

Challenges in Managing Change: The Case of Performance Management System at the University of Botswana¹

Lewis B. Dzimbiri

University of Botswana

Abstract:

One of the features of effective organisations is the ability to adapt to an ever changing social, political, economic and technological world which has a huge impact on growth, development and performance. The process of managing that change is riddled with various challenges which managers and employees have to surmount to ensure a smooth transition from the current state to the desired state of affair. Higher education institutions like universities which want to be effective in teaching, learning, research and outreach programmes and therefore inject a strategic impact on their public and private sector clientele need to embrace change. Founded in 1982, the University of Botswana in Southern Africa, has undergone various processes of transformation to ensure that it is effective in its mandate as the only public university over the past two and half decades. Based on documentary sources and the author's experience as an academic member and facilitator of departmental and faculty strategic plans as part of the change process at the University, this paper analyses the change process which the University of Botswana went through in introducing and maintaining a new performance management system. It identifies benefits, challenges and lessons involved in managing this change initiative.

Introduction

The University of Botswana, like other organisations in the public sector in Botswana has been engaged in numerous change programmes to enhance its effectiveness in a dynamic social and economic environment. Some of the changes have included housing policy for domiciled academic staff, introduction of the semester system for course work, introduction of evaluation of teaching and learning, decentralisation of research management, appointment and promotion criterion for academic staff, pension schemes, car parking policy and more recently, performance management system (PMS). Based on documentary sources and the author's experience as both an academic member and facilitator of departmental and faculty strategic plans, this paper

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analyzes the change process which the University of Botswana went through in introducing and maintaining a new performance management system. It identifies benefits as well as challenges involved in the introduction of this reform initiative. The first part provides a theoretical framework for change management in modern organisations and clarifies the rationale for performance management vis-à-vis performance appraisal. The second part introduces the University of Botswana's previous performance appraisal system and the process of change to the current PMS. The third part looks at the benefits as well as challenges of the system. The final part brings together lessons learned and concludes the paper.

The Concept and Process of Change

The management of change is a process that has been with humanity time immemorial and will continue to be with us for many decades to come as long as people continuously adjust to the world of work (Randall, 2004). Change is a process in which an organization goes through in order to effectively achieve its vision and goals (Burnes, 2000). Organizational change relates to planned change aimed at addressing the relationship between the organization and its environment and also the relationship between different parts of the organization (Kang and Anderson, 2002). This change is important because workplaces are changing so quickly and organizations are facing challenges of various dimensions. Movements in external conditions such as competition, innovation, public demand and government policy require that new strategies and new methods of working and outputs be devised for an organization to survive. Internal factors also promote change in that managers and other members of an organization may seek not just its maintenance but also its growth. Theories of change describe the different stages through which planned change may be effected in an organization. There are a number of theories or models like Lewin's Change Model, Planning Model and Action Research Model used to explain change in organizations (Cummings, & Worley, 2001). Lewin viewed change process as consisting of three steps: unfreezing, moving and refreezing. Unfreezing involves reducing those forces maintaining the organization's behavior at its present level. Unfreezing is accomplished by introducing information that shows discrepancies between behaviors desired by organizational members and those behaviors they currently exhibit. Moving shifts the behavior of the organization/department to a new level – it involves developing new behaviors, values and attitudes through changes in organizational structures and processes. Finally, refreezing stabilizes the organization at a new state of equilibrium.

Action Research is a process of systematically collecting research data about an ongoing system relative to some objective, goal, or need of that system; feeding these data back into the system; taking actions by altering selected variables within the system based both on the data and on hypotheses; and evaluating the results of actions by collecting more data. The Planning model views planned change primarily from the perspective of the organization development consultant

working with organizational members through a seven-step process: entering and contracting, diagnosis, feedback, planning, implementing interventions, evaluation and institutionalization (Cummings, & Worley, 2001).

The entry phase is the initial step in the change process where the organisation contacts a change agent about potential help needed in addressing an organisational issue. The consultant who may be a professional from outside or inside the organisation might assess the issues at hand against his/her competence and experience before signing the contract. The second stage, diagnosis, involves collecting data, analysing it and providing feedback to the client. Diagnosing is a critical phase because any solution that is provided depends on the diagnostic phase. The solution is a mutual agreement between the organisational members and the consultant. It involves collecting the pertinent information about current operations, analysing data and drawing conclusions for potential change and improvement. Everyone who contributed information should have an opportunity to learn about the findings of the assessment process. Feedback motivates members of the organisation to solve organisational problems and develop appropriate interventions (Manzini, 1988).

Intervention design or action plan is aimed at resolving specific problems and to improve particular areas of organisational functioning identified in the diagnosis phase. This phase distils recommendations from the assessment of feedback, considers alternative actions and focuses on interventions. An implementation plan is developed at this stage based on the assessed data and the change process is carried out. The implementation stage involves executing the interventions planned. This is the period when the transformation of the organisation from the current stage to the desired stage has to be managed. This step involves judgments about whether an intervention has been implemented as intended and whether it has achieved the desired results. Evaluation provides members of the organization with feedback interventions. Finally, once an intervention has been implemented and is effective, attention is directed at institutionalizing the changes, thereby making them a permanent part of the organization's normal functioning (Robey, 1986, Cummings and Worley, 2005). In this paper the planning model is used to illustrate the change to PMS at UB.

The Context of Change in the University of Botswana

From the 1940s up to 1970s the state expanded its activities for various reasons in the developing world, communist countries of the former Soviet Block and in the western capitalist nations of Europe and the United States of America. From the 1980s a big u-turn in the expanded role of the state was witnessed. The state started rolling back in almost all these countries. (Sharma, 2006). When the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America became independent, the state in these countries become central in the role of eradicating poverty and development of their economies due to dearth of indigenous entrepreneurial class. The state had to develop

infrastructure and provide public utilities such as water, electricity, housing and telecommunications. It had also to operate industries, agriculture, banking, marketing, and various commercial activities.

However, the continued poverty and economic crises in those countries led to a realization that their continued economic problems were largely due to the public policies, which resorted to large public sector, nationalization and excessive controls over the economy. There was a lot of mismanagement, nepotism, political patronage, large and rigid bureaucracy and widespread corruption in administration. Consequently, good governance became a primary objective of all governments and their public management machinery all over the world. The essential characteristics of good governance are: the rule of law, democracy, public accountability of government, public participation in public policy making and implementation, decentralization in governance, independence of the judiciary, merit principle in public management, equity in public policy, high standards of ethics and integrity in public bureaucracy and political leadership, responsible, responsive and humane public bureaucracy. (Sharma, 2007; Kaul, 2000)

This was followed by the emergence of New Public Management (NPM), which seeks to implant a new approach in the traditional public administration for enhancing efficiency, productivity, improved service delivery and accountability. NPM emphasizes result orientation as opposed to the process orientation of the traditional public administration. It advocates de-bureaucratization, offloading, downsizing or right sizing the public bureaucracy, greater reliance on private sector, service delivery through contracting out and outsourcing, public private partnership, competition, reliance on market forces, and creation of an enabling environment for the growth of private enterprise. Ayeni (2002) documents numerous public sector reforms in 40 Commonwealth countries including Botswana.

Although Botswana has achieved a lot since independence, it was still felt that the public sector was inefficient, under performing and lacked job accountability, ownership and lacked sensitivity to the public in service provision (GoB, 2003). Wastage of resources in ministries and departments and lack of proper planning and management of funds was widespread and inefficient management of human resources resulted in the creation of unnecessary posts in ministries and departments. To improve the quality of service delivered and satisfy customers and stakeholders, the Government of Botswana introduced reforms such as Work Improvement Teams (WIT), Performance Based Reward System (PBRs), Decentralization and Organization & Methods. The problem of poor service delivery still loomed. Government came up with the initiative of improving internal processes by introducing Business Process Reengineering whose recommendations included the introduction of PMS to ensure efficient and effective service delivery and the improvement and sustainability of high productivity at all levels (GoB, 2003). The Botswana National Productivity Centre (BNPC) was commissioned to introduce PMS in the public

service with the help of Performance Centre- an American Consultancy Group. Ministries and independent departments formulated strategic plans with vision, mission statements, key result areas, goals, objectives and values. These strategic plans were meant to direct ministries and departments to deliver services in a focused manner. Performance Improvement Co-coordinators (PICs) were appointed in each ministry to coordinate PMS. Consequently, ministries, departments, parastatal or statutory bodies including the UB and local authority institutions embraced PMS as an instrument for managing and evaluating performance.

Issues on performance management and performance appraisal have not been the concern of private sector organizations only. Governments have also shown increasing interest in performance management and the need to develop appropriate performance management processes and measures since the 1980s. As organizations are human groupings constructed to achieve specific goals, their performance is a sum total of individual employees in the organization. Traditional public administration model did not pay significant attention to the measurement of performance. Individual employees were appraised confidentially; without targets and the approach was not only historical but also without an opportunity of the employee to improve on his/her performance. Performance appraisal, as appraisal in the traditional public administration model is called, laid much emphasis on behavioral or personality characteristics like loyalty, dependability, punctuality, honesty etc as central attributes for evaluating individual employees. Not only was individual performance of little concern to management, it was never linked to departmental, divisional and organizational strategic goals and objectives. Performance management system is an effort to improve performance, efficiency, accountability and effectiveness of public sector organizations.

Performance management is defined as a strategic and integrated approach to delivering sustained success to organizations by improving the performance of the people working in them and by developing the capabilities of teams and individual contributors. It is concerned with managing the organization, all aspects of employee performance and development, stakeholders' satisfaction and finally, is a mechanism for communication and involvement (Armstrong, 2003). It is based on the principle of management by agreement or contract rather than management by command. It emphasizes development and the initiation of self-managed learning process plans as well as the integration of individual and corporate objectives. It is a continuous and flexible process that involves managers and their subordinates within a framework that sets out how they can best work out to achieve the required results. Its focus is on the future performance planning and improvement rather than on retrospective performance appraisal. It provides the basis for regular and frequent dialogues among managers, subordinates and teams on performance and development needs (Armstrong, 2003)..

PMS relies on performance reviews to make decisions on performance-related pay, as well as individual and team development plans. It is also a process for measuring outputs in the form of delivered performance compared to expectations expressed as objectives, targets, standards and performances indicators. PMS links organizational vision, mission, values and strategic goals to divisional, departmental and individual goals, objective, tasks and targets (Hughes, 2003; Henekom, et al. 1987; Armstrong, 2003).

University of Botswana's Performance Evaluation to 2006

Before the introduction of PMS, the evaluation of academic staff members was retrospective. At the end of every academic year, each head of department would distribute forms, Academic Staff Annual Performance Appraisal Form for faculty to complete. The purpose of the annual performance appraisal meeting between the staff member and the Head of department was to provide an opportunity to discuss the individual's professional activities and development during the previous academic year. The record of the meeting provided a brief progress report, which could be referred to subsequently when a staff member was reviewed for confirmation, crossing the bar, renewal of contract or promotion. The report also provided a basis for the recommendation to Faculty Appointment, Promotions and Review Committee (FAPRC) or equivalent for a merit award and the granting or withholding of an annual increment. The form consisted of two major parts. The first part consisted of the academic member's personal particulars and his/her report which was in connection with activities undertaken during the year of appraisal [i.e. August to July). Under this section, a lecturer would focus on teaching by listing courses taught (including number of students), tutorials, research supervision, laboratory supervision, internship, teaching practice and project supervision.

Under research, a lecturer had to list and describe research activities undertaken during the year. Publications had to be listed, and for the forthcoming publications, letters of acceptance were attached. In terms of service to the University the lecturer had to list all service activities undertaken to the University, the profession and community. Service to the University include chairing task forces and departmental or university committees, acting as mentors to junior colleagues, serving as a University representative on external bodies. Service to the professions include external examining internationally for affiliated institutions, teaching practice moderation for affiliated institutions, co-ordinating workshops, seminars and in-service activities, organisation of conferences, membership in professional committees and associations nationally and internationally, editorial work for professional newsletters/bulletins, acting as an external assessor for promotion of candidates at other universities etc. Service to the community would include activities such as serving as resource person/organiser at workshops, seminars, advisor to community organisations, participation in community projects, membership of government commissions, parastatal boards etc.

The second part consisted of the head of department's assessment of teaching, research and publications, service activities and academic leadership (for heads and professors). The head would provide overall comments on the candidates' weaknesses, strength and opportunities for growth. The head would recommend a merit or an increment. The staff member would, after reading the comments of the head, write his/her own comments, sign and date the form and return to the head who would later table it at the FAPRC. This would be endorsed by the dean and forwarded to the Human Resources Department for implementation of merit award or increment. Eventually a copy of the form would come to the lecturer for records.

Apart from the list of courses the staff member outlined as evidence of teaching, the head relied also on evaluation by students through 'Student Evaluation of Courses and Teaching' (SECAT) which focused on teaching and the course. Under teaching, students are asked to rate the quality of teaching on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). The key questions relate to the teacher's command of the subject, communication, enthusiasm, ability to explain, organization and structuring of sessions, interest generated by the teacher, teacher's concerns of students' welfare and how good he/she does the job. In relation to the course, the focus is on the organization of the course, clarity of objectives, course material, course guides and handouts, set texts and reading list, availability of staff for consultation, fairness of the assessment system and general management of the course. Students are also asked to evaluate teaching and the course by being asked what they liked most about the course, how the course could be improved, ways in which the teacher could improve and any general suggestions that would help improve their university education. The feedback is sent to the lecturer after the SECAT office has analyzed students' responses (Dzimhiri, 2006).

Although it was historical in orientation, one of the strengths associated with this appraisal approach is that it was open. The staff member was able to read what the head's assessment was and was also free to comment or engage in a meaningful conversation with his/her head in relation to the rating. One of the weaknesses of this type of appraisal is that apart from teaching, there was no prior knowledge and planning of what exactly one was going to do in research, publications, service to the university, profession and community. In other-words, whatever one did was what was appraised irrespective of whether it had a bearing on the objectives and goals of the department, faculty or the University.

The Change to PMS

It has been pointed before that the public sector in Botswana has since the 1990s embarked on a number of reforms including PMS to ensure effective service delivery. The University of Botswana as a public sector institution had to respond accordingly. The Vision of the University of Botswana with a student population of over 15,000 and an academic staff complement of close to 1,000 (UB, 2006a), is to be a 'leading academic centre of excellence in Africa and the world' and its mission

is 'to advance the intellectual and human resource capacity of the nation and the international community'. Core values include a more focus on students, academic freedom, academic integrity, cultural authenticity, internationalism, professional and ethical standards, social responsibility, equity, autonomy, public accountability and productivity (UB, 2006b).

The University's commitment to excellence is the key driving force behind the change to PMS. According to UB, a university categorized as Excellent would share the following characteristics:

- Academic staff renowned for research and scholarship;
- Highly competent teaching staff;
- An effective system for managing both the academic and non-academic business of the university;
- Competent students who are motivated to learn;
- Resources such as laboratories and libraries that fully support the University's research and teaching activities. In order to be viewed as "excellent" by the constituencies that watch and comment on the quality of universities, UB must have an outstanding record in the five areas identified above (UB, 2005)

The new Performance Management System (PMS) was intended to help UB move toward achievement of high standards by having academic staff renowned for research, scholarship and teaching ability and by having effective managers for the academic and non-academic business of the University. Apart from the wider public service reforms in Botswana, PMS at UB was therefore driven by a commitment to quality and the quality assurance process as it provides an objective approach to evaluating how well each individual academic staff performs the three core activities of teaching, research and service.

The Approach to PMS at UB

There are two levels at which PMS can be approached- macro and micro levels. That is, at the broad university-wide level and at the operational departmental level. We shall examine both. At the macro level there were five steps through which PMS was approached. These are, scanning the internal and external environment, planning and design of the system, implementation, mid term review and final review.

Step 1: Scanning the environment.

The need to scan the internal and external environment is the best starting point for an effective PMS which the UB introduced in 2005. Although UB did not conduct a thorough scanning of its environment to identify factors that would affect the successful implementation of PMS, it nonetheless developed a strategic plan with a vision, mission statement, values and strategic goals mentioned before. The UB strategic plan which is also in line with the national vision 2016 was the basis for faculty strategic plans which are also in turn the basis for departmental strategic plans. The latter are also the basis for individual performance plans and objectives.

Step 2: Plan and design of PMS

The planning and design of the PMS was top-down in approach although there was some limited involvement through departmental representatives on the PMS Project Team. The PMS Manual was produced by the PMS Internal Project Team (IPT), convened by the Project Champion. The PMS Consultants, Albertyn, Hugo and Associates provided specialist advice. Much of the work was done by three working groups : Support Services, Academic disciplines and Development. The IPT produced the Overall Design Principles document followed by Detail Design Guidelines. Both these policy documents were approved by the Steering Committee (chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, with the following people as members: the Deputy Vice Chancellors, a Dean's representative, a Support Services representative, the HR Director and a representative of the Centre for Academic Development). Approval followed periods of extensive consultation. The overall Design Principles and the essence of the detail and design guidelines were captured in the PMS Policy Statement

Step 3: Implementation

While the overall framework for the implementation of the PMS was developed, strategic plans for faculties and departments and individual performance plans were not in place. Thus, implementation started before most departments had finalised their departmental strategic plans. Whatever performance contracts were agreed upon and signed by individual lecturers, other support or managerial staff and their supervisors or heads, were in the majority of cases, not aligned with the faculty and university wide strategic plan. Again it was implemented without incorporating a human resource strategy which could have taken into account staff morale, facilities and equipment although these were eventually reviewed and incorporated during the implementation process. A pilot phase planned for January 2006 was delayed because of the need to train staff, design performance contracts, develop departmental plans and ensure that staff has signed their contracts. Thus, the implementation was done before all aspects of the framework and required activities were put in place.

Step 4: Mid-term Review of PMS

There was an initial pilot phase which was done towards the end of 2006 and feedback from academic staff members through departmental and faculty board meetings regarding PMS formed the basis for the review of the design and implementation of PMS. However there was no inbuilt mechanism to incorporate other stakeholders like students, support and employers (Mpabanga, 2007).

Step 5 Final Review and Rewards

This involved an assessment of what was planned and what has actually done. Scores were given and this formed the basis for the recommendation on rewards. This point will be elaborated later under micro level analysis.

Planning and Measurement for Academic staff

Measurement of academic staff is an example of the micro level analysis. There are six generic steps in the PMS which academic, managerial and support staff follow to complete the process. These steps are developing key performance areas KPAs, developing key performance indicators KPI, developing objectives, performance agreement stage, observe and feedback, final review and reward decisions. Developing key performance areas (KPA) provides the first step for both the performance agreement and the individual development plan processes. KPA's belong to the job and not to the incumbent (job-holder). They are the main areas in which results must be obtained in order to realise the core purpose of the job. Teaching, research, service, academic leadership are KPAs for a senior academician. KPA weights provide an indication of the relative importance of each KPA. The total of KPA weights shall be 100%. For example, in table 1 below, the lecturer planned that his teaching would constitute 45%, research 40% and service 15%. The next step is developing key performance indicators (KPI). This is a crucial step in the performance measurement process. A KPI is a yardstick of performance in quantifiable terms. The individual lecturer formulates key performance indicators for each KPA to ensure that measurement can be done easily. Formulating KPIs helps to develop measurable objectives.

Table1: KPA's , KPI and Objectives

| KPA | KPI | Objectives |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| Teaching 45% | 1. Teaching load 2. Tests and assignments 3.Students consultation etc | Teach 3 courses per semester (6 courses per year) 2 pieces of assignments per semester 6 hours per week etc |
| Research 40% | Book Refereed journal paper Book chapter, etc. | 2 chapters per year 2 journal articles sent to editors per year 2 book chapters sent to editors |
| Service 15% | Departmental responsibilities Moderation of exams etc | Registering students for two semesters 4 sets of Board minutes per semester 3 papers moderated per semester. Etc |

Source: UB form modified 2007

Developing objectives is the third step: This is what the lecturer aims to achieve, in specific terms. Objectives must be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time bound (SMART). The underlying premise for individual objectives is to consider the institutional, divisional and departmental plan when formulating them.

Signing the performance agreement is the fourth step. This is an undertaking by the lecturer to achieve a set of objectives. Thus after agreeing on the KPAs, KPIs and objectives both the head of department and the lecturer sign the document. The head undertakes to support the employee in any form say providing funds, arranging fewer lecture hours or providing training opportunities. Each of them keep a copy of the agreement. The fifth step is involves observing and providing feedback. This can be described as monitoring the performance of the key performance areas of teaching, research and service as work progresses. Constant feedback with the head, if there are any problems, is part of this step too. However, an interim review can be arranged to discuss progress so far before the end of the year to ensure that corrective measures have been taken. The last step is final review and rewards. Evaluation of teaching, research and service is currently measured in the same manner as before in terms of performance indicators and we do not, therefore, need to repeat what has been detailed before.

Towards the end of the year, the Human resource department circulates a form and an elaborate timetable for staff members to fill their actual performance and have it discussed with the head or their supervisors. The rewards associated with specific levels of performances such as outstanding, excellent, very good, good etc are also circulated at this point in time. For academic members the document had to be filled by a lecturer by transferring from the performance agreement form what was agreed at the beginning of the year onto the new form under the appropriate column (What was planned), and then under each objective, the lecturer would fill what actually was done under teaching, research and service. The head of department would verify and certify the actual performance by putting a comment under each objective. The head would discuss the weighting of the performance and award a score under each key performance area. The lecturer would also read through the head's comments and then give his/her comments under an appropriate column. Thereafter the head would finalise the overall rating and the two would each sign and write their comments. The completed form would be like the modified form in table 2 below. The form would then be discussed at FAPRIC before being submitted to the Human Resource Department for implementing the recommended reward.

Table 2: Showing both planned Actual performance and ratings.

| KPA | KPI | Objectives | Result end of Year (Staff) | Result end of Year (HOD) | Rating | Comments |
|-------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Teaching 45% | 1. Teaching load | Teach 3 courses per s mester (6 | Taught 4 courses | Yes, he did more than | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--|---|---|---|-----------|--|
| | 2. Tests and assignments 3. Students consultation etc | courses per year) 2 pieces of assignments per semester 6 hours per week etc | Did as planned Did as planned | planned Verified as correct Could not verify but contact hours are posted on his door | 43 | |
| Research 40% | Book Refereed journal paper Book chapter etc | 2 chapters per year 2 journal articles sent to editors per year 2 book chapters sent to editors | Completed three chapters Sent 4 papers Sent three book chapters | Verified Verified Verified | 37 | |
| Service 15% | Departmental responsibilities Moderation of exams, etc. | Registering students for two semesters 4 sets of Board minutes per semester 3 papers moderated per semester, etc. | Did as planned 5 sets of minutes were done Moderated 5 papers per semester, etc | Verified Verified- Verified Etc | 14 | |

Total Score

94%

Signature: (Staff member) _____

Signature

(HOD) _____

Source: Modified UB form 2007

As can be noted from the above form, the lecturer was rated at 94% overall. This demonstrates that he was an excellent performer who achieved more than what was planned in many respects. According to UB reward schedule, this performance attracts a reward in the form of a lump sum worth half of one's salary and one notch increment in the salary scale. In case of a lecturer is at the top notch of his salary, then he would be entitled to 7% of his annual salary given as a one-off payment.

The PMS Process at UB and the Planned Change Model.

It was noted at the beginning of this paper that every aspect of change needs to be built on a particular theoretical framework. From our experience of the transition from performance appraisal to performance management system at the UB, we note that the first stage which is entry and contracting out was well accomplished between the UB management and an external consultant (who used local change agents as well). However, the diagnostic stage was top down in that organisational members were not consulted by the consultant as would have been expected. This needs to be understood against the background that the policy change to PMS was already sanctioned by the University Council. The consulting team went ahead to develop KPA, KPI, objectives, balance score card and a detailed PMS manual which was eventually used for training staff as well as using it as a selling document. Under normal circumstances, we could expect lecturers, students, heads, deans, directors and managers to have been interviewed by the consultant about their work, measurement challenges in their work, satisfaction with current approaches and their reaction to the proposed change-performance management system- and how best the new system could be designed and implemented. These views would have helped to create a sense of ownership, commitment and would go a long way in reducing resistance. This would also be a very important step to understand the limitations of the proposed change in the context of the existing work environment- classroom space, equipment, number of student per class, teaching load and its implication on other key performance areas like research and service.

Thirdly, since consultation was not done at the earliest stage, it was not possible to engage departments fully in the design of the intervention (PMS). Though departments were represented by nominated individuals, the participation was not adequate enough for the consultants to benefit from diverse views, concerns and recommendations. Even some of the written reactions from faculties and departments on the implementation of the PMS were heavily sifted and few found their way into the final design and implementation (Mpabanga, 2007). As we shall note below, although the implementation process was replete with challenges, it has nonetheless proceeded well in terms of deadlines as well as envisaged processes. Faculty and departmental strategic

plans, training of members on the new system, and implementation were done although the pilot phase and other logistics were delayed.

However, one of the challenges UB faced is the lack of initial comprehensive consultation which meant that many activities were taking place simultaneously when they should have been sequential. Certain bolts and nuts of the PMS were being tightened whilst the system is being implemented. For example at the time of performance review, it was noted that the absence of a bench mark against which lecturers would be judged as average, above average or excellent was not thought of at the beginning. Consequently whatever number one had put down on research or publication as performance objective for the year was considered normal by individual departments. The problem with this is how to compare excellent between someone who planned to do 1 article per year against another who planned to do 3. The one who planned to do 1 and did it is considered to have scored 100% while the one who planned to do 3 but did 2 is rated 67%. The benchmarking to ensure comparability across departments was developed after the PMS was implemented for one year. In short, although UB has successfully introduced and implemented the PMS, it had not followed the Planned change model in its logical sense and this raises a number of challenges some of which we have noted.

Benefits, Challenges and Lessons from PMS at UB

Although the change to PMS has been a recent phenomenon and full advantages have yet to await a comprehensive evaluation after sometime, there are both benefits and challenges which can be pointed at this early stage. There are several benefits that can be outlined as having emanated from the introduction of PMS. Before PMS was introduced, UB had a vision, mission statement, values and strategy for the University. However, departments and faculties did not have strategic plans although they spelt out their visions, missions and goals in their undergraduate and postgraduate students' handbooks. Faculties and departments did not have annual performance plans and targets. Appraisal was based on unplanned achievement in teaching, research and service during the year. Thus, both teaching, research and service activities were undertaken by academic staff in a haphazard manner, i.e without having thought and planned about what needs to be accomplished during the following year. There was no basis for evaluating the achievement of departmental mission and goals because these were not linked to the performance of individual lecturers. With the introduction of PMS, departments and faculties have strategic plans, strategic goals, objectives, key performance areas, key performance indicators and targets and annual plans for academic staff. Regular feedback sessions with heads of department have further been strengthened. Another dimension is that PMS has proved to be a tool to help management and staff plan, monitor, manage and measure as well as reward performance (Mpabanga, 2007). PMS has also widened the scope of evaluators which now include peers in the assessment beside head of department, external reviewer and students.

However, there are a number of challenges associated with the introduction of PMS at UB. These include resistance by staff, phasing out of PMS, organisational factors, stakeholders' involvement, dilemma for unplanned for activities and reward system.

Resistance to change is one of the normal human responses to change that is little understood or is going to shift people from their comfort zones to the unknown destinations. Academic staff members were not receptive initially to the whole idea of PMS, first, because it was little understood. This was a result of the manner in which it was introduced. It was top down in that a decision was already taken at Council level that PMS be implemented as a new approach to managing performance. Consequently it was perceived as a management tool to control the performance of staff, especially by insisting on staff contract signing when staff did not fully understand what PMS was generally about and how they would benefit from it as individuals. Professors mounted severe criticisms over the entire system and tore it apart as irrelevant to the academic environment. Others argued, with deep conviction, that the system was too mechanistic and thereby having the potential to reduce the complex work of an academician to a technician.

The second challenge is the phasing of the change. The approach was 'to implement PMS now and take care of the rest later'. While there is absolutely no best time to handle each step, a more systematic approach to the introduction of the PMS would have yielded support from both academic and non academic staff. Because of the rush, implementation was taking place side by side with the development of strategic plans for department and faculties. The challenge was how to integrate the development of strategic plans for the entire organisation and those of faculties and department before designing and signing of individual contracts. It was this challenge that created a negative feeling against PMS. It was seen as being bulldozed by top management on very unwilling and cautious academic community.

The third challenge relates to organisational factors that are critical for the implementation of PMS. Some of the resistance to the change initiative emanated from staff discontent with teaching equipment like over-head projectors, data projectors, loud speakers and microphones (for large lecture theatres), the large numbers of students against small classroom space, among many others. There were perceived as inimical to an appropriate staff performance evaluation. Lecturers wondered why a hasty approach to their evaluation was introduced at a time when certain material conditions on the ground were not conducive to effective teaching, research and service performance. This was another area of commentary by various academic members during faculty and departmental meetings and feedback sessions on PMS. The majority felt that the best approach would be to address the shortcomings which would affect the effectiveness of the PMS. However, top management argued, convincingly at times, that the fact that certain material conditions were not conducive was because some support staff are not doing their job well. PMS was viewed as a mechanism which would address those shortcomings in the sense that support

staff would always be on their heels to ensure they fulfil their promise in those areas viewed by academic staff as deficient.

Failure to involve stakeholders at the very beginning is the fourth challenge to the effective implementation of PMS. Because it did not scan its environment to identify its strength, weaknesses, threats and opportunities, UB did not take into account the resource implications of introducing PMS, the concerns by employees, students and the expectation of employers of UB graduates in both the private, public and non-governmental organisations. The needs of the work environment have to be taken into account because we are not simply developing human resources for its own sake. UB is developing these resources to become more relevant to industry, commerce, public services and nongovernmental organisations (Dzimbiri, 2006). By not taking into account their needs, and the needs of the employees at UB and the students, a lot of invaluable resource for fine-tuning the PMS was lost.

The fifth challenge is that the introduction of PMS raises a big dilemma on how to handle unplanned activities during the life of the performance contract. The question is how to account for unplanned activities for which a lecturer did not agree with his head of department. These would include, for example, students references, request for assistance to help with dissertation or other works from students, other department or faculty. Does one say 'no' to these unplanned but increasingly important activities in academic circles simply because they are not included in the performance agreement? In short, will the emphasis on documented tasks to be performed not lead to minimum performance by academic staff? How can this be minimized? Linked to this problem is how to anticipate service to the community and university. Some of the activities of the university to which one is appointed to serve as a committee member cannot be anticipated. Appointment of boards of statutory bodies, commissions, boards of inquiries, and other vital committees are unpredictable. How does one plan for them? The author is reminded of how he reduced his planned weight on service to 15% and increased teaching and research to constitute 85% in total because he was not sure how much would come in the form of service during the year. While he did a lot on research and teaching, he was amazed that his service was far greater to have amounted to even 45%.

Lastly, but not the least, the development of a comprehensive reward system to ensure good performers are properly rewarded is a big challenge especially in an institution which has over 2,000 employees most of whom will still qualify for cash reward. To what extent can an institution which is not selling products produced by its staff rewards everyone at the end of every year without blowing-up the budget provided for its functioning? For example, at the end of the year when the majority expected to be rewarded handsomely, the University had half the money required to pay staff that performed well. Consequently, about 122 staff members in both

academic and administrative sections were rewarded. This created a sense of frustration among the majority who were not rewarded.

From the foregoing experience, it is clear that PMS is more superior in managing the performance of not just individuals but also departments, faculties and the university as a whole. There is a lot of logic in its design and implementation since university strategic plan is translated by faculties, departments and individuals. After all, organisational performance is achieved through the sum of individual performances in various departments and divisions put together. However, there are several lessons learnt such as stakeholders' involvement in planning and design, importance of training, the vital role of information technology, taking stock of the work environment, detailed guidelines for the PMS, subordinate-superior evaluation and top management commitment.

There is need to involve stakeholders at the very beginning of the change initiative in order to take account of various concerns and needs. This is possible through a proper scanning of the environment through workshops with various stakeholders. Training is an important aspect that brings some understanding of what change is being introduced and how it will be done. UB conducted a lot of workshops for team members, heads of departments and deans as well as at the level of departments. If all members of the organisation are to appreciate the new change, a lot need to be done in the area of increased awareness, communication and briefing. Again, the role of information technology is crucial to the success of the PMS process. UB has been endowed with good computer facilities and because every lecturer has a computer and that UB has an excellent functioning intra- and internet, it was easy to communicate thick documents to everyone. Lecturers would receive documents or any form of briefing from the Vice Chancellor or his deputies or those in charge of PMS, heads or deans instantly and act on them. Comments were also made by individuals and sent direct to appropriate offices by e-mail. The need to take stock of the work environment has been mentioned as a critical success factor in the change management process. If performance is to be enhanced, then it is imperative that the work environment should be carefully analysed and corrective action taken to handle inadequacies which might act as impediments to the envisaged change, otherwise PMS might be viewed as another 'reform ritual'. However, UB was successfully quick to respond to some of the emerging concerns about the teaching environment while the process was on because it had the commitment, financial and technical resources to handle such concerns at the 13th hour. This is unusual to many university institutions struggling with inadequate financial, material and human resources.

The question of subordinate-superior evaluation raises an important dimension. While superiors are to evaluate their subordinates at the end of the performance agreement period, there is no mechanism for subordinates to evaluate their superiors to ensure what is called '360

degree' mechanism ideal for PMS. How do subordinate take PMS seriously when they feel they cannot evaluate officially the performance of their bosses? It is necessary to build-in a mechanism for lecturers to evaluate their heads of departments; and heads to evaluate their dean; and deans to evaluate deputy vice chancellors who would evaluate the vice chancellor. After all students do evaluate lecturers; why should lecturers not evaluate their heads of department, deans etc. Detailed guidelines are an important ingredient to a successful PMS change initiative. There is need for continuous guidance from the relevant authority entrusted with championing the system. At UB, for example, a detailed 122 page PMS manual gives guidelines on the PMS process, performance measurement adapted to specific groups such as academic, management, support staff and daily paid workers. Illustrations, tables and charts guide heads and individual lecturers on how to derive their key performance areas, performance indicators, weighting of each objective or key performance area among others. Finally, top management commitment was crucial in the successful implementation of the PMS at UB. Given the reaction to PMS among senior academic staff at the university, a high level commitment by executive management is crucial to effective implementation of PMS. If top management is not committed and has not embraced the spirit of the change envisaged, it was easy to be derailed by well argued and thought-out counter-arguments which came from resistant academics.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the process of change from performance appraisal to performance management system at the University of Botswana. It has noted that the change followed system wide public service reform initiatives in the Botswana public service and the University's commitment to be a centre of excellence. Central to the paper are the concept and process of change, appraisal versus performance system, the process of design, implementation and evaluation of PMS at UB. It has also looked at benefits, challenges and lessons learnt. It is clear that there are a lot of benefits to be had in the introduction of PMS as an evaluation mechanism for academic staff performance and rewards. However the paper advocates the need for a comprehensive system wide consultation and involvement of all parties to be affected. This involvement needs to be done at every stage from beginning to the end. A top-down and haste approach to the introduction of the system can meet severe resistance. A step by step approach will allow for a sequential implementation of activities. Top management support is crucial for the successful implementation of PMS. Other factors include taking into account the realities of the work environment, the value of IT and the presence of detailed guidelines. In all, PMS provides the basis planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating performance in a more integrated manner and linked to university, faculty, departmental and individual academic staff's goals and objectives.

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