

A man and a woman are standing at a long, curved wooden conference table. The man, on the left, is wearing a light-colored sweater and dark trousers, holding a pen. The woman, on the right, is wearing a light-colored blazer and matching pants, looking down at a document on the table. The background is a red wall with a repeating geometric pattern.

Improving Service Delivery through BPM

by Thabelo Siala

THE WORLD CUP 2010 IS OVER AND SOUTH AFRICA is only showing signs of economic recovery from the global financial crisis that crippled major economies and with many companies across the globe going under with no chance of ever coming back to economic participation. Coincidentally around the same time there was a high level of increase in violent service delivery protest in South Africa leading up to the 2010 World Cup. Although one cannot make a clear correlation between the impact of financial crisis and the increase in service delivery in this country, it was clear that the SA Government could not respond to the needs of the community in the pace that will quell these violent service delivery protests. One may argue that these protests were politically motivated, but the fact remains that irrespective of this point, South Africa government faces a great challenge to deliver services to the community at a pace acceptable to the local communities.

Looking back at the successes of the FIFA 2010 World Cup, one can learn good lessons which can be translated into improving service delivery within the public sector including government departments particularly at local level. No one can argue that at the heart of the FIFA 2010 World Cup successes, were very robust yet flexible processes coupled with the enabling IT systems. This is how most organisations around the world, big and small have become to realise the importance of efficient service delivery through the implementation of robust yet flexible core and back end processes and coupled with enabling IT systems. Effective business process management and improvement initiatives have resulted amongst other things; improvement in service delivery turnaround times; sustainable cost cutting measures; improvement in quality service delivery; improved staff morale and to some extent reduces the inherent risk in the system.

Of course one cannot claim that the sole focus in business improvement will solve all service delivery problems, but it has been acknowledged that the benefits are significant, measurable and visible. Based on the benefits derived from implementing business process improvement initiatives, mostly prevalent in the private sector, most public sector organisations including government departments across the world, are beginning to follow this trends. The impact of effective business process in management in government is mostly visible in the first world countries such as United Kingdom, Canada and United States of America, who have significantly improved their service delivery to their local community.

The key success factor was to ensure that people who work on the processes are well trained using best practice, tried and tested methodologies and frameworks.

Apart from the enabling technology people play a central

role in ensuring that BPM and BPI projects are successful, particularly in the third world and developing countries like South Africa which is still too labour intensive.

It is for this reasons that South African Government across all three spheres should consider embracing business process management approach as one of the multifaceted approaches to improve service delivery just like the FIFA 2010 World Cup success was centered on clearly defining processes and procedures. For the event to work effectively FIFA had to ensure that everyone is trained properly on their processes across the entire value chain of the event. One could see from the ticketing process at the time of buying to the collection thereof, a process was clearly defined and people were well trained, not just to understand what they have to do but also on the principles and the benefits of strictly following the process all the time.

Similar examples can be said about the Department of Home Affairs emigration processes, Department of Health emergency processes and Department of Justice's court processes. In all these, the turnaround times were quick and efficient because of the visible business process management brings if well implemented.

In conclusion, South African government, particularly the local governments can embrace the concept of business process management and improvement as a powerful tool to implement their Turnaround Strategy for improved service delivery.

THABELO SIALA is the CEO to the Tipp Focus group and infuses the organisation's culture with a passion for people, processes and projects. He is currently acting Managing Director for the Training Business Unit, a member of TIPP FOCUS Group.

His collective experience over the past 15 years range from organisational restructuring, business process management and improvement, project management, total quality management, performance management, change management, strategy formulation and deployment, to training and workshop facilitation.

His key qualifications include: Masters in Business, Leadership (MBL) (UNISA), BSc Engineering (UCT), and South African Excellence model certificate (SAEF), ISO9000 Quality Auditor Certificate (DGQ-Germany), and Six Sigma Black Belt – PMI (United Kingdom).

