

STRATEGISING FOR THE PSC's FUTURE



Brains behind the Office Strategic Planning Session

The buzz phrase during the Office Strategic Planning Session held from 4 – 5 July 2012 at Roodevallei Conference and Meeting Hotel in Pretoria, was “reviewing of business processes”. Almost all the presenters expressed this phrase and officials in attendance quickly caught onto this bug and talks about “reviewing of business processes” were even heard during the tea and lunch breaks!

The Office Strat Plan, as it is usually referred as, was held for the first time in July instead of at the end of the year during the beginning of December. The Office Strat Plan was attended by all officials from Deputy Director level up to the Director-General (DG). This was preceded by the Management Committee (MANCO) meeting held on 3 July 2012.

The purpose of the Office Strat Plan was to discuss the activities that the four branches propose to undertake in the next five years, which would be linked with the organisation's strategic outcomes oriented goals and objectives. These discussions would then lead to the production of the PSC Strategic Plan for the Fiscal Years 2013/14 – 2017/18.

The first day kick started with an opening address by the DG where he indicated the purpose of the meeting and laid out the expectations over the next two days. The ever bubbly Mr Dugan Fraser then took over as the facilitator and had an interactive session on the formulation of indicators. This was followed by a breakaway session where members of each branch had group discussions to revise their branches indicators based on the presentation done by Mr Fraser. Each branch then nominated a spokesperson that gave a report back on the revised indicators.

“ ... reviewing of
business
processes...”

Usually, sessions conducted after lunch are called the graveyard shift, as there is a perception that people's concentration levels are low after having their stomachs filled with a scrumptious meal. Well this was not the case on this occasion as officials were eagerly awaiting the Chairperson, Mr Ben Mthembu's address. During his address, the Chair reported that he was pleased that the Office understands its role of providing support to the Commission. He indicated that the new vision and mission is a reflection of a new and more focused direction of the PSC which ultimately wants to see an ethical, efficient, effective Public Service that achieves developmental results. He advised that as an organisation, we should set an example of what we want to achieve in the Public Service. This links well with a quote by Mohandas Gandhi that he relayed that says that we "should be the change [we] want to see in the world".

Another phrase introduced during the Office Strat Plan that had the conference room rapture in laughter was when the Chair said that we need to "*Batho Phelamise*" the Public Service and the PSC. This means that we need to respond to our developmental challenges and build a Public Service that is people centred and delivers services to all who need them.



PSC Chairperson, Mr Ben Mthembu

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- Chairperson

The Chair also took the opportunity to raise his concerns about the quality of our work and indicated that we would need to change the approach of our reports "*reviewing of business processes*" so that they are shorter; provide better guidance to our stakeholders on implementing our recommendations and more importantly, make an impact. He encouraged the Office to make better use of the Commissioners as advocates of our work. He also encouraged officials to work hard and do their best every day. His closing message was that the step to achieving an excellent Public Service is by doing small things today that will ultimately be strategic.

With everyone feeling motivated following the Chairperson's address, the DG gave a broad overview of the organisation looking at both the internal and external environment. In terms of internal matters, the DG reflected on the organisation's performance over the past financial year, the challenges of the current structure and concerns about our reports and problematic internal business processes. During his presentation, the DG also made proposals to address some the challenges faced by the organisation through amongst others, the "*reviewing of business processes*".

In line with addressing organisational challenges, consultants that worked on the transformation programme of the Department of Home Affairs gave an eye opening presentation on how this Department addressed its organisational challenges by “reviewing its business processes”. The consultants took the meeting through the various phases of the programme and how its implementation led to the turnaround of service delivery within just a few months! There were valuable lessons to be learnt from the presentation and this will also assist the PSC as it embarks on its own transformation programme.

The second day of the Office Strat Plan focused on inputs for the PSC Strategic Plan document. Prior to the Office Strat Plan, each branch was requested to meet with officials within their respective branches to review the current Strategic Plan. The Deputy Directors-General (DDGs) gave a presentation that focused on the following:

- Progress on implementation of the Strategic Plan (highlighting achievements and shortcomings)
- Review of the existing Strategic Plan: identifying what needs to change and why, with a specific focus on the indicators used to measure performance by each branch
- Propose a new formulation of the Strategic Plan highlighting amendments to be adopted.

Following each DDGs presentation, the floor was opened for discussions where members made various proposals that would improve the ultimate inputs submitted for the Strategic Plan document.

The last leg of the Office Strat Plan focused on the introduction of the Imvuselelo Programme. The presentation was done by Mr Dugan Fraser, Ms Fienie Viviers, Mr Humphrey Ramafoko and Mr Sifiso Ngema, who all gave detail on what the programme entails. The Imvuselelo Programme is about transforming the Office and has four components namely, re-engineering, re-organisation, cultural change and performance management and development.

The re-engineering process will focus on reviewing the way in which we do our work “reviewing our business processes” in order to facilitate the speedy delivery of our work while the re-organisation process will focus on re-organising the



PSC officials hard at work



Regional Office representatives



PSC DG, Prof Richard M. Levin

structure of the organisation through amongst others, the creation additional human capacity, upgrading of certain posts and the appointment of contract workers to assist in certain areas of our work. In terms of cultural change, this process aims to inculcate a culture of performance and delivery of outputs timeously by amongst others, creating a conducive working environment, improving staff retention and strengthening internal communication. The last aspect of the programme deals with performance management and development wherein the Office wants to build organisational performance, discipline and excellence through the emphasis of consequences for non-delivery, rewards for good performance and the implementation of the Policy on Special Awards and Recognition (non-financial rewards).

During the presentations, it was emphasised that in order for this programme to be successful, all officials are encouraged to be part of it and also provide inputs when requested to do so.

In his closing remarks, the DG made a commitment to deliver on the promises he has made and expressed his confidence in the organisation's ability to improve on its performance. He closed off by re-emphasising the Chairperson's message that "we can make a difference".

The Office Strat Plan truly ended on a high note as an atmosphere of change filled the conference room and officials left feeling highly motivated and reiterating the DG's statement that he said in isiZulu "ngiyawu funa lom' sebenzi"!



Mr Dugan Fraser during his presentation



Mr Barry Momberg acting as spokesperson for his branch

Please note that the various presentations during the Office Strat Plan can be accessed on the intranet.