

STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE: A SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This overview of strategic public human resource management (SPHRM) establishes that human resource management (HRM) is a major influence in the strategic management of police affairs. The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) has frequently referred to the importance of strategic HRM and how the efficient application thereof can lead to effective public service delivery. Therefore, the concept of SPHRM holds considerable promise for improving service delivery in the South African Police Service (SAPS). However, to come to grips with this promise, it is necessary to analyze the concept with clear meaning within the context of police management. Public human resource management (PHRM) practices are undergoing continual transition since 1994, moving from former formal closed-mechanistic concepts to more flexible modern policies and strategies. In the face of these changes, police managers and HR specialists are currently expected to take on new roles and adopt different values within the broader public administration field. One of these roles provides impetus for the HRM function to achieve an elevated level of strategic integration with corporate and business strategies. The viewpoints used in this article provide support for arguing that SPHRM requires a systematic view of HR matters in the SAPS, opting for a conceptual framework representative of the kind found in Public Administration literature.

INTRODUCTION

From the literature consulted it is evident that HRM ought to be managed in accordance with a strategic approach. As Chiavenato (2001: 6) puts it: "HRM is becoming increasingly involved with strategic planning and the development of means by which people can work pro-actively toward the achievement of organizational objectives.

This means a broader perspective focused on objectives and results. It implies personal commitment by each worker to the company's goals." This is even more emphasized by Hays and Kearney (2001: 3) when they state that: "HRM is purportedly being viewed as a strategic staff enterprise aligned with organizational values, mission and vision." The need for such an approach in the South African public service was already being mooted in the early eighties because public service delivery is a strongly labor-intensive activity. In total the South African public service comprise more than one million people, of which the South African Police Service (SAPS) comprises roughly round about 140 000. This figure is likely to stay the same well into the foreseeable future. Because so many people are employed in the police service it is essential that police managers and HR specialists have to think many years ahead about the numbers and types of human resources they will need and also where such human resources will come from. Strategies, will therefore have to be developed within the parameters set by the budgetary process. *Strategic*, in this regard, will include adopting of wide-ranging techniques such as organizational redesign, process re-engineering and outsourcing (White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service of 1997: 31).

The contemporary acknowledgment of strategic HRM in the police service places major challenges on the shoulders of police employees in general. If the HR function is practised strategically, it is essential that the line function employees and HR specialists work closely together in an integrated manner within the policy guidelines set by the legislature and the administrative instructions to the political executives. Police managers have begun to experience more frequently the problems they face from day to day in terms of core service delivery objectives. Now more than ever, all police managers (line and specialists) will have to integrate the means and ends of HRM by developing policies, making plans and taking decisions with the institution's vision, mission, objectives, values, stakeholders and internal and external constraints in mind. As already indicated one of the challenges currently for police managers is that they are becoming more involved in formulating, integrating and implementing strategies for the institution. The efforts to formulate, integrate and implement sound HRM strategies are designed to achieve efficient police service delivery. Compared with the past, HRM are regarded nowadays in a new light in the police service. It is no longer viewed as a highly specialized and technical staff activity. There is a growing tendency to see human resources as a vitally important role player to the police service's success and that the HR function must be involved in all aspects of the institution's activities. Hence, it is essential that all police employees must perform at an optimal level so that the overall strategy, purpose and objectives of government can be achieved.

In the context of the above, the research aim for this article is to clarify the link between general strategic management of the SAPS and HRM. To this end, key concepts are explained and it depicts strategic HRM as a process that merges strategic management (planning) and HRM. The focus than falls on management decision making relating to the formulation of HR strategies. This is followed by a discussion of other long-term decisions relating to HRM. The main purpose of this article is analytical and descriptive rather than seeking comprehensive theoretical explanations of SPHRM.

MEANING OF STRATEGIC PUBLIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

In the spirit of what has been written so far one now needs to elaborate on the concept PHRM. If the term *strategic management* is applied to the human resource management field one can see that there are many overlaps. As noted by Swanepoel, Erasmus, Van Wyk & Schenk (2003: 172) "... by strategic human resource management we mean those long-term, senior management decisions and actions regarding employment relationships that are made and performed in a way that is fully integrated with the overall general strategic management of organizations." These authors go on to state that it chiefly concerns synchronizing and integrating the institution's strategic needs and plans with all those aspects stemming from and relating to the management of employees. A strategic approach to HRM requires that we focus on the contributions police managers and HR specialists make to the overall success of the police service institution. Thus, the way in which they contribute to the directing of the broader activities of the police service. From a strategic management perspective this has a major implication for public human resource management in particular. All police managers (including HR specialists) are part of the management cadre and all of them are responsible for reaching the objectives of government in the most efficient and effective way. Therefore, each and everyone of them has a role in strategy making, namely shaping and directing the police institution in the face of all opportunities and threats that arise in the environment (Tompkins 2002: 7-9).

This brings another aspect to the fore. Adopting this strategic perspective to HRM implies that the term "public human resource manager" is a misnomer. One way to elaborate on this is to argue that HR managers are not there to manage "human resources." Actually they are there to help manage the police service in its totality ensuring that it is resourced with the right HR knowledge, skills and competencies to help it to survive on the long term. At first sight, SPHRM should not be viewed as something separate from or subordinate to the formulation and/or implementation of corporate or business strategy (Swanepoel *et al* 2003: 172). To some extent, as this article suggests, it is also not considered as something which has only to do with either general strategy formulation or with strategy implementation. It will be argued that it forms an integral part of general strategic management.

Not so long ago PHRM followed the incremental pattern of planning for HR activities. These planning options mainly relate to the tradition that all police work (including the HR function) are associated with budgeting and that all decisions need to centre around budget allocations. This led to the incremental approach of managing police affairs where the search for alternative solutions to a problem was stopped when a satisfactory, but not necessarily optimal solution was found. It goes without saying, that the result of this pattern of police management normally resulted to minor adjustments in the *status quo* (Dresang 2002: 125-125). Consequently a situation develops where matters were not looked at strategically. This means that comprehensive solutions could not be found. In part, incrementalism, in terms of managing people strategically, means accepting current HR positions and structures as the basic framework within which one has to operate. Mainstream

public administration have always in the past during times of budgetary constraints, coped with less people by not filling vacancies rather than analyzing how they might creatively redeploy existing employees. Although routine work is essential in the HR field to ensure that work is done consistently, it is essential that comprehensive and rational decisions are taken for long term planning purposes. Thus, adopting a more modern SPHRM approach, excluding incrementalism, is more acceptable. At the centre of this new SPHRM approach lies the adoption of a set of procedures to guide those participating in the process. This is the viewpoint the author applies to SPHRM in this article. The procedures are designed to direct police managers to act systematically and to break out of the natural mould of making human resource decisions incrementally. This is a great advantage since it tends to lead to greater strategic success.

TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR STRATEGIC PUBLIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE

McGregor in Tompkins (1995: 32), places the strategic management of human resources on the shoulders of people at all levels of management. He is of the opinion that the application of strategic management principles requires all managers to "... learn to think systematically about the many connections between strategy and people." With a systematic view of SPHRM, formal HR plans are processed and can be considered as preceding actions. The term "processed" has been used to embrace the fact that SPHRM consist of different phases (steps), requiring of police managers to execute the process in a logical order. However, given the complexity of HR work we often influence the results of one phase is anticipated to influence the other. Therefore, the actual sequence of the phases is rarely neat and orderly (Dresang 2002: 128). These phases capture what is required to integrate strategic planning in the SAPS with HRM in such a way that could enhance institutional performance. But practising SPHRM in the SAPS may not be such an easy task. In its broadest sense of application, this depends on the size, complexity and resources of the Service.

Considering the corporate plan

What is important in all of these efforts of SPHRM is that it has to start with the existing corporate plan. Typically, the Service's corporate plan will contain the scope of its operations in service delivery terms. It will spell out the "who, why, what and whereto" of the institution. In essence, it refers to the domain that the institution stakes out for itself and to its *raison d'être*. In sum, determining the corporate plan includes: the formulation of a vision, mission, objectives, strategies and plans, consulting of the different stakeholders and also considering the relevant values that are at stake. The fundamental purpose of a vision and mission of any public service institution can be found in the needs of a society. Another important aspect that has to be specifically catered for in the corporate plan is the different stakeholders impacting on the human resource function. For example, the Department of Public Service and Administration plays an essential role in formulating

policies with regard to the functions and institutional arrangements of the police service and employment and other practices such as the promotion of broad representativeness, training, salaries, service conditions and labour relations (Public Service Review Report 1999/2000: 7). There are also other important stakeholder groups such as political office bearers, the Public Service Commission, trade unions, employment agencies, professional bodies, the Treasury, media and society (Cheminais, Bayat, van der Waldt & Fox 1998: 37-40). In addition, it also requires the full involvement of the HR executive in the process so that when a new police programme initiative is under consideration an analysis can be offered of projected human resource needs (Tompkins 2002; 100).

An important aspect that impacts on the corporate plan is the values underlying PHRM at a particular point in time. Nowhere in the field of public administration is the contest between the competing values played out more clearly than in the arena of HRM (Denhardt 1995: 197). Public HR systems continuously undergo transformation as a result of conflicting value orientations in the broader society. These value orientations are then altered into political priorities in the form of legislation, executive orders or judicial decisions (Tompkins 1995: 53). Managerial concern for applying these values, may during particular periods, differ from time to time depending on the policies of the political party in power. Some values may be more influential than other. (White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service 1997: 12).

Take a closer look at the vision, mission and values of HRM in the South African public service which is also applicable to the SAPS:

- *Vision.* Human resource management in the public service will result in a diverse, competent and well-managed workforce, capable of and committed to delivering high quality services to the people of South Africa.
- *Mission.* Human resource management in the public service should become a model of excellence, in which service to society stems from individual commitment instead of compulsion. The management of people should be regarded as a significant task for those who have been charged with that responsibility and should be conducted in a professional manner.
- *Values.* The following values which are derived from the 1996 Constitution, will underpin human resource management in the public service: fairness, equity, accessibility, transparency, accountability, participation and professionalism

Scanning environmental conditions

It should be clear from the foregoing discussion that PHRM takes place in a political environment. In practice, this means that HR decisions are affected by the interplay of politics and the issues surrounding the political arena. These political considerations become even more evident in the application of the different HRM rules and regulations (Tompkins 1995: 22). HR strategies do not exist in isolation and are essentially formulated to be used offensively or defensively to mediate between the preferences and frames of reference of police management and the perceived environmental threats, opportunities and constraints. Environmental influences need not, however, be accepted passively. Really,

proactive police managers and HR specialists will attempt to influence or shape their environments - even though such an approach will not necessarily make them immune to forces in the external environment. It should be noted, however, that the external environment does not only refer to factors or forces external to the Service but also to those internal to the institution but external to the institution's HR system. This means that when environmental scanning is done from the perspective of HR strategy formulation, not only are the relevant factors in the political, economic, social and technological (PEST) environments explored but also those related to institutionally internal variables. This requires, first of all, the alignment of the institution's general business strategies with the HR strategies. At this stage the question may be: which particular factors need to be analyzed? To draw up a complete list in this regard is neither possible nor feasible. Each public service institution is different and each institution's environmental make-up differs.

However, there is one key characteristic of the police service environment impacting on the HR function currently. This includes a changing worker corps. A demographic survey indicates that representivity figures already reached a stage where one can argue that racial and gender composition of the public service is approaching a situation where the make-up of the public service mirrors the make-up of the South African population. For example, in 1998 white males were 91 701, whilst in 2002 they were 70 991. This clearly shows that the presence of white males is decreasing in numbers in the public service. It is also evident that women are becoming increasingly the dominant group of workers. In 1998 there were 543 617 women working in the public service, whilst only 496 889 men occupied posts in the public service. This has serious implications for HRM in the SAPS from a strategic perspective. Dual career couples and single parents are some of the issues to address in this regard. This social trend calls for family involvement on the part of the government. An integral step in the development of strategic HR interventions, in this regard, is the putting into operation of flexitime systems, nursery schools and maternity leave arrangements (paternity leave benefits for the male worker too) (van der Westhuizen 2000: 60-61).

The immediate question that arises is where to start with the scanning process. Basically, the environment can be scanned in terms of four major dimensions: (Gòmez-Mejia, Balkin & Cardy 1998: 31).

- degree of uncertainty (how much information is available to make relevant and appropriate decisions);
- volatility (how often the different environmental factors change);
- magnitude of change (how drastic the changes are);
- complexity (how many different factors in the environment affect the institution) There seems little question that today's police managers need to examine in advance (even before formulating human resource strategies) how low or high it is on each of these environmental dimensions.

Police service institutions that score high on all four these dimensions are more likely to benefit from HR strategies that promote flexibility, diversity, innovation, adaptability, decentralization, integration, competition and responsiveness. Institutions facing environmental

factors that are low on uncertainty, volatility, magnitude of change and complexity will benefit from HR strategies that allow for rationality, centralization and orderliness with a relatively predictable and stable environment. Normally, police service institutions tend to fall at the low end of the scale on all four of these dimensions. Therefore, police service type HR strategies may tend to be more mechanistic in nature with an emphasis on activities such as performance appraisal as a developmental tool, individual-based pay and a continuing concern for the terminated employee (Gòmez *et al* 1998: 32).

Establishing specific objectives

As emphasized above, strategic PHRM must be based on the corporate plan of the institution. After the corporate plan has been consulted and the environment has been scanned, specific objectives can be established that will support the corporate plan (Fisher, Schoenfeldt & Shaw 1990: 694). Formulating the institution's objectives with regard to its HR systems, thus, requires an explicit statement outlining the means by which management intends managing the relationship between the institution and its employees as important stakeholders. In the process of shaping this part of the institution's corporate plan, the crucial linkup and integration between HRM and general management of operational police affairs are thus to be facilitated (Byars & Rue 1997: 118).

Basically, one can use two approaches in establishing HR objectives strategically. One option of objective-setting begins at the top of the institution where senior police managers formulate a statement of vision and mission that defines the institution's current and future service delivery levels on the long term (Byars & Rue 1997: 118-119). This is referred to as the *top-down* approach. Sometimes these types of objectives are vague and contradictory and could end in political compromise or very generally stated objectives (Dresang 2002: 127). Long-range objectives are formulated based on the institution's corporate plan. For example, it is stated in Section 195 (1)(i) of the 1996 Constitution that public administration (including, police administration) must be broadly representative of the South African people. This is a general objective and it is not always easy to translate it into specific and exact HR objectives. Another approach to objective-setting might be referred to as *bottom-up*. Here the objectives should be stated in terms of expected results and be short term related based on the content of long term objectives. This approach to objective-setting in SPHRM emphasizes that short term objectives should have a time schedule, expressed quantitatively, and involves all levels of management in the process. It has been referred to as the "cascade" approach. If properly used, the bottom-up approach involves both line function police managers and HR specialists in the overall strategic PHRM process. Especially during the early stages of the strategic PHRM process, HR specialists can play a vital role in influencing objective-setting by providing correct and timeous information about the institution's human resources. To explain short term objective-setting in a less dry and abstract manner, consider an example of representativeness and affirmative action. In the *White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service* of 1995 objectives are proposed with specific time frames and that are measurable. It is proposed that within four years all public service institutions must endeavour to be at least

50% black at management level. During the same period at least 30% of new recruits to the middle and senior management echelons should be women.

Deciding on an integrated HR strategy

The implementation of HR strategies involves strategic choices (decisions) amongst specific HR practices. These strategic HR choices (decisions) are the different options it has available in designing its HR systems. Choices (decisions) are strategic because it affects the institution's performance levels (in terms of service delivery) and that can be favourably or unfavourably in the long run. There are of course many different programmes that can be used separately or together to implement a specific choice that has been opted for. Consideration of a HR programme in the SAPS, such as pay for performance, can lead to several alternatives or to the specific choice (decision) of a particular direction in which the Service should move. Pay for performance, for example, may incorporate strategic HR choices (decisions) or alternatives such as cash awards, lump-sum annual bonuses, raises based on performance appraisals and on employee-of-the-month award (Gómez-Mejía *et al* 1998: 22).

Strategy options

The success of strategic PHRM is dependent on how well it fits in with all the other factors involved. Throughout all the attempts one should always strive towards that one powerful prediction for HR strategies and that is that particular fit that will lead to better performance (service delivery) by the Service as a whole. Basically, the concept "fit" refers to compatibility between HR strategies and other key managerial and operational factors of the institution. There are obviously many of these factors facing the Service, and correspondingly, many fit options to consider in determining which HR strategies will have a positive impact on the performance levels of the institution. The following institutional law is relevant in this regard, namely that the relative contribution of an HR strategy to the performance levels of the Service increases: (Gómez-Mejía *et al* 1998: 26-27).

- the greater the fit between HR strategies and the institution's overall corporate strategy;
- the greater the extent to which the HR strategy is in line with the environment in which the institution deliver its services;
- the more the HR strategy is correlated to the unique institutional features (features such as history, culture, leadership style, technology, senior management's philosophy and productivity concerns); and
- the more HR strategies enable the institution to benefit from its distinctive competencies]

In the light of the above it is useful to conceptualize the different strategic options in the field of PHRM. It has to be decided what approach will be followed in managing the individual and collective dimensions within the Service. Obviously, the size of the Service and complexity of service delivery options that are involved will play an important role in

sorting out the individual and collective dimensions of strategy selection. Generally, strategy options could take one of two generic forms. These options are summarized below.

- **Corporate strategy**

The corporate strategy refers to the mix of activities, tasks, processes, practices and services the Service decides to hold and the flow of resources (financial, physical, information and human resources) among those activities. This predominant overall corporate strategy is also referred to as a *grand strategy*. Actually, the corporate strategy is a major plan of action for achieving the objectives of the institution as a whole rather than of a single public service institution such as the SAPS. A decision has to be made at administrative level (normally in the Department of Public Service and Administration) regarding the type of corporate strategy to get involved in. The new *Public Service Management Framework* (which is an administrative policy-guideline compiled by the Department of Public Service and Administration) is an example of a corporate strategy followed currently in the public service as a whole. The new framework is about changing the way the Service operates in order to provide better police services to the citizens. It is a radical change from the past (pre-1994) - the focus is now on the delivery of efficient and effective police services as opposed to the past where the focus was on the preoccupation with rules and regulations that the Service is so well-known for. It is an integrated approach to PHRM to ensure that services are shaped to the needs of the citizens. In terms of the new Public Service Management Framework it is expected of the Service to: (Baseline Implementation Guide 1999: 15-36).

- establish and sustain a service delivery improvement program and publish an annual statement of commitment;
- develop policies or guidelines on internal work organization;
- develop employment equity plans;
- develop manuals about how to implement and manage delegations.

It is possible to observe opportunities that might arise in seeking to link the above corporate strategy of the public service to strategic PHRM options. Particularly, the establishment of a service delivery improvement programme may raise a strategic HR issue of training and development, especially for front line police service personnel. This corporate strategy of service delivery improvement has brought renewed attention to a culture and ethos of service delivery (*White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service* 1995: 17). Obviously, front line police service personnel are not properly trained in the principle of quality service delivery where the citizen comes first and this HR option needs to be redressed.

There are two major types of corporate strategies which are matching HR strategies, namely stability and evolutionary.

Stability strategy. This involves a strategy where citizens are served on the same service delivery level, focuses on the same objectives and are only seeking gradual improvement in performance levels. By following this strategy the Service sees the environment as not having such a huge influence on the daily activities and offering rather limited

opportunities for expansion. Although, strategies based on stability will in practice be unlikely, especially in light of the continuous changing environmental challenges the Service is faced with, such possibilities still cannot be completely excluded. There are several HR options available when opting for a strategy of stability. For the Service pursuing this strategy, the most prominent HR issues relate to utilizing and developing employees. In this case, police managers know that there is little opportunity of upward mobility and there are no substantial opportunities for advancement. HR strategy options most appropriate under these stable environmental conditions are: emphasizing of efficiency, detailed work planning, long term career development, centralization, a paternalistic attitude (reflected, for example, in a preferential approach towards laid-off employees when economic conditions improve, retention of talented workers), focus on the motivation of employees, employment security, and formal HR planning (Gòmez-Mejia 1998: 27).

Evolutionary strategy. The evolutionary strategy involves change management to its fullest capacity. To fully understand what is meant by change management one has to consider the broader role of the state in society and the impact it has on public service delivery. In more recent years, many countries, including South Africa, have embarked on a thorough re-evaluation of the role of the state and the public service. This could be attributed to a number of factors operating in the broader public sector environment. For example, the growing impact of international public administration, the increasing trend to political democratization, increasing international spread of communication and information technology. During this process a number of relevant themes have begun to emerge which have particular relevance for PHRM evolutionary strategy options in the Service. These can be summarized as follows: *White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service* 1995: 23-24).

- a move away from centralized and corporate planning;
- trimming state expenditure and the size of the public service;
- sub-contracting of public services to private sector and non-governmental agencies;
- ensuring greater accountability and devolution of managerial authority and resource control;
- increasing emphasis on quality, efficiency and cost-effectiveness;
- developing a more effective citizen/customer orientation and a stronger service ethos;
- increasing emphasis on HR development and participative management; and
- greater reliance on information technology and computerized management information systems

Allmost every theme highlighted above has serious HR implications for the SAPS. Since 1995 the Government has developed many sophisticated devices to transform and change the operations of public service institutions. In moving towards the principles of change management (in other words transformation) the Government has identified the following strategic evolutionary priority areas for transformation: (*White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service* 1995: 25).

- rationalizing and restructuring to ensure a unified, integrated and leaner public service;

- institution building and management to promote greater accountability and organizational and managerial effectiveness;
- representativeness and affirmative action;
- transforming service delivery to meet basic needs and redress past imbalances;
- democratization of the state;
- HR development;
- employment conditions and labour relations; and
- promotion of a professional service ethos

HR options to best fit the above evolutionary corporate strategies include strategies such as flexibility, diversity, decentralization and entrepreneurship (*White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service 1997: 22-23*). The implication of adopting these options, when applied to the management of human resources in the Service, is significant. It will mean that the Service will have to introduce early retirement opportunities, carry out a comprehensive audit of skills and competencies, appoint persons from outside the institution, redeploy, develop new organizational cultures, total quality management, training programmes to promote affirmative action, redirect human resources from administrative tasks to service provision and the introduction of a code of conduct (*White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service 1995: 43-72*).

• **Business strategy**

Whereas corporate strategies apply to the entire public service, business strategies refer to the formulation and implementation of strategies for separate institutional components (for example, a national public service institution such as the South African Police Service) even if it is part of the larger public sector. This implies that public service institutions must develop its own HR and work organization policies, procedures, practices, manuals, guides, employment equity plans, delegations and authorizations according to its service delivery objectives. This is very different from the past where all these business strategies was determined centrally (Baseline Implementation Guide 1999: 5). A business strategy can be regarded as an attempt to establish harmony between the broader public service's corporate strategy and a separate public service institution's business strategy such as the SAPS. In addition, all efforts need to be in congruence with the external and internal factors in the environment. Two broad strategy options to the business strategy have been defined: the prospector and defender options.

Prospector strategy. Generally, the prospector strategy is associated with flexible, decentralized organizational structures and unstable environments that change rapidly to facilitate innovation and creativity among staff (Gómez-Mejía 1998: 30). The public service's present corporate strategy of decentralized management, where the aim is to minimize waste and maximize value, allows for flexible and creative prospector strategies. In this case, service standards are high on the priority list. HR strategies that match the orientation of a prospector strategy involve a wide range of options. Police service institutions pursuing a prospector strategy, for example, tend to opt for external recruitment. Normally, prospectors try to recruit experienced well-skilled employees from the

outside. Another popular HR strategy option for prospectors is to use results-oriented performance appraisal methods. Thus, prospectors appraise on the basis of final results - the need for divergent, creative and unprogrammed behavior to cope with changing environmental factors.

Defender strategy. Unlike prospectors, whose success primarily come from efficiently serving a changing environment, the defender's key objective is to focus on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of existing work activities. Defenders prefer to maintain a secure position in a stable environment instead of expanding into new territory (Gómez-Mejía *et al* 1998: 29). In addition, defenders follow highly formal management patterns, make use of organizational structures that are heavily centralized and they seldom make major adjustments in their operations and technologies. The police service under the previous political dispensation (before 1994), where police service delivery was to a great extent heavily centralized, provides an example of a defender strategy. The police service, inherited by the current Government, in many ways promoted the social, economic and political system of apartheid. Many HR problems arised from the apartheid system because of the defender principles applied. Consider the following examples. Because employees were hired according to rigid apartheid rules and regulations, certain race groups (mainly blacks) were excluded in the staffing processes. This led to a lack of representativeness of all the people of South Africa in terms of race, gender and disability in the SAPS.

Another aspect that needs special attention, which is an indication that a strong defender strategy was followed under the previous system, was the application of centralized control measures and top-down management principles (*White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service* 1995: 17-18). Even more importantly the police service system was strongly oriented towards control of the majority of people's social lifes. This resulted in a system where the Service was highly authoritarian, centralized and rule-bound in its service delivery activities. HR defender strategy options that best correlate defenders' needs are well-known for not taking risks. They tend to implement their defender strategy by appointing at the entry level and then developing their own high-level employees. Defenders focus on promoting their own employees. Therefore, they often get involved in extensive in-house training and development (Fisher *et.al* 1990: 711).

Drafting and implementing of PHRM business plans

There are many ways in which PHRM business plans can be constructed and implemented. One way to elaborate on business plans, as documents detailing the more medium-term plans and objectives of the institution, is to argue that such business plans cover five-year periods and are redrafted annually within the context of corporate planning. Normally, these plans are carried out in order to ensure the necessary fit between internal and external environments on a continuous basis (Swanepoel *et al.* 2003: 187). Taking into account the environmental scanning information and the strategy that has been decided upon, medium-term moves or plans are formulated to facilitate vision and mission accomplishment. PHRM business plans will thus focus in more detail on various functional areas and

on what ought to be done in these areas to facilitate goal achievement. An aspect of the drafting process that needs special attention, is that these business plans need to form the basis for short-term, annual action plans. Even more important, those who compile these business plans need to be attentive to what properly reflects the basis of such action plans. Having these detailed data available for the action plans would be helpful in compiling the annual police budgets in order to allow for appropriate resource allocation. At the most fundamental level, police resources (such as money, people, time, information) should be allocated so that action plans can be carried out. This, in turn facilitates execution of the PHRM business plan, which finally, leading to strategy implementation and vision and mission accomplishment of the Service in general.

In any application of drafting and implementing PHRM business plans the concept of *fit* is of crucial importance. There is no question, that not only must the HR business plan fit the HRM strategy, but it must also fit the internal and external environmental factors - most notably the Service's general corporate strategy. In addition, one must ensure that the HRM corporate strategy fits with the business strategy and is facilitated by the execution of the HRM business plan (Swanepoel *et al.* 2003: 188). It is also of fundamental importance that the various elements of the HR business plan must now clarify how the necessary fit will be achieved. To effectively draft and implement HRM business plans in the SAPS, it must reflect the key areas or strategic priorities that require attention in order to facilitate corporate police strategy implementation. Many issues may come up. Exactly what is necessary to redesign the work? What is required to rewrite job descriptions? What criteria would be used to recruit new employees with different characteristics? What steps need to be followed to design a new performance management system and/or to redesign the institution's remuneration system? At this level the emphasis shifts to different functional aspects of HRM. Broadly speaking, this implies the selection of the required strategic change interventions in each area and assigning responsibilities and allocating time limits in respect of each functional intervention.

Monitoring, evaluating and reporting

The final step in the strategic PHRM process is the monitoring, evaluating and reporting of results. An aspect of monitoring and evaluating that needs special attention is that it requires standards against that what has happened so that it can be measured. The message to convey here is that without these set standards, it is all most impossible to determine success or failure. Normally, monitoring and evaluating begins with a comparison of the SAPS's vision, mission and objectives that have been originally established and the final accomplishment (Dresang 2002: 141). A monitoring and evaluating effort that ends with matching objectives and looking at accomplishments is incomplete. It is important that monitoring and evaluating be incorporated with reporting. The Government realized the importance of this aspect. The particular format used to do reporting on HR issues in the public service is addressed in *Public Service Regulations* 2001 Part III. J. The HR report shall be compiled annually and submitted to Parliament and shall include such information on planning, service delivery, organization matters, job evaluation, remuneration, benefits,

personnel expenditure, affirmative action, recruitment, promotions, termination of services, performance management, skills development, injury on duty, labour relations, leave and discharge due to ill-health.

To be judged successful one will have to evaluate how effectively human resources have been used in the Service. An effective tool police managers and HR departments can use in monitoring and evaluating HR programs boils down to HR audits. The literature seems to suggest the following broad set of questions that can be asked during the HR audit: (Gómez-Mejia 1998: 36-37).

- Is the turnover rate exceptionally low or high?
- Are the people leaving the institution good employees who are frustrated in their present job, or are they marginal performers?
- Is the institution receiving results on the funds it spends on for example, recruitment and training?
- Is the institution complying with all regulatory guidelines?
- How well is the institution managing employee diversity?
- Is the HR department providing the services that line staff need?
- Are HRM policies and procedures assisting the institution accomplishing its objectives?

CONCLUSION

The starting point of this article was to explore the meaning of SPHRM. Based on the work of, among others, Fisher et.al (1990), Gómez-Mejia (1999) and Swanepoel (2003) the author focused on, *inter alia*, the nature of strategy and strategic management, and on how PHRM can be linked with the general strategic management of the Service. The emphasis was on options, choices and decision making in the formulation of HRM strategies that have to match or fit the internal and external environmental conditions of the institution. Special attention was devoted to the necessity of streamlining the Service's HR strategies with its general corporate strategies.

Further, this article has explored a unique framework for strategic PHRM in the SAPS, including the steps that should be noted in managing human resources strategically. The material in this article contributes a knowledge base on which to build strategic PHRM skills. It was emphasized that the application of strategic management principles requires a systematic view of HR matters. Therefore, it is important that one executes the SPHRM process in an orderly manner as explained in the framework presented in this article. Based on this analysis, the author developed six phases or steps that culminate in the following suggestions:

- considering of the corporate plan;
- scanning of environmental conditions;
- establishing of specific objectives;
- deciding on an integrated HR strategy;
- drafting and implementing of PHRM business plans; and
- monitoring, evaluating and reporting.

This framework complements academic interest in the linkage between general strategic police management and HRM with the notion of environmental factors influencing the shaping of HR activities. In addition, this framework can be used in different institutional settings in the public sector. Although the concept of strategic PHRM calls for steep, problematic and rationalistic decision-making, it holds considerable advantages for the Service in enhancing performance. The main conclusion is that strategic PHRM presents specific responsibilities for police managers and HR specialists in assuring that integration takes place between the Service's strategic and operational roles and its HR activities. Further, the study of strategic PHRM holds exciting challenges for future research in the HRM field.

NOTES

This article is based on a chapter written by the author in a book under the title *South African Human Resource Management for the Public Sector* (by Barney Erasmus, Ben Swanepoel, Heinz Schenk, Ernst J. van der Westhuizen & Jacobus S. Wessels) which is an adaptation for the public sector of the well known book *South African Human Resource Management - Theory and Practice* by Ben Swanepoel and others.

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