

## **THE VALUE OF PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT**

Given the challenges of today's complex world as reflected in globalization, politics, representation, initiatives, referenda, and term limits, we must create a new way to articulate the values of professional management that includes ethics, performance, transparency, and equity, development of organizational capacity and competency and self-identification as trustees of democratic values. What are the implications for our leadership roles?

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Clr. SK Mashilo, is the Executive Mayor of Nkangala District Municipality which is the best run District in the country, the Vuna Awards winner on the category C municipalities, for the year 2004 and 2006 respectively. Amongst others the District Municipality is also the winner of the 2005 ZK Mathews Award bestowed by the National Executive Committee of the ANC. Invited by the iLGM, in his capacity as the Executive Mayor of Nkangala District Municipality, Clr. SK Mashilo has this to input on the above-mentioned topic:

These paper will by and large addresses the challenges of today's complex world reflected in globalization, politics, representation, initiatives, referenda and term limits. As we respond to the said challenges, we must therefore have innovative ways to articulate the values of professional management that includes amongst others ethics, performance, transparency, equity, development of organizational capacity, competency and self-identification, which are all inherent within the good and corporate governance system, that we are all aspiring.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

It is encapsulated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) and the White Paper on Local Government of 1998, that in all our working, democratic government should strive towards a developmental state, which should be based upon the following attributes: (as contained in the ANC 2007 Draft Strategy and Tactics document)

- 1) Its strategic orientation, that is an approach premised on people-centered, people-driven change, and sustained development based on high growth rates, restructuring of the economy and socio-economic inclusion.
- 2) Its capacity to lead in the definition of a common national agenda and in mobilizing all members of society to take part in its implementation. Therefore, such a state should have effective systems of interaction with all social partners, and exercise leadership informed by its popular mandate.

- 3) Its organizational capacity is to ensure that its structures and systems facilitate realization of a set agenda for all spheres of government.
- 4) Its technical capacity should lead to the ability to translate broad objectives into programmes and projects and to ensure their implementation. This depends among others on the proper training, orientation and leadership of the public service and on acquiring and retaining skilled personnel.
- 5) It is meant to ensure that these capacities are attained, and the processes of identifying weakness and correcting them will be intensified. This includes engendering new doctrines, culture and practices as well as ensuring that the state institutions reflect the demographics of the country including appropriate representation of women and people with disability.

This therefore calls upon us to advocate for shared understanding and commitment by both technocrats and political leadership within the state so as to adequately deal with the developmental mandates we are tasked with.

### **3. PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT WITHIN ORGANIZATIONS**

After the democratic dispensation of 1994, our country relied on managers and leaders who changed with time and attempted to meet the requirements posed by the new dispensation.

We need to examine how our organizations, departments and units therein are showing signs of dysfunctionality or functionality. We need to take note of the fact that all organizations undergo metamorphosis. In terms of the life cycles analogy that I want to use, which I do not attribute to anybody, you can actually see organizations that are in the embryonic phase, developmental phase, mature phase, and those that are in declining phase of which none of us would like to experience. This then presents us with a clear vision that we need capable professionals and leaders for different types of phases to ably take us through these stages and ensure that our organizations continue excelling in their mandates without declining.

In the same breath organizations should be treated as projects to be managed along the project management cycles. In the organization,

where I come from, Nkangala District Municipality, we have identified the following values: I quote.

**We will achieve this by**

- Infrastructure development and service provision that meets priority needs of communities.
- Integrated development planning and proper co-ordination and integration of development initiatives in the district.
- Ensuring the fair and just allocation and distribution of resources within the district
- Encouraging and supporting the effective performance and functioning of municipalities in the district.
- Enhancing the economic development and growth within the district.
- Promoting a healthy and safe environment.

**The Nkangala District Municipality also adopted the following principles and values:**

- To be responsive to the needs of citizens and partner-local municipalities
- To be transparent, accountable and participative in our dealings with each other and our partners.
- To cultivate a work ethic focused on performance, achievement and results.
- To promote and pursue key national, provincial and local development goals.
- To ensure a representative organization.
- To be democratic in the pursuance of our objectives.
- To show mutual respect, trust and ensure high levels of co-operation and discipline in our dealing with one another.

Critical for us to attain our vision which says, I quote.

**“Improved quality of life through balanced, sustainable development and service excellence.”**

**3.1 Value of Professional Management**

The CEO of First Rand Banking Group, Mr. Paul Harris, says, I quote,

**“Setting milestones and measurements for decision outputs remain integral”**

He further says,

**“The best companies do not take values or corporate culture lightly or leave them to chance. They manage corporate values as explicitly as they manage their stock”.**

Close quote.

Out of the said quote it can be concluded that organizations in embracing professional management values should amongst others, strive for attainable milestones, operate within the parameters of corporate governance, strive for excellence and sustainability of their strategic objectives, monitor and evaluate their performance in attaining their organizational objectives.

Whilst embracing the professional management values that should be done in conjunction with adherence to the following Batho Pele Principles:

- 1) Consultation
- 2) Setting service standards
- 3) Increasing access
- 4) Ensuring courtesy
- 5) Providing information
- 6) Openness and transparency
- 7) Value for money
- 8) Redress

In addition, Walter Denton, City Administrator's Plog, in his paper **“Democracy on the Front Lines,”** dealing with the value of Professional Management, he lists the following practices that capture the skills, commitments, and goals of local government professional managers:

1. **Professional adds value to the quality of public and produce results that matter to their community.** Local government professionals are directed by and work in partnership with elected officials to develop sound approaches to meeting community aspirations and solving problems. Professionals believe they should offer a balanced assessment of policy options in pursuit to the public interest.
2. **Professionals take a long-term and community-wide perspective.** Local government professionals are most effective when guided by long term community plans that provide a framework for policy formulation and goal setting.

3. **Professionals commit to ethical practices in the service of public values.** City managers are not in their jobs for personal gain, but for the purpose of socially responsible public service and Code of Ethics.
4. **Professionals help build community and support democratic and community values.** Professional managers facilitate partnerships among sector, groups and individuals. Developing effective partnerships with elected officials and community engagement are as important as efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery in helping to build a sense of community.
5. **Professionals promote equitable, fair outcomes and processes.** Professional managers seek to ensure that services are fairly distributed and the design and implementation of administrative processes avoid favoritism. It does not matter who you are or who you know, no one is above the law.
6. **Professionals develop and sustain organizational excellence and promote innovation.** Highly trained professionals – hired on the basis of merit and committed to professional development for all employees – promote innovation while valuing consistency and strengthen organizational capacity to produce results.

These six practices may appear overly complicated, yet they play a critical role in guiding officials to execute their responsibilities as good as possible, as cheap as possible, as responsive as possible, and as responsible as possible, and as possible as possible.

### 3.2 Understanding Leadership

To understand leadership, one must first go back to the generic understanding of a leader. A leader is someone who leads organizations. Leading therefore is a process of influencing people so that they will remain contributing and productive employees for the organization and group goals and objectives. However in any normal society there will always be a distinction between worst and best leaders. But of the best leaders, when the work is done, and the task is accomplished, the people will say *“we did it ourselves because we have been empowered”*.

But what makes a good leader? It is the ability to use power effectively and in a responsible manner. It is the ability to comprehend that human beings have differing motivation forces at different times and in different situations.

There are a range of influences on effective leadership. These include the superior's expectations and behavior; leader's personality, past experiences and expectations; organizational culture and policies; subordinates' characteristics, expectations and behavior; tasks requirements; and peers' expectations and behavior. There is a need to balance elements of leadership.

Borrowing from the ANC document "***Through the eye of a needle,***" which deals with the broad requirements of leadership, the following becomes pertinent in the light of the above assertions:

- *A leader should constantly seek to improve his capacity to serve the people, he or she should strive to be in touch with the people all the time, listen to their views and learn from them. He or she should be accessible and flexible, and not arrogate to himself the status of being the source of all wisdom.*
- *A leader should win the confidence of the people in her day-to-day work. Where the situation demand, he or she should be firm, and have the courage to explain and seek to convince others of the correctness of decisions taken by constitutional structures even if such decisions are unpopular. He or she should not seek to gain cheap popularity by avoiding difficult issues, making false promises or merely pandering to popular sentiments.*
- *A leader should lead by example. He or she should be above reproach in his or her political and social conduct as defined by our revolutionary morality. Through force of example, he or she should act as a role model to the ANC members and non-members alike. Leading a life that reflects commitment to the strategic goals of the NDR, including not only being free of corrupt practices, it also means actively fighting against corruption.*
- *There are no ready-made leaders. Leaders evolve out of battles for social transformation. In these battles, cadres will stumble and some will fall. But the abiding quality of leadership is to learn from mistakes, to appreciate one's weaknesses and correct them.*

In the leadership periodical of July 2007, Mr. Royston Lamond in his contribution, "**Leadership in the first 100 days,**" he identified the following 10 basic attributes applicable to any form of leadership:

1. ***Get out of the boardroom, meet the people who you will ask to follow you.*** *Be visible and approachable. Choose your captains and team leaders. Show your humanity.*
2. ***Set directions.*** *Agree on visions and strategies and test them against definable results in the short term.*

3. **Create momentum.** Focus on quick wins that apply to bigger goals. You are working with three elements; **time, money and energy.**
4. **Confirm critical timing.** Tackle what is imperative and know what can be left until later.
5. **Understand both the emotional and rational factors.** Logic would not work if the human element is ignored.
6. **Maximize participation.** Get a buy in from wide spectrum of your players.
7. **Communicate.** You communicated well to achieve the position. Do not stop now. The success of the first 100 days now depends on and inspired concept shared with confidence and clarity and bought into by all.
8. **Fast decisions create energy.** Old sacred cows that are redundant should be dealt with swiftly (avoid death by 100 cuts). Be fair. Be firm. Be fun.
9. **Identify legal issues and major obstacles early.** Left unchecked they may hamper time tables for delivery.
10. **Manage the first 100 days as a project of its own.** Create goals from time lines. Praise loudly. Reward often.

He concluded by saying, its amazing what you can do when you do not mind who get the credit. Emanating form the above discussions, the collective role of both professionals and political leaders particularly in local government proofs to be a necessity as we move towards ensuring our system of governance become truly developmental in nature.

#### 4. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The spirit of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, provides that all professionals and political leaders should build a sovereign state that is united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic.

Sections 152 (1) (a)-(e) and 153(a) and (b) of the Constitution say;

152. (1) The objects of local government are:

- (a) to promote democratic and accountable government for local communities,
- (b) to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner,
- (c) to promote social and economic development,
- (d) to promote a safe and healthy environment and
- (e) to encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in the matters of local government.

153. A municipality must:

- (a) structure and manage its administration and budgeting and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community and to promote the social and economic development of the community and
- (b) participate in national and provincial development programmes.

As mentioned in the Constitution leaders and managers at local government level should work hard to meet the objects of local government and manage the affairs of municipalities in a manner that is compliant to section 153 of the Constitution.

In terms of the Municipal Systems Act, the municipality must ensure that there is community participation in decision making process which has impact on their lives (as contained in chapter 4). The act further states that the municipality must adopt a single, inclusive and strategic plan for the development of the municipality, known as the IDP (as contained in chapter 5). Chapter 6 of the same act requires that municipalities monitor and evaluate their performances against objectives as set out in their respective IDP's. In addition municipalities are required to meet their targets that should be contained in their Employment Equity Plans and Skills Development Plans. It is in this context that the objectives of local government are also about political democracy, economic development and the provision of the municipal services.

Chapter 10 of the constitution and 7 of the Municipal System Act respectively, deals basic ethical principles of public administration, which are applicable to councillors and officials. It is for this reason that there are two "Codes of Conduct", one for councillors and the other for municipal staff.

As indicated earlier, the White Paper on Local Government states that developmental local government requires political leadership which is accountable, transparent, efficient, effective, decisive, accommodative to diverse interests, and demonstrates a high level of monitoring the implementation of council resolutions and policies. Effective municipal officials and councillors draw from various theories and experiences in their efforts to harmonize individual and organizational objectives, which is the key area of work in leading public institutions.

## **5. CHALLENGES OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT.**

In order for a leader or a manager to understand his or her followers and subordinates, he or she should first understand and manages him or herself. The personality and conduct of leaders or managers of organizations influence the lifestyle of the organization. But too the leadership style is normally according to organizational life cycle.

Leaders therefore are faced with challenges of being under scrutiny, of how their subordinates or followers see them in those positions. Leaders like organizations, they evolve around time, and they too grow and develop into better or worst leaders.

Irving Berlin has this to say about leadership and management, I quote

**“Business is 10% what you make it and 90% how you take it.”**

Close quote.

To give impetus to the underlying factor for a business to thrive there must be a good relationship between managers and employees. Good interpersonal skill is therefore critical for a good leader. Through their attitude business people convey unspoken professionalism, confidence and the will to succeed.

The acclaimed motivational writer, John C Maxwell, once said that it's one's attitude more than once aptitude that determines once altitude. It therefore takes attitude to reach altitude. A positive mental attitude and commitment to the organizations ethics and objectives will spread to staff, service providers and clients. Managers and leaders should be aware that they are constantly under the microscopic eyes of their subordinates and followers, and they must do their best to stand the test of time.

This is the turning point in the development of leaders to do their best, to be what they ought to be. Leaders should at all times try to be right.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The reviews process of the Local and provincial government as spear-headed by the Department of Provincial and Local Government had given opportunities to the public and leaders to comment on the essence of the future of developmental local government and developmental provincial government. All spheres of government must embrace the objectives of ASGISA and JIPSA, so that communities benefit out of the said initiatives.

The Deputy President, Ms Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka raised the following important matters; when dealing with ASGISA. She says that government must be honest, show a sense of urgency, accelerate service delivery, target the youth, women and disable persons in its empowerment programmes and evaluate its performance continuously. She further says that we must make sure that people who work for government come to work on time, do their work diligently and treat the public with respect and humanity.

South Africa is found in Africa, and therefore its outlook should always be African, though it should accommodate the best practices of other countries internationally. Our organizations must be homegrown organizations in the African context. It is not surprising that we have 50% representation of women in municipal councils because Africans are duty bound to empower women. Having said this, I hope that we shall work hard to excel.

At the 4<sup>th</sup> Nelson Mandela Lecture, held in July 2006, President Thabo Mbeki said, I quote.

**“We must place at the centre of our daily activities the pursuit of the goals of social cohesion and human solidarity. We must therefore, strive to integrate into the national consciousness the value system contained in the world outlook described as Ubuntu.**

**We must therefore constantly ask ourselves the question – what is it our country that militates against social cohesion and human solidarity? I believe that none of us present here would have any difficulty in answering this question.**

**I am therefore certain that we would all agree that to achieve the social cohesion and human solidarity we seek; we must vigorously confront the legacy of poverty, racism and sexism. At the same time, we must persist in our effort to achieve national reconciliation.**

**The foundation of human association is the idea that human life has equal worth and human beings are equally entitled to political, economic and social rights which allow them to choose a life they have reason to live.”**

To put this noble words into corrective perspective, the Minister of Finance, Mr. Trevor Manuel in his 2007 Budget Speech said, I quote.

**Motho ke motho ga ana bosehlana (a human being is a human being, there is no lesser human being)**

**The idea, that human life has equal worth, and that this is the core value that unites us, invites us to ask whether we have done enough to give practical effect in South Africa today or our shared humanity. Have we acted in manner that shows that human life had equal worth? Or do we still live in a society where the shadow of history dominates over the opportunities of an open society.**

**Sound management of public finances and the improved tax compliance culture on which it rests provides us with the resources to invest in our public services, renew our infrastructure, reshape our residential areas, and provide water, electricity, housing, sanitation, schooling, health care and access roads to millions who were previously denied these elementary building blocks of modern society. The social grant system has expanded, hunger is in retreat and vulnerable families are being lifted out of poverty.”**

The above-mentioned quotes require all political leaders and managers to take note of them in their daily work. They are the guiding principles for all leaders to work and serve the interests of the communities and employees they are leading.

Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of Nkangala District Municipality, I would like to thank iLGM for having invited us to share with you in this discussion.

**I thank you.**