

The Water Herald

Learn from your peers

July-Sept 2009, Vol 1, Issue 1



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15th International
African Water
Congress and
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DIVINE CORNER

**Pay attention to the
Word of God**

Managing Director's Message



Dr. William T. Muhairwe, MD - NWSC

I wish to once again present our Corporate Newsletter for the period July to September 2009, a period which marks the end of the financial year 2008/09 and the commencement of a new one. Suffice it to say that during the year, the Corporation has strived to remain buoyant despite the prevailing global financial crisis and economic melt down.

The second half of the financial year has been characterised by a number of activities and achievements, key among which were our quest to continue improving service delivery to our esteemed customers. Among the activities and achievements registered were;

- The completion of the Mukono Water Supply Project in which water supply was extended to Mukono, Seeta, Namanve, Bweyogerere, Kireka and the surrounding areas. Water supply in the mentioned areas has indeed greatly improved.
- The continuation of the rehabilitation and expansion of the Gulu, Arua and Bushenyi water supply systems using our own internally generated resources.
- The securing of funding for the extension of intake pipes in Kampala and Jinja to mitigate the effects of reduced lake water levels and increased pollution of the inner Murchison Bay.
- The signing of the Kampala Sanitation Master Plan Financing Agreement between the African Development Bank and the Government of Uganda.
- The continued improvement of the network in some parts of Kampala, as part of our short term programme to improve water supply in the water stressed areas.
- The continuation of the Water Raving Fans concept that sought to create delighted customers. Indeed we have received a number of accolades in regard to our improved interface with the customers.
- Furthermore, with the completion of the IDAMC phase II, the Corporation tendered out the Operational Areas for the IDAMC phase III, and bids were received and evaluated during the period.

As we edge into the financial year 2009/2010, our Operating Theme, which was developed as part of the 2009 – 2012 Corporate Plan, will be “To Maximize the Cash Operating Margin”

- In regard to our external services exploits, new regional partnerships and memoranda of understandings were signed with various utilities in a bid to strengthen the south to south cooperation within the Water Industry.

We are however cognizant of our short falls, which include the continued intermittent supply of water in some parts of Kampala, for which we are actively seeking solutions. As mentioned in the previous edition of the Herald, we have both short term and long term plans. Currently, we are implementing the short term plans in a phased manner, which are progressing well.

As we edge into the financial year 2009/2010, our Operating Theme, which was developed as part of the 2009 – 2012 Corporate Plan, will be **“To Maximize the Cash Operating Margin”**. Simply translated, the Theme aims at maximizing revenues and rationalization of costs, so as to realize resources that can be ploughed back into the much needed investments.

Let me end by thanking and wishing our readers and customers a good reading, and I wish to reiterate that NWSC is committed to serving you better, because you are the reason we exist.



Editor's Note

Welcome to the July to September 2009 (Quarterly) edition of the Water Herald (WH) newsletter. It's all part of our commitment to provide the best possible learning experience for our readers. WH has evolved over the last five years, from a monthly magazine concerned primarily with documenting monthly area performance, to a broader communication tool, targeting both internal and external audiences.

It has played a key role in internal benchmarking, communicating performance data and practices in NWSC operational areas for the benefit of both staff and external stakeholders.

Over the years, the newsletter has been instrumental in helping the Corporation to maintain a connection with its staff, customers and external stakeholders, build morale and learn from the peers.

In this issue, WH has taken another turn geared towards making it a cornerstone of NWSC's internal and external communication, as well as a knowledge sharing platform. The newsletter captures division achievements, a number of advice-oriented briefs from NWSC staff at headquarters regarding operational problems and how they could be solved, as well as some of the main occurrences in NWSC this quarter.

We ask for your opinions on our balance of editorial coverage, lessons you have learnt along the way and the successes you are now achieving. Please let us share this inspirational knowledge with all our readers. We believe learning from each other's experience is the best way of achieving the value of effective internal communications in any business. If you would like to provide some feedback on this issue, please contact the Editor at watereditorial@nwsc.co.ug

Have a pleasant reading....

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The Water Herald
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The essence of organisational learning is the organisation's ability to use the amazing mental capacity of all its members to create the kind of processes that will improve its own
(Dixon, 1994)

Private Water Operators (PWOs) from small towns conduct a guided tour of Gaba water works, during a learning /benchmarking visit organised by NWSC's External services Department

Transforming NWSC into a Learning Organisation: What will it take?

By Josses Mugabi

NWSC has recently established a Research and Development (R&D) Department, which is mandated to – among other things – promote a learning culture within the corporation. **Josses Mugabi** reflects on the challenge of transforming NWSC into a learning organisation and the cultural processes that we may need to develop or enhance in order to achieve this goal.

What is a Learning Organisation?

The 'learning organisation' has its origins in companies like Shell, where Arie de Geus (a former Corporate Planning Director at Shell, and a leading expert in organisational learning) described learning as the only sustainable competitive advantage. The learning organisation is seen as a response to an increasingly unpredictable and dynamic business environment. Here are some definitions by a few key writers on the subject:

"The essence of organisational learning is the organisation's ability to use the amazing mental capacity of all its members to create the kind of processes that will improve its own" (Dixon, 1994)

"A learning organisation is an organisation that facilitates the learning of all its members and continually transforms itself" (Pedler et al, 1991)

"Organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to learn together" (Senge et al, 1990)

Drawing on these definitions and more, we can start to develop a vision of what a learning NWSC will look like. First, it must have in place systems, mechanisms and processes that are used continually to enhance organisational capabilities. Secondly, it must be able to create, capture, transfer and mobilise knowledge to enable it to adapt to a changing environment, and meet the rising expectations of customers. The important points to note about this definition are that learning organisations:

- are adaptive to their external environment
- continually enhance their capability to change/adapt
- develop collective as well as individual learning
- use the results of learning to achieve better results



Transforming NWSC into a Learning Organisation

Why should NWSC be interested in becoming a learning organisation?

NWSC is committed to providing quality water and sewerage services to her esteemed customers in an efficient and cost-effective manner, ensuring utmost customer delight and continuous service improvement. It is this longstanding commitment that has been the driving force behind the plethora of short-term performance improvement initiatives or programmes (such as 100 days program, SEREP I and II, area performance contracts, IDAMCs, water raving fans, etc) that have been implemented during the last 10 years, and which have earned the Corporation much admiration within the region as a progressive public utility.

It is clear that NWSC has also learnt some lessons from implementing these various initiatives and programmes. We have learnt that such programmes succeed or fail depending on human factors, such as skills, attitudes and organisational culture.

The current interest in the 'learning organisation' stems from the recognition that such short-term performance initiatives, by themselves, often do not work; something more is needed to:

- cope with rapid and unexpected changes where existing 'programmed' responses are inadequate;
- provide flexibility to cope with dynamically changing situations; and
- allow front-line staff to respond with initiative based on customer needs vs. being constrained by organisational processes established for different circumstances.

What level of 'learning' should NWSC aspire to achieve?

A learning organization is not about 'more training'. While training does help develop certain types of skill, a learning organisation involves the development of higher levels of knowledge and skill. There are typically four levels of learning which can be applied to the learning of individuals, of teams and of organisations:

- **Level 1** - Learning facts, knowledge, processes and procedures. Applies to known situations where changes are minor (e.g. most water supply engineering concepts are universal and rarely change).
- **Level 2** - Learning new job skills that are transferable to other situations. Applies to new situations where existing responses need to be changed. Bringing in outside expertise may be a useful tool here.
- **Level 3** - Learning to adapt. Applies to more dynamic situations where the solutions need developing. Experimentation, and deriving lessons from success and failure is the mode of learning here.
- **Level 4** - Learning to learn. Is about innovation and creativity; designing the future rather than merely adapting to it. This is where assumptions are challenged and knowledge is reframed.

NWSC should aspire to achieve Level 4 learning. Organisations that achieve this level of learning have the potential to reinvent not just their organisation but also their industry. Given NWSC's prominent role in Uganda's water sector, this in my view is worthwhile goal to pursue.

What would a learning culture in NWSC look like?

It would be utterly misleading to suggest that there is no learning culture in NWSC. The corporation's various performance improvement initiatives in themselves were informed by a process of learning. Knowledge and ideas that worked elsewhere were captured, adapted, transfer and mobilised to enable the corporation deal with its challenges. In his book (soon to be published) which chronicles the performance turnaround of the corporation, Dr Muhairwe – NWSC's Managing Director – clearly demonstrates this culture at work. Here are some quotes from the book:

"... Managers should not be stuck in the conventional ways of doing things; ideas ought to be sought from an array of sources, places and people; besides textbooks on management and knowledge acquired from training institutions, a manager should remain up-to-date through reading and networking locally, regionally and internationally (p. vii)

"...I demonstrate that after collecting the ideas, one should brainstorm with colleagues and come up with a blend of the best interventions that will propel an organisation to change its work ethic and lead to profitability..."(p. vii)

"... Sometimes good ideas may exist somewhere – it is just a question of courage and enthusiasm to discover these good ideas and put them to the right use..." (p. 100)

"... People have been wondering how NWSC recovered and gained robust health. The answer lies in the fact that there are good ideas out there. What one needs to do is to find the relevant ideas and apply them in the pursuit of the respectively corporate or individual vision and mission. It works! We did it at NWSC! And it is applicable elsewhere..." (p. 156)

"... We learnt to be receptive to ideas, to shop for them from books, the streets and private conversation – from wherever, for no one has a monopoly on ideas..." (p. 209)

The above quotes clearly show we have the building blocks of a cultural revolution within the Corporation that would create the right environment to nurture learning. But what exactly is this 'right' environment?

The environment we aim to have is one where staff do not fear being belittled or marginalised when they disagree with peers or management; ask naïve questions; own up to mistakes; or present a minority viewpoint. Instead, they must be comfortable expressing their thoughts about the work at hand. We should aim to create an environment where there

Transforming NWSC into a Learning Organisation

is appreciation of differences, as learning occurs when people become aware of opposing ideas. Recognising the value of alternative worldviews increases energy and motivation, and sparks fresh thinking.

We should aim to create an environment where learning is not simply about correcting mistakes and solving problems. It is also about crafting novel approaches. Staff should be encouraged to take risks and explore the untested and unknown.

We should aim to create an environment where staff are allowed time for reflection. When people are too busy or overstressed by deadlines, their ability to think analytically and creatively is compromised. They become less able to diagnose problems and learn from their experiences. Supportive learning environments allow time for a pause in the action and encourage thoughtful review of the organization's processes.

Apart from creating the right environment, we will also need to strengthen key learning processes and practices, which include the generation (through research), collection, interpretation, and dissemination of knowledge and information. This is why the R&D department has identified knowledge management as one of the key departmental functions that will support the transformation of NWSC into a learning organisation. Knowledge sharing must take place in systematic and clearly defined ways, and can take place among individuals, groups, or whole organizations. Knowledge can move laterally or vertically within the corporation, and can be internally focused, with an eye toward taking corrective action.

In addition to creating the right environment and putting in place learning processes, our managers should adopt leadership styles that reinforce learning. This is because organisational learning is strongly influenced by the behaviour of leaders. Professor David Gavin and his colleagues from Harvard Business School could not have put it better in a recent article that appeared in the Harvard Business Review:

".. When leaders actively question and listen to employees — and thereby prompt dialogue and debate — people in the institution feel encouraged to learn. If leaders signal the importance of spending time on problem identification, knowledge transfer, and reflective post-audits, these activities are likely to flourish. When people in power demonstrate through their own behaviour a willingness to entertain alternative points of view, employees feel emboldened to offer new ideas and option..." (Gavin et al, 2008.)

So, in summary what exactly would a revived learning culture in NWSC look like and feel like? Here are some pointers to stretch your imagination:

- Future, external orientation. We have a thorough understanding of our operating environment and are constantly aware of the changes in that environment. Senior Management take more time out to think about the future. We embrace (not despise) the use of external advisors and

good consultants out there because we value their fresh perspectives on our challenges.

- Free exchange and flow of information. We have in place systems to ensure that expertise and knowledge is available and easily accessible to those who need it; individuals network extensively, crossing organisational boundaries to develop their knowledge and expertise.
- Commitment to learning and personal development. Staff at all levels are encouraged to learn regularly; learning is rewarded. And staff are allowed time to think and learn (understanding, exploring, reflecting, developing) when faced with challenges in their work.
- Valuing people. Ideas, creativity and "imaginative capability" is stimulated, made use of and developed. Diversity is recognised as strength. Views can be challenged.
- Climate of openness and trust. Individuals are encouraged to develop ideas, to speak out, to challenge actions.
- Learning from experience. Learning from mistakes is often more powerful than learning from success. Failure is tolerated, provided lessons are learnt.

Our challenge

That above pointers in my view should help shape our vision for a learning corporation we want to see. What will it take to get there? A supporting learning environment, concrete learning processes and practices and leadership styles that reinforce learning. It is my hope that we can spend some time to assess how we are doing on these three building blocks of a learning organisation, so that we can pinpoint areas where we need to improve. Transforming NWSC into a learning organisation is clearly a momentous a challenge — one that we require us to abandon our preoccupation with fire-fighting and start thinking strategically and, abandon all hidden personal agendas and focus on the corporation agenda and create real empowerment of staff. This challenge is not for the R&D department alone. It is a corporation-wide challenge. Are you ready for the challenge? Are you ready for change?

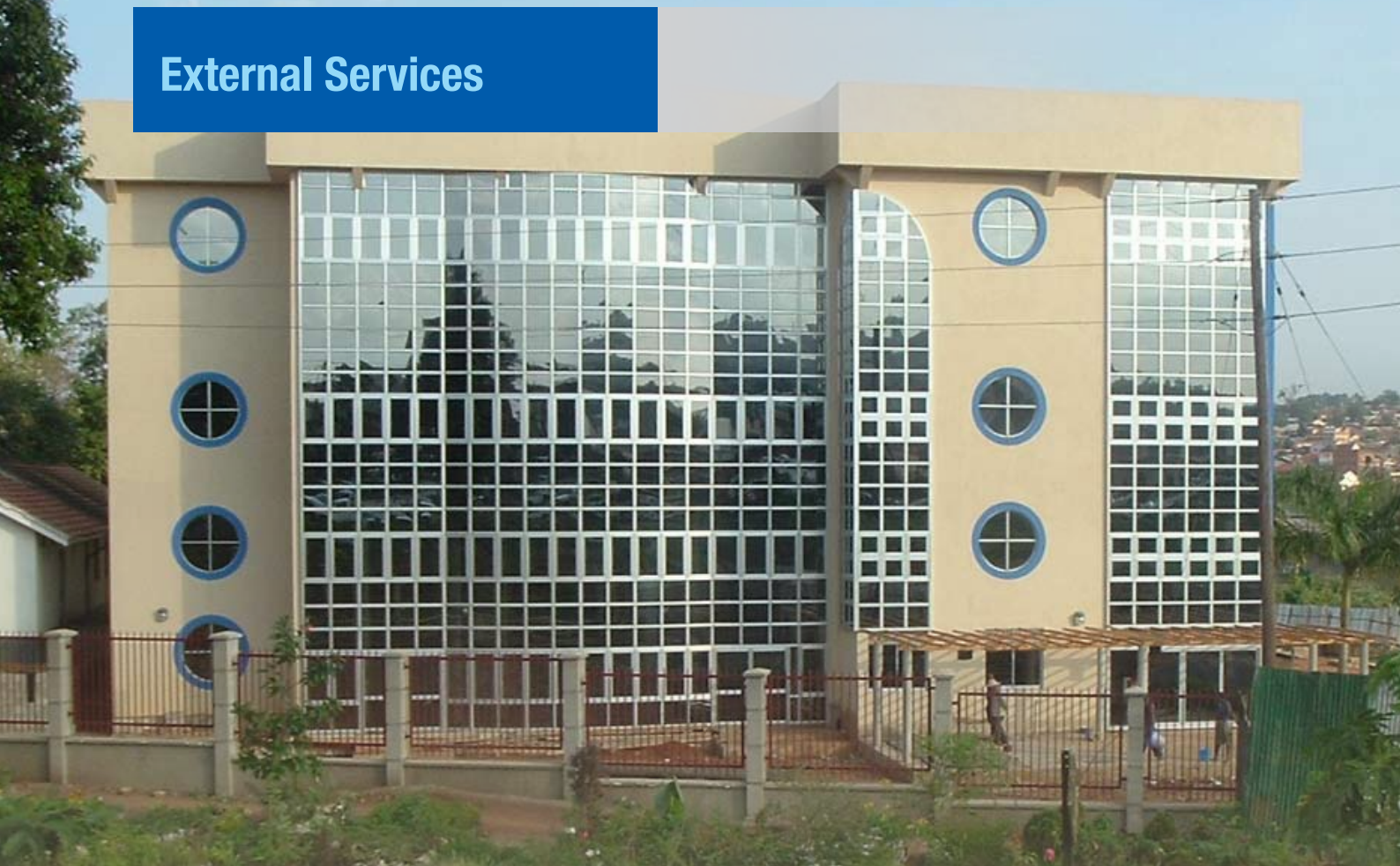
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To comment on this article, please email up to 500 words to the editor at: watereditorial@nwsc.co.ug. A selection of comments received will be published in the next issue of the magazine. The Water Herald relies entirely on contributions sent in by NWSC staff, customers and other stakeholders. Articles should be 1000–2500 words long, with adequate illustrations and references. Please contact the editor for further information.

External Services



Highlights of External Services

By Mariam Mbabaali Yiga

National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC) Uganda, through the External Services Department (ESD) has continued to offer consultancy services to various utilities in Africa. Various assignments were executed during the 3rd quarter of the FY 2008/09 (January – March 2009). Several delegations from various utilities also carried out benchmarking visits to NWSC.

During the January – March period, the ESD signed a second agreement to offer consultancy services to UN-HABITAT. The second cooperation agreement is funded under the Lake Victoria Region Water and Sanitation Initiative that addresses the water and sanitation needs of the people particularly the poor in the secondary towns around Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation Initiative. NWSC shall carry out a fast track capacity building Programme for five towns namely Bunda in Tanzania, Bundo in Kenya, Mutukula and Kyotera in Uganda. NWSC shall also provide technical assistance in the preparation of a comprehensive Strategic Business Plan and provide training to enhance the capacity of Harar Water Supply and Sanitation Authority in Ethiopia within the programme the Water for African Cities.

The ESD also signed a financing agreement with GTZ to provide capacity building for Private Water Operators and Water Boards /Local council officials for the towns of Yumbe, Pakele, Adjumani, Nebbi, Packwach and Moyo in North and North western Uganda. This

is on behalf and in close collaboration with the Directorate of Water Development of the Ministry of Water and Environment.

During the January–March quarter, various delegates visited NWSC on benchmarking missions. A delegation of six senior Managers from Addis Ababa Water and Sanitation Authority visited NWSC for a study tour from the 1st to 5th March 2009. Their main focus was to learn more about NWSC's new programme strategies in loss reduction and sanitation improvement. From 16th to 20th March 2009 NWSC hosted a team of delegates from Liberia Water and Sewerage Corporation comprising of a Consultant, Civil Engineer, and Assistant Manager Field services, Senior Assistant Manager Commercial Services, Deputy Managing Director, Technical Services and Assistant Manager Billing. During the visit, the team held discussions with the Managing Director and management on areas of cooperation between the two utilities. The team then visited various NWSC Entebbe area office and Kampala Area offices, with an aim of sharing experiences.

NWSC External Services Team has continued to offer consultancy services to various utilities in Africa. With the execution of the aforementioned assignments, revenue has been raised for the Corporation and increased reference of NWSC as one of the leading water utilities on the continent.

WETwin Research Project

Enhancing the role of wetlands in integrated water resources management for twinned river basins in EU, Africa and South America in support of EU Water initiatives

By Susan Namaalwa

The research project which is funded by the European Union (EU) is aimed at enhancing the role of wetlands in basin-scale integrated water resources management (IWRM). The project is intended to support the implementation of the EU Water Initiative (EUWI) in the context of international cooperation, thus specifically contribute to meeting the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (UN - MDGs) for drinking water and sanitation, within the context of an integrated approach to water resources management.

The project covers 'twinned' case study wetlands from Europe, Africa and South America. In Uganda, the project is being implemented by National Water and Sewerage Corporation as a lead partner in collaboration with Wetlands Management Department and Makerere University Institute of Environment and Natural Resources as subcontractors. The project scope includes two wetland sites in Uganda; the Nabajjuzi wetland in Masaka and Namatala wetland in Mbale. The two wetlands are vital to National Water and Sewerage Corporation as important sites for drinking water supply and wastewater treatment respectively. The sites are facing challenges of severe degradation due to agricultural activities, settlements and pollution. Under the WETwin project, strategies are to be identified for: utilizing the drinking water supply and wastewater treatment potentials of these wetlands for the benefit of people living in the basin, while maintaining and improving the ecosystem functions, adapting wetland management to changing environmental conditions, integrating wetlands into river basin management and improving stakeholder participation and capacity building with the aim of supporting sustainable wetland management.

Some of the site specific studies to be conducted on Nabajjuzi and Namatala wetlands include; field

assessment of the wetland hydrology including ground water recharge and discharge, water purification and nutrient removal, analysis of water uses and demands, vulnerability assessment and scenario design on drivers and pressures such as climate, demographic growth, land cover change and economic development. Management solutions are to be worked out for the case study wetlands with the aim of improving the potential of the wetlands in supporting drinking water supply and wastewater treatment. Knowledge and experiences gained from these case studies will be summarized in general guidelines aiming to support achieving project objectives on global scale.

The research project which kicked off on November 1st 2008 will run for a period of three years. During the first year of the project, the following activities have been completed: review of Ugandan Golden indicators for the performance of the water and sanitation sector, review of national/international guidelines concerned with water and wetland management, delineation of case study sites, stakeholder analysis and development of a strategy for stakeholder engagement, identification of site specific research studies and review of management structures and current institutional capacity for water and wetland management. The review of Uganda Golden indicators revealed that the water demands for the growing industries and agriculture are not reflected in the computation of the indicator for water quantity, and sustainability of water resources as a factor contributing to water availability (water access and water quantity) and hence long term functionality is not dealt with. Directorate of Water Resources Management, National Environment Management Authority, Wetlands Management Department, Local Government Water and Environment departments and resource users are some of the stakeholders that were identified to drive the agenda of wetland/ water resources management forward.



Department Profile



The primary framework for R&D activities is NWSC's four key strategic aims – i.e. operational efficiency, financial sustainability, increased coverage and internal reforms

Research and Development

NWSC's corporate plan identifies research as a key strategic goal, commensurate with the corporation's core value of continuously developing and applying creative and innovative solutions to improve service delivery. In line with this goal, the corporation has initiated a Research and Development (R&D) department which is mandated to - among other things - promote research, knowledge sharing and training. **Josses Mugabi** profiles the new department, outlining the strategic thinking behind its creation, its vision, mission, strategic goals and key results areas.

Rationale

The past decade has seen NWSC grow from strength to strength in terms of corporate management and operational efficiency, and has become one of the leading water utilities in the region. In order to maintain this level, there is need to continuously engage in research and knowledge exchange.

NWSC has over the years contributed to the scientific and engineering research worldwide, through collaboration with local and foreign universities. As part of their postgraduate studies, staff of the Corporation have carried out research on a wide range of topics, including water quality, environmental management, sanitary engineering, financial management, project planning and utility management. Some of this research has led to tangible benefits – such as enhanced staff skills, improved water/wastewater treatment process, and improved financial performance.

However, most of the research has been externally led, and NWSC has not been proactive in identifying areas of research that are relevant to its operations. Moreover, until now, there has not been a dedicated department to define

and drive the research agenda, nor has there been a clear policy to guide the formulation and implementation of research activities in the corporation. The strategic decision to strengthen the R&D function is therefore a welcome development, with numerous potential benefits to the corporation and our customers. Sound R&D will enable the corporation to:

- improve its processes
- boost its revenues and increase profitability
- open new markets - both in Uganda and regionally
- enhance its brand and reputation as an innovative public corporation
- attract the best employees through its enhanced reputation
- find new business partnerships; and
- attract external

finance

With many areas of water utility operations under-researched, we need to take a pro-active approach if we are to meet the rising expectations of our customers.

The primary framework for R&D activities is NWSC's four key strategic aims – i.e. operational efficiency, financial sustainability, increased coverage and internal reforms. For each of these aims, there is a need to identify critical knowledge gaps, develop research proposals,



Research and Development cont'd

conduct research and communicate research results through training programs in order to increase the readiness of our staff in achieving the organisation's strategic aims.

With many areas of water utility operations under-researched, we need to take a proactive approach if we are to meet the rising expectations of our customers. There is also an immense need to share utility management home grown innovations in the region and Africa. We can

only continue doing this effectively if we invest in relevant R&D.

It is against this background that the corporation has initiated a dedicated R&D department to strengthen the R&D function. The department has defined its mission, vision and key result areas, and is in the process of developing an operational framework to be presented to the Board for approval.

Who we are...

The R&D department was created under the Institutional Development and External Services (IDES) division and charged with the responsibility of promoting and coordinating research and development activities within the corporation. In the context of NWSC, we define research as a process of systematic enquiry aimed at developing new knowledge that is: (i) potentially of value to us and to other water and sewerage utilities in the region; (ii) open to critical examination; and (iii) accessible to all who could benefit from it.

Development, on the other hand, refers to the testing and evaluation of new ways of working (i.e. how well innovations actually work in practice), as well as the dissemination and integration of new knowledge into practice through training (see R&D cycle in Figure 1).



Fig 1: The R&D Cycle

The department's vision is:

To be internationally recognised for excellence in research, knowledge management and training in support of NWSC's strategic goals and the needs of other utilities in the African region and beyond.

Its mission statement is:

To increase the quantity and quality of relevant research activity and its dissemination (both internally and externally) and integration into practice in order to meet the rising expectations of customers.

What we do...

In line with its vision and mission, the department's overall strategy encompasses three key functions:

- **Research:** establishing a research agenda, planning, managing and overseeing individual research projects;
- **Knowledge management:** capturing and organising knowledge from research results, as well as other sources, into formats accessible to practitioners; and
- **Organisational training:** disseminating and integrating new knowledge into practice

These three functions constitute the key result areas of the department. In addition, the work of the department will be organised around four strategic goals that flow directly from the mission and vision, i.e.

- developing and optimising organisational systems and processes that help NWSC and other utilities in the region to be efficient, effective and customer responsive organisations;
- providing research to help NWSC and other regional water utilities to demonstrate environmental leadership through protection and sustainable use of water resources, development of alternative water sources and proper

- management of wastewater;
- providing research to help NWSC and other regional water utilities to deliver high quality water that ensures public health and safety, through effective treatment, distribution system management, and monitoring; and
- providing research to help NWSC and other water utilities to achieve and optimize infrastructure reliability and ensure a continuous, safe and uninterrupted supply of water to customers

These strategic goals provide the framework for

all of the steps involved in implementing the department's R&D program: identifying research needs, developing research programs, conducting research, organizing and communicating research results, and exploring opportunities for partnerships.

The "topic areas" for each of the four strategic goals are being developed through a consultative process, which will culminate into a Strategic Research Plan (SRP). The rest of our key departmental milestones for the 2009 - 2011 corporate planning cycle are summarised in Table 1.

What we are doing now

We are still in the process of finalising our operational framework (i.e. the R&D policy and the SRP – to be completed in December 2009). However, in parallel to this process, we have embarked on a few priority projects that reflect the corporation's business needs at the time the department was being formed. These are described below:

- **Network Management Improvement Action Research Project (NMIARP):** This is a pilot action research project being conducted in collaboration with Kampala Water. The study aims to reduce non-revenue water levels through applying best practice network management. The study will lay the ground work for future technical and administrative unbundling of the entire network to make individual branches accountable for the water entering their zones. For further information on this project, contact martin.kalibbala@nwsc.co.ug
- **Development and testing of a methodology for regular customer satisfaction measurement:** As part of NWSC's continuous endeavour to serve our customers better, the R&D department is leading the development and testing a methodology to enable the M&E department carry out regular customer satisfaction measurement and identify areas where customers would like us to improve. For further information, please contact samalie.mutuwa@nwsc.co.ug

Table 1: Key departmental milestones during the 2009-2011 corporate planning cycle

- Develop a R&D policy for Management approval (December 2009)
- Develop the SRP (December 2009)
- Conduct research in priority areas identified in the SRP
- Put in place knowledge management systems to identify, create, represent, distribute and enable adoption of knowledge, insights and experiences from research activities
- Establish and renew existing national and international research and knowledge networks beneficial to the corporation
- Develop knowledge products, training modules and other related training materials
- Establish and manage a database of knowledge products and training modules
- Facilitate the formation and functioning of thematic knowledge groups on various topics relevant to NWSC operations
- Conduct yearly training needs assessments, develop plans, implement and evaluate relevant formal and informal learning activities
- Develop a training management system to track training activities throughout the Corporation
- Develop an operational framework for the NWSC research and training complex.





NWSC to host the 15th International African Water Congress and Exhibition

By Emma Casey, The TERP Group

KAMPALA.

Preparations are well under way for the 15th International African Water Congress and Exhibition (Kampala, Uganda, March 15th – 18th 2010) with the aim of creating a positive, exciting and beneficial experience for exhibitors, sponsors

and participants alike.

Following the successful launch of the Congress to media in May 2009, much has been done in terms of organisational groundwork in Uganda and outside.

Following numerous site inspections of conference and accommodation

L-R: Eng. Amayo Johnson (Chief Manager - Planning and Capital Development, NWSC), Ambassador Agnes Kadama Kalibbala (Deputy High Commissioner/Permanent Representative to UNEP and UN-HABITAT), Hon. Prof. Wangari Muta Maathai, Dr. William Tsimwa Muhairwe (MD-NWSC), Odrek Rwabwogo (the TERP Group - Uganda), Dr. Eng. Silver Mugisha (Chief Manager-Institutional Development and External Services, NWSC).

The theme of next year's Congress relates to energy and climatic change and the challenges facing water and sanitation service provision in Africa.

NWSC to host the 15th International African Water Congress and Exhibition cont'd

facilities in Kampala, it has been decided that Commonwealth Speke Resort, Munyonyo would be most appropriate, both venue and exhibition space have been confirmed.

The Congress website is now fully functional with detailed information about the Congress themes and organisation available online at www.aae-event.com. Registration details, floor plans and costs can also be downloaded from the website to allow potential exhibitors and sponsors register in an easy to follow format.

In June 2009, a Ugandan delegation attended Water Tec 2009 in Johannesburg, South Africa with the aim of creating awareness about Kampala 2010 and attracting potential attendees. Since the teams' return they have been inundated with requests for further information about the Congress, exhibitor space and sponsorship opportunities.

The 2010 Congress, which hopes to attract many high profile dignitaries and industry leaders, will for the first time open to an international audience. This way a cross section of exhibitors, sponsors and renowned experts in water management, sanitation, climate change and energy can share opinions and show-case state of the art technologies relating to water and sanitation provision.

Already, the 2004 Nobel Prize Laureate and

champion of human rights and environmental issues, **Professor Wangari Maathai** has confirmed her attendance as a key note speaker at the event.

The theme of next year's Congress relates to energy and climatic change and the challenges facing water and sanitation service provision in Africa. It will seek to address these issues under the following sub-themes:

- Climate change and energy issues, what are the threats to the water and sanitation industry.
- Partnership and contractualisation for better water and sanitation services
- Half way assessment of the progress towards the Millennium Goals for Development.
- New technologies of information and communication in the management of water and sanitation.

It is obvious that the changes related to global warming will affect water resources in Africa. Therefore there is a need to take into consideration the implications of this phenomenon as part of policies aimed at developing the sectors of drinking water and sanitation on the continent. The aim of the Congress is to discuss these challenges be looking specifically at water and sanitation service delivery, efficient management,

investment financing, research and capacity building.

The Congress will also be a milestone on the way to 2015 as it will be time to analyse how close Africa is in achieving the targets set out in the Millenium Goals for Development.

A tentative programme for the four day event has also been put together to give those who are interested, a flavour of the types of workshops and seminars that are likely to take place. The programme includes:

- One symposium focusing on the linkages between climate change, energy, water and sanitation.
- Nine technical sessions and round table on the Congress themes
- One exhibitors forum
- A maximum of 10 side events
- One Mayors meeting
- One Water and Environment Ministers meeting

Preparations are off to a good start but there is much work to be done, particularly in attracting sponsors and exhibitors. Both AfWA and National Water and Sewage are hoping to attract over 400 exhibitors and over a 1,000 participants and guests in order to make Kampala 2010 the biggest bi-annual Congress and Exhibition ever seen on the continent, and a bench mark for all Congresses to come.



NWSC stays the course to attain corporate ISO 9001 certification

Christopher Kanyesigye

KAMPALA

National Water and Sewerage Corporation began treading the road to ISO 9001 Certification when Jinja and Tororo got certified in December 2003. This was after undergoing training for about 11 months, facilitated by Mr. Vincent Damulira, then working as a consultant of Uganda Manufacturers Association.

The certification audit was carried out by M/s OQS, an Austrian accreditation firm, and was based on ISO 9001:2000 Standard. Three years later in December 2006, four other Areas also got ISO 9001 certified, namely Entebbe, Masaka, Mbale and Soroti, whose certification audit was done by M/s Bureau Veritas Certification, a Kenyan based Certification firm. Next to be certified by the same firm were Kampala Water in June 2007 and Lira and Gulu in August 2007.

Five more Areas were certified by the same audit firm in April 2008, bringing the total number of Areas that are ISO 9001 certified so far to fourteen. As I write, three other Areas and the Head Office have been undergoing training and will be ready for certification audit in August and September 2009 respectively.

ISO 9001 Certification is awarded after establishment and development of a Quality Management System (QMS) that certifies the requirements of ISO 9001

international standard. The scope of the system is usually specified and in the case of NWSC, it is production and distribution of potable piped water and the relevant management functions.

This implies that all the processes of water treatment, quality management, storage, distribution, maintenance, procurement and inventory management, block mapping and GIS, IT functions, customer services e.g. water connection, billing and revenue management, finance and accounts, human resources and administration, planning and capital management, monitoring and evaluation and internal audit.

The process of system mapping, analysis and standardized documentation has made operations quite clear and focused. Staff now know the business system well and management decisions and policy are based on fact and duplication of duties has been minimized.

Internal audit that was hitherto more biased to financial accountability is now more holistic (system based). There is improved staff awareness about the business in totality and about process interactions, hence staff commitment and responsibility. The documented system has made induction new staff much easier. Furthermore, QMS/ISO emphasizes and has enhanced customer focus. Through ISO and other management approaches, the Corporation has attained

improved corporate image and market competitiveness.

The ISO certificate issued is usually valid for the years, subject to annual follow up external audits, by the same certifying firm, to ascertain maintenance of the quality management system. After the three years, the system has to be subjected to renewal.

The renewal (re-certification) audit may or may not be carried out by the initial certifying firm depending on the procurement process. So far all the certified Areas have been able to maintain the system. One point to be noted is that the 2000 version of the standard (ISO 9001:2000) has been reviewed into the current one namely ISO 9001:2008. It follows therefore that all Areas have to upgrade their QMS systems to the current version, and the next follow up (surveillance) audits will be based on ISO 9001:2008 version. Certification of Head Office, Arua, Hoima and Masindi will also be based on the current version.

It is to be noted that so far each of the certified Areas has been holding an independent certificate, with an independent external audit process. In the next three months, the entire Corporation will more or less be ISO 9001 Certified. This implies that the individual Area ISO certificates may be merged into one corporate ISO certificate, with the advantage of a harmonized internal and external QMS audit processes.

Kabale trains on peak performance strategies and customer care

By Kambabazi Jackline

KABALE

Kabale Area held training on peak performance strategies and customer care (refresher) with a basis on creating water raving fans. This training was held on the 15th and 16th of July 2009 at the Area Office being facilitated by a consultant from VINOD Management Consult Ltd and the Kampala Water Raving Fans Coordinator.

The peak performance strategies presentation was very timely and relevant given the new IDAMC III targets that were set and which have to be achieved for improved performance of the Area. The following are a few highlights that were presented on peak performance strategies that can be of benefit to everyone in the Corporation.

Peak performance refers to performance to your best. It means achieving great things against all odds. The fountain of peak performance is *perseverance, insistence and consistency* actions towards set goals.

The main hindrance to peak performance is *procrastination* i.e. postponing what should have been done now to a later undefined time for no good reason. The ultimate consequence of this is that some of the things postponed may

never get done. If one is to be a peak performer, an individual has to ensure the following:

- figure out what arena you are suited to play in.
- have courage to take action and get started.

The peak performance strategies presentation was very timely and relevant, given the new IDAMC III targets that were set and which have to be achieved for improved performance of the Area.

- have determination to endure and persevere and go all the way even if the going gets tough.
- be willing to do whatever it takes as long as it gets the job done.

Prerequisites for peak performance include:

- make clear decisions. Every positive change in life begins with making a clear decision.
- develop goals and objectives

- have a clear plan of action. Prior planning prevents poor performance.
- use ABCDE approach to set priorities i.e. prioritized order of the alphabet.
- separate urgency from the important
- use available time to do something. No one works best under pressure.
- work at your energy peaks. Establish at what time of the day you perform best.
- organize your workplace. Working in a tidy environment helps save valuable time.

Identifying and associating with people who support your intentions creates dream teams and creation of functioning teams in an organization is one way of ensuring peak performance. Creating of meaningful teams however calls for scrutiny of the team members for blending of individual talents.

With all the above in mind, Kabale Area staff pledged to perform to their peak in order to achieve the new set targets of IDAMC III and with the refresher customer care training, we are hoping to be the number one peak performers in NWSC.



NWSC amidst the global financial crisis

By Peter R. Twesigye

It is now approximately 10 months since the Wall Street crash began spreading worldwide, crippling most financial and stock markets let alone bringing to the knees the so called mighty companies of America. Africa which had hitherto seemed cushioned against the effects of the crisis has also taken a thorough beating. **Peter Twesigye** examines the impact of the crisis on NWSC operations and business.

In order to assess whether or not NWSC has had any effect from the crisis, one would have to look at prices of input raw materials first (i.e. prices of chemicals like chlorine, soda ash, pipes and fittings, meters, etc.). An assessment carried out in our procurement department to determine any possible price changes, surprisingly shows that these have not changed since the world proclaimed the "gospel" of the Global Financial Crisis. This implies that in the short run, NWSC is in a secure position.

However, the financial crisis has had a negative effect on effective demand of our water services. A notable decline in consumers' disposable transactionary incomes has called for rational spending.

This has been compounded by the rise in food prices and depreciation of the Shilling. This means a change in income allocations and spending. Priority is attached to Price elastic goods whose bill the household meets every day, unlike the water bill that comes monthly (other commodities are competing for the person's income). Therefore, Households or businesses attach more importance to other products and goods before considering the water bill.

This has partly contributed to accumulation of water bills/arrears for the different categories of our customers. NWSC Arrears have grown to Shs 41 billion as at March 2009, with Domestic arrears constituting 13 billion (31.4 %) and Ministries 17 billion (43 %)

Also, there seems to be noticeable change in supplier behaviour which can be attributed to the financial crisis. For instance, suppliers are unwilling to have long term purchase orders, and in some cases they are cancelling them. Additionally, suppliers are agitating for payment sooner unlike before. This is

an indicator that the crisis has taken a toll on their investible income, and therefore cannot accept any gaps in their income flows. Ironically some suppliers (especially foreign) have become very aggressive & are willing to supply even below the market price.

A possible logical reason for this behaviour could be a fast fall in the price of these inputs on the foreign market, and a speculated fall in the future. As a result, the supplier is willing to offload his items at the current price than face a depreciated price in the near future as economies are foreseen to continue crumbling. Another factor could be the fact that many of these manufacturers could be under pressure to meet their fixed costs, costs of finance e.g. paying back loans financiers. In the wake of low sales, a shrewd business man will part with his goods at lower prices as a survival mechanism hoping that he makes loss for some time until prices pick. Of course this can be disastrous and lead to closure of business. From the financial aspect, NWSC has had direct effects of the crisis. One such is the refusal by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to offer security and approval of the Shs



10 billion Bond initiative the Corporation intended to float on the financial market, citing high volatility in key macroeconomic variables.

The rising world oil prices have escalated pump fuel prices, translating into increased transport costs both for the Corporation and its staff (those who have cars & taxi users), hence impacting on their overall disposable income. This has been compounded by the rising food prices.

Furthermore, commercial credit has become scarcer and thus more costly hence impacting on the cash flow of the Corporation and individuals. The crisis has had a multiplier effect on commercial lending rates, majorly being up scaled. Some Banks that used to lend at 19 % have increased to 24 % - 27 % while others moved from 17.5 % - 25 %. The cost of finance has risen as a result of the crisis mainly emanating from increased speculation, uncertainty and volatility in the financial sector. Banks have thus resorted to hedging in a bid to mitigate likely amplitudes and sporadic recessions of the economic meltdown. Administrative fees of these banks have likewise gone up implying that if the Corporation is to take credit, it will face a higher transactionary cost. At the individual level, one wonders whether Interest Arbitrage still makes sense, apart from security of one's money in the bank vaults.

From the global Ugandan economy perspective, the financial recession will impact negatively on the ODA (Official Development Aid) that Uganda has been enjoying.

On the 22nd September 2008, just as the Wall Street crash began spreading worldwide, the UN General Assembly held a high level meeting in New York

on Africa's development needs. Leaders from Africa appealed to donors to live up to their earlier pledges to increase foreign aid to Africa. As the crisis worsened, many African leaders voiced concern. Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga noted "we fear that as economies of our main donor partners are affected, the first victim is going to be aid". Such concerns were bluntly reinforced by French foreign minister Bernard Kouchner. Commenting on donor pledges to increase aid to help poor countries achieve MDGs, he repeatedly stated in New York "Promising to get people more

In order to assess whether or not NWSC has had any effect from the crisis, one would have to look at prices of input raw materials first

money for development? This is not true, we are lying". A month later, a French NGO, the Comite Catholique contre la faim et pour le developpement-Terre Solidaire (CCFD) warned that French officials were considering cutting aid payment authorisations in the 2009 budget by more than half. Uganda may soon realise a cut in French aid in this case.

Bank of Uganda buys dollars 10 million to smooth out foreign exchange shortage. Towards the end of March 2009, Bank of Uganda bought about \$ 10 million in a bid to contain the scarcity of dollars urgently needed mostly by Ugandan importers, and to maintain a stable inflation rate buoyed by the crisis. However this resulted in a sharp rise in the exchange rate from Shs 1746 to Shs 2148 per dollar. This is not

good for the economy especially for importers, and overall, the tax payers. Although the BOU action eased the inflation rate which had shot up to 14.8 % back to 14.2 %, it has resulted in depreciation of the shilling, and the implied cost will be borne by the taxpayer sooner than later, in form of higher tax on consumer goods. (It should be noted that the earlier trend in depreciation arose out of unrestricted inflow of dollars into the market from Sudan).

Unemployment is bound to increase. Over the last 9 months many people worldwide have lost their jobs because of the crisis. This stems from the fact that most companies especially European are consumer driven. (They produce according to what is demanded by the market). A fall in disposable incomes of consumers translates into a fall in expenditure & a cut in average output by industries, and the need to optimise operational costs hence laying off some workers. Alternatively, the reverse is increased operational costs propagated by reduced purchasing power, which has compelled industrialists to Cost Rationalise by cutting down jobs, and in worse extremes to exercise closure. Notable among these was GTV which liquidated internationally, while Barclays Bank, AIG, etc laid off many employees. 650,000 jobs were lost in February 2009 alone in USA raising the unemployment rate to 8.1 % while India recorded 500,000 jobs lost (Uganda's information is lacking here). Concerning Job cuts in NWSC as a result of the financial crisis; this has not been witnessed yet. On the contrary we may notice an increase in staff numbers, because of the need to satisfy the increasing operational activities. Examples include, increase in operational activities in

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NWSC Pictorial



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1

Gulu rehabilitation of tanks-project

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GTZ Capacity building of Private Water Operators at the NWSC Training centre - 2008

5

NAWASCO - Demonstration of leak detection.
Nakuru, Kenya

6

UN HABITAT 2- Group work development of
PIP - Bunda, Tanzania



3

UN HABITAT 1 Field Demo - block mapping
Kisii, Kenya - 2008

4

Mukono reservoir - project

NWSC amidst the global financial crisis

Kampala & Mukono, Takeover of new towns like Kaberamaido, expansion of the Iganga branch and increased activities in other Areas.

Declining Remittances; Remittances from abroad by the “Nkuba Kyeyo” which had hitherto been rising have drastically reduced and so have earnings from the tourism industry. (The withdrawal of America from Iraq, will see inflows from Ugandans).

In all the above challenges and effects, the major reason for the magnitude of the impact of the crisis is that “Economies are structurally fragile with low capability to respond to shocks in a manner that maintains a stable development environment”. Major propellers for this include; unstable export revenues, rigidities in supply response, limited access to timely stabilisation and adjustment finance in response to shocks and high dependence on imports (May be NWSC can initiate a joint venture with one of the pharmaceutical companies in Uganda to start production of chemicals like Soda Ash or Alum to minimise import costs in future, for we have been importing since 1973).

One of the solutions that can be used to mitigate the effects of the crisis is to restructure African economies to enhance their capabilities to respond to flexibility to shocks, reduce exposure to shocks by diversifying their export base and sustained timely resource support to shocks.

For large corporation like NWSC, it is advisable to

maintain operations at the minimum of the Average Cost Curve. (It's good the MD has already initiated the Theme of Improving the “Cash Operating Margin” whose framework is to Maximise Revenue and Cost Rationalise).

Production should be at the minimum of the Average Cost, within which the company will maximise economies of scale. Operating beyond will expose the company to vulnerability to shocks.

Production should be at the minimum of the Average Cost, within which the company will maximise economies of scale. Operating beyond will expose the company to vulnerability to shocks.

In summary, with the prevailing economic crisis, we shall still expect the following;

- trade finance will come under tremendous pressure. With high fuel & food prices, foreign exchange constraints will persist in Uganda and the continent as a whole.
- a reluctance to lend by Commercial Banks will make it even harder to find trade financing resources.

- where credit is still available, banks have already started to increase the cost of long-term finance.
- shortening the tenure of such loans is equally likely
- for countries where a fall in Investment is simultaneous, coupled with drops in export earnings, a slowdown in GDP, weakened bank balance sheets, drop in asset prices like housing could result including some cases of bank failures.
- large projects that require external financing to complement short-term bank financing will face difficulty obtaining these funds, and if they do, they will face higher interest rates because of a greater risk aversion of the lenders.
- as investment falls, some projects in the country will not be completed making them unproductive.

The good news is that there's light at the end of the tunnel as African economies are not very much integrated into the capital markets of developed economies, so the impact of the crisis will overall be less than what is being experienced in developed economies like USA, UK, Japan and China.

And NWSC is still in a better position to withstand the crisis.



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Climbing the Ladder of Success: The inside story of the Rwenzori Water Partnership's recent success at the April 2009 quarterly IDAMC evaluation

By Jessica Namukwana

Fort Portal Area emerged overall winner during the April 2009 IDAMC II evaluation covering the period from November 2008 to March 2009. *Jessica Namukwana, the Area Manager of Fort Portal, shares some of the secrets behind the success which include getting the right people for the job, a strong focus on the customer and team work.*

The right people for the job

The Vision of Fort Portal Area is to be a world class utility which provides effective and efficient water and sewerage services to improve the quality of life of the people of Fort Portal. The Area's mandate has always been striving towards better performance and excellence as well as striking a balance between work and employee welfare.

To achieve such an overarching vision, the Fort Portal Area endeavours to utilize employees with the highest level of integrity, intelligence and maturity. These are important characteristics which everyone who wishes to work for us must possess.

In addition, greater emphasis has been put on evaluating individual staff performance on a monthly basis and recognizing the best performers. The Area also organizes small social

functions to appreciate its staff while giving room to share and reflect new ideas and strategies to be implemented.

For us nothing matters more in winning than getting the right people on the job. All the clever strategies and advanced technologies in the world are nowhere near as effective without great people to put them to work as a team.

A strong focus on the customer

Realizing that the customer is the single most important asset we possess, the area has been committed to:

- Ensuring customer satisfaction by carrying out effective process control so that quality is ensured at all stages of water production and distribution.
- Meeting the demands and expectations of our different stakeholders by upholding the integrity, being proactive, innovative and flexible in creating products and processes.
- Also implementing and ensuring continual improvement of the quality management systems.

Customer relationship management is one other approach we use to create and maintain customers. Fort Portal Area has successfully been able to carry out talk shows on radios and sensitization meetings to share and allow customers to

better understand the services we offer to them.

These meetings are always open for discussions where customers are able to ask and inquire about anything concerning the services offered to them. These meetings have enabled Fort Portal to bridge the gap between our staff and customers.

Teamwork

Teamwork has also played a big role towards improving staff and Area performance. Management has been able to energize others through collective efforts as well as helping one another in accomplishing tasks. In this case, positive energy is the ability to get other people revved up. People who energize can inspire their team to take on the impossible and enjoy the benefit of working in a team.

Teamwork has steadily grown and employees are in position to meet and share ideas regularly. This has been made possible by encouraging staff to advance in their careers, in order to perform and to get involved in other community activities that will not only develop their career status but also enhance their social responsibility. We have been able to participate in corporate leagues, prepare radio talk shows, and give public lectures to various groups with an aim of improving the corporation's image in the



public and creating more raving fans.

Moving forward

Performance improvement is a necessity of every organization and therefore there is need to take action in order to achieve our goals and get what we want. As a manager, you have to give a clear direction of what needs to be achieved, work with your team to design a plan of action steps to get you there, and then follow that plan to achieve your goals.

This is not to say that there will not be failures. When failures occur, you should have a positive attitude. Every failure brings an opportunity for growth and sets you up for future success in a new effort. For example, failing at one target may bring you the opportunity to enjoy great success in another.

Learning from past failures leads us to greater achievements. I remember during previous evaluation workshops they used to make us stand up for recognition because of poor performance and this made us work harder. As Sir Winston Churchill rightly pointed out:

“Too often, people use “I did my best” as an excuse for not doing what really needed to be done. Plan and prepare appropriately for the task at hand so that you can do what is required to succeed. Using this results-oriented strategy will help you accomplish your goal”

The challenge is how to maintain the improved performance without turning back. We shall work hard for it. “Yes We Can”.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

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PROJECT BRIEFS

By Mary Kobusingye

Mukono Water Supply and Sanitation Project Phase II. This phase includes the construction of four reservoirs and an 11km Transmission Mains from Namuwongo to Namanve. Currently, the reservoirs and transmission mains have been completed and the project installations were officially handed over to Kampala Water management on the 30th April 2009. There are still some pending works including the connections to the existing water mains at Namuwongo and system testing, which are anticipated to take two more months. Already, reports from Mukono indicate that there has been a substantial improvement in water supply in the dry areas, with many customers who used to receive water less than once a week now receiving water for 6 hours a day. The project has been funded entirely by NWSC to the tune of UGX 12 billion.

Gulu Water Supply Project and Sanitation Project. Due to limited funding, the project scope was broken down into several stages. Stage I was commissioned in November 2009 and the works for stage II are just commencing. The scope of works involves the following; electro/mechanical works at the water treatment plant; laying of new DN 500 mm of clear water pumping main; construction of new 5,300 m³ reinforced concrete reservoir at custom Corner hill; replacement of some distribution mains; rehabilitation of the gravity filter and clarifiers and laying of some new pipe lines. The works are expected to be completed in April 2010. Funding for this project was made available by GoU (for rehabilitation of the North) spread over five financial years, of which FY 2009/10 was the second.

Buloba Water Supply Project: The project involves water supply to Buloba and is funded by both NWSC and GoU. Project design and tender documentation were finalised. However the funds that were to be supplied under the supplementary budget from the Ministry of Finance are still being awaited.

Jinja Offshore Pipeline Project: The project aims to negate the effects of the sudden fall in Lake Victoria levels which exposed raw water pipelines at Jinja Water works in 2004. Works to extend the intake to a depth of 2 metres below the minimum expected lake level commenced in March 2009 and shall be completed within the next twelve months. This project is funded through a grant obtained from AFD, France.

Ggaba Offshore Pipeline Project: Like the Jinja project above, this project also aims to secure water supply to Ggaba water treatment complex and improve on the raw water quality by extending the raw water intake 203 metres further into the Murchison Bay. Due to effects of pollution from the Nakivubo Channel and unstable lake levels, there was a great urgency to shift the intake from its current location. This project is being financed through a loan from AFD, France.

Arua Water Treatment Plant Project: The construction works to replace and upgrade the 40 year old 19.6 m² masonry gravity filter with a 36 m² reinforced concrete gravity filter and a new 91 m³ contact tank to supplement the existing 51 m³ tank. The project commenced in the FY 2007/2008 and was substantially completed in June 2009. Currently both the new filter and contact are fully operational and under defect liability period.

Bushenyi Water Supply Project: This involves the implementation of the emergency works for the rehabilitation of the Bushenyi water supply project. Works commenced in October 2008 and the new pumping main has been completed. Other works to rehabilitate and expand the treatment plant, including construction of a new filter and clarifier, expansion of the Nyarizinga intake and construction of a new reservoir are ongoing. Construction of pipe line to supply Ishaka is also in the offing. The project wholly is funded by NWSC. Funds for the construction of a new treatment plant at a different water source are being sought.

Kampala Sanitation Program: This project is funded by KfW, ADB, EU and NWSC with the objective to improve the sanitation conditions in the Nakivubo catchment area and reduce on the pollution of the Murchison Bay through improvement of the sewer networks, construction of four new sewage and faecal sludge treatment plants, and rehabilitation of the Bugolobi sewage treatment plant. Designs by the consultant for the immediate works were completed. Prequalification of contractors for the initial works was also initiated. Procurement of the consultants for the major works is in its final stage.

Kampala Water Supply Network Rehabilitation Project: This project is still on the drawing board and aims at continuing with the implementation of the network rationalization and expansion to reduce water losses and the incidence of dry zones within Kampala. Proposals have been prepared and submitted to different development partners for funding. Updating of the 2003 feasibility study funded by KfW and AfD shall commence soon.

NWSC Transcends from the 4th Corporate Planning Cycle to the 5th Corporate Plan

By David Isingoma

The NWSC has just completed its 4th planning cycle (2006 – 2009), a period that has revealed both growth and challenges within the Corporation. **David Isingoma** summarises the main achievements and challenges. In regard to growth, the corporation increased service coverage, customer base and financial growth among others. However, a number of challenges were met during the period, notable among which were the increasing levels of non-revenue water (NRW), debtors, low growth in water sales, and the incidence of dry zones especially in Kampala. However, these to management were construed as opportunities to reinvigorate and re-define our strategies. Indeed, management came up with various short-term and long-term strategies to address the above challenges.

Corporate strategies (2006 – 2009)

The strategies in brief included the Stretch out Programme, the One Minute Manager Concept, the IDAMCs, the Checkers system, the Simplified Water and Sewerage Connection Policies, the Raving Fans Concept, the Soroti and Fort Portal Declarations and Kampala non-revenue water action plan. The strategies were directly linked to the corporate goals (2006 - 2009) under the following themes;

- operational efficiency
- financial sustainability
- water and sewerage coverage
- Capital works projects
- internal reforms and restructuring
- external services

Achievements (2006 - 2009)

As a result of the successful implementation of these strategies, the Corporation increased water production by 21 % from 58.1 m³

in 2006 to 70.2 m³ in 2009, while water sales increased by 7 % from 40.8 m³ to 44.2 m³. Our water service coverage, representing the percentage of the population served within our areas of operation throughout the country, rose from 70 % to 73 %. This performance is particularly significant in light of the Country's commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) and the President's Manifesto (2006), all of which address the common theme, of improving the welfare of the people of Uganda through increased access to safe drinking water.

In terms of infrastructure developments, the planning period 2006 – 2009 witnessed the completion of key projects which included; Gaba III Treatment Plant and the Transmission mains, the Entebbe Water Supply and Sewerage Project, the Iganga Water Supply and Sewerage project (implemented by DWD), the Soroti Water Supply and Sewerage Project (also implemented by DWD). All these have significantly added to the sustainability of water supply in the Corporation.

In regard to the financial performance, the Corporation has in the last three years been able to cover all its operating costs, including depreciation, and to post increasing margins that have been ploughed back in investments such as Mukono Water Supply project, Bushenyi Water Supply project, Arua Water Supply and Kampala Network Expansion.

Key among the achievements was the continued expansion of the Corporation's External Services and benchmarking activities amongst various utilities which culminated into the Corporation embarking on the construction of a Training Centre that will offer utility skills transfer from a practical perspective.

Way Forward 2006 - 2009

In formulating the Fifth Corporate Plan 2006 - 2009, the Board and Management of the Corporation adopted the Theme; **"Maximising the Cash Operating Margin"** which simply translated implies maximisation of revenues and rationalisation of costs. By adopting this theme, it is envisaged that the Corporation will generate sufficient resources that will be ploughed back into expansion of the water supply and sewerage systems. This will in turn improve water and sewerage services delivery in an efficient and cost effective manner.

Vision/Mission

Based on the current performance and trends within the corporation, management retained the Vision for the period 2006 – 2009 which was deemed still relevant since the Corporation still strives to be among the best in water and sanitation service delivery. Therefore, the vision for the planning period 2009 – 2012 is: **To be one of the leading water utilities in the world.**

To achieve the vision, the mission statement adopted for NWSC corporate plan period 2006 - 2009 is: **To provide efficient and cost effective water and sewerage services, applying innovative managerial solutions to the delight of our customers.**

The above mission adds a new dimension of "Delight" in line with the Raving Fans Concept that is being propagated within the Corporation as the vanguard for improving customer relations and service delivery.

At NWSC, we look forward to the continued improvement in our service delivery for the good health and prosperity of the people of Uganda. Remember Water is Life and Sanitation is Health! and Health is Wealth!



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Changing trends in debt management: What can we learn?

By Pheona Wall

*Debt management is a challenge faced by many post-paid service providers in Uganda, including National Water and Sewerage Corporation. **Pheona Wall** –NWSC's Commercial Officer –shares some insights on the changing trends in debt management and what lessons NWSC can learn to improve the debt management practices*

Generally, Ugandans have a poor paying culture. This is probably due to instability, lack of accountability, and the way some of our service providers run businesses (for example GTV rolled up and left customers in the rut, without warning). Also, we sometimes we lack the integrity to stay true to our word, as customers.

Most customers I have talked to claim that in most cases they pay water dues not out of obligation, but out of fear of consequences, i.e. law suits, loss of continued service, embarrassment. The only people who are genuinely obliged to pay are housewives, because priority is financial security for their families. Even housewives – to some degree – fear of consequences is still a driving force.

Also, capitalism encourages the culture of 'give and take' which comes with its own evils. So how does a post-paid utility service provider like NWSC "win" against such seemingly insurmountable odds?

Helping the customer maintain good credit ratings

Experience has shown that given the chance, anybody would accumulate more debt than they could pay back. As a water

utility company, NWSC needs to go beyond just providing the service, to enabling customers pay for it and keeping their debt at manageable levels.

This can be done through:

- setting customer credit limits in accordance with consumption and/or service levels, and firmly insisting on zero balance payments for current billing.
- keeping in touch with customers to avoid issues like liquidation or shifting from premises, without NWSC's knowledge.
- breeding a prompt "debt payment culture" among ourselves as NWSC staff.

Assessing customer credit risks

Like all utility suppliers, NWSC is sometimes obliged to supply services, which exposes it to higher credit risk. However, with timely deployment of appropriate measures, this risk can be significantly reduced. With our effective data management systems in place, it's easy to actually devise counter measures to this effect. We ought to classify customers according to credit history; it will probably be a clearer guide to managing our debt. For instance:

- Possible outstanding debts should be recalled immediately.
- Suspect and absentee customers should be asked to pay in advance.
- The other indebted customers should be constantly reminded, and the really difficult ones

should be referred to debt collectors.

This obviously provides a more systematic approach to debt management, and such flexibility is known to yield impressive results. Ulrich Schmitz (Head of Service, Stadtwerk Duesseldorf) once said: "by identifying the risk of payment default early on, we can initiate timely and coordinated measures." This approach helped reduce Stadtwerk Duesseldorf's losses by 13 % and increased turnover by 18 %, in just one year.

Changing policy and practices

Some finance scholars advocate for delaying payments, as much as possible (i.e. receivable days against payable days' ratios). However, these practices are in the end retrogressive. Take for instance, some simple commercial process.

A customer applies and pays for a new connection which should be due immediately, but because of delays in paying suppliers, the necessary materials to effect the connection are lacking, thus causing unnecessary connection delays. When finally connected, this disgruntled customer becomes an unwilling payer, and arrears accrue. Aren't we then shooting ourselves in the foot?

Of course, nothing happens without serious policy review, plus an overhaul of some of our retrogressive processes in all departments. However, imposing strange unpopular policy can create problems, so we as NWSC need to recognise the need for change like the Mice in 'Who Moved My Cheese' (by Spencer Johnson), and set

out in search for better ways of achieving our vision.

Some of the issues to note in a bid to allow policy to flow with the times include;

- Credit and collections management should be part and parcel of customer relations management.
- Risk evaluation and not only turnover should stand at the fore front of customer assessment.
- Current customer data should be complemented with external information, like social demographic data and/or key market statistics, in order to achieve comprehensive segmentation
- All measures and collection procedures should be fine-tuned to reflect individual customer behaviour and be flexible enough to take into account the changing risk scores of customers.

Additional tips on improving debt collection

Ordinary debtors usually succumb to ordinary collection methods. Extraordinary debtors require more forceful measures. Of course, there are debtors who cannot pay – simply because they have not, and cannot get, the money to pay – with whom ordinary or extraordinary collection methods do not yield fruits. The majority of those who fail to pay their debts are not in this category, but rather difficult people who are trying to get something for nothing. In such cases, any methods within the limits of the law can justifiably be used. However, these “extremes” should be a last resort.

Debt collection is not a matter of hard-heartedness. It is merely a matching of wits between the collection manager and the delinquent debtor. Bearing in mind that NWSC is customer

“By identifying the risk of payment default early on, we can initiate timely and coordinated measures.”

Ulrich Schmitz, Head of Service, Stadtwerk Duesseldorf

centered, these methods should be used with utmost care and consideration. NWSC already uses some of these methods listed below, but there are some additional details and tips on how to use them more effectively.

a, The Telephone Call

The telephone call is a comparatively mild collection measure – good for the ordinary slow account – but of little avail for really hard cases, because of the facility with which the debtor may shut off its importunities, when they become annoying. For the ordinary overdue account, its effect is as good as a personal interview. Indeed, when the telephone message comes from an important officer, it might be even better. This adds more weight to the phone call compared to that of a collector – who might be a subordinate.

However, a telephone call has its own down turns. Firstly, there must be a phone line through which the indebted customer could be reached. Secondly, the debtor should have a degree of willingness – on his part to listen, or a mechanism employed by the caller to compel him – to listen. Otherwise, the debtor might bring the conversation to an abrupt conclusion, by just hanging up.

A telephone call might be useful at any stage of collection, because it can serve as a convenient reminder on the due day, if remittances do not come in promptly. It can also become equally handy, if the matter has dragged on for months, with promises broken,

letters unanswered, and when debt payment agreements are defied. An explanation of the delay could be sought, and the importance of prompt payment emphasized. The entire matter could be discussed in detail, depending on the circumstances.

It's quite easy – under such circumstances – to make a very strong appeal for money without offending the debtor – an appeal which the debtor will find difficult to resist. However, the greatest shortcoming of a telephone collection call is the inability to secure debt payment there and then. Once the debtor has been fully convinced to pay, the collection manager ought to strike the iron while it's still hot – by moving fast to get the promised debt payments. If this is untenable for the debtor, he/she can await a remittance, which may take long in coming.

b, The Registered Letter

For a delinquent debtor who pays no attention to letters and is not accessible through telephone calls, a registered letter might be useful. The registered letter is effective due to its semi-official character. Registry is formal and unusual, and when the delinquent debtor receives the letter with reference to his account, he will in most cases, conclude that the matter is serious, and probably give it the attention it deserves. By knowing that the letter was registered, and that he/she signed a receipt for it, might prove to be a valuable asset for the manager in charge.

c, Installment collections, coupled with a persistent attitude

Overdue accounts may sometimes be secured piecemeal. In such cases, where the debtors are either unable or unwilling to pay the full amount, collectors ought to propose payment by installments. This can be crystallized by signing installment payment agreements. For ordinary debtors who seem to be between a rock and a hard place, this works very effectively.

By tailoring it to adapt to the circumstances of debtors, it could eventually yield some fruits.

Constantly keeping in touch with indebted customers has an added dimension of reminding them of their debt responsibilities. NWSC ought to be like the widow in Jesus' parable who got justice, not because the judge thought she deserved it, but because of her persistence (Luke 18:1-8). In any undertaking, persistence obviously yields results.

For example, on numerous

occasions, Abraham Lincoln ran for public office – including the office of the Presidency of the United States – and failed, but his failures never stopped him from trying again. He eventually succeeded because he never gave up. Let us therefore embrace our nemesis 'arrear' and await the glory that will come when we finally overcome them. Our consequential and respectful interaction with customers – including the indebted ones – is the key to NWSC success. After all, they are the reason we exist.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

To comment on this article, please email up to 500 words to the editor at: watereditorial@nwsc.co.ug. A selection of comments received will be published in the next issue of the magazine. The Water Herald relies entirely on contributions sent in by NWSC staff, customers and other stakeholders. Articles should be 1000–2500 words long, with adequate illustrations and references. Please contact the editor for further information.

DIVINE CORNER

By Pheona Wall

Pay attention to the Word of God

"Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the Law My servant Moses gave you: do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth: meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful" – Joshua 1:7-8

What has happened to us? What has happened to our desire to hear from God? Why do we want mediators? In the persecution days for instance in China people would smuggle in pages of the Bible and ponder over them until they were threadbare. Why is it that in this day of religious freedom we spend our wealth on books and opinions of other Christians instead of spending time in His Word?

Recently, the newspapers have been full of articles about cults that bury people in their churches, child sacrifice, fake pastors that are committing such atrocities. Why in this day and age of education are we so gullible? In the old days witches were

hunted and stoned. Why is it that now when we should know better we accommodate these self declared Satanists and voodoo practitioners in our midst?

Why do we give them business? Why do we close our eyes to these wolves in sheep's skin when their fangs are so evident? The Bible says you shall know them by their fruit. How can we go to a mango and get jack fruit and still stay there? Don't we then deserve what we are getting?

I am so tired of hearing 'convenient' and 'customized' versions of the Word from our teachers. We fashion it to our wants, and ignore it where it requires change in us. We have grown way too comfortable with the World that there is very little it is able to do in our lives.

When was the last time you read the Word and were convicted to change? When was the last time you encouraged someone with the word or even gave them counsel? What does the Bible say about your situation right now? Are you doing God's will?

Join me in prayer that we shall change, that we shall go back to God's feet and find out what He has called us to do.



HR CORNER

How to Handle Difficult People at Work

By Susan Nanyange

The job of any manager is how efficiently and effectively he or she handles people at work. It is a challenge as a manager to form coalitions of willing, eager, and ambitious people within the realm of your responsibility. Handling people at work is not always as easy as it looks like, more so when a manager has to handle difficult people. **Susan Nanyange** gives some insights on the different categories of difficult people, how they affect the work place, and what managers can do to deal with them.

Handling people at work is not always as easy as it looks like, more so when a manager has to handle difficult people. They can destabilize you if you cannot understand and handle them properly. On the other hand, every difficult person in the form of a boss, colleague, subordinate, friend that you come in contact with is an opportunity for you to grow and develop into a stronger, more resilient - and more serene manager.

The coping skills need to be learned. If you get rattled with their behaviour they might create considerable damage in the smooth functioning of your department. Every organization, department, section has difficult people and these people have to be understood, handled and dealt with properly. Failing to act proactively might mean that you are scared to handle these difficult people and to make their presence felt they assume the role of a parasite slowly indulging in the act of gnawing and paralyzing the whole set up. Thus, it becomes a challenge for the managers to take these difficult people along with them while they are in the process of achieving concrete results.

How difficult people affect the work place

Difficult people waste a lot of time. They not only waste a lot of their time but waste a lot of your time. Difficult people bring you down. Yet, team efficiency suffers if you and your subordinates simply

avoid the person causing the problems.

Moreover, difficult people affect you at all levels, and their effects vary depending on whether they are co-workers, subordinates, or bosses. The problems you encounter in dealing with a difficult person stem from one of the two sources:

- **Conflicting expectations.** When you expect something from someone else – increased sales, stepped up performance, higher productivity, or more help with your workload- you set yourself up for the possibility of disappointment. Offices are full of co-workers, superiors walking around resenting each other over expectations they never discussed, negotiated, or agreed to. Subordinates, peers, and superiors become “difficult” when they stand between you and your expectations.
- **Unclear boundaries.** Boundaries can be physical or emotional, that is, what you will and will not tolerate in the way others treat you or talk to you. People who cross these boundaries without permission can seem difficult. For example, a subordinate crosses your boundaries when he walks into your office uninvited, cuts you off in meetings, sends out department-wide directives without consulting you, or makes unauthorized purchases. He becomes a classic difficult subordinate i.e., a difficult employee.

Difficult people in whatever form they are in your organisation therefore deplete energy.

Depleted energy dampens enthusiasm. Dampened enthusiasm decreases personal performance. Decreased personal productivity diminishes organizational performance. Hence, every organization and the manager need to have strategies and language to deal with them.

If you proactively make an earnest attempt to understand difficult people in your work place, the battle is half won. Focusing on improving and forging the relationship is important because you can't reasonably expect to change a difficult person. You can only hope to influence and change his or her behaviour.

Categories of difficult people

Difficult people at workplaces can be classified into 10 categories:

The Slave Driver

One who makes unreasonable demands on your time, resources and attention.

The Black Hole

Someone who takes everything you can give and then asks for more.

The Minutiae Monster

Someone who is inefficient, unfocused and obsessed with details.

The Busybody

Someone who doesn't respect personal and professional boundaries.

The Recluse

Someone who is isolated and does not communicate with co-workers.

The Bully

Someone who deliberately intimidates others.

The Liar

A person who deliberately breaks the rules and misleads you.

The Outlaw

Someone who doesn't play by the rules unless they're his own.

The Blamer-Complainer

Someone who blames you and others for his mistakes.

Know-It -All

Someone who claims to know everything about everything.

After going through the above, you now have a fair idea of the many ways people can be diffi-

cult to work with. Note that not all difficult people will fit neatly into one of the categories but they may possess one or more traits which makes them difficult to work with.

These people will behave in the most unconventional and unpredictable ways imaginable - intentionally or not. So you need to be ready. In any event, be prepared to act decisively. To be an asset to your company, you need to be a problem solver. In other words, you need to possess certain attributes at making problems go away. The more you do, the more you command respect, the more you command respect, and the more you would be given difficult and complex problems.

The more complex problems you resolve, the more you command value in the work place, the more you command value in the work place, the more you command a price. Thus, your career graph sky rockets to all time high. To manage all difficult people and the problems that come with them, you need to remember one basic principle: First, you must separate the problem from the person.

Ways of dealing with difficult people

There are a number of proven ways managers can deal with difficult people:

- (i) constructive confrontation;
- (ii) progressive discipline;
- (iii) giving positive feedback in public, but give reprimands in private; and
- (iv) termination.

Constructive confrontation is about going hard on the issue and soft on the person. In other words, when you need to confront a staff member, bring to the table both your high work expectations and

standards and a sympathetic ear. Focus on what you want to get out of the confrontation. To solve the problem, make the relationship stronger, help the person develop and empower the development.

Managers should engage difficult employee in conversation, create a written covenant or an agreement. Schedule and conduct regular feedback and monitoring sessions. Celebrate the accomplishment of short-term goals. Repeat process until long-term goals have been achieved.

If you have engaged in constructive confrontation with an employee who continues to be difficult, it's time to use the extensive counselling and documentation you've built up to begin a formal program of progressive discipline. Progressive discipline offers difficult employees a chance to turn their situation around, under the looming threat of dismissal.

Sometimes there is no other option left for the manager to deal with incorrigible people in the work place, termination is the only answer. Be as diplomatic as possible to avoid any further confrontation in your work place. Trust that you are doing the right thing for your business and then make sure you follow all the correct procedures with the support of your HR department.

If you do need to terminate someone's employment, the best time is at the end of the workday, preferably at the end of the week; make a point to call a meeting the next workday to notify your other employees in person. Every Manager faces difficult people while they are in the process of achieving organizational objectives. The focus of a manager however should be the company's objectives and not the person who makes his job and your job difficult. You need to skilfully pull out the weeds as and when they appear.



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Why Eagles fly Higher

By Martin Kalibbala

Why do eagles fly? It's because of their rare willingness to soar against challenging heavy winds. A million dollar question is thrown to you. How do you view the challenges you face? **Martin Kalibbala** dares you to view challenges as great opportunities before you, to help you soar to "great heights". Take them on with an attitude of overcoming them. The way you view them – coupled with persistence – will make you or break you. Success is never possible without the winds of challenge.

Eagles fly way higher than any other birds, on the planet. They dwell in mountains, and are rarely seen. They fly in the most turbulent region of the atmosphere called the stratosphere. Eagles withstand pressures at those heights because of their resilient design of wings, plus their intrinsic ability to take on the challenge of turbulent winds. The greater the wind resistance, the better the flying conditions for eagles, yet the same conditions are a nightmare for other birds.

However, when eagles are young, and are trying to learn flying, scientific studies have depicted that only 60 % of the eaglets survive this stage. A whopping 40 % are annihilated by turbulent winds. Their nests are usually between 1.5 meters – 3 meters wide and weigh about 2 tonnes. Eagles incubate their eggs for about 5 weeks, after which they hatch.

The eagles' eyesight is so sharp and clear that they can see at an angular range of 180 degrees, over a distance of 40 kilometers, to the finest detail. This is very powerful visual. No living creature on earth – not even humans – can look into the sun without using visual aids. Yet eagles can do so without closing eyes, because theirs are protected by an anti-glare layer, which filters deadly radiation.

Why do eagles fly? It's because of their rare willingness to soar against challenging heavy winds. A million dollar question is thrown to you, how do you view the challenges you face? I dare you to view them as great opportunities before you,

to help you soar to "great heights". Take them on with an attitude of overcoming them. The way you view them – coupled with persistence – will make you or break you. Success is never possible without the winds of challenge.

Today, you might be admiring people who have managed to soar to great heights, wondering if you will ever make it to their level. The unfortunate truth about most people who have made it in life, is that they rarely come back to talk about their hurdles, failures and frustrations they faced before they became the applauded heroes. By failing to tell their full stories, they rob those who are climbing up in frustration, the encouragement they may draw from them. Thus, men like William Muhairwe – MD, NWSC – deserve much accolade for putting pen to parchment, to tell their balanced and successful turnaround stories.

So many people worldwide seem to be racing towards the door of success, but very few discern the right way to it. Why is this so? Sir Tony Buxton said, "...I have noticed conclusively that the difference between the great and small, rich and poor, strong and feeble, successful and nobodies is energy..." He went ahead to explain what he meant by energy; "...the invincible, positive, sacrificial determination to make it against all odds, no matter what..."

What would have happened if the great Nelson Mandela hadn't sacrificed his bright career of being an attorney, just to persistently fight for a noble cause of seeing a free South Africa? Would South Africa enjoy the freedom it does today? What would have happened if MD – NWSC, William Muhairwe, had given up during the first 100-days of taking office – with seemingly insurmountable odds – would he have a successful turnaround story to tell?

If the renown genius, Albert Einstein had listened to his high school teachers who had concluded that he was a below average student, and had advised him to give up, would the world have received the law of relativity? His performance in high school

was generally below average, so much so that he failed to go to university. However, all through, his performance in Physics and Mathematics was phenomenal. His mental childhood development was slow. This worried his parents a lot.

He tried applying to a number of universities in Germany where he lived then, but to no avail, because of his poor grades. He even failed entrance exams. He tried some foreign universities and failed. He was advised by relatives to join a technical college. He later wrote in his diary these words, I quote, "...I have given up all hope of going to university..." After technical college studies, he decided to apply for a tutorial job at university. He again met an uphill task of staying at the job, because of his daunting past performance.

During his stay at this diminutive job – with part time supervision from a professor – he started doing his physics research in various areas, especially on the "law of relativity" – during night hours. Few years later, he published his findings. One time he was asked by fellow scientists, how he got clues that led to his discovery. His response was interesting, he said, "...God does not play dice..." He was awarded a doctorate degree in 1905, a Nobel physics prize in 1921, became a professor in numerous varsities. It is interesting to note that despite his past challenges, in 1999, Time Magazine named him "person of the century."

What about Bill Gates? He was recently gazetted by Forbes magazine as the richest man on earth today. His pockets are bulging with a whooping USD \$ 40 billion. Yet he is a Harvard university drop out, who failed

to complete his first degree. This is because, while he was doing his dissertation, he had ideas on data processing that he wanted to use. However, his supervising professor trashed them.

He walked out of university in frustration and formed his company. He later on developed an operating system with a friend. They tried to sell it out to hardware giant IBM, but to no avail. Surprisingly, some of those ideas flash in front of us today whenever we switch on our personal computers – via the mighty Microsoft.

During tough times when he struggled in business, other businessmen nicknamed him "business nerd". For those of you who might not know what his nickname meant, here it is, Webster dictionary defines it as "an unstylish, unattractive, or socially inept business person; especially one slavishly devoted to intellectual pursuits". In fact, one time he almost filed for bankruptcy, then oil tycoon, Ross Perot requested to sell him Microsoft. He refused to budge, and decided to persist against the winds of challenge. Look where he is now!

He requested for a business appointment with the IBM CEO, who accepted to meet him. This time he had gone to negotiate a cheaper deal for his product, but the IBM guru refused, based on the firm premise at the time – that software business was not good and that hardware was booming. Gates then requested that the software product be used by IBM, but keep his copyright ownership. Look where the world is now in computer business, especially with software.

For the NWSC staff who unsuccessfully participated in the recently concluded IDAMC

III bidding exercise, I dare you to view the challenge of failure as an opportunity to reflect, and try again next time. Find out why and what made you fail to make it.

It seems to me that yesterday's failure is tomorrow's fertilizer in which the flowers of your future success will blossom, if you don't give up. Victory does not go to the faint hearted, or coward. Neither does the prize for a race go to the fastest runner who decides to drop out, but rather to the one who endures to finish the race. The challenges we face have a way of bringing out the best in us.

The world's reward system – in all arenas, be it past, present or future – uniquely revolves around the following; you are remembered, rewarded or resented via the problems you solve or those you create. For example, we remember and applaud Albert Einstein, because he solved the nagging mystery of the law of relativity. Two thrusts have shaped the destiny of great men and women of old namely, inspiration and desperation. Which one have you chosen to shape you? The ball is in your court!

It seems like inside the unpleasant and ugly gift wrappers of challenges, lay the grains of wisdom we may need for the next season of our lives. Don't you think it's time to face the winds of challenge ahead of you with relentless positive attitude, so that they carry you to greater heights in life? Without doubt, in due time you will reap the rewards of persistence. Eagles fly higher, because of the turbulent winds they fly against. Now you know!

By Beat Nabacwa

Area		January Performance				February Performance				March Performance			
		NRW	WR	CE	Incentive Earned ('000Ushs)	NRW	WR	CE	Incentive Earned ('000Ushs)	NRW	WR	CE	Incentive Earned ('000Ushs)
Kampala	Actual	43.9	51	84.3	0	45.5	57	84.3	65,347	42.2	44	84.9	95,904
	Target	38	31.7	89.6	200,000	38	31.7	89.7	200,000	34.0	31.7	89.7	200,000
Jinja	Actual	21.2	53.3	81.1	0	12.4	46.2	81.1	47,235	35.3	52.4	81.4	0
	Target	20	40.9	85.8	67,532	20	40.9	86.1	67,532	20.0	40.9	86.5	67,532
Entebbe	Actual	16.6	47.4	92.42	0	14.6	41.0	92.80	25,678	15.3	58.5	92.89	18,590
	Target	17	41.3	94.69	50,818	17	41.3	94.79	50,818	17	41.3	94.88	50,818
Mbale	Actual	8.0	63.4	90.7	0	8.0	56.7	91.3	25,191	12.7	63.0	91.4	1,516
	Target	7.6	64.3	93.89	50,833	7.6	64.3	94.02	50,833	7.6	64.3	94.14	50,833
Mbarara	Actual	14.3	63.0	98.9	12,318	12.7	60.7	98.9	25,002	12.4	61.9	98.9	0
	Target	13	53.1	98.7	49,525	13	53.1	98.8	49,525	13	53.1	98.9	49,525
Masaka	Actual	18.2	71.1	93.9	0	19.8	63.6	94.0	12,882	22.2	84.7	94.1	0
	Target	22.9	77.6	95.77	33,898	22.9	77.6	96.46	33,898	22.9	77.6	97.12	33,898
Tororo	Actual	9.1	77.0	95.7	0	7.0	79.7	95.7	15,647	5.2	69.5	96.3	0
	Target	9	61.0	93.4	26,247	9.0	61.0	93.4	26,247	9	61	93.4	26,247
Soroti	Actual	23.6	99.8	85.6	0	23.6	81.9	86.1	6,599	12.1	63.7	86.5	3,632
	Target	23	68.0	87.77	26,217	23	74.4	88.02	26,217	23	74.4	88.26	26,217
Arua	Actual	7.0	82.5	98.2	156	12.6	104.9	98.1	0	18.0	104.6	98.1	0
	Target	10	60.8	98.34	30,075	10	60.8	98.50	31,075	10	60.8	98.65	31,075
Gulu	Actual	18.1	54.8	95.4	0	10.9	51.8	95.4	6,520	11.0	53.6	95.4	1,188
	Target	5	51.3	97.10	28,964	5	51.3	97.10	28,964	5	51.3	97.10	28,964
Bushenyi	Actual	19	124.5	100.0	0	22	175.3	100.0	9	13	144.4	100.0	0
	Target	13	93.8	99.32	14,637	13	93.8	99.33	14,637	13	93.8	99.34	14,637
Kabale	Actual	10.2	67.9	99.2	0	10.2	68.4	99.2	2,612	10.2	67.6	99.2	0
	Target	8	65	99.46	20,167	8	65.0	99.47	20,168	8	65	99.47	20,168
Lira	Actual	9.0	65.5	88.8	1,328	9.9	120.1	89.3	0	9.6	69.8	89.7	0
	Target	8.0	55.4	94.52	28,525	8	55.4	94.63	28,525	8	55.4	94.74	28,525
Fort Portal	Actual	7.3	64.4	95.9	3,363	20.1	72.1	96.1	2,835	17.8	72.6	96.3	1,123
	Target	20	60.2	98.50	20,429	20	60.2	98.50	20,428	20	60.2	98.50	20,428
Kasese	Actual	18.8	58.0	97.4	559	17.1	86.1	97.5	0	26.1	56.7	97.6	1,123
	Target	18	62.3	98.6	20,429	18	62.3	98.62	20,429	18	62.3	98.64	20,891
Hoima	Actual	19.4	107.2	86.5	0	13.7	80.5	90.1	3,037	15.3	81.4	90.9	511
	Target	15	81.3	97.17	10,891	15	81.3	97.29	10,891	15	81.3	97.39	10,891
Lugazi	Actual	35.0	118.3	83.5	0	35.0	115.6	83.3	0	28.0	132.6	83.6	0
	Target	16	65.3	89.60	3,484	16	65.3	89.78	5,000	16	65.3	89.96	5,000
Masindi	Actual	13.0	72.8	86.6	0	10.8	78.5	85.0	3,253	11.2	74.3	88.0	0
	Target	10	85.1	84.76	18,712	10	85.1	84.93	18,712	10	85.1	85.1	18,712
Mubende	Actual	13.2	137.0	93.4	0	13.0	92.4	95.6	4,998	26.5	126.9	95.5	0
	Target	15.0	98.0	98.67	13,025	15	98	98.71	13,025	15	98	98.75	13,025
Kajjansi	Actual	0.0	28.1	95.0	1,068	0.0	37.5	95.0	1,856	0.0	45.4	95.0	1,598
	Target	n. a	33.4	96.82	9,927	n. a	33.4	97.09	9,927	n. a	33.4	97.34	9,927

January 2009 Performance

Non Revenue Water:

The January 2009 performance indicates only five Areas succeeded in achieving their NRW targets. These were Entebbe, Masaka, Arua, Fort Portal, and Mubende. All the other areas fell short of their targets.

Working Ratio:

Five Areas were able to achieve their Working ratio targets. These include: Mbale, Masaka, Kasese, Masindi and Kajjansi.

Connection Efficiency:

All Areas with the exception of Mbarara, Tororo and Bushenyi fell short of their targets during the month of January 2009.

Incentives Earned:

Most of the Areas were not able to earn any incentives with the exception of Mbarara, Lira, Hoima and Kajjansi.

February 2009 Performance

Non Revenue Water:

During the month of February 2009, eight areas achieved their NRW targets. These areas were Jinja, Entebbe, Mbarara, Masaka, Tororo, Kasese, Hoima and Mubende. Other areas fell short of their targets.

Working Ratio:

Entebbe, Mbale, Masaka, Tororo, Hoima, Masindi and Mubende are the Areas that

Connection Efficiency:	achieved their working ratio targets. The other Areas fell short of their targets.
Incentives Earned:	With the exception of Mbarara and Tororo, all Areas were unable to achieve their connection efficiency targets for the month.
Incentives Earned:	Most Areas managed to receive substantial incentives during the month of March 2009, with Jinja earning the highest incentive of Ushs 47 million among other Areas.

March 2009 Performance

Non Revenue Water:	The performance for March 2009 indicates that most Areas did not succeed in obtaining their NRW targets. Only Entebbe, Mbarara, Masaka, Tororo, Soroti, Bushenyi and Fort Portal managed to achieve and even surpass their targets.
Working Ratio:	Only Mbale, Soroti, Kasese and Masindi achieved their working ratio targets. The other Areas fell short of achieving their targets.
Connection Efficiency:	All Areas with the exception of Mbarara fell short of their connection efficiency target during this month.
Incentives Earned:	Nine Areas were able to achieve an incentive in March 2009 with Entebbe Area earning the highest amounting to Ushs 19 million.

***Foot note: NRW – Non Revenue Water, WR – working ratio, CE – Collection Efficiency*

Area		April Performance				May Performance				June Performance			
		NRW	WR	CE	Incentive Earned ('000Ushs)	NRW	WR	CE	Incentive Earned ('000Ushs)	NRW	WR	CE	Incentive Earned ('000Ushs)
Kampala	Actual	39.7	44	85	98,241	44.7	53	85	90,374	40.3	59	84.6	87,593
	Target	34	31.7	89.9	200,000	34	31.7	90.3	200,000	34	31.7	90.4	200,000
Jinja	Actual	33.3	50.9	81.4	0	22.8	48.0	81.7	10,935	16.8	53.8	80.3	24,561
	Target	20	40.9	86.8	67,532	20	40.9	87.0	67,532	20.0	40.9	87.3	67,532
Entebbe	Actual	15.6	61.0	92.71	0	16.0	44.2	92.19	19,756	15.4	51.1	92.4	6,123
	Target	17	41.3	94.97	50,818	17	41.3	95.06	50,818	17	41.3	95.15	50,818
Mbale	Actual	19.8	51.5	91.5	1,016	17.9	80.4	91.6	817	15.4	64.6	91.6	5,038
	Target	7.6	64.3	94.26	50,833	7.6	64.3	94.37	50,833	7.6	64.3	94.48	50,833
Mbarara	Actual	10.4	59.8	98.7	0	13.5	59.7	98.7	24,581	13.6	68.2	98.8	9,107
	Target	13	53.1	98.9	49,525	13	53.1	99.0	49,525	13	53.1	99.1	49,525
Masaka	Actual	20.4	82.7	94.1	0	25.7	62.0	94.2	7,247	20.3	66.1	94.2	1,447
	Target	22.9	77.6	97.75	33,898	22.9	77.6	98.35	33,898	22.9	77.6	98.93	33,898
Tororo	Actual	9.6	77.5	96.1	0	9.6	68.2	96.1	2,326	6.9	84.9	96.2	0
	Target	9	61.0	93.4	26,247	9.0	61.0	93.4	26,247	9	61	93.4	26,247
Soroti	Actual	22.9	81.9	87.1	0	23.0	91.8	87.0	0	20.1	72.1	87.1	0
	Target	23	68.0	88.49	26,217	23	74.4	88.71	26,217	23	74.4	88.92	26,217
Arua	Actual	6.2	78.5	98.1	0	16.9	92.3	98.1	0	16.9	92.3	98.1	0
	Target	10	60.8	98.80	30,075	10	60.8	98.94	31,075	10	60.8	99.08	31,075
Gulu	Actual	28.1	61.7	95.4	0	13.3	61.6	95.4	10	13.2	52.0	95.4	1,071
	Target	5	51.3	97.10	28,964	5	51.3	97.10	28,964	5	51.3	97.10	28,964
Bushenyi	Actual	13	102.4	100.0	0	26	105.0	100.0	673	16	119.8	100.0	0
	Target	13	93.8	99.35	14,637	13	93.8	99.35	14,637	13	93.8	99.35	14,637
Kabale	Actual	10.2	68.3	99.2	0	10.2	74.2	99.2	2,343	10.2	66.7	99.2	535
	Target	8	65	99.48	20,167	8	65.0	99.48	20,168	8	65	99.49	20,168
Lira	Actual	8.4	73.2	89.9	615	8.2	83.6	90.1	615	9.0	145.8	90.3	615
	Target	8.0	55.4	94.84	28,525	8	55.4	94.94	28,525	8	55.4	95.04	28,525
Fort Portal	Actual	12.5	66.3	96.2	207	16.0	64.2	95.1	4,310	19.1	100.7	93.4	0
	Target	20	60.2	98.50	20,429	20	60.2	98.50	20,428	20	60.2	98.50	20,428

Area		April Performance				May Performance				June Performance			
		NRW	WR	CE	Incentive Earned ('000Ushs)	NRW	WR	CE	Incentive Earned ('000Ushs)	NRW	WR	CE	Incentive Earned ('000Ushs)
Kasese	Actual	19.0	53.2	97.6	0	28.3	51.7	97.1	0	23.6	66.7	97.2	0
	Target	18	62.3	98.66	20,429	18	62.3	98.67	20,429	18	62.3	98.69	20,891
Hoima	Actual	16.6	89.9	92.5	0	14.3	84.7	91.0	2,489	17.5	104.6	89.7	0
	Target	15	81.3	97.49	10,891	15	81.3	97.57	10,891	15	81.3	97.66	10,891
Lugazi	Actual	6.6	136.1	87.5	0	36.6	151.1	87.6	0	23.5	123.9	81.4	0
	Target	16	65.3	90.12	3,484	16	65.3	90.29	5,000	16	65.3	90.44	5,000
Masindi	Actual	10.8	79.2	86.0	0	9.7	73.7	85.4	1,601	9.0	100.7	86.3	0
	Target	10	85.1	85.26	18,712	10	85.1	89.3	18,712	10	85.1	85.58	18,712
Mubende	Actual	20.2	109.3	95.7	0	17.9	104.4	95.2	768	16.7	102.0	96.8	3,142
	Target	15.0	98.0	98.79	13,025	15	98	98.82	13,025	15	98	98.86	13,025
Kajjansi	Actual	0.0	53.7	95.0	430	0.0	35.0	95.0	2,025	0.0	35.4	95.0	2,097
	Target	n. a	33.4	97.58	9,927	n. a	33.4	97.81	9,927	n.a	33.4	98.03	9,927

April 2009 Performance

Non Revenue Water:	The performance of April 2009 indicates that only eight Areas succeeded in obtaining their NRW targets. These include: Entebbe, Mbarara, Masaka, Soroti, Arua, Bushenyi, Fort Portal and Lugazi.
Working Ratio:	Only Mbale, Kasese and Masindi achieved their working ratio targets. The other Areas fell short of their targets.
Connection Efficiency:	All Areas with the exception of Mbarara, Masaka, Kasese, Lugazi and Masindi fell short of their connection efficiency target during this month.
Incentives Earned:	With the exception of Kampala Area, most of the Areas were unable to earn an incentive in the month of April 2009.

May 2009 Performance

Non Revenue Water:	The performance of May 2009 indicates that only two Areas succeeded in obtaining their NRW targets. These included: Hoima and Entebbe Area.
Working Ratio:	Only Mbarara, Kasese and Masindi achieved their working ratio targets. The other Areas fell short of their targets.
Connection Efficiency:	All Areas with the exception of Bushenyi fell short of their connection efficiency target during this month.
Incentives Earned:	Most Areas were able to earn significant incentives in May 2009, with Mbarara earning the highest incentive of Ushs 24 million. (Excluding Kampala Water)

June 2009 Performance

Non Revenue Water:	The performance of June 2009 indicates that seven Areas succeeded in obtaining their NRW targets. These include: Jinja, Entebbe, Masaka, Tororo, Soroti, Fortportal, and Masindi.
Working Ratio:	Only Masaka and Soroti achieved their working ratio targets. The other Areas fell short of their targets.
Connection Efficiency:	All Areas with the exception of Bushenyi Kabale fell short of their connection efficiency target during this month.
Incentives Earned:	Eleven Areas were able to earn an incentive in June 2009. Jinja Area earned the highest incentive amounting to Ushs 24.5 million. This is with the exception of Kampala Water.



WATER RAVING FANS CORNER

WATER RAVING
FANS CORNER

Kampala Water Experience with the Water Raving Fans Program

■ By Esther Kemigisha

KAMPALA.

Water raving fan program (WRF) is simply a practice of having more than satisfied customers. i.e. having overwhelmed customers who are more than willing to use the Corporation's service and pay for it happily. It involves three secrets and these are the 3Ds. Decide what the Corporation wants, Discover the customers' needs and Deliver consistently on our promise, then add 1 %. As Kampala Water we decided that we want increased water sales and high revenue collection, and then discovered that our customers needed accurate bills, constant water supply and effective response to customer's complaints. On top of delivering on our promise to the customers, we improved our services and added on what the customers never expected e.g. providing free drinking water to those who visit our offices.

During the practice of the raving culture, smiles were on each and every staff's face and were greatly rewarded by return smiles from the customers. Staff did everything in their hands to satisfy customers for example, handling their complaints in time and getting back to them, maintaining good office ambience, offering soft drinks, thanking those who pay, giving small gifts like pens, key holders to name but a few. These acts did not go unnoticed by the customers. They showed their appreciation through various ways. Some of them just said thank you, others smiled back, while others compared NWSC to other service providers and ranked us the best. They go on commenting that all service providers should benchmark from NWSC. Other customers have even offered gifts to some of our staff members. For instance, a British lady recently visited KW offices and offered a birth day cake to George Kasule (Call Centre). This was not the first time that George had received such a gift, it has happened more than once.

Many other staff members have received such appreciation gifts. In addition, many customers have written articles in the local newspapers about the good customer care of NWSC staff. For example there was an article in the weekly observer of 2nd April 2009 appreciating our Managing Director, Dr William Muhairwe and George Kasule. In summary, the WRF has helped to get us more customers and opened the lid to good customer care practices.

RAVING FAN SPIRIT IN CHURCH

By Monica Wambi

It appears churches in Entebbe have become our Raving Fans. On Sunday 10th May 2009, NWSC Entebbe Water turned out to be part of the sermon in Namatte Church of Uganda. The sermon was being delivered by Archdeacon Salongo Jonathan Kisawuzi. The main Theme of the day was 'love and Care'. It so happened that his examples were focused on organizations. He told the congregation that if they want to be shown love and care they should just pop in the NWSC Entebbe office, one of these days. He said before you reach the door steps, there is someone to receive you and guide you up to the cashier or any officer you want to see. If the cashier is still handling another client, there is always a sit and some news papers to pass time with. He also emphasized that one is not only shown love but there is care as well. As the customer is leaving the office he/she is a companioned by some nice words such as 'have a nice day and come again' or 'wish you well'. So you can imagine the Archdeacon has become our Raving Fan. And all this came because of our innovation of employing an usher and introducing news papers at the front desk.

**WHAT
DO YOU
THINK?**

TO OUR ESTEEMED CUSTOMERS:

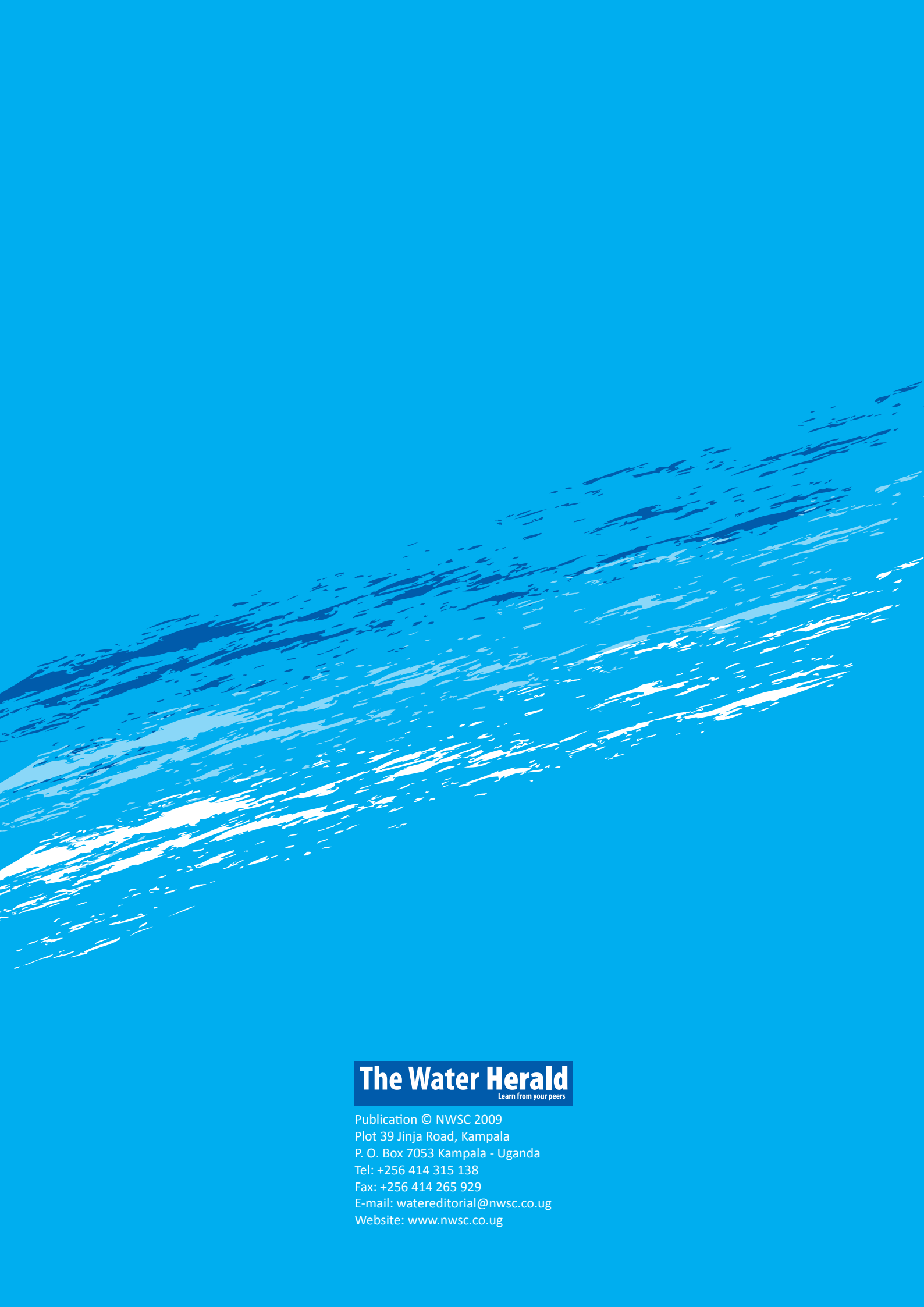
We would like to know how you feel about our services, especially the areas you would like us to improve upon since you are the reason we exist. If you would like to send any specific comments or suggestions that could be useful in improving our service delivery, please contact the editor at: watereditorial@nwsc.co.ug. A selection of comments received will be published in the next issue of the magazine

Top 25 Engineering Terms and Expressions

(What they say and what they really mean)

By Ronald Azairwe

Customer satisfaction is believed to be assured.	(We're so far behind schedule that the customer will settle for anything)
Please see me / Let's discuss it	(I need your help. I've screwed up again)
The project is in process.	(It's so tied up in red tape that it's completely hopeless)
We're trying a number of different approaches.	(We still guessing, at this point)
We're following the standard	(We've always done it this way)
Close project coordination	(We met together and had coffee)
Years of development	(It finally worked)
Energy saving	(Turn off the power to save electricity)
We'll have to abandon the entire concept.	(The only person who understood the thing just quit)
We had a major technological breakthrough.	(It's boring, but it looks high tech)
We're preparing a report with a fresh approach.	(We just hired a couple of kids out of college)
Preliminary operational tests proved inconclusive.	(It blew up when we flipped the switch.)
Test results proved extremely gratifying.	(Yahoo! It actually worked)
Please read and initial.	(We want to spread around the responsibility)
Tell us what you are thinking.	(We'll listen, but if it disagrees with what we've already done or are planning to do, forget it)
Tell us your interpretation.	(Let's hear your bull)
We'll look into it.	(Forget it! We've got so many other problems already; we'll never get to it)
No maintenance.	(If it breaks, we can't fix it)
Low maintenance.	(If it breaks, we're no likely able to fix it)
All new.	(None of the parts are interchangeable with the previous design)
Rugged.	(Needs major equipment to lift it)
Robust.	(More than rugged)
Light weight.	(A little less than rugged)
Fax it to me.	(I'm too lazy to write it down)
I haven't gotten your email.	(It's been days since I've checked my email)



The Water Herald

Learn from your peers

Publication © NWSC 2009

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