalities and other service points. That should not be so.

The old culture of the Public Service – one that is not people-friendly and lacks the skills and attitudes to meet the developmental challenges of our country – has to change. We need a public service that serves citizens properly and in which

Public managers are a significant group in our society and their understanding and implementation of government policies is an important aspect of the responsive and responsible government we seek to be. As they go about doing their work, it is important that they share among themselves best practices and debate public policy questions, analysing the implications and offering the best possible solutions to the challenges we face.

Government Executive provides the forum for our public managers to confront these issues. It is my sincere hope that this magazine will contribute towards the furthering of knowledge and best practices at all levels of government and that it will encourage professionalism and high performance within the senior corps of public administrators.

Finally, this publication demonstrates the seriousness with which we regard public sector managers as an important target audience with its own and unique information and communication needs. GCIS is prepared to play its role in meeting these needs. Enjoy the read!

Dina Pule
Deputy Minister
The Presidency

The birth of *Government Executive* is not only a dream come true for GCIS but a duty to communicate with a very strategic component of government's target audiences – senior public sector managers.

South Africa, like most developing countries, faces some challenges in public service leadership. Through this magazine, we intend to contribute to finding solutions to some of these. There has never been a more auspicious time, and product, through which GCIS could help in the pursuit of President Jacob Zuma's vision of a new public service cadre.

Through this magazine, we intend to help public sector/government managers and their departments/agencies to improve the quality of the services they provide by reporting on management innovations and best practices within the public sector.

Sharing best practices is like storytelling – something that people can easily relate to. It helps build communities and make communication more human. Indeed, if others are doing well, people tend to be interested in what they are doing and how they are doing it, so that they, too, can be successful.

Of course, that does not mean we will not write about problems and failures of departments and agencies but we shall do so in a manner that offers lessons about pitfalls to avoid.

Talking about building community, through this magazine we hope to create a greater sense of community among public sector managers. Managers and executives in the private sector have their own publications that not only meet their information needs but create a sense of identity and promote common long-term objectives to enhance their knowledge. *Government Executive* will seek to do the same.

In this trial edition, we have profiled the newly appointed Director-General in The Presidency, Dr Cassius Lubisi. Profiling public sector/government executives and managers who can both encourage and provide role models to other public servants will be a regular feature of the magazine.

We share the view that the Public Service remains one of the noblest of callings and are committed to ensuring that it is appropriately projected – by profiling its leadership – as a field worthy to attract and retain top-quality candidates.

Apart from creating a vessel through which to inform public sector/government managers about public service principles, management and innovation in everyday government and public sector practice, the magazine seeks to improve the image of the Public Service by teaching our non-government/non-public sector readers about the functioning of government and the public sector in general.

Also, *Government Executive* will help those who do business with government departments and agencies to understand the needs of the public sector and the thinking of the managers and executives who, collectively, make acquisition and procurement decisions amounting to billions of rands.

Lastly, it cannot be all work and no play. In this spirit, the magazine will have a lifestyle section that will focus on health, travel, car reviews, food and wine, real estate and other light reading matters.

Government Executive will be at the forefront of communication efforts to transform and put public service on the centre stage of South Africa's national agenda. The magazine is the first of many initiatives to "revolutionise" communication to public servants. Come on the journey with us!

Themba Maseko
GCIS: CEO



Meeting the information needs of public sector managers

Building

a new public service cadre

A conversation with Minister Richard Baloyi

South Africa has in the recent past seen people taking to the streets in demand of services that they expect from the Public Service. What does this mean for those who are charged with managing the Public Service? What kind of a public sector manager does the country need to respond adequately to challenges posed by these protests and the country's developmental imperatives? And is there political will to fight corruption in the Public Service? Government Executive caught up with Minister of Public Service and Administration, Richard Baloyi, to find out.

On the training of public servants and facing service-delivery protests

This conversation takes place during a time when we saw in some areas of our country, people taking to the streets in demand of services that they expect from our public service. When these people are called upon to explain their actions, they give different accounts from place to place and from situation to situation.

It will be an opportunity missed if we were to ignore some of these issues as we engage in this conversation.

I had some discussion with Palama (Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy) late last year wherein I raised the issue about public service trainers and their understanding of the environment around them.

I said that there was a need for trainers to have a sufficient grasp of the situation so that when they have to provide capacity-development interventions, they are at all times relevant to the immediate challenges facing society.

For the Public Service to respond adequately to all the issues raised in the so-called service delivery-related

protests that we saw, there is a need for public servants to relate perfectly to the demanding environment.

We put ourselves in the position of the intended receivers of the service that our public service has to deliver, and reflect on those things that we would like to raise as an indication that our service is sometimes below expectations. And, of course, not out of pressure but as an act in self-assessment. We need to rise above what other people call "escapism" in dealing with issues where people raise genuine concerns. We need to be focused where we are seen as providing responses that only address issues at theoretical level.

On participative governance and empowering citizens with information

One of the values guiding the operational activities of our public service is that of participative governance. Through public participation, we will arm our communities to understand the need for prioritisation in the provision of services, and the inherent reality that whereas we may at times be able to provide services to some, there will always be others who will have to wait for their turn in the delivery of services.

We may not have difficulties in agreeing that the Government has for the past 15 years demonstrated a clear commitment and a practical record of accelerated service delivery, and we may also not disagree with the fact that whereas that is so, there is still more that remains to be done.

But, of course, some of the protests and demonstrations are motivated by political interests and other subjective considerations. You will find in some instances, people crying foul on government's service-delivery programmes when in actual fact they know that theirs is to promote their selfish narrow interest and they take advantage of any situation that they know will appeal to the hearts and minds of the people.

It is only through an accelerated programme of awareness-building through campaigns that we can win this battle. The people need information, for that is the power they will use against opportunists. Who can mislead our communities if they know about government's service-delivery programmes? Even if, due to limited resources, those programmes have to be reprioritised, who will mislead our people if the information about such changes reaches them?



“It is time our training interventions reach out to empower our public servants to become foot soldiers of service delivery and be readily available to interact with the people.”



Minister Baloyi making a point. Next to him is Minister Lulu Xingwana

It is time our training interventions reach out to empower our public servants to become foot soldiers of service delivery and be readily available to interact with the people. Maybe it is time we go back to such campaigns as Masakhane, which encourages taking mutual responsibilities in the development of a nation.

On anti-corruption measures in the Public Service

The cause of good governance requires that we eradicate the scourge of corruption in public institutions. While it is the responsibility of the entire society to join the fight against corruption, we in government have a greater responsibility. As a result we have established a Cabinet Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) to coordinate government efforts to combat corruption. This committee works with institutions such as the Special Investigation Unit, the Auditor-General as well as the Public Protector. We thank all these institutions for the support they are providing to the IMC.

We have also established an Anti-Corruption Task Team led by the Directorate of Priority Crimes Investigations, also known as the Hawks, to coordinate investigations and prosecutions.

In August 2010 the Special Investigation Unit was directed to investigate allegations of corruption around supply chain management processes in seven national departments and in the provinces of Gauteng and the Eastern Cape.

We have taken all these steps because we know that corruption does not only take away resources that should otherwise be used to improve the lives of our people. We also know that it weakens a democracy, undermines the confidence that people have in public institutions and corrodes the cohesion and moral fibre of society.

On politics and the development of a public service cadre

We need to have a public service cadre, and we can only achieve that through the efforts of our trainers. But what are the attributes of a public service cadre who is equal to what it takes to be in a position to fast-track the policy-implementation agenda of the Government? Before I address this question, let me just point out that some people argue that the question of having an ideal public servant, a public service cadre, should not arise and therefore no one should make an effort to

answer that question because governments come and governments go, but the Public Service remains.

The adherents of this view subscribe to the notion that public servants are ready-made machines suitable for all governments, irrespective of the nature of that government and the policies it is pursuing. They believe that even if you can overthrow a government and substitute it with a new one, you should absorb the public servants of the old order and make an effort to learn from them, for they believe that those workers will adjust, adapt and champion the service-delivery agenda of the new political order. The assumption is that these public servants know it all and who are you to tell them how to do things.

Those who push this line of argument will advise public service trainers that theirs is to do business as usual. They will argue and seek to prove to you that the only approach that works is a conservative one. Even in situations where, for instance, Palama would like to procure training services from the academic community, the advocates of this view would say that you do not have to be worried, as you can utilise the services of those individuals and institutions at will, including those that will challenge the Government and say that the idea of a developmental state is a distant dream.

If we were to agree with this school of thought, we would be saying that all is well and be complacent. Unfortunately, reality dictates otherwise. Any political dispensation needs public servants who are equal to the tasks, challenges and priorities of the order of the day. They should understand the political direction of the electoral mandate and internalise their obligation to service the public in terms of the policies and laws that they understand and cherish and are ready to uphold.

They must have political understanding and the will to serve. Of course, there is a view of extremists who would argue that the change of political authority should mean the change of public service

leadership in its entirety. They go to the extent of even suggesting that we should have only liberation struggle-time heroes and activists swelling the ranks of our public service for us to begin to see the fruits of a transformed and competent public service.

Unfortunately, too, reality dictates otherwise. In South Africa, we have adopted an approach that gives opportunities to all South Africans to contribute in their own unique way in building and servicing the country according to their capabilities and not necessarily limited to the extent as defined by their history, but committed to implement the policies of the Government.

Reality therefore suggests that we need a public servant of a special kind, whether historically belonging to the so-called "sunset clause" workers or to the struggle heroes category. We need a public servant who will be equal to the challenges and priorities of the current political dispensation, and we can only produce such a worker through training and development.

On qualities of the public servant

What qualities should that public servant have? Is it a matter of just academic qualifications? Is it cadreship profile that matters? If it is a merit issue, what constitutes an ideal merit?

Such a public servant should reflect some or all of the following attributes, to mention but a few.

Breaking new ground: An official with this attribute is innovative and does not shy away from coming up with new ideas for the public good. The point of departure for this official should be the policies that we have, the legislation that we have developed, the service-delivery mechanisms that our government has initiated and the expectations of the public.

He or she will then be able to make personal interventions to translate policy into action. We should agree

that gone are the days when individual innovative capability was considered to be located in the history of that person. Yes, history is important, but competency first and equal opportunities for all.

Inspiring success: The public servant we need is self-motivated and ready to motivate others to serve the public. Those who are responsive to this attribute always provide leadership wherever they find themselves, irrespective of rank or status.

Raising the standard: An official who is responsive to this attribute is capable of giving his or her best regardless of whether he or she is in the front office or at management level. Such a public servant always seeks to outdo yesterday's performance.

A public servant who is on board is the one who owns the processes of service delivery ...

Nothing is impossible: This is the type of a public servant who comes up with turnaround strategies to salvage a failing situation. This public servant will not use policy and resource constraints as an excuse for not doing his or her work, but will always seek solutions where it appears that solutions are not readily available.

We commit ourselves to service-delivery priorities because we know that Palama will lead the course for training and development of public servants.

Making a difference to people: A public servant who upholds this quality understands that the Public Service has to serve people, and these have expectations that should always be considered in the execution of public duty. This worker will always be committed and work towards the attainment of the people's expectations, and will be results-oriented and always measure

the impact of his or her actions against those expectations.

Collective responsibility and teamwork: An ideal public servant must believe in partnership and be practically seen to work with other people. He or she considers the opinion of other colleagues, peers and the public. Even in working under pressure, this official does not work behind people's backs. This worker is able to network with organs of civil society, community development workers and all other stakeholders.

On board: A public servant who is on board is the one who owns the processes of service delivery and this person understands that blame for the failure of the system should be laid squarely on his or her shoulders.

This person is able to identify early warnings in situations where some challenges may be standing in the way of service delivery, thus being prepared to make timely interventions.

International activism: This is a public servant who is an active agent in implementing the Public Service agenda on the continent and in the world. This public servant reads and is familiar with international best practices.

Conclusion

It will be useful to see our public sector trainers continue to make an effort to provide support to our public servants in such a way as to ensure the realisation of some of the attributes I have outlined above.

We are continuing with the transformation of Palama as a vehicle for public service training. It is an academy of choice and we support them.

We commit ourselves to service-delivery priorities because we know that Palama will lead the course for training and development of public servants.

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THE BEACH
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CLASSIC
THIS HOLIDAY?



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