

STRATEGY 4 MANAGING HUMAN RESOURCES

Improved human resource management systems within the public service aim to recognise, encourage and reward both team and individual performance. Recent reforms have utilised practical approaches for measuring performance and for managing under-performance, very particularly through increasing managerial autonomy at departmental and agency levels.

The new approach to human resource management is, above all else, concerned with motivation and encouragement. Recognition of individual effort, and systematic efforts to strengthen team working, are fundamental to current approaches. The renewed emphasis on merit and achievement is strengthening equal opportunities policies in employment and the determination to minimise corruption.

FLEXIBLE STAFFING AND RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

Open recruitment procedures, with wider recruitment for senior posts, are ensuring that vacancies are filled on the basis of skills and competence, weakening the assumption of a career-based public service with semi-automatic promotion on the basis of time served. At senior levels, low reward, high security positions are being replaced with the exact opposite.

A number of governments have successfully experimented with developing flexibility in working conditions (Australia and New Zealand); moving collective bargaining from the entire public service to the work place (Australia, New Zealand and U.K.); and the application of private sector law to the public sector (New Zealand).

- Some of the most successful Asian economies recognise the importance of recruiting the most talented people available and improving their skills through constant training. Hong Kong and Singapore carry out aggressive recruitment at entry level, entice high flyers for further training, and generally pay attractive salaries compared with the private sector.

As the emphasis continues to shift from high security careers, shaped by length of service and seniority, towards shorter term employment contracts and achievement-oriented promotion, a new cadre of responsive managers is emerging.

This shift away from a career public service has been emphasised by the establishment of Senior Executive Services in Australia and New Zealand, offering

appointment contracts, performance measurement, and intra-service mobility. The expectation is that public sector managers, often recruited from the private sector, will have a high level of managerial skills and talent and will be flexible enough to manage effectively in any government agency.

- Singapore has maintained a systematic focus on efficiency as the sole criterion for retaining or retiring senior public servants. Seniority is not the basis for promotion and many of Singapore's Permanent Secretaries are comparatively young.

There is an increasing emphasis on encouraging mobility within the public service. Encouraging officers to move between departments on promotion or transfer is seen as an effective way of achieving versatility and professionalism within the service. Such mobility also assists with developing career paths and succession planning.

- In Australia the practice of mobility is spreading through middle management and lower levels. Many agencies are increasingly filling middle management vacancies by external transfer from another agency or department. As a result, the career service is seen as being Australian public service-wide and not just limited to the department joined at career entry.

RECOGNISING ACHIEVEMENT

Incentive packages, such as the Malaysian New Remuneration System, which ensure that skills and, in particular, personal achievements are recognised and rewarded, are also becoming more widespread.

- The Government of Singapore has made a commitment to pay public servants market rates for their abilities and responsibilities in order to attract and retain the talent it needs. As a result, senior public servants in Singapore earn salaries which are extremely high by international standards.
- The Malaysian Government places great emphasis on giving due recognition to public servants who perform well. This appreciation is seen as important to provide motivation to officers to improve their performance in line with the aim of providing quality services. One of the measures implemented in this area is the Public Service Innovation Awards to recognise individuals for practical ideas and implementing them to improve the quality of public service. An officer who has successfully introduced an innovation in the service stands to win a cash award of RM1,000 together with a plaque.

The New Remuneration System (NRS) came into effect on 1 January 1992 in Malaysia. Under this system consideration for promotion, salary increments, training and placement of government officers is based on the officer's performance on the job and contribution towards the organisation and the civil service.

A significant aspect of the restructuring of the civil service in Malaysia was the reclassification of 574 schemes of services into 19 service classifications. These, in turn, were divided into three service groups: top management, management and professional, and support group. The service groups are divided into salary grades. The top management has seven grades. The management and professional groups have three grades each, whilst the support group has a maximum of thirteen grades. The number of grades under the old system for Group 'A' was 30, Group 'B' was 16, Group 'C' was 20 and Group 'D' was 47.

The reclassification significantly reduced the number of grades in the public sector pay system in Malaysia with fewer grades and consequently the civil service has a flatter organisation structure. A performance-related pay system was made possible through the introduction of the matrix salary schedule in which the pay increase of a civil servant is related to his or her job performance.

Panels, formed under each government agency, review job performance and decide on one of the four possible types of salary movements or increments:

- a. static (no increment);
- b. horizontal (normal, one increment);
- c. vertical (merit increment, which ranges from greater than one to double the normal increment); and
- d. diagonal (merit increment, which ranges from double to triple increment).

Performance review techniques which identify strengths and weaknesses of individual contributions, and personal career planning, are being introduced in performance management strategies which ensure that personal ambitions and aspirations are harnessed towards the overall service of government.

- The Canadian Government has made it a policy to inform employees of the results expected of them in the performance of their work; to make them aware of the standards against which their performance will be judged; to provide them with feedback on a continuing basis and periodic formal feedback; and to act on the conclusions of employees' performance reports.

In the South African Public Service, the following performance-based compensation systems have been introduced and are currently utilised to grant special recognition to personnel who have distinguished themselves from their peers through sustained above-average work performance. This is expected to stimulate the initiative of personnel and to encourage them to be more efficient and effective. Components are:

Merit award system – applicable to all public servants. A cash amount, calculated at either 18% or 10% of basic annual salary, depending on the evaluation of results, can be made to an individual.

Special recognition by way of either cash payments or commendations can be granted to personnel for suggestions, invention, improvements, etc.

Departmental-specific award system where awards, bonuses or allowances may be granted to persons of exceptional ability, or to those who possess special qualifications utilised to the benefit of the employer and those who have rendered sustained meritorious service over a long period.

- The Government of Botswana is developing a “Cascading Performance Management and Staff Appraisal System” involving performance-related and bonus pay, and appointments on contracts.

In Malaysia the New Performance Appraisal System embodies several key principles or elements:

- the determination of annual work targets, a mid-year review and the adoption of an ‘open’ process of performance appraisal;
- the recognition of activities and contributions rendered outside the scope of official duties;
- the introduction of additional evaluative criteria and detailed weighting system;
- the use of different performance appraisal forms according to grades and divisions in the civil service;
- the establishment of Co-ordination Panels on Performance Appraisal and Salary Progression to ensure fair and just appraisals.

The performance appraisal system evaluates performance according to targets and goals set. Under the new performance evaluation exercise, close provision of the performance of officers is done on a frequent and regular basis. This will enable the Reporting Officer to write a good and accurate annual report. This system demands open communication and close interaction between the supervisor and the subordinate. The Officer concerned will note clearly the system and opt for the grading and evaluation of each critical factor.

The new performance appraisal system fulfils the requirements of the personnel management systems such as salary progression or promotion in placement of staff as well as determine annual work targets of the staff and establishing performance standards. Civil servants and management and professional groups have to attend specific courses before being considered for promotion.

- In Zimbabwe, a new performance appraisal system is being developed. The new system is focusing on objective setting, measurable outcomes, training needs and continuous dialogue between managers and staff. Efforts are also being made to develop meaningful indicators for quality of outputs at various levels.

TAILORED TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Current reform programmes are adopting a highly pragmatic approach to maximising the effectiveness of all levels of staff. Training and development programmes to ensure competency are increasingly tailored to individual needs.

Throughout the public service of Canada, staff training and development is given high priority. Close attention has been paid to the objectives, coordination and cost-effectiveness of training and development, so that overall effectiveness has increased. Training and development are provided on a wide variety of subjects:

- Specialist skills and knowledge directly related to current job – as job content becomes more complex and varied, updating is required.
- Generalist skills for job enrichment and wider participation in the department and in the public service.
- Training for taking advantage of new technology and working arrangements, eg. computer skills, networking, and telecommunications.
- Continuous and adaptive learning.
- People-related skills and principles, such as ethics and the management of diversity.
- Service-related skills and approaches, eg. training in service quality.
- Language training is important, given the bilingual character of Canada and the public service.

- The Malaysian Government focus on establishing key national institutions capable of providing highly targeted training to strategic personnel provides a useful example of current developments in this field.
- Imaginative training initiatives have been initiated in a number of countries. In Britain and Mauritius training is being tailored to rank, and Singapore, Ghana, Australia, and Trinidad and Tobago have all instituted customer service training for staff.
- The Australian public service, through the work of the Joint Australian Public Service Training Council (JAPSTC), involves management, unions and the education sector in developing a service-wide approach to training, revolving around core competencies. Competency-Based Training (CBT) is being developed in the Australian public service as the principal mechanism for achieving higher levels of skills and career opportunities for

individuals. Opportunities are also provided for higher level training for the Senior Executive Service.

- The Indian Government has developed specialised customised training programmes for senior public servants using prestigious management and business schools in the country, as well as organising foundation programmes at the National Academy of Public Administration.
- In Malta, a staff development organisation has been established to coordinate all development activities, ranging from senior management training to specially focused programmes.
- The Government of Mauritius has recently set up a Mauritius Institute of Public Administration and Management (MIPAM) which will concentrate on management and supervisory training.
- The Botswana Government has recently set up a specialised institute of training, the Botswana National Productivity Centre, to develop productivity and quality improvement training programmes for various levels of public service.
- The Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) has expanded its activities to meet the increased demands of training as a result of public service reforms in Ghana.
- The Zimbabwe Institute of Public Administration and Management (ZIPAM) has recently been restructured to provide senior level training to meet the new demands of the reform programme.
- In Trinidad & Tobago, the thrust of public service reform initiatives in respect of training is to develop a cadre of managers in the public service capable of managing in an environment that will demand from them an entrepreneurial spirit and a greater degree of autonomy. Specialised training programmes are being organised, from Permanent Secretaries downwards.

CONTROLLING WORKFORCE

There are few settings where workforce downsizing is not, at the very least, under discussion. Current developments emphasise the importance of controlling costs and raising productivity, more than simply containing or reducing staff numbers.

- The U.K. civil service provides departments with a limit to their running costs rather than on their allowed staff numbers. This allows more flexibility to managers, and also reduces the time spent by managers in seeking imaginative responses to short-term workload pressures.
- The objective of the new Government of Namibia after independence was not necessarily to trim the size of the public service but to enhance its efficiency and effectiveness by modifying public service structures and putting the right people in the right jobs.

Management of redundancies is a reform component of last resort. Ideal or otherwise, it is, however, a pressing issue within many public services, particularly following structural adjustment programmes.

Malaysia established a Steering Committee on Reduction in Size of the Public Service which is responsible for considering changes to the administrative system, institutions, posts and personnel. The Steering Committee has introduced various measures to control the size of the Civil Service including:

- **Control in the creation of posts:** Priority has been given to creating posts in critical areas which would contribute to the growth of the economy and the competitiveness of the nation.
- **Review of the status of vacant posts:** Vacant posts which are no longer required, or which do not add value to the performance of the agency, will be abolished.
- **Re-organisation of agencies under the New Remuneration System:** Organisational structures of agencies are changed in order to create a flatter organisation and optimise the use of resources.
- **Review of the status of statutory bodies:** Statutory bodies were reviewed to identify if any were duplicating roles, had achieved their objectives or were carrying out roles and functions similar to government departments. As a result a number of posts were abolished.
- **Enhancing the pace of the privatisation programme:** The privatisation of government agencies/services continues to be actively pursued. Since its implementation in 1984, a total of 86 projects have been successfully privatised.
- **Use of computers and office automation equipment:** The use of computers and equipment for office automation in government agencies has expedited daily routine work as well as cutting down on the usage of existing staff. The excess workforce can be deployed to carry out new activities without the need to create additional posts.

Major programmes of redundancy management within the public service must be linked to more systemic approaches to controlling workforce size. Strategies for controlling workforce size, and for managing redundancy, must be founded in a

strong culture of realism concerning likely future funding and the need for continuing performance improvement.

- The Singapore experience of a zero growth strategy and financial capping, and the Malaysian experience of public sector salary cuts, introduced into these settings during periods of national economic difficulties, provide powerful examples of public sectors being tutored in this culture. The zero-based reviews of public sector structures and costs undertaken in Singapore every five years further emphasise this culture of realism by focusing on what is to be done rather than what has already been achieved.
- In Uganda, the reduction in size of the public service was advised through the removal of overdue leavers and co-host workers, voluntary retirement schemes, and reviews involving the rationalisation of ministries and departments.

Experiences have highlighted the importance of clarity of purpose in driving through a contentious but unavoidable redundancy programme. A rational and purposeful approach is most politically and administratively feasible when popular support for the government is at its highest, and when there is internal political and managerial cohesion. Natural disasters such as drought, floods and externally determined problems such as economic recession, result in conflicting pressures. They may provide the impetus for cost-reduction measures, including redundancy programmes, as well as a common

A major component of the Civil Service Reform Programme in Zimbabwe is the reduction of the size of Zimbabwe's civil service. Since 1992 the Zimbabwe Government, through the Public Service Commission (PSC), has adopted various strategies to reduce the size of the civil service. First, those posts that remain vacant in excess of 12 months were abolished. Second, obligatory reductions were effected in the form of giving up a certain percentage of positions in each of the ministries. Third, downsizing the service was done through voluntary retirement. The Zimbabwe Civil Service, up to 30 June 1994, had been reduced by 12,700, giving a shortfall of 10,300 to reach the target of 23,000 posts.

In addition the PSC has now embarked on a number of other measures which include:

- a. the reduction of administrative levels within the service, currently standing at 10 grades, from clerk to permanent secretaries. It is hoped that the collapsing of administrative levels will not only reduce the number of posts but will reduce the bureaucracy enhancing improved overall performance.
- b. contracting out of certain functions of line departments which can be better and profitably performed by private sector organisations.
- c. decentralisation of certain functions and activities of ministries to local authorities with a view to bringing goods and services closer to the consumer at provincial, district, and village levels.

and unifying external threat. Equally, however, they lead to pressure for improved services and hence an expanded workforce, and generate significant political tensions.

ANTI-CORRUPTION MEASURES

Current reforms are translating the broad appeals for transparency and accountability in government into operational systems for specifying the expected performance of staff and institutions. Governments have always been concerned to limit corruption, both because of the inefficiencies and inequities involved and because of its broader consequential impact on public life.

- The experience of Singapore indicates how strong political leadership and rigorous anti-corruption measures, enforced by powerful and incorrupt agencies, can turn corruption from a low risk-high reward activity into the reverse.

- The Government of Malaysia has given powers to an Anti-Corruption Agency to carry out positive vetting on public officers. This vetting is carried out from time to time to ensure that only officers who are not involved in corruption or malpractices are recommended for promotion; acting to promotion; optional retirement; receiving Federal or State Awards, etc.

The Mauritius Public Service, like all big organisations, is not exempt from malpractice. To minimise corruption, the following measures have been taken:

- an Ombudsman's Office exists to which members of the public can have recourse for the redress of their grievances;
- an Anti-Corruption Tribunal has been set up to deal with cases of fraud and corruption;
- a code of ethics to promote "responsible behaviour" within the service is under preparation; and
- a Public Complaints Bureau will be set up to examine complaints from members of the public.

The increasingly business-like approach implicit within many reform programmes is allowing anti-corruption measures to be supported by tighter employment frameworks for senior officials. Contracts are for shorter terms, with more detailed specifications, to ensure that performance monitoring is more rigorous.

Significantly, the development of large sticks is being matched by the growth of larger carrots. Salary levels are increasingly comparable with private sector positions to reduce the temptation of inducements to corruption.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Reform strategies increasingly recognise that the public service must be broadly representative of the public that it serves, both as a moral position and because this is a route to improvements in service quality.

- In South Africa, where improved human resource management is critical to the transition to the new public service, under-represented groups are being trained and collective bargaining rights are being extended throughout the entire public service.

The trend towards equal opportunities employment policies, and affirmative action, does not imply a break with traditional public service values and aspirations. Despite the major devolution of human resource management responsibilities, the U.K. will continue to maintain common standards of human resource management across the public service and in South Africa, affirmative action will not be pursued to the detriment of recognised public service values of merit, equity, probity, integrity, ethical conduct and political independence, or the more recently re-emphasised values of emphasis on leadership, quality, productivity and openness.