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INTRODUCTION TO SERVICE DELIVERY CHARTER

Responding to the challenges presented by the legacy of the past and of having to rise to the legitimate demands of citizens to be treated as customers, as opposed to mere users of public services, has been acknowledged as an enormous and daunting task.

To help public servants rise to these challenges of transformation, government has passed a body of enabling legislation, known as the Regulatory Framework. To support the implementation of the mandates emanating from this legislation, government, through its structures, has introduced the new Public service Management Framework, aimed at making service delivery a reality for every citizen.

The Public service exists to serve the needs of the people. All citizens have a right to expect high-quality public services, which meet their needs.

The main challenge facing the public service is to move from “knowing” to “doing”

The main challenge facing the public service is to move from “knowing” to “doing”. It has to discover ways of working that encourage new attitudes and organisational cultures and which develop new skills and competencies.

To help transform attitudes and the culture of the Public service from a “can’t do” rules bound mindset to a “can and will do” service delivery commitment, government introduced the concept of *Batho Pele* – putting people first. The White Paper on the Transformation of Public Service Delivery (*Batho Pele*) lists eight basic principles to enhance service delivery. These principles are listed on the following page.

All public servants are exhorted to internalise these principles and make *Batho Pele* a way of life.

PRINCIPLES

One of the main pillars of the Public service Management Framework is Integrated Planning and central to this process is the need to develop a Service Delivery Improvement Plan (SDIP). Such a plan will focus on strategies to bring the *Batho Pele* principles to life and to make successful, efficient and effective service delivery a reality.

Each department within the public service should have a SDIP, which includes a Service Delivery Charter.

It is not within the scope of this manual to discuss the development of a SDIP. Our aim is rather to help operational managers develop and implement a Service Delivery Charter for their department or component.

This will have an immediate three-fold benefit in that it will:

- ❑ reinforce the department's or the component's commitment to service delivery improvement for all end-users;
- ❑ help the department or component rise to the challenge of treating citizens as customers and meeting their demands equitable and fairly; and
- ❑ immeasurably enhance communications with customers.

***Without the
commitment and
support of staff
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The responsibility for developing and implementing a Service Delivery Charter vests with the institutions or bodies responsible for delivering services to the public. Operational managers must involve their frontline staff in the process of developing a Service Delivery Charter. They must be encouraged to take ownership of the values and principles expressed in the Charter. In the final analysis, the responsibility of implementing the Charter vests with the individuals who are at the coalface, namely, the frontline staff. Without their commitment and support, improving service delivery will remain a distant, idealistic dream.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The aim of this guide is to introduce you to the Service Delivery Charter and to provide you with a frame of reference for developing a Service Delivery Charter

This guide will give you:

- ❑ A definition of Service Delivery Charter
- ❑ Explains how developing a Service Delivery Charter can be used as a learning opportunity;
- ❑ Provides you with guidelines and best practices on developing a Service Delivery Charter
- ❑ Outlines the objectives, outcomes and key performance indicators of a Service Delivery Charter
- ❑ Illustrates the links to legislation and the *Batho Pele* White Paper;
- ❑ Suggests possible challenges and responses to these;
- ❑ Takes you through a step-by-step guide on how to develop a Service Delivery Charter;
- ❑ Offers some key considerations to think about during the process;
- ❑ Refers you to additional resources and training opportunities that are available in this field.

WHAT IS A SERVICE DELIVERY CHARTER?

A Service Delivery Charter is a statement of commitment

A Service Delivery Charter is a statement of commitment that a department or component makes towards service delivery. It should be developed to suit the needs of individual departments or components.

There is no rigid format, but it should address the following:

- ❑ The name of the department or component.
- ❑ The physical, postal and e-mail addresses of the department/component.
- ❑ The days and times that the department/component is open to the public.
- ❑ A list of the services provided.
- ❑ A statement of the service standards that customers can expect.
- ❑ An explanation of how queries and/or complaints will be dealt with.
- ❑ A statement of the customer's rights.
- ❑ A statement of the customer's obligations.
- ❑ A pledge to maintain service delivery standards.

SPECIMEN

SERVICE DELIVERY CHARTER AS A LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

Developing a Service Delivery Charter is a consultative process and affords managers an opportunity of learning about the organisation itself and communities it serves.

Consultation as such lends to the following learning opportunities:

- ☐ understanding the circumstances of your customers
- ☐ knowing what your customers need and expect;
- ☐ understanding one's own shortcomings;
- ☐ understanding one's own limitations;
- ☐ realising what is realistic and "doable" and what is not; and
- ☐ coming to a deeper understanding of *Batho Pele* or putting "people first".

Improving service delivery is a continuous, progressive process, it is never complete and as standards are met, new standards should be set. This on-going process allows for learning and improvement.

GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING A SERVICE DELIVERY

CHARTER

The following guidelines should be borne in mind developing a Service Delivery Charter:

- ☐ get buy-in and commitment;
- ☐ set realistic targets;
- ☐ communicate widely; and
- ☐ reward staff.

Each of these will be dealt with in detail.

Buy-in and commitment

It is crucial to get involve staff in the development of a Service Delivery Charter so that you get their buy-in and commitment to improve service delivery. Encourage staff to become custodians of the process so that they can take ownership of the Charter.

Set realistic targets

When consulting customers, do it intelligently and realistically. Make them aware of resources and the bigger picture of the transformation process. Set realistic targets.

Communicate widely

Develop and implement a well-structured communication strategy to ensure that it serves as a vehicle for *Batho Pele*. Think creatively about imparting information to all audiences and again consider the cost implications.

Reward staff

Announce positive results of the programme and reward individuals who have been particularly instrumental in making the Charter come alive.

THE OBJECTIVE OF DEVELOPING A SERVICE DELIVERY

CHARTER

The objectives of developing a Service Delivery Charter are many. However, in the main, the purpose of such a Charter is to express a commitment to service delivery in which:

- ☐ published standards of service delivery are maintained;
 - ☐ the treatment of all end-users as customers is encouraged;
 - ☐ customers' rights are protected;
 - ☐ relationships with customers are enhanced; and, finally,
- the transformation of the public service from a rules bound bureaucracy to a results driven organisation is accelerated.

LINKS TO *BATHO PELE*

The *Batho Pele* principles have already been listed. It is clear that a Service Delivery Charter embodies most, if not all of these principles, in that it must:

- ☐ Specify the services provided, which must be decided in **consultation** with the customers.
- ☐ Provide information on where the services may be **accessed**.
- ☐ State the customer's rights and obligations to facilitate **courtesy**.
- ☐ Provide full **information** on what services are provided and where they can be accessed.

- ❑ State the standards of service customers can expect and give full particulars of whom should be contacted if there are any queries in order to promote ***openness and transparency***.
- ❑ Explain how complaints will be handled to ensure that customers have ***redress***.
- ❑ Reassure customers that they are getting ***value for money*** in the range, quality and availability of the services offered.

LINKS TO LEGISLATION

Apart from the White Paper on Transforming Public service Delivery, which has already been mentioned, the most powerful mandates for the development and implementation of a Service Delivery Charter come from:

- ❑ The Constitution.
- ❑ The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act. No3 of 2000
- ❑ The Promotion of Access to Information Act, No2 of 2000.
- ❑ The Public service Regulations of 2001.

Section 195 insist that public servants should commit to provide services of a standard

The Constitution

The nine principles governing public administration provided in section 195 of the Constitution insist that public services should be announced and that public servants should commit to provide services of a standard that meet the needs of the customers.

The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act no. 3 Of 2000

This act confirms the customer's right to consultation and redress if his or her rights are adversely affected by an administrative action and a Service Delivery Charter should stipulate how these rights will be upheld.

The Promotion of Access to Information Act no. 2 of 2000

The Act gives effect to a citizen's constitutional right of access to information held by the State and any information that is held by another person and which is required for the exercise or protection of any rights, in order to:

- ❑ foster a culture of transparency and accountability in public services by giving effect to the right of access to information; and

- ❑ promote a society in which the people of South Africa have effective access to information to enable them to exercise and protect all of their rights.

A Service Delivery Charter is an important means of complying with these mandates and giving full expression to provisions of the law.

The Public Service Regulations of 2001

Part C of the Regulations states that an executing authority shall establish and sustain a service delivery improvement programme for his/her department that must include:

- a) an identification of the type of actual and potential customers and the main services to be provided to them;
- b) the existing and future arrangements with the department's actual and potential customers;
- c) the customer's means of access to the services, the barriers to increased access and the mechanisms or strategies to be utilised progressively to remove the barriers so that access can be increased;
- d) the existing and future service standards for the main services to be provided;
- e) the existing and future arrangements on how information about the department's services are provided; and
- f) the current and future complaints system or mechanisms.

An executing authority shall establish an annual statement of public service commitment (a Service Delivery Charter) which will contain the department's service standards that citizens and customers can expect and which will explain how the department will fulfil each of the standards.

All employees have a responsibility to implement the tenets of the Charter

Whilst the executing authority remains accountable for the service delivery of his or her department and the development of Service Delivery Charters by institutions or components within the department which interface directly with the public, all employees have a responsibility to implement the tenets of the Charter(s) and to improve service delivery.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Staff need to uphold the provisions of the Code of Conduct

In order to ensure that the implementation of the Service Delivery Charter meets our expectations as well as those of the customers, it will be useful to remind staff of the following provisions of the Public Service Code of Conduct, published on 5 January 2001, which requires frontline staff to:

- ❑ identify themselves to customers when rendering services;
- ❑ serve the public in an unbiased and impartial manner, without discrimination on the grounds of religion, colour, social origin or political affiliation, so as to create confidence in the Public service;
- ❑ be friendly and smile at all times when dealing the public;
- ❑ treat members of the public as customers who are entitled to
- ❑ receive good standards of service;
- ❑ address customers in the language they understand;
- ❑ provide services efficiently, without asking for favours in return for the services;
- ❑ provide the services within a reasonable time;
- ❑ provide full, accurate and up-to-date information;
- ❑ treat all customers with equal dignity; and
- ❑ satisfy the customer at all times.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- ❑ A Service Delivery Charter developed and displayed at strategic points;
- ❑ Standards are met and continuously raised – improved service delivery;
- ❑ An increase in the number of compliments or complaints – an indication that customers know what standards to expect.

OUTCOMES

The primary outcomes of successfully implementing a Service Delivery Charter will be:

- ❑ improved service delivery;
- ❑ greater job satisfaction for public servants;
- ❑ more satisfied customers; and
- ❑ the accelerated transformation of the Public service.

Secondary outcomes will be:

- ❑ greater consultation with customers;
- ❑ better communications with customers; and
- ❑ fewer complaints by customers.

CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES

The main challenge to developing and implementing a Service Delivery Charter successfully are given below, together with measures to reduce the challenge.

Challenge: Getting buy-in and commitment from employees

Someone once said: "There is nothing more difficult to take in the hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things." This applies absolutely to the development and implementation of a Service Delivery Charter, especially against the backdrop of the pre 1994 public service, where addressing the needs of the people was not a priority.

***Get buy-in and
commitment, train and
develop staff to drive
the process***

In all change there is a risk that the various means employed to achieve the change become the whole focus of attention and that the means are thus confused with the ends. It is not the Service Delivery Charter that is important, but rather the commitment of all staff to service delivery. It is crucial to get buy-in and support from all staff.

Response:

- ❑ The development and implementation of a rigorous Service Delivery Improvement Plan.
- ❑ Training and development programmes on *Batho Pele* and service delivery implementation.

Challenge: Unrealistic expectations of customers

The Charter, although implicitly a sound practice, can produce scepticism on the part of customers and staff alike.

Response:

Set realistic targets

- ❑ When consulting customers, do it intelligently and realistically. Make them aware of resources and the bigger picture of the transformation process. Set realistic targets.

- ❑ Make sure that management leads by example and lives the elements of the charter. If management is luke warm to the Charter, staff cannot be expected to take it seriously.

Challenge: Cost of developing the Charter

The development and implementation of a Charter cannot be done overnight or on the cheap, if it is to achieve its purpose and include *Batho Pele*. Consultation takes time and effort and consideration must be given to the specific needs of end users.

Response

Consider cost and time implications and work all phases into the costing – from scanning the environment to communicating the Charter.

Challenge: Communication

If no structured communication plan/strategy is in place, communication may not reach all audiences. Thus both the consultation process and the publication of services and standards may be jeopardised.

Response:

A communication strategy serves as a vehicle for Batho Pele

Develop and implement a well-structured communication strategy to ensure that it serves as a vehicle for *Batho Pele*. Think creatively about imparting information to all audiences and again consider the cost implications.

Challenge: People may become tired of buzzwords such as “transformation”, “service delivery” and “Batho Pele”.

People easily become inured to buzzwords and they can quickly lose their impact, especially if they are used indiscriminately.

Response:

Announce positive results of the programme

- ❑ Adopt a fresh approach to the process. Encourage staff to become custodians of the process so that they can take ownership of the Charter.
- ❑ Announce positive results of the programme and reward individuals who have been particularly instrumental in making the Charter come alive.

STEP 1

WHO ARE WE?

This is easy. The answer will take the form of: “We are the Department of “

STEP 2

WHERE CAN WE BE FOUND?

This is not quite as simple as step one. All the physical locations of the department where services are delivered to end-users must be identified and listed, clearly giving the address details.

In addition, telephone and fax numbers must be provided for each location, as well as e-mail addresses, if applicable. Where call centres have been established, these must be identified with their corresponding address details. It is critically important that the days of the week and times during which the services may be accessed are clearly stated.

It is preferable to provide all this information by geographical area so that end-users can establish the most suitable location for their needs. For remote locations it is advisable to provide full directions of how to get to the service point.

STEP 3

It is necessary here to list all the services provided by the department and then to specify which services are available at each location.

In addition, full information must be provided on what the customers need to do or take with them in order to access the services, for example, ID documents, birth certificates, photographs, medical histories, educational qualifications and certificates, etc.

A commitment to the *Batho Pele* principles will enhance the Charter. It is suggested that a statement along the following lines be included here: “The provision of our services will be based on the principles of *Batho Pele* and we undertake to honour these principles by ... (indicate here how you will give force to each of the *Batho Pele*

principles in delivering the relevant services).“

This is not a simple exercise and requires thought and discussion with staff as well as end-users. Some of the best ways to consult with staff and customers is by way of focus groups. These groups should be representative and often work best with a mixture of staff and customers. The facilitator must be a mature and preferably senior member of staff, well-versed in the services of the department.

It must be accepted that the findings of these focus groups may require the department to review or even revise some of its services and how they are provided.

Once the focus groups have been held it is useful to send out questionnaires to a cross section of end-users, asking the same sort of questions addressed during the focus groups. This may provide additional important information and will serve as a useful control mechanism.

The same focus groups and questionnaires can be used to provide the input to the next two steps.

STEP 4

OUR SERVICE STANDARDS

Having established realistic and relevant service standards through the focus groups each service should be listed with the standards applicable to this particular service. The standards may be introduced with the following statement: “We have set the following minimum standards for the level and quality of the services we provide:”

Remember that your customers, as a result of previous disadvantage, may not be in a position to articulate appropriate standards and may thus not expect much from you. On the other hand their expectations might be totally unrealistic. The focus groups should help them understand more clearly what they can rightfully expect from your department.

Times change and customers' needs may change with them. In order to monitor standards and customer satisfaction it will be necessary, at

regular intervals to review the standards. Again, focus groups can be used to facilitate this process. However, a simple questionnaire at service points is a useful interim device to ensure that service delivery is still on track and meeting the needs and expectations of customers. This questionnaire can also be used to determine changed needs or new expectations.

STEP 5

HOW WE WILL DEAL WITH QUERIES AND COMPLAINTS

Here customers will be reassured about their rights by committing your department to *redress* procedures and *courteous* assistance.

If your department has set up a complaints/help desk, this must be clearly stated, with full particulars and an explanation on how to access this service, with full details, including the names of staff in attendance. You may wish to follow the following guidelines in completing this section of your Charter:

- ❑ When you write to us we shall:
 - Acknowledge your letter or e-mail within () days of receiving it.
 - Provide you with the name of the person handling your query.
 - Provide you with a reference number, where applicable.
 - Tell you when you can expect a full response.
 - Provide you with telephonic and e-mail contact details, for example, "You can call or e-mail Mr/Ms ... on (telephone number and area code) or at (e-mail address) between () and () from Monday to Friday.
- ❑ If you have a complaint:
 - Tell us.
 - We shall apologise and try to put things right immediately.
 - If you are not happy with our response you can contact Mr/Ms ... on
- ❑ Please tell us what you think of our services and standards and whether you think we are meeting them. WE would appreciate any comments and/or criticism you may have. Please contact :
Mr/Ms () at: Telephone (..) Fax: () e-mail (..)

Finally, under the heading of standards, it is useful to give an undertaking to publish the results of the department's performance in a publication available to the public. The following statement may be helpful: "We shall publish the results of our performance against our standards for the year 2002 in (name of publication) on (date)."

STEP 6 –

YOUR RIGHTS

Here you must list the customer's rights. We suggest the following: You have the right to all the *Batho Pele* principles, especially the following:

- ☐ Courteous behaviour at all times.
- ☐ Full information.
- ☐ Prompt and efficient service.
- ☐ Redress and an apology for lapses in our service.

The above may need to change, depending on the department and the nature of the services provided.

STEP 7

YOUR OBLIGATIONS

While it is critically important that the Service Delivery Charter should spell out the rights of customers, they need to be reminded that service delivery is a two-way street and that they have certain obligations as well. For example, you may wish to remind them that they too need to be courteous and civil and respect the dignity of officials they encounter.

SOME KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Once the Service Delivery Charter has been completed it should be widely distributed to customers and displayed within the department, especially at service points.

USEFUL REFERENCES

Visit the DPSA Website for White Papers, Acts, and other useful information :

<http://www.dpsa.gov.za/>

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

- ❑ Presidential Strategic Leadership Development Programme;
- ❑ Improving Service Delivery: Senior Managers' Programme;
- ❑ Service Delivery Implementation: Operational Managers' Programme;
- ❑ Excellent Customer Service: A Training Programme for Frontline, Back Office and Support Personnel

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