

CASE B

THE WESTERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Department

The Western Cape's Department of Transport and Public Works (DPTW) "aims to deliver an integrated, accessible, safe, reliable, affordable and sustainable transport system and quality property infrastructure provision through socially just, developmental and empowering processes, to improve the quality of life for all" (DPTW website). It constructs new facilities, upgrades, rehabilitates and maintains existing facilities. The Department also is responsible for overseeing the maintenance and construction of new provincial roads, overseeing the province's properties, and providing public transport. The DPTW handles motor vehicle licensing and registration and the government motor transportation.

Achieving Employment Equity

Darryl Jacobs, DPTW Executive Manager, has his mind on employment equity issues this morning in light of this afternoon's meeting of the Employment Equity Consultative Forum. That Forum, as required by the Employment Equity Act, is comprised of all stakeholders such as employee representatives from designated groups, non-designated groups, all occupational categories and levels, including the disability sector and representative trade unions. They are meeting to go over the most recent draft of the required 5 year Employment Equity Plan to cover 2006-2010.

Identifying Problems

Darryl has in front of him the Department's most recent annual report to the Department of Labour. That report stated that DPTW achieved neither the numerical targets they had set out for that year, nor the affirmative action objectives. The reasons were:

- Labour attrition arising from resignation, especially of women and black males
- Limited available technical skills from designated groups.
- Certain inappropriate attitudes towards race, colour, language, gender and disabilities still exist, mainly covert

The limited available technical skills refers primarily to the shortage of engineers in the Department. Engineers are in short capacity throughout the country. But an additional difficulty faced by public sector departments such as DPTW is that salaries are tightly regulated and they cannot compete with the private sector. At the moment they have 48 engineering posts, and 26 of them are vacant. Fortunately, one initiative was recently launched to try to make inroads into training more engineers to fill this critical shortage.

It is entitled Masakh' iSizwe (Let's Build the Nation) Centre of Excellence. It awarded 127 bursaries (scholarships) in engineering and environment fields and there are plans

to add an additional 250 next year. The Centre of Excellence has also undertaken to monitor students' academic performance, provide them with mentors who can help them to adopt professional attitudes and behaviors, require them to engage in community service, and develop additional social science subjects to broaden their understanding of the socio-political context in which they live. Darryl has great hopes that this initiative will allow them to report greater representation of engineers next year.

Before going to the meeting, there are a few people Darryl wants to check in with. He is particularly concerned about the attitudinal problems the annual report alludes to. His first call is to his good colleague Thando Mguli, Chief Director of Public Works. Thando wasted no time in agreeing that underlying attitudes within the workforce are a predicament "This department is exemplary in that it was the first to have an African Head of Department (HOD)." Thando pointed out. "They were bold enough to ensure that a critical portfolio—transport and public works—could be entrusted to an African—they never had that in this province before. The HOD and I were appointed on the same day and since then a number of senior managers from historically disadvantaged groups have been appointed because they want to create representivity."

"But," Thando continued, "The climate within the department is tense. White and Coloured employees aren't used to Africans in positions of leadership. It was fine to have Mandela and then Mbeki as president but that was it—no more Africans in leadership positions." When Darryl asked him what it would take to change the climate in the Department, Thando's response was that "some people would have to leave." That is not an end that is neither easily accomplished nor necessarily desirable.

There was one other issue Darryl wanted to raise with Thando. Recently, Marius Fransman, Minister for Transport and Public Works, (the political head of the Department) gave a speech that generated some controversy. The Minister had praised the Centre for Excellence programme, and called it the "High Road to the provision of professionals in the built environment fields." He went on to contrast it to what he called the "Low Road [that is] normally followed."

"The Low Road," he said, "is to give bursaries to as many learners as possible, with the proviso that we get our Previously Disadvantaged Individual (PDI) statistics correct." As a result,

- There is a very high dropout rate. Fewer than 30% of undergraduates in engineering obtain their qualifications within five years because they are not able to find placements for their experiential training
- It is becoming increasingly difficult to retain engineering graduates because they are able to move into higher paid professions such as financial planning.
- Many young white graduates find jobs in other countries because they believe affirmative action will preclude them from finding jobs in government.

Minister Fransman then went on to repeat his call to "*place an immediate moratorium on affirmative action in all priority skill areas.* We need to go beyond the blunt instrument

of affirmative action if we want to more effectively address the vicious cycle of poverty that characterizes the second economy.” (Emphasis in original)

Darryl asked Thando for his reaction to the Minister’s statement about the moratorium on affirmative action. “What the Minister said about skills taking precedence over affirmative action was a mistake,” Thando replied. “He contradicted his own [political] party.”

Darryl’s next call was to Brian Williams, a consultant who often advises the Department on equity matters. He answered the question about representivity versus the urgent need to bring on engineers more broadly. The political leadership has lost sight of the real meaning of the need for a representative public service, he told Darryl. The intention was to have one that reflected the community and that was excellent so that it could best serve the needs of the community. But they lost site of the “excellence” component in their rush to just achieve the numbers and so the needs of the community are not being served. There is pressure being put on organizations to achieve “quotas” even though such quotas are not required—there is enough flexibility in the laws so that reasons for failure to meet quotas can be documented.

Finally, Darryl called the Head of Department, Thami Manyathi, and asked him to comment on whether the Minister was calling for putting skills above representivity. He responded that that was not a fair interpretation of the Minister’s remarks. There is a need to train a huge number of engineers. Transformation goes beyond the numbers to addressing the support people need. You may do well in terms of numbers but not get the performance required, Thami suggested. The Department does and should go out aggressively to find people in different communities but will hire white males when they are available and needed.

And what about attitudinal problems in the Department, Darryl wanted to know? Thami acknowledged that there was tension between the Coloureds and the Africans. When they attract people they don’t stay, in the department or the province. Africans find the discrimination fairly sharp here where other parts of the country have made better strides to integrate. But, he reminded Darryl, the Premier has made it a key focus to figure out a way to accommodate people of different backgrounds. Thami went on to note that he could have a role in diffusing the tension as well. “It’s how you carry yourself as a person and as Head of the Department. It’s how you interact with your own staff.” He went on to note that he doesn’t emphasize the hierarchy in the organization and has had some limited success in reducing the tension but he hasn’t had time. He hasn’t had time to walk around and talk to staff. There is more that he could do to try to change the climate.

Putting Together the Plan

Having gotten a better sense of these key perspectives, Darryl went to the afternoon Forum meeting. He began by reminding the members of the fairly aggressing affirmative action measures the Department already has in place:

- Advertising broadly to attract designated groups

- Including a rider in advertisements indicating that preference would be given to targeted groups
- Allocating points for targeted groups identified by the plan. After the candidate is given points based on his or her qualifications, points are awarded based on membership in a targeted group. These points represent 20-25% of the points allocated
- A more qualified candidate may be passed over in order to achieve equity targets
- The work environment is being adapted to achieve reasonable accommodation

In addition, the department has a formal diversity training program, community outreach programs, and a learnership programme for unemployed designated group members. They have a senior manager appointed to manage the program's implementation, but does not have a budget to support it.

Darryl turned to Forum member Wayne Taylor, who is the shop steward for the Public Servants Association, one of the two registered trade unions with the Department. "Do you have a problem with any of these measures, Wayne? Granting extra points for targeted groups can mean that an outside candidate may be selected for a position rather than an internal candidate who is a union member." Wayne indicated that he did not; the union is fully on board with the employment equity plan.

Forum members then went on to discuss again the barriers that had been identified during the recently completed consultation process. That process had included representatives of all occupational levels and categories of employees:

Barriers to employment equity:

- **Organisational culture**
Although the Department has made significant progress in taking progressive measures to eliminate racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination, the organisational culture is still influenced by all aspects of the working environment. Slanted perceptions of employment equity also contribute to an organizational culture, which is not fully transformed.
- **Scarce skills**
The Department embarked on various initiatives to address the scarce skills question. Given circumstances like better remuneration and benefits from the private sector, the Department still finds it difficult to recruit scarce skills, especially from the designated groups. These skills are generally of very limited availability among designated groups.
- **Attitudes of managers to towards human resources practices**
Managers of other Branches perceive human resources as a less important contributor to the overall objective of the Department.
- **Performance management**
The inconsistent application of the performance management system is a

contributing factor to the low morale experienced by staff.

- **Succession and experience planning**
The lack of a succession and experience planning is also identified as a barrier. There is high mobility amongst people from designated groups and not effective programmes to retain them.
- **Staff retention**
The shortage of qualified staff, the strong competition from the private sector, and the rapid movement between departments to higher salary levels, from designated groups, has been identified as a barrier to retain qualified designated staff.
- **Language**
Although the Department has a language policy, the policy does not relate to the experiences the designated group faces on a daily basis, which remains a barrier to employment equity.
- **Quality of supervision and mentoring**
Staff perceive the quality of supervision as sub-standard as a result of ineffective communication and a lack of trust. Mentoring is inadequate as mentees pose too great challenges to mentors to be effective.
- **Politeness barrier**
Managers and staff, in general, tend to be too polite in addressing shortcomings or areas of contention in subordinate and other staff. In the case of employment equity, there may be a fear of being regarded as racist or gender-sensitive and fail to take decisive actions that are needed to develop targeted individuals.
- **Lack of resources**
A lack of targeted funding, equity incentives, internal processes and buy-in and support to implement and achieve employment equity has diluted the effectiveness to implement employment equity.
- **Training**
Staff have identified the provision of scheduled training to be slow and perceive the quality of training as unsatisfactory. This contributes to the lack of opportunity for growth and development. Most training courses are not SAQA aligned which contributes to lack of mobility and progression within training and career paths.
- **Communication**
Although the Department strives to effectively communicate important matters to all staff, poor communication is identified as a major barrier to employment equity, such as policies not being communicated effectively to all staff.
- **Recruitment and selection**
There are difficulties experienced in recruiting, and attracting suitably qualified

candidates from the designated groups, and in particular black groups. This can be ascribed to the inability of the Department to offer competitive salaries compared to the private sector. Additionally, is it difficult to get representivity on selection panels, especially in senior ranks as a result of availability.

The Forum has already identified its goals for the next five years, as well as the numerical targets that need to be reached. Appendix B-1 provides information from the last annual report regarding the current profile of the workforce as well as information on recruitment and turnover during the last year. The numerical targets can be found in Appendix B-2. . The goals are as follows:

- To improve representivity of designated groups where they are underrepresented
- To promote strategies for the accelerated career progression through a training and development framework within the Department
- To improve staffing and recruitment practices to effectively source and retain affirmative action candidates
- To improve induction, probation and performance management practices to retain people with the required skills
- To create a corporate culture in a way that affirms diversity.

Now, their task is to identify the specific actions that must be enumerated to achieve these goals and targets.

As members of the Forum ponder this assignment, Darryl is considering what recommendations he should make for actions to be taken. And how should they address the touchy issue of affirmative action following the Minister's speech? What would be required to improve the climate overall in the department, and diffuse the tension between Africans and Coloureds?

APPENDIX B-1
Workforce Profile and Changes 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006

Workforce profile as of March 2006

| Occupational Levels | Designated | | | | | | | Non-designated | | | TOTAL |
|--|------------|------------|----------|-----------|------------|----------|------------|----------------|-------------------|----------|-------------|
| | Male | | | Female | | | | White Male | Foreign Nationals | | |
| | African | Coloured | Indian | African | Coloured | Indian | White | White | Male | Female | |
| Top management | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Senior Management | 2 | 6 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 23 |
| Professionally qualified and experienced specialists and mid-management | 12 | 67 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 0 | 18 | 90 | 1 | 0 | 199 |
| Skilled technical and academically qualified workers, junior management, supervisors, foremen, and superintendents | 19 | 69 | 1 | 11 | 51 | 1 | 49 | 84 | 0 | 0 | 285 |
| Semi-skilled and discretionary decision making | 51 | 147 | 0 | 21 | 117 | 2 | 42 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 408 |
| Unskilled and defined decision making | 221 | 223 | 0 | 7 | 71 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 526 |
| TOTAL PERMANENT | 306 | 513 | 2 | 44 | 247 | 3 | 112 | 217 | 1 | 0 | 1444 |
| Non—permanent employees | 12 | 16 | 0 | 10 | 17 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 59 |
| GRAND TOTAL | 318 | 529 | 2 | 54 | 264 | 3 | 115 | 218 | 1 | 0 | 1503 |

Source: Employment Equity Plan Draft 4

Recruitment for period 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006

| Occupational Bands | Male | | | | Female | | | | Total |
|---|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|------------|
| | African | Coloured | Indian | White | African | Coloured | Indian | White | |
| Top Management | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Senior Management | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 |
| Professionally qualified and experienced specialists and mid-management | 8 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 25 |
| Skilled technical and academically qualified workers, junior management, supervisors, foreman and superintendents | 13 | 17 | 0 | 3 | 15 | 10 | 0 | 3 | 61 |
| Semi-skilled and discretionary decision making | 14 | 22 | 0 | 1 | 27 | 53 | 0 | 2 | 119 |
| Unskilled and, defined decision-making | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| Total | 37 | 47 | 0 | 8 | 47 | 69 | 0 | 9 | 217 |

Source: Annual report

Terminations for the period 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006

| Occupational Bands | Male | | | | Female | | | | Total |
|---|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|------------|
| | African | Coloured | Indian | White | African | Coloured | Indian | White | |
| Top Management | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Senior Management | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Professionally qualified and experienced specialists and mid-Management | 7 | 6 | 0 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 28 |
| Skilled technical and academically qualified workers, junior management, supervisors, foreman and superintendents | 9 | 15 | 0 | 5 | 9 | 9 | 0 | 9 | 56 |
| Semi-skilled and discretionary decision making | 9 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 84 |
| Unskilled and defined decision making | 26 | 19 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 50 |
| Total | 52 | 57 | 0 | 14 | 29 | 55 | 0 | 14 | 221 |

Source: Annual Report

Annual Turnover rates by critical occupation for period 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006

| Occupation: | Number of employees per occupation as on 1 April 2005 | Appointments and transfers into the department | Terminations and transfers out of the department | Turnover rate |
|---------------------------|---|--|--|---------------|
| QS Technicians | 4 | 1 | 0 | - |
| Quantity Surveyors | 6 | 0 | 1 | 16,6% |
| Engineers | 29 | 2 | 3 | 10,3% |
| Architects | 11 | 1 | 2 | 18,2% |
| Senior Management Service | 26 | 4 | 3 | 11,5% |
| Total | 76 | 8 | 9 | 11,8% |

Reasons why staff are leaving the department

| Termination Type | Number | % of total |
|---|------------|-------------|
| Death | 10 | 4,6% |
| Resignation | 41 | 18,6% |
| Expiry of contract* | 109 | 49,3% |
| Dismissal operational changes | 0 | - |
| Dismissal misconduct | 9 | 4,1% |
| Dismissal inefficiency | 0 | - |
| Discharged due to ill-health | 13 | 5,9% |
| Retirement | 23 | 10,4% |
| Transfers to other Public Service Departments | 16 | 7,2% |
| Other | 0 | - |
| Total | 221 | 100% |
| Total number of employees who left as a % of the total employment | | 15,7% |

*These are not critical occupations

Appendix B-2

Numerical Goals to be Achieved by 2010

| Occupational Levels | Designated | | | | | | | White Male | TOTAL |
|--|------------|----------|--------|---------|----------|--------|-------|------------|-------------|
| | Male | | | Female | | | | | |
| | African | Coloured | Indian | African | Coloured | Indian | White | White | |
| Top management (HOD) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Senior Management | 5 | 8 | 0 | 4 | 7 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 29 |
| Professionally qualified and experienced specialists and mid-management | 20 | 35 | 1 | 18 | 30 | 0 | 10 | 13 | 127 |
| Skilled technical and academically qualified workers, junior management, supervisors, foremen, and superintendents | 94 | 162 | 3 | 82 | 141 | 2 | 48 | 60 | 592 |
| Semi-skilled and discretionary decision making | 93 | 161 | 3 | 82 | 140 | 2 | 48 | 59 | 588 |
| Unskilled and defined decision making | 102 | 177 | 4 | 90 | 154 | 2 | 52 | 65 | 646 |
| TOTAL | | | | | | | | | 1983 |

SOURCES

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