



CESA INFRASTRUCTURE INDABA

PROFESSIONALIZATION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR

Prepared by: Baloyi E.J, President SABTACO



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. Definition of Professionalism**
- 2. Background**
- 3. Best Practices**
- 4. Observations**
- 5. SABTACO'S view on the Topic**
- 6. Skills Myth**
- 7. Conclusion and way forward**

PROFESSIONALISM DEFINED

- The National Implementation Framework towards the Professionalization of the Public Service makes an important distinction between being Professional and Professionalism
- Professional is “relating to or belonging to a profession” while Professionalism which are practices, conduct values and behavior regardless of training, qualifications and levels of responsibility
- According to the framework “Professionalizing also means having qualified people who know what they are doing and are fully equipped to perform their jobs with diligence. This entails continuous development, which makes public servants more competitive by sharpening their “know-how”

BACKGROUND

The talks/discussions about Professionalization, especially that of the public sector does not start today, there are a number of discussion documents that have been issued over the years, which were developed in order to zoom into the matter and possible solution to this matter.

Government Gazette No. 44031, issued on the 24th of December 2020 with the heading “A National Implementation Framework towards the Professionalization of the Public Service” is one of those documents that have been issued to highlight issues on this topic, though its focus is purely on the public sector.

BACKGROUND CONT.....

In December 2018, the Public Service Commission (PSC) issued out a document titled “REPORT ON THE ROUNDTABLE ON THE PROFESSIONALISATION OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE IN SOUTH AFRICA”. This document was also meant to look at the same issue that is being discussed today.

From this submission, one would then realize that the problem actually lies in the implementation plan because ideas are there but are not tested.

BACKGROUND CONT.....

Historically, from the apartheid era, South Africa never practiced “Meritocracy” when it comes to issues of appointing government employees, especially on high salary level positions because that’s where decisions are made. In many ways than one, senior managers come with a bucket list of people to employed at lower levels, and this is historical.

The apartheid government was divided based on colonial balkanization of South Africa into the former Transvaal, Orange Free State, Natal and the Cape Colony. The apartheid regime also resulted in the ethnic balkanization which resulted in the creation of Bantustans and self-governing territories.

BACKGROUND CONT.....

The common practice was that whites were appointed in the private sector, and those that could not be accommodated in the former British colonies would be placed in the Bantustans or self-governing territories.

In fact, in the early nineties, at the dawn of democracy, the senior management in the administrations of the Bantustans and self-governing territories comprised of white officials who could not make it in the four administrations of the British colonies.

Black officials that were appointed in senior positions within the Bantustan governments were also not appointed on merit, but rather based on royal lineage.

BEST PRACTICES

It is unfortunate that as a member of a South African community my views do not matter and the same criticism cannot be levelled against the private sector due to the monopoly practices of the business owners and or directors.

The private sector is not governed by the South African constitution or any by-laws which regulates how business should be run in the public sector in terms of appointments of employees. The professionalization and performance of a private company serves the interests of that private company.

Having said the above though, It is worth mentioning though that private sector must be ethical in their business operations as that will determine their continuous business opportunities or lack of. Their professionalism contribute in putting the country on a map either as the country with best or bad infrastructure. It is for this reason that private sector should also practice meritocracy and pay people based on their capabilities and experience, and not necessarily who they are.



OBSERVATIONS

Companies doing business with the state they continue to suffer the consequences by merely doing business with the state because lack of professionalism result in poor planning and implementation of services. Service providers are paid very late and there seems to be no consequence management to resolve the problem and protect it from happening.

The public sector is highly politicized and unionized. Employees who are not performing are protected by unions and as a result they are protected from being faced with punitive measures.

OUR VIEW ON THE TOPIC

- Whilst SABTACO welcomes the professionalization of the private and public sector, this cannot be done at the compromise of transformation and advancement of black professionals in the built environment
- This is at the backdrop of the assumption that professionalism is associated with white professionals and non-professionalism is associated with black professionals which is unfortunate because all professionals are awarded their professional status by the same accrediting body
- There is an issue about public sector being highly politicized but there is silence about private sector appointments being based on cronyism and non compliance to transformation objectives

OUR VIEW ON THE TOPIC CONT..

- **SABTACO's view is that:**
- **Private and Public sectors must have a pool of Professionally registered individuals, then professionalism will be an automatic outcome**
- **Professionals must be encouraged to training and register with their respective professional councils (ECSA, SACPCMP), and these councils must conduct best practice to all candidates.**
- **As per definition, we encourage having qualified people in our employment**
- **Both sectors must have employees who know what they are doing and are fully equipped to perform their jobs with diligence.**
- **This entails continuous development, which makes public servants more competitive by sharpening their “know-how”**

SKILLS MYTH

- You cannot talk professionalism without addressing opportunity to develop skills
- How does one develop a skill in the professional space if not by
 1. Qualification
 2. Access to Job opportunity
 3. Mentor/Train on the job
 4. Continuous Professional Development

CONCLUSION & WAY FORWARD

- Organizations like SABTACO and CESA must join hands in providing opportunity to train young professionals and be intentional about the effort
- The Public Sector must be deliberate in their appointments of Professional Service Providers by ensuring that they include clause to train the internal and external graduates
- Professional Service providers who are mainly doing private work must be encourages to employ black graduates and professionals
- Young professionals in training must be paid in accordance to their level of education other than being paid a lot of money under OSD and to be paid less than what they used get during their training once they are appointed permanently.
- Professionalization of the private and public sector must be treated as a work in progress, therefore continuous engagements must be done to improve the status quo and once taken, decisions must be implemented for the benefit of the end users.

HA KHENSA
THANK YOU
RI KHOU LIVHUWA

