

LEADING STRATEGIC CHANGE

**DRIVING THE TRANSFORMATION IN THE PROVISION OF LEGAL
SERVICES TO THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT.**

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ABSTRACT

Effective change leadership is important to any organisation undergoing fundamental transformation. In particular, the ability of senior public sector leaders to successfully drive strategic change is crucial to meeting the developmental and service delivery challenges faced by the Province of the Eastern Cape in ensuring the effective, efficient and innovative government demanded by all its various stakeholders.

The creation on 3 October 2000 of a Shared Legal Service situated in the Office of the Premier provided a unique opportunity to examine the leadership of this change initiative in the context of the organisational culture that existed in the provincial public service. This thesis consequently probes the phenomenon of effective change leadership by means of an examination of the understandings of the three change agents involved in driving the transformation of the provision of legal advisory services to the provincial administration and its constituent departments.

The picture which emerges from the insights of the participants is one that casts a shadow over the validity of the contemporary theory of transformational leadership. Furthermore, the research conducted has identified the need to view the nature of effective change leadership through a more nuanced, situation-specific lens: one that appreciates the role of relationships and emotions, and that recognises the importance of culture and its impact on the success of organisational transformation.

The case study of the Shared Legal Service change initiative provides useful insights into the many and varied challenges faced by public sector leaders in driving strategic transformation in the provincial administration. It offers an example of successful change leadership and demonstrates the need for change agents within the public service to harness more emotionally resonant and relational forms of leadership if they are to soar to new heights in meeting the service delivery expectations of all who look to provincial government to deliver the fruits of democracy.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Thought is not merely expressed in words; it comes into existence through them.

(Vygotsky, author)

1.1. The Birth of the Shared Legal Service

The Province of the Eastern Cape is an area of South Africa that is characterised by its rich natural resources, particularly that of its people. They are a resilient and resourceful amalgam of pioneering characters whose sons and daughters tamed frontier lands and whose spirit of freedom and social justice was instrumental in the transformation of the nation into a vibrant and compassionate constitutional democracy.

The region has always been a place where there were challenges that have needed to be overcome. The provincial government has the enormous task of delivering the fruits of democracy by facilitating economic growth, employment creation, poverty eradication and income redistribution. In the context of the public service, there has been the need to establish both the mechanisms necessary to ensure the achievement of these ambitions and the means of identifying the right individuals to drive the strategic implementation of the plans of government in ways that are effective, efficient and innovative.

The Office of the Premier of the Eastern Cape is the lead government institution within the provincial public administration and has as one of its major roles the planning, co-ordinating, monitoring and controlling of the work of the various departments. The State Law Advisory Service component within the Office of the Premier was originally tasked purely to provide the specialist legal drafting required to translate government policy into legislation and also to give related legal opinion to the provincial administration.

During the course of 2000, the province experienced such an upsurge in litigation against certain of its departments that government was concerned that this occurrence had the potential to adversely affect important service delivery initiatives. In the result, the Executive Council of the Eastern Cape Province resolved on 3 October 2000 to sanction the establishment of a Shared Legal Service to assume sole responsibility for all legal advisory services to the provincial administration and its constituent departments.

The challenge facing the public servants tasked with the leadership of the transformation in the provision of legal services to provincial administration was to drive the strategic change necessary to create and build a new and dynamic institution capable of assisting its client departments in meeting the demands imposed by the service delivery imperatives of government.

1.2. The Nature of Effective Change Leadership

The creation of a Shared Legal Service in the Office of the Premier of the Eastern Cape posed an opportunity to examine the leadership of this change initiative within the context of the organisational culture that existed within the provincial public service.

I was one of the senior managers recruited from private practice as an advocate to head the litigation directorate of the new component, and had the privilege both to observe and to be affected by the transformation that was taking place in the provision of legal advisory services to the provincial government. The initiative has provided me with a rare chance both to experience and to study the phenomenon in an attempt to capture something of the nature of effective change leadership.

My interest in this area of research was stimulated by a desire to find answers to seemingly important questions that would not only serve to illuminate my own appreciation of the possible significance of the initiative, but also might provide insights into the leadership of strategic change that might serve to assist in the strategic execution of other transformations in the vital area of service delivery provision in the province.

1.3. Methodology, Participants, Aims and Goals

I chose to use the single, intrinsic case study method because it affords me with a unique opportunity to tell a story of an exceptional experience in the leadership of strategic change within the organisational context of the provincial public administration.

I did not have to look very far to find the best participants for my research. They were rather self-evidently the three key leadership figures in the Office of the Premier who played significant roles in driving the Shared Legal Service strategic initiative, namely: the provincial Director-General, Dr Mvuyo Tom, the Head of Department and Accounting Officer in the Office of the Premier, Ms Bea Hackula, and the Chief State Law Adviser, Advocate Joe Lukwago-Mugerwa.

The aim of my research has been to give an insight into the lives of these remarkable change agents and to express the way they have experienced or perceived the challenges posed by transformation. I have done so in the hope that their views illustrate a different, and possibly relevant, understanding of the nature of effective change leadership.

Interviews were conducted with these individuals that were aimed at realising the goals of my research which are to:

- Describe the influence of leadership and its impact on driving the transformation in the provision of legal services to the Eastern Cape Provincial Government.
- Appraise the key success factors in the leadership of strategic change within the context of the provision of legal advisory services to the Eastern Cape Provincial Government and Administration.
- Identify and evaluate the critical drivers in the leadership of strategic change within organisations which may emerge from my particular research context.

I have approached my task in the firm belief that research should be about creating new knowledge that, whilst not always challenge the existing order of things, may provide the required measure of revelation into people's lives that initiates a better understanding of a particular phenomenon. Accordingly I have actively and enthusiastically sought out the qualitative element of my research and in so doing have tried to describe and interpret how my research participants understood themselves, their settings and their actions in driving the strategic transformation of the provincial legal advisory services.

My research is strongly interpretive in nature and involves my own socially constructed analysis, description and understanding of the nature of effective change leadership. However, in analysing the data and presenting the findings I have sought not only to ensure a meticulous and appropriately rigorous understanding that does justice to my research paradigm, but also to evidence the rich and powerful voices of the participants. In so doing I have sought to piece together a jigsaw puzzle that evocatively, fairly and engagingly represents their experience of the phenomenon of the leadership of strategic change within the context of a provincial public service organisation.

I have been mindful that my proximity to the transformation that I have researched has made the qualitative evidence that has been elicited more complex, and sometimes more difficult to process and present as a sufficiently complete and valid understanding of the phenomenon. However, I trust that, by way of compensation, my admitted internal perspective has given me some advantage both in researching and presenting a coherent and interpretive summary of what has been discovered.

At best, I can hope that my context-specific findings may find a natural resonance with other separate experiences of similar situations requiring effective change leadership. If this happens, then so much the better ... if not, then at least I will have had the privilege to give an account of the reality discerned during my research, and the satisfaction of ensuring – through the creative process of describing my findings – that the meaning of my particular discoveries are not lost, but are told in a fashion that both celebrates their existence and clarifies their possible relevance.

1.4. An Outline of the Structure of the Thesis

In the next chapter, I present a review of the literature designed to examine the following important issues:

- What is effective leadership?
- How does effective leadership interact with the culture of an organisation?
- What leadership styles and behaviours are most appropriate in situations of organisational change?

In Chapter 3, I discuss in more detail the particular research methodology that has been adopted. In so doing, I outline the goals of my research, explain my research paradigm, argue the appropriateness of my use of the single, intrinsic case study method, detail the participants, data-gathering tools and methods of analysis, reflect on the particular ethical issues that I have had to confront, and seek to assess the potential limitations of my chosen methodology.

In Chapter 4, I strive to give voice to the understandings elicited during the interviews that were conducted. I analyse the data by taking all the various pieces of information provided by my three research participants and arranging them in appropriate themes and sub-themes. This is done so as to present a detailed picture that reflects how these individuals have understood their role as leaders in driving the transformation of the provision of legal advisory services to the provincial administration.

In Chapter 5, I present a detailed discussion of the findings of my research. The understandings of my research participants are arranged under the various important themes captured in the previous chapter. These insights are then critically evaluated in order to make sense of, and give meaning to, the findings and in so doing address the research questions posed in this dissertation.

In the concluding chapter, I summarise the main findings of the research. I thereafter examine the potential value of my case study, detailing firstly, certain recommendations for leadership practices and secondly, setting out some possible avenues for further research on effective leadership. Finally, the chapter evaluates the limitations of the study that I have conducted on the Shared Legal Service change initiative.

1.5. Conclusion

I have assumed an onerous responsibility: that of presenting in the following chapters of my dissertation, a coherent and interpretive picture of what has been discovered. It is a challenge that I have found daunting, yet stimulating. It is an endeavour aimed not only at drawing together both the theory and the experience of effective change leadership, but also of skilfully crafting my writing to harness the insights that will make transparent an understanding of successfully driving strategic transformation in the particular organisational context of the provincial public service .

This is a task not merely of expressing thoughts in words ... but of giving these thoughts an existence through the discipline and the rigour of their written expression.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The ultimate test of leadership: creating positive change.

(Reuel Khosa, business leader)

2.1 Introduction

On 3 October 2000, the Executive Council of the Eastern Cape Province approved the establishment of a Shared Legal Service for the administration and its departments. This involved the integration of all legal administration officers previously employed by individual provincial departments, and the state law advisors situated in the Office of the Premier into a single, transversal legal advisory service to the provincial government.

The challenge to the newly recruited senior management of the Shared Legal Service was to lead this newborn organisation in building an excellence model capable of meeting the challenges posed by the service delivery imperatives of the provincial government.

This chapter reviews the existing literature so as to facilitate an examination of the following important questions:

- What is effective leadership?
- How does effective leadership interact with the culture of an organisation?
- What leadership styles and behaviours are most appropriate in situations of organisational change?

In answering these questions, I identify the contribution made by so-called traditional leadership theories, and thereafter evaluate the essence of the contemporary theories of

effective leadership. Once this has been done, I develop a sense of how these concepts of effective leadership can be implemented within the culture posited by an institution such as provincial government, and in the change environment under which the Shared Legal Service component was required to succeed.

In the opening section of this chapter, I examine the existing theories of leadership in order to answer the first question:

2.2 What is Effective Leadership?

2.2.1. The New Reality of Organisational Leadership

The changes that swept the current government to power ushered in a new view of leadership. In the political context, a style marked by authoritarianism was replaced by one more in line with the values of openness, accountability, transparency and responsibility. Leaders had to be equipped to deal not only with the transformation of South African society, but also have the ability to manage this process within a fast-changing global community of nations.

In an African context too, leaders had to come to terms with this changing dynamic. The age-old system of tribal leadership with its emphasis on traditional models based around traits and behaviour was anathema to a newly democratic nation that demanded a fresh breed of inspirational and transformational leaders capable of turning new-found political freedom into sustainable growth and prosperity.

These expectations needed to be mirrored in the manner in which organisations, both in the private and public sectors, were structured and led. Similarly, provincial governments as service delivery instruments of the new democracy were required to be operated in a manner reflecting this new business leadership reality.

2.2.2. Traditional Theories of Leadership

There has always been a great deal of attention paid to leadership, and it is hence not surprising to find that many theories have developed over time in order to form a basis for predicting an individual's chances of successfully leading any organisation.

Whilst many of the so-called traditional theories of leadership which I discuss have been supplanted by subsequent research, they form a platform upon which many of the subsequent 'contemporary' theories were constructed.

(a) *Traits Model of Leadership*

The earliest of such theories (originating from the work of Bernard in 1926) centred on the physical, social, and personal characteristics that researchers observed in leaders (Hellriegel, Jackson and Slocum, 2001: 285). These so-called inherent leadership traits were said to presage success in guiding the fortunes of the endeavour being undertaken.

Whilst the theory is useful in identifying some common-sense leadership attributes, the model was based on a limited number of perceived characteristics. It furthermore failed to give appropriate recognition to the situational, environmental and organisational context in which the particular individual was considered to be an effective leader (Horner, 1997: 270).

(b) *Behavioural Models of Leadership*

The obvious shortcomings of the traits theory of leadership led researchers to seek to isolate the behaviours that are characteristic of leaders (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2001: 286 - 288). By studying what these individuals actually did, said, or thought, a number of models were developed in the expectation that effective leadership behaviours could be identified and learned.

McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y model (*op cit.* 286 – 287) was based on certain key assumptions made by leaders about their subordinates, which outlook affected their leadership behaviour. Effective leadership was found to be more likely in individuals who had positive views of the motives, abilities and attitudes of subordinates.

The Ohio State University and University of Michigan models (*op cit.* 287) respectively identified considerate, as opposed to initiating-structure, leadership styles and production-centred versus employee-centred approaches. These models recognised effective leaders as being those who developed supportive relationships with their subordinates.

The Managerial Grid model of Blake, Shepard and Mouton (*op cit.* 288 – 289) identified and plotted five leadership styles that combined different proportions of people-orientation, and found that these individuals (compared with those who were considered more process-oriented) exhibited greater levels of effective leadership.

(c) *Contingency Models of Leadership*

In placing emphasis on a more outward looking approach to effective leadership, the behavioural models logically gave rise to a third and final set of so-called traditional theories that focused on the individual leader's response to various situational factors (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2001: 290 - 299).

Fielder's Contingency model (*op cit.* 290 – 292) postulated that successful leaders matched their individual style to the demands of the situation. Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership model (*op cit.* 292 – 294) expanded on this concept and emphasized that successful leaders had the flexibility to adapt to changing situations by being able to judge maturity levels of their subordinates.

House's Path-Goal model (*op cit.* 294 – 296) postulated that successful leaders were able to assess the task and the employee characteristics inherent in the situation, and then

utilise the appropriate style. Finally, Vroom and Jago's Leader-Participation model (*op cit.* 296 – 298) formulated eight contingency questions and assessed successful leadership as the ability to correctly answer these questions and adapt to the style required by the situation.

In summary, the traditional leadership styles evidence three major thrusts, the first focusing on the characteristics of a great leader, the second on the behaviour of the leader, and the third on the situation in which the leader was required to operate (Horner, 1997).

More recent trends initiated in part by a growth in existing motivational theory - but not germane to the research questions that I have posed - have impelled researchers towards the study of more people-focused contemporary theories of effective leadership.

2.2.3 Contemporary Theories of Effective Leadership

The old order business and government models mirrored a pre-information age leadership paradigm based on strategy, systems and structures. Government in its so-called 'grand apartheid' policies placed obedience, order and ideology above people and their fundamental human rights much in the same way that the private sector created and nurtured employees that were beholden to the organisation.

But as business was finding, prosperity in this new age could only be based on an approach that placed the individual at the centre of any successful enterprise. In the context of government as an organisation, this would need to be premised on leadership that acted with purpose - following fair processes - in the interests of its people.

As if to mirror the winds of change that blew through post-colonial Africa during the latter half of the past century, new theories were sweeping away many of the old ideas on what constituted effective leadership in an organisation. It was now necessary, in the words of Bartlett and Ghosal (1995: 132), for leaders "... to unleash the human spirit."

(a) *Strategic Leadership*

In order to survive in this changing world, organisations needed to have strategic leadership. Boal and Hooijberg (2000: 517) identified the essence of this leadership style as involving "... the capacity to learn, the capacity to change, and managerial wisdom."

Strategic leaders exhibited charisma, were value driven, visionary, and had the required cognitive and behavioural complexity necessary to translate their social intelligence into effective business performance in an ever changing organisational landscape.

This approach was informed by a realisation that the pace at which change takes place has become exponential: the world has moved in quantum leaps from the industrial age, to the space age, and into the information age. Accordingly, this theory held that effective leaders needed the strategic skills to rapidly assimilate lessons, to devise proactive strategies and to implement them with speed and sensitivity.

(b) *Transformational Leadership*

Leaders need not only to adapt to changing circumstances, but also to create the changed circumstances necessary to achieve organisational objectives. Burns (1978) foreshadowed the move away from transactional leadership perspectives towards a role for the leader in both initiating and managing change within an organisation.

Brand, Heyl and Maritz (in Meyer and Botha, 2000: 67) postulate a model which holds that effective leaders need not only to adapt to changing circumstances, but also to create the changed circumstances necessary to achieve organisational objectives.

Leaders must make the paradigm shift from a selfish, risk-averse situational approach towards a more innovative style of leadership. In South African political history, this leadership style will forever be associated with Nelson Mandela, and his example has inspired a new generation of business leaders. The transcendent, almost spiritual qualities

of such a leader are encapsulated in the so-called “Four I’s” (Meyer and Botha, 2000: 75) of idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration.

In a world where change is a constant, this theory seeks to demonstrate that it is the inspirational leader who has the ability to develop and transform an organisation and its people, and so to serve the interests of all its stakeholders.

(c) *Global Leadership*

The information age, and its concomitant technological advancements have resulted in the growing interconnectedness of the world-wide community of nations. In order for leaders to survive and prosper in this global market, according to Gregersen, Morrison and Black (1998: 21) they must have the ability to connect emotionally with employees, and must possess an inquisitive and open mind, integrity, and the organisational savvy to manage uncertainty in a diverse world environment.

The move towards so-called “full-range leadership” (Bass and Avolio, 1994: 5) embodies the development of strategic, transformational and global leadership characteristics amongst top management of an organisation. It also involves an analysis, not only of external organisational factors, but also of the psychology of effective leadership.

(d) *Emotional Intelligence*

In his seminal work, Goleman (1995) advocated an examination of the role and use of the individual psychological profile of a business leader. Goleman later (1998: 93) argued that whilst IQ and technical skills were important: “... emotional intelligence is the *sine qua non* of leadership.”

He isolated the five components of emotional intelligence in the workplace as being self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. It was argued that

emotional intelligence could be learned, and that in the new business paradigm it was an essential component of success in organisational leadership.

(e) *Leadership That Gets Results*

The true test of the efficacy of business leadership must surely lie in the results that are achieved by the organisation. Goleman (2000: 78) identified six leadership styles: coercive, authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pacesetter and coaching.

He argued that an effective leader gets results by the use of a number of leadership styles applied at the right time and in the right measure. This situational and contextual approach to leadership is guided at all times by a developed emotional intelligence on the part of the manager of an organisation.

(f) *Level 5 Leadership*

This final contemporary style postulates a level of organisational management that transcends mere effective leadership. Collins (2001: 67) espoused a so-called level 5 leader who sits on top of the hierarchy of capabilities and who is "... a necessary requirement for transforming an organization from good to great."

Such a leader is humble, quietly but fiercely determined, and is inspired by the highest of personal and professional standards. This model harks back to the traits theory in speculating that there is a "unique psychology" (Collins, 2001: 68). An ability to relate to people that can be developed by effective leaders and that is very different from the larger-than-life leadership attributes and styles described in many of the theories.

2.2.3. The Ephemeral Nature of Effective Leadership

Contemporary models of effective leadership are premised on an appreciation of the multi-faceted nature of the modern world, its people and its organisational environment.

Whilst the science of management has revealed many important insights, the art of effective leadership remains as elusive and as ephemeral as the human spirit. According to Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2003: 22), the true test of the efficacy of what they describe as “the new leaders” lies in the results that are achieved by the organisation.

Contemporary leadership models have correctly drawn the attention of leaders to the need to constantly re-evaluate all the various factors impinging upon an organisation. Effective leaders are those individuals who best harness the available spiritual, emotional, psychological and material resources of their organisation and its employees to best serve the interests of its stakeholders.

Models of effective leadership thus provide the appropriate theoretical basis from which a practical plan of action can be implemented to identify and nurture leadership within an organisation. It is however also important to appreciate that leaders are found at all levels of the organisation. The theories that have been canvassed are but ever-growing spirals of knowledge that must neither rule out the development of more appropriate new models, nor ignore the important concept of leadership with a small ‘l’ which Diphofa (2003: 68) believes is “...the everyday leadership that we are unfortunately failing to acknowledge”.

The next section of the literature review examines the impact of organisational culture on leadership and answers the second question that was initially posed:

2.3 What is the Relationship between Leadership and Culture?

One of the most daunting tasks that can be faced by a leader is the challenge of managing organisational culture (Schulz, 2001). However, all effective leaders must find a way to operate within the particular culture of their organisation, monitoring its effect on the behaviour of individuals within the organisation, and using their influence to ensure that the culture is shaped in such a fashion so as to ensure organisational effectiveness.

They must understand that not only does organisational culture influence, and often circumscribe their leadership style, but also that they as leaders have a powerful effect on culture within the organisation.

In addition, leaders must not only appreciate the prevailing culture of the nation, but they must also understand that such national values do not necessarily equate with organisational practices, and hence that national culture does not necessarily identify the appropriate leadership levers that may be used to ensure success within their particular organisational environment.

Furthermore, in order to be effective as leaders, senior managers in the public service must realise that although their mandate may well be to move towards implementing a more private sector approach to management, the culture of a public sector organisation exhibits a variety of fundamentally different aspects that must be appreciated in the drive to influence the behaviours of their subordinates.

2.3.1 Understanding Organisational Culture

The issue of culture is crucial to the leadership of any successful transformation of an enterprise, and accordingly it is important for leaders to understand, monitor and actively manage the culture of their particular organisation.

Importantly it must be recognised that: “Indeed, increased knowledge about organizational culture can provide leaders with special insights regarding the fundamental characteristics of an organization that will, in turn, help managing or changing the culture” (Schraeder, Tears and Jordan, 2005: 493).

Schein (1984: 3) defined organisational culture as:

The basic pattern of assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and that have worked well enough to be considered valid, and,

therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to problems.

He listed these basic assumptions as being: (i) the relationship to the environment; (ii) the nature of reality, time and space; (iii) the nature of human nature; (iv) the nature of human activity; and (v) the nature of human relationships.

It is necessary for a leader to exhibit the ability to both assess and understand these underlying assumptions as they are the building blocks of organisational culture and (according to Schein, 1984) form the basis of the creation of the group values that in turn manifest in external patterns of behaviours. An effective leader must furthermore be able to influence these basic assumptions and so mould organisational culture in such a way as to nurture the values necessary to manifest the behaviours by subordinates most likely to achieve both group success and the attainment of organisational objectives.

Effective leaders are aware that they can not only use the basic assumptions that give rise to the creation of organisational values, but also that they can use various culture-embedding mechanisms to change the visible structures and processes, the so-called 'artefacts' of the organisation.

The following culture-embedding mechanisms were listed by Schraeder *et al.* (2005: 499) as being important levers available to leaders seeking to change organisational culture:

- (i) What leaders regularly pay attention to, measure and control in the work environment;
- (ii) How a leader reacts to crises and critical incidents within the organisation;
- (iii) The observed criteria by which leaders choose to allocate resources;
- (iv) Role modelling, teaching and coaching engaged in by the leader;

- (v) How leaders choose to allocate rewards and status in the work environment;
- (vi) How leaders recruit, select, promote, retire, and excommunicate organisational members.

Effective leaders must understand how their actions in these key areas can either embed or undermine the efforts to drive strategic change within an organisation. Furthermore they must appreciate that their actions are both the triggers for changing the culture of an organisation and potent carriers of cultural meaning (Schraeder *et al.*, 2005).

2.3.2 Understanding National Values and Organisational Practices

Effective leaders need to have an understanding of the national values and - of importance in the public service- the social, economic, legal and political imperatives that contribute to the creation of such values. However, they must also appreciate that these values can not necessarily be equated to the culture of their particular organisation.

On the basis of a quantitative study across 40 nations, which included corporate South Africa of the 1970's, five value dimensions were identified that could be used to describe the culture of a nation. Hofstede and Peterson (2000: 403) list these dimensions as (i) power distance; (ii) individualism versus collectivism; (iii) masculinity versus femininity; (iv) uncertainty avoidance; and (v) long-term versus short-term orientation.

Importantly however, these authors (2000: 405) state that “the culture dimensions developed for understanding nations simply do not work when applied to organizations”. They also refer to earlier work by Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv, and Saunders (1990) where six separate dimensions to distinguish organisational cultures were found to exist, namely: (i) process-orientated versus results-orientated cultures; (ii) job-oriented versus employee-oriented cultures; (iii) professional versus parochial cultures; (iv) open-system versus closed-system cultures; (v) tightly controlled versus loosely controlled cultures; and (vi) pragmatic versus normative cultures.

In a multicultural country such as South Africa, an effective leader must be aware that the pervasive national environment and its empirically determined cultural dimensions may not necessarily dictate what happens at an organisational level. Leaders must be attuned to the particular cultural practice within their organisations and must be able to leverage that understanding in the assessment of their subordinates' basic assumptions so as to create values that will nurture the appropriate behaviours.

2.3.3 Understanding the Culture of Public Organisations

Finally, in assessing the role that culture plays in the leadership of strategic change within an organisation, successful leaders must understand that public organisations exhibit cultures that may differ substantially from those which exist in private sector businesses.

It has been pointed out that public organisations have been under pressure in the recent past to adopt management techniques utilised by private organisations (Bradley and Parker, 2001) and many senior managers in the public service have either been recruited from, or have had experience working in or with, large private-sector corporate entities.

However in order for these leaders to be effective in their new callings in the public service they must understand (as pointed out by Schraeder *et al.*, 2005: 494–5) that “despite growing similarities between environments of public and private sector organizations, there are still a variety of specific, fundamental differences at the operational and cultural levels of these organizations”.

The traditional model of public organisations has been well conceptualised in the literature, and the research (summarised in Parker and Bradley, 2000) reveals the following common features:

- (i) They are constrained by political imperatives rather than by market forces;

- (ii) Their objectives, goals and structures are defined by legislation and are often prescribed by national structures of the ruling political party;
- (iii) They are characterised by rigid hierarchies, defined decision-making processes, and set rules and procedures; and
- (iv) They are essentially bureaucratic, rule-enforcing cultures often led by members with specialised technical knowledge and expertise in public administration.

The public sector accordingly poses special, and sometimes, severe challenges to leaders seeking to drive strategic change initiatives within government.

This is predominately due to the fact that such public organisations “have traditionally under-emphasized developmental and rational aspects of organizational culture because they have lacked an orientation towards adaptability, change and risk-taking (development culture) and have lacked an orientation towards outcomes such as productivity and efficiency (rational culture)” (Parker and Bradley, 2000: 130-1).

In summary, effective leaders acknowledge and appreciate the importance of organisational culture, understand how the cultures of public and private organisations may differ, and are able to apply this knowledge in nurturing behaviours within their own sphere of influence that will maximise the success of their style of leadership in the achievement of the goals of their organisation.

2.4 How can Leadership influence Change within an Organisation?

Leadership in situations of change is made all the more important by the fact that change, by its very definition, requires the creation of a new system and then the ability to institutionalise the new approaches necessary to achieve organisational objectives (Kotter, 1995).

While much has been written on change management, little attempt has been made to integrate this field of study with the vast array of literature that exists on the subject of leadership (Eisenbach, Watson and Pillai, 1999). Even less research appears to have been conducted into the interaction between change, culture and effective leadership.

In this final section of my literature review, I answer the last of the questions that were initially posed by synergising the work done in the fields of leadership and culture with the body of knowledge on change management, and in so doing draw the threads of these disciplines together in a fashion that will allow this chapter to serve as a springboard for the analysis and subsequent discussion of my research findings.

2.4.1. The Management of Change within Organisations

One of the irrefutable lessons of history has been the challenge posited by change. Over 500 years ago, Italian statesman Niccolo Machiavelli was of the view that “there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle than to initiate a new order of things” (Black and Gregersen, 2002: 3) and the passage of time has proved him correct.

We live in an increasingly complex, but interconnected, world where technology and telecommunications, globalisation and deregulation, innovation and the knowledge economy, and shifting social, political and demographic patterns have irrevocably altered the environment in which all organisations must now operate. In the result, the study of change management has enjoyed a growing interest as organisations seek to understand, adapt and flourish in a new and constantly evolving world.

Change management is defined as “the process of continually renewing an organization’s direction, structure and capabilities to serve the ever-changing needs of external and internal customers” (Moran and Brightman, 2001: 111).

Effective leaders need to be aware of the fundamental issues surrounding change management in their organisations. Zeffane (1996) has postulated that change agents need to have a sufficient appreciation of the forces that exist within the environment so as to be able to influence the required transformations.

Two distinct forces have been identified, namely, those that exist within the people affected by the change, such as levels of knowledge, skill, self-esteem and self-awareness, and those that exist within the system itself, which “include the type of leadership, the culture, the climate of the organization and the perceived consequences of success or failure within the organization” (Zeffane, 1996: 37).

The challenge for a leader is to develop an integrated understanding of all the dynamics involved in successful change management.

2.4.2. The Role of Organisational Culture in the Management of Change

The management of change has often been seen purely as a strategic planning issue, but there is now a growing appreciation of the important role of culture in driving strategic change within an organisation (Zeffane, 1996).

Fullan (2001: 43-44) sounds a clarion call to leaders, stating that:

... structure does make a difference, but it is not the main point in achieving success. Transforming the culture – changing the way we do things around here – is the main point. I call this reculturing. Effective leaders know the hard work of reculturing is the *sine qua non* of progress.

In my earlier treatment of this area, it was posited that an effective leader must be able to mould behaviours, and hence influence organisational culture in ways that will best prepare the environment for successful change management. Leaders must master their organisations and “effective leaders know that whilst you can’t change people, you can change cultures” (Peters, 2003: 335).

Hamel (2002: 153-154) talks about being able to influence both the “metal model” of the organisation, which encompasses the beliefs, dogmas and orthodoxies of individuals, and the “political model which refers to the way power is distributed throughout the organization and, in particular, the distribution of power to enforce mental models”.

One of the key barriers to change is culture, and hence a leader must understand the environment in order to overcome the negative assumptions and psyches that exist within an organisation. Effective leaders must not only appreciate their corporate climate, but must also be able to harness the processes of cultural change so as to successfully drive their strategic initiatives (Zeffane, 1997).

There is a growing call to create emotionally intelligent enterprises, and “it is up to the leaders to help the organization identify its reality – including the cultural norms that hinder it – and then to explore the ideal vision of what could be and to help members of the organization uncover their own roles in that vision” (Goleman *et al.*, (2002: 289-290). An important new perspective of leadership is gradually emerging, one which will see “leaders creating context so that people want to invest themselves and their knowledge in the enterprise” (Edvinsson, 2002: 186).

2.4.3. The Concept of Change Leadership

Leadership in a situation of strategic change “is a great deal different from leading a neatly hierarchical organization in which everyone knows their place and does what they are told” (Edvinsson, 2002: 181).

In my discussion on leadership theories, I touched on the development of a transformational model which described a form of leadership that went beyond the mere transactional approach which posited a simple exchange of reward for performance.

The 'Four I's' of the conceptualisation by Bass (1985) of transformational leadership involved charisma or idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration. Accordingly, "transformational leadership behaviours go beyond transactional leadership and motivate followers to identify with a leader's vision and sacrifice their self-interest for that of the group or the organization" (Eisenbach *et al.*, 1999: 83).

The development of a transformational leadership theory owes much to the fact that many organisations have over the past twenty five years had to face rapidly changing environments that required leaders to articulate new visions, foster new cultures, and breed new mindsets involving changes in basic values, belief and attitudes of subordinates (Eisenbach *et al.*, 1999: 83).

Goleman (1998) suggests that change leadership involves two important roles. The leader plays an instrumental role in ensuring the correct organisational design and the control of an environment necessary to manage the change processes, and a charismatic role in envisaging the future path, and in motivating, empowering, inspiring and energising followers (Waldersee and Eagleton, 2002).

The key dimensions of these roles played by the change leader are identified by Graetz (2000: 550-551) as that of:

- (i) Challenging the *status quo* and creating a readiness for change within the organisation;
- (ii) Inspiring and communicating a shared vision of the direction of organisational change both to participants and stakeholders of the process;
- (iii) Enlisting the support of key sponsors and supporters at various levels of the organisation;

- (iv) Enabling others to act by providing the necessary emotional, intellectual and material support for the change initiative;
- (v) Providing the necessary symbolic and substantive actions required to nurture and embed the necessary behaviours of subordinates; and
- (vi) Demonstrating the personal commitment necessary to become the role-model for success of the transformation process.

Kotter and Schlesinger (1979) recognise that the key to the correct choice of change strategy lies in the interpersonal skills of the leaders who drive the transformation of any organisation.

Furthermore, Kotter (1995) identifies a number of interdependent reasons why transformation efforts fail, and acknowledges that change within any organisation requires the creation of a new system, which in turn always demands leadership.

Effective leaders will need to be change leaders, and in driving strategic change within their organisations, they will “need to hone a completely different range of leadership skills” (Graetz, 2000: 550).

2.4.4. Effective Change Leadership

People are significant barriers in the attempt to drive strategic change, and hence Moran and Brightman (2001: 113) state that:

Change leaders must create an environment where people involved in the change process can open themselves up to new ideas and concepts, adopt new assumptions, and overcome their hostility and resistance to change.

According to Black and Gregersen (2002), lasting success in leading strategic change lies in the ability of leaders to alter the mental maps of the people within their organisation.

They argue (2002: 2) that instead of an “organisation in” approach, an “individual out” approach must be adopted that seeks to realise the goal of strategically changing the organisation by first changing its individuals.

This approach to change requires strong and emotionally intelligent leaders who relate to the fears, anxieties and insecurity that people feel in change environments.

According to Moran and Brightman (2001: 113) effective change leaders share the following common characteristics:

- (i) They act as framers of the change environment for both the organisation and the affected individuals;
- (ii) They create and foster the climate necessary to nurture the change environment, to learn from mistakes, and to fashion new solutions that drive transformation;
- (iii) They are the exemplars of change, providing a highly visible and credible role model for the organisation;
- (iv) They are determined and dedicated, inspiring and encouraging a passion for the success of the change initiative; and
- (v) They are interactive networkers who persuade, influence, explain, critique and occasionally cajole in their commitment to sustain strategic change.

Change leaders are the new “revolutionaries” (Hamel, 2002: 9) of the organisation - a rare, but vital, breed of individuals who are able to embrace uncertainty, ambiguity and complexity. People who have the talent, the desire and the ability to shape a context that can deliver tangible and positive change outcomes both to the organisation and to the individuals that constitute its most valuable resource.

2.5 Conclusion

Change is variously described as non-linear, chaotic and sometimes even catastrophic, but there remains an important truth: that “change can be led, and leadership does make a difference” (Fullan, 2001: 34).

In the event, the success or failure of the newly created provincial Shared Legal Service depended on how effectively its leadership was able to drive the change initiative embodied by its new strategic mandate to deliver professional services to the entire provincial administration ... and so rise to the ultimate test of leadership: creating positive change.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The countless stars and constellations that we see today were gradually formed and discovered, but the interesting thing is that the more powerful the telescopes we use, the more we will find – more and more of stars and lives. Thus, the more we have the power to see things, the more there is to see.

(The Dalai Lama, spiritual leader)

3.1 Introduction

The creation of a Shared Legal Service situated in the Office of the Premier of the Eastern Cape posed a unique opportunity to examine the leadership of this change initiative within the context of the particular culture that then existed within the provincial government administration.

My fundamental interest in the research topic was one borne neither from mere curiosity, nor from the obvious allure presented by the single case study method to business management students eager to fulfil the research requirements of their Masters' degree. It was founded rather in my enthusiastic desire to appropriately, honestly and rigorously examine an occurrence in my working life that had both touched and moved me. In the circumstances, I sought to grasp this chance to examine the phenomenon that emerged from this initiative in an effort to understand something of the nature of effective leadership of strategic change in a particular public service organisation.

In this chapter, I outline the goals of my research, explain my research paradigm, argue the appropriateness of my use of the single, intrinsic case study, detail the research participants, data-gathering tools and methods of analysis, reflect on the particular ethical issues confronted, and assess the potential limitations of my chosen methodology.

3.2 The Goals of the Research

The goals of my research have been to:

- Describe the influence of leadership and its impact on driving the transformation in the provision of legal services to the Eastern Cape Provincial Government.
- Appraise the key success factors in the leadership of strategic change within the context of the provision of legal advisory services to the Eastern Cape Provincial Government and Administration.
- Identify and evaluate the critical drivers in the leadership of strategic change within organisations which may emerge from my particular research context.

3.3 The Research Paradigm

I strongly believe that research should be about creating new knowledge. My view is however based on an ontology that reality within any given research context only exists through one's own subjective assessment, and that hence reality exists only in its phenomenological construct (van der Mescht, 2002).

This does not mean that in conducting my research I have ignored the objective - what people do, what the records show and so on - but that I have actively and enthusiastically sought out as indicated by Gillham (2000: 7) "the qualitative element: describing and interpreting how people understand themselves, their setting, and their actions – seeking what lies behind the mere objective evidence".

Due to this fact I acknowledge that I have invariably perceived the research context subjectively (Remenyi, 1996). My epistemological point of view in the circumstances is such that it is bound to have often influenced my findings (Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 111).

Accordingly, my research paradigm has been strongly interpretive in nature. It has essentially involved my own socially constructed analysis, description and understanding of the leadership of strategic change within the research context. In the premises, I have adopted a “research strategy” (Yin, 2003: 59) which manifests in a constructivist case study approach (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

3.4 The Use of the Single, Intrinsic Case Study Method

Case studies are becoming increasingly relevant in business management education as a means to look beyond the details of a particular workplace, allowing scope for the development and expression of insights into the essence of the forces that lie behind the mere external constructs of the situation (Remenyi, 1996: 27).

Yin (2003: 13) opines that “you would use the case study method because you deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions – believing that they might be highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study”. Winegardner (2004: 4) identifies the method as one that allows for a focus on “holistic description and explanation”.

My use of the case study as the chosen framework has been influenced by a blend of my research orientation and the particular phenomenon that I wished to examine in my dissertation. I was eager to research how the particular leaders understood and made sense of their role in the strategic change initiative posited by the creation of the Shared Legal Service in the provincial administration of the Eastern Cape. Its intrinsic nature accordingly arises predominantly from the fact that my overarching interest in this phenomenon was to interpret and to understand the meaning that the leaders constructed of their experiences (Winegardner, 2004: 2).

I have chosen the single case study method because of the unique nature of the phenomenon that I have investigated (Yin, 2003) and because it affords me the particular opportunity to tell a story of an exceptional experience in the leadership of change within the public service organisational context.

3.5 The Participants in My Research

I did not have to look very far to find the crucial participants in my research. They were all, rather self-evidently, to be found amongst the key leadership figures in the Office of the Premier of the Eastern Cape who played significant roles in the transformation of the provision of legal services to the provincial government and administration.

The participants interviewed consisted of the following individuals: the provincial Director-General, Dr Mvuyo Tom, the Head of Department and Accounting Officer in the Office of the Premier, Ms Bea Hackula, and the Chief State Law Adviser, Advocate Joe Lukwago-Mugerwa. At the time of my interviews with these respondents, all had either left the public service or were on the point of departure from it so as to be able to pursue new career opportunities – an important fact in itself, not only because it lent some insight into themselves as leaders of change, but also because of the sense of detachment that this was able to lend to their participation in the research.

I originally considered seeking interviews with some of the senior management of the provincial legal advisory services, and went so far as to schedule interviews with a certain individual who had previously acted as Chief State Law Advisor prior to the appointment of Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa and who had subsequently remained with the service after the change initiative that I examine had been implemented.

This individual, who was the director of legislation, was one of three senior managers of the newly created Shared Legal Service that included a director of contracts and agreements, and me, as the director of litigation in the province. He was approached and consented to an interview, but subsequently did not make himself available for the research either as planned or by way of answering a list of questions (attached as an appendix to this thesis) later e-mailed to him at his new place of employment.

The other senior manager had only occupied the position for about eight months – half spent on maternity leave - before leaving the provincial public service and was not

considered as a possible participant who could add meaningfully to the research that I have conducted into creation of the Shared Legal Service change initiative.

3.6 Interviews as Data-Gathering Tools

Data collection was mainly based on phenomenological interviews (Yin, 2003). Whilst my study is not *per se* phenomenological, I felt that its strategy of utilising in-depth, open-ended interviews geared at probing for lived experience was best able to enact my qualitative methodology. This important tool was also chosen to breathe life into the interpretive paradigm in which I have sought to pursue the goals of my research.

The research was accordingly primarily conducted by means of “elite” interviews (Gillham, 2000: 63) with the people in authority within the context who I considered were capable of giving me information relevant to the problem - with insight and with a comprehensive grasp of the nature of the research. In line with my epistemology, I sought constantly to be mindful of the need to so conduct these interviews as to “explore the lived experiences of the respondents” (van der Mescht, 2002: 47).

In accordance with the research goals, questions derived from my literature review were aimed at eliciting from the respondents an understanding of the role played by leadership within the context of implementing strategic change in the organisation of legal service provision to the province. I was however careful to allow the flow of the interviews to be largely dictated by the participants and sought to allow them the freedom to express themselves on all areas that they considered relevant to the research context.

I took steps to meet with the participants prior to the interviews, furnishing them with a copy of my research proposal, outlining the general thrust of the research and answering any queries or questions that my request for an interview might have occasioned. These meetings were not recorded, but were followed by a letter and usually a further written or telephonic reminder of our formal arrangements to convene a research interview.

The interviews themselves were recorded on audio-tape with the permission of the respondents. I commenced by interviewing the then Chief State Law Adviser, who was shortly to leave the public service, and subsequently with the then Director-General of the Province and finally with the then Head of the Department and Accounting Officer of the Office of the Premier.

These interviews were reasonably lengthy in nature, varying between about one hour thirty minutes and two hours in duration, and produced a rich tapestry of information, insight, experience and reflection from the participants. Handwritten notes of the interviews were kept as best as circumstances permitted, but I made no special attempt to make a *verbatim* record of proceedings, choosing rather to concentrate on my interaction with the participant.

In the instance of the interview with the Chief State Law Advisor, I dictated a ten page memorandum of the proceedings shortly after the interview, but was not constrained to do so following the interviews with the remaining two respondents. The interviews and the memorandum were transcribed and made available via e-mail to the respective participants. They have not deemed it necessary to make any additions, amendments or corrections to the transcripts, and I have furthermore not considered that any follow-up discussions were required to clarify or supplement the data obtained from them.

In this particular respect, the reader will need to appreciate the fact that I have been an insider within the research context, and that hence an “emic perspective” (Winegardner, 2004: 2) incorporating direct observation has been occasionally used in an effort to add a further depth of understanding to the research.

However, I wish to point out that other sources of evidence including various documents such as memoranda and other formal communication, minutes of meetings, and provincial Executive Committee resolutions also formed part of the data collection and have been used to help enrich my sense of the context of the research.

3.7 My Approach to the Analysis of the Collected Data

Whilst conducting my case study, the three principles of data collection as postulated by Yin (2003: 97) have been a constant guide as I have interviewed the participants and collated other information related to the goals of my research. In so doing, I have sought to use multiple sources of evidence, creating a rich, but relevant case study data-base and maintaining an appropriate chain of evidence.

Nonetheless, in analysing the data that has been collected, I appreciate that in the real world, evidence is of various kinds, and none of it is perfect in the sense that it is without fault or possible flaw. Accordingly, what I have set out to do in my analysis has been prefaced by an appreciation that there is a need for such qualitative research to evidence both “internal” and “scientific” rigour (van der Mescht, 2002: 49) in an attempt to facilitate a more accurate and appropriately grounded set of research data, and ultimately a more ontologically and epistemologically sensitive discussion of this material.

Consequently, whilst I do not accept that the process of triangulation - even although likely given the choice of my participants - will necessarily yield a more valid “convergence of evidence” (Yin, 2003: 100), I have nevertheless sought to analyse the data in such a fashion that not only will ensure a meticulous and appropriately rigorous description that does justice to my particular research paradigm, but will also - evocatively, engagingly and fairly - evidence the rich and powerful voices of the participants.

Whilst so contending, I have nevertheless judged the qualitative validity of the data in terms of the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Trochim, 2002) and have then analysed the data qualitatively by relying on the “theoretical propositions” (Yin, 2003: 111) espoused in my review of the literature. These propositions have assisted me to focus appropriately guided attention on the data, and have, in turn, facilitated the addressing of the goals and the answering of the questions that are posed in this research dissertation.

In line with the qualitative, story-telling approach that I have adopted, the results are presented in narrative format - mindful however of the need not only to stay anchored in my chosen ontology, but also to remain appropriately critical in the conveying of the research findings (van der Mescht, 2002).

3.8 The Ethical Implications of My Research

I am particularly cognizant that my status as an insider places an acute ethical responsibility on me. However, since the goal of the research is primarily to understand (rather than evaluate) what happened in relation to the leadership of the strategic change posited by the creation of the provincial Shared Legal Service, the potential risk of any manipulation of the findings is considerably reduced.

Nevertheless, I have sought to give careful and considered attention to these ethical issues in relation to the analysis and evaluation of the data that has been collected. In particular, as Remenyi (1998: 111) has been at pains to point out, I have been mindful that my proximity to the phenomenon I have researched has made the qualitative evidence that has been elicited more complex, and sometimes more difficult to process.

My relationship to the change initiative brought about by the creation of the Shared Legal Service for the Province of the Eastern Cape is briefly the following: As an independent practising advocate, I had substantial experience of legally representing various provincial government departments on the instructions of the Office of the State Attorney. My work brought me into contact with the legal administration officers employed by client departments, one of whom was Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa who was subsequently to become the Chief State Law Adviser in charge of the Shared Legal Service.

Shortly after the creation of this service, I was recruited by the Office of the Premier to head the litigation department, the largest section of the newly sanctioned structure. I worked closely with Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa from May 2001 until his resignation

in April 2005, and after initially acting in the post, I succeeded him as Chief State Law Advisor and head of legal services in the provincial administration. Furthermore, in my capacity as a senior manager in the Office of the Premier, I worked with the previous provincial Director-General, Dr Mvuyo Tom, and with the Accounting Officer and Head of the Office of the Premier, Ms Bea Hackula, until their resignations from the provincial public service.

Accordingly, I have been at pains to tread the fine line between, on the one hand, the benefit that I have gained by being close to the phenomenon I have investigated, and on the other hand, the risk of falling prey to either conscious or unconscious bias (Remenyi, 1998: 111). In this regard, I have been greatly assisted by the particular level of knowledge, strength of character and depth of insight exhibited by the participants. I am grateful that they have evinced a clear understanding of my research and a willingness - even a determination - to fully and freely volunteer their insight into the leadership of the strategic change initiative brought about by the Shared Legal Service.

Ultimately, the success or otherwise of my endeavour to balance these factors and so to produce a compelling, but ethically grounded work, must be left to the judgment of those more objectively placed than me.

3.9 The Drawbacks of My Research Methodology

Finally, it is appropriate that I reflect on some of the potential drawbacks of my adopted research methodology.

What I am not doing by adopting a single case study method of research is to suggest that the findings that I report are in any respect readily transferable to similar situations requiring the leadership of strategic change that may be encountered in a South African public sector organisation.

At best, I aim to challenge the accepted assumptions of effective change leadership, and in so doing to convey a sense of how the individual leaders involved in the case study have experienced and constructed their meaning of the situation (Winegardner, 2004: 1).

Insofar as my research may be said to contain “broad generalizations based on case study evidence” (Yin, 2003: 15), I can simply hope that some of the richness that is expressed in my context-specific findings may “naturalistically” resonate with the reader’s own individual experiences of similar leadership situations (Winegardner, 2004: 15).

Furthermore, I realise that since my research only canvasses the experiences of three individual leaders, the data gathered may be insufficiently reliable (Yin, 2003: 34). However, it must be pointed out that the perspectives pertinent to the answering of my research questions are, in fact, those of the leaders of the strategic change initiative. These leaders have all been interviewed and have given a textured and multi-layered exposition of their experiences; one that I have sought to ensure has been fully captured in a manner that gives voice to their own particular style of expression.

Nevertheless, in line with my strongly interpretive research paradigm, I have striven to provide a complete and rigorous picture of the data: one that I hope that will provide a sense of the intrinsic validity of the experiences shared with me by the participants in my research (van der Mescht, 2002: 49).

3.10 Conclusion

In concluding this chapter, I am cognizant of the fact that an “exemplary case study” goes beyond its mere methodological research procedures (Yin, 2003: 161). My method of using the intrinsic, single case study can, and indeed should, have potency greater than that of any other form of research (Gillham, 2000: 101).

It affords me, as a naturalistic researcher, with a rare vehicle by which to give an account of the reality discerned during my research, and so to ensure that - through the creative

process of describing my findings – that the meaning of my discoveries are not lost, but are told in a fashion that both celebrates their existence and clarifies their possible relevance.

I am furthermore mindful of the fact that I owe an important responsibility to the reader to present, in the following chapter of my dissertation, a coherent and interpretive summary of what has been discovered (Gillham, 2000: 93).

So, my task in analysing and presenting my findings is one that I find daunting, yet challenging: that of not only drawing together the essentials from the database of my research evidence, but also of skilfully crafting my writing to harness the insights which will illuminate and make transparent the understanding that the ‘telescope’ provided by my methodology has enabled me to discover... more and more of stars and lives.

CHAPTER FOUR

DRIVING THE TRANSFORMATION IN THE PROVISION OF LEGAL SERVICES TO THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

The essence of art is poetry ... the essence of poetry is the stating of the truth.

(Martin Heidegger, philosopher)

4.1. Introduction

The nature of effective change leadership is a puzzle that is to be constructed from many different jigsaw pieces, each containing an indispensable part of the complete picture. The shape of the pieces - viewed in isolation - sometimes obscures a meaning that is only clear when its place within the broader framework is located.

A chapter - such as the presentation of the research data which follows – is in many ways similar to the often neglected pleasure of puzzle building. The researcher dips into a pile of pieces, holds one up to the light, frowns, and turns the piece, first one way ... then another. Some pieces of the data, like some jigsaw pieces, have flat edges or distinctive shapes that make their place in the framework easier to find. Other pieces are more challenging, requiring more perception and often a little trial-and-error guesswork before their subtle shape, colour and form reveal an appropriate place in the puzzle's grand scheme. However, the picture once assembled is more powerful than any of its many pieces may possibly have foreshadowed. There is both a truth and a beauty in a completed puzzle, and an honesty in the endeavour associated with its construction.

In this chapter, I take all the various pieces of information provided by my three research participants and arrange them so as to present – in accordance with the methodology that I have recently detailed – a picture that describes how they have understood their role as leaders in driving the transformation of the provision of legal advisory services to the Province of the Eastern Cape.

In arranging the pieces, I have resolved to sort them into seven separate ‘piles’ based on the following change leadership themes identified from the data: (i) acknowledging the need for change; (ii) the importance of other leaders to change leaders; (iii) change leadership and organisational culture; (iv) choosing the right change leader; (v) building support for change; (vi) change agents and the new world of the knowledge worker; and (vii) total change leadership. This final ‘pile of jigsaw pieces’ dealt with many aspects related to the characteristics of effective change leaders and was further arranged into five categories, namely: a connection with people; balanced change leadership; getting the best out of people; what drives change leaders; and the legacy of the change leader.

The sources of my collection of jigsaw pieces were the three leadership figures in the provincial public administration at the time of the conception, creation and implementation of the Shared Legal Service change initiative:

- Dr Mvuyo Tom (whose transcript is referred to as ‘Mvuyo’) was the Director-General of the Province of the Eastern Cape, the Head of the Provincial Administration and its highest ranking civil servant.
- Ms Nombulelo Beatrice Hackula (transcript referred to as ‘Bea’) was the Accounting Officer and the Head of Department of the Office of the Premier, and who, as Deputy Director-General, was the senior official in charge of the lead government department in the provincial administration.
- Advocate Joseph Lukwago-Mugerwa (transcript referred to as ‘Joe’) was the Chief State Law Adviser in the provincial administration and as such was the General Manager and Head of the Shared Legal Service component situated in the Office of the Premier of the Eastern Cape.

All three research participants gave interviews which were loosely structured around a series of interrogatories (detailed in the appendix) based on research questions aimed at firstly, describing the influence of leadership and its impact on driving transformation;

secondly, at appraising the success factors in the leadership of strategic change; and thirdly, at identifying and evaluating the critical drivers in the leadership of strategic change within organisations.

Finally, it must be noted that the three leadership figures that were my research participants spoke in English which, although the language of government in South Africa, is not their mother tongue. In consequence, their turn of phrase is often unusual, sometimes ungrammatical, but always rich, engaging and evocative. I commend to you this ‘jigsaw puzzle’ as a compelling picture of their understanding of the true nature of effective change leadership.

4.2. Seeing Beyond the Walls: Acknowledging the Need for Change

Effective leaders have an intuitive sense that change, whether seen or unseen by the organisation, is the very essence of every living organism. They view their environments as characterised by homoscedacity, a condition of constant variance that presents them with the opportunity to take advantage of this fluidity to drive strategic change in their organisations. Provincial Director-General, Dr Mvuyo Tom reflected on this reality and painted an unforgettable picture of the nature of change within the public service:

But again it never stops... you can never say now that I have moved to this [new] situation ... much as when you change, you unfreeze the mould ... and you have to refreeze in the new ... but, for me, it's not completely refreezing ... you still have to leave it open as a system that can be influenced (Mvuyo, transcript: 20).

Leaders are pre-eminently ‘scanners’ of the environment within their organisations and are often the first to sense the need for a change initiative. Head of the Office of the Premier, Ms Bea Hackula, describing her previous private sector experience of transformation, stated that:

So it assisted me in quickly understanding the organisation. So that explains how I could translate that into the public service, to say “what do I do ... I’m coming into a new environment ... let me quickly do the scanning of this environment and quickly adjust” (Bea, transcript: 17).

Ms Hackula goes on to describe the “rigidity around the leadership” (Bea, transcript: 18) that she found amongst senior management in the Office of the Premier, noting that one of the things she appreciated about Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa was that “he could see beyond the walls of the Shared Legal Service” (Bea, transcript, 18):

You see ... seeing beyond what is within your scope ... he was like that. That’s what made him different ... other than him personally ... the way he presented himself and all that ... but how he could work beyond there (Bea, transcript: 18).

In a sense, the leader’s ability ‘to see’ is more than being visionary. It involves a special understanding of the organisation and the nature of its reality, one that also asks the question: “How do I become effective in this environment?” (Bea, transcript: 18).

Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa, as one of the legal professionals then servicing the individual provincial departments, was frustrated by the lack of recognition of the need to change that he saw around him. He was of the view that his colleagues “could not see the greater picture” (Joe, transcript, 5).

In similar fashion, he also described the challenge posed by the attitudes of the various departments as follows:

But the problem ... they were not seeing. It was not because those people [the legal officers] could not provide good service, but it was because the environment in which they were placed to operate – without leadership, without career-pathing. Without those, they would not be able to focus on service delivery (Joe, transcript: 5).

The task of driving strategic change in the provision of provincial legal services was made possible, in the first instance, because all the leaders affected by the initiative understood that what was needed was for them ‘to see beyond the walls’ of the public service. Furthermore, they then had to have the courage and commitment to acknowledge the need to move away from an existing moribund ‘attitude of entitlement’ towards one of driving service excellence in the provincial administration.

Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa described Ms Hackula as having “brought in a different paradigm shift in the Office of the Premier” (Joe, transcript: 19) - one that involved a “different look at service delivery ... on how to do service delivery” (Joe, transcript: 19) - and described its effect as follows:

That helped me as a programme manager in the Office of the Premier to buy into the paradigm shift of the Office of the Premier. Which had changed from a rule-driven public service into a service delivery department (Joe, transcript: 19).

Director-General, Dr Mvuyo Tom reflected on the potential that lurked within the nascent change environment existing at the time of the creation of the Shared Legal Service, and expressed the view that “there were lots of changes that were taking place in provincial government, but also in the public service itself” (Mvuyo, transcript: 1). He recognised that changes would be necessary if he was to meet the new challenges being placed on him as administrative head of the provincial government. As the Head of the Provincial Administration, he also had the foresight of the change leader to recognise the serendipitous role that the initiative proposed by Joe Lukwago-Mugerwa could play in his own efforts to transform the provincial public service:

So when this new idea [came] out from people like Joe, it coincided with that particular period of the new roles of Directors-General ... Now with legislation and with other related matters that are legal, the Director-General of a province played a key role ... because government policy is ultimately translated into legislation. So you needed to make sure that the legislation was in line with the strategic direction that the Province wanted to take (Mvuyo, transcript: 2).

The leaders involved in the change initiative brought about by the creation of the provincial Shared Legal Service were all blessed with the ability to see beyond the walls of the existing organisational environment to a new and potentially more promising world of opportunities. Their visions however were tempered by the reality of the situation in which they found themselves. This important aspect is highlighted later in the section on change leaders and organisational culture. Dr Tom however reflected on the challenges to leaders of sustaining the ‘view beyond the wall’ in the following terms:

So we needed to build on the immediate restructuring ... to handle the culture as well of the people... the behaviour of the people who were there ... to know that it's a new environment ... they need to change (Mvuyo, transcript: 21).

The newly appointed Chief State Law Adviser, Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa, also alluded to the challenge facing him in sustaining his vision of a new, shared legal service to the provincial administration:

So the colleagues in the departments - most of them could not see the greater picture... So there were those challenges. And to be able to deal with the challenges you have to put strong leadership in place (Joe, transcript: 5 – 6).

Change leaders have that special ability to sense the need for change in their organisations, and have the foresight to recognise and to seize the opportunities that their environment provides to drive the transformation that their vision has allowed them to imagine. Effective leaders do not however operate in isolation. They find ways to harness the abilities of others within their circle of influence, building relationships with other like-minded leaders in their organisation and in so doing create the critical mass needed to initiate strategic change in otherwise stagnating environments.

The next section describes how the three leaders responsible for the creation of the Shared Legal Service within the Province of the Eastern Cape saw their relationships toward each other in connection with this change initiative.

4.3. We're One Unit That Has to Drive: The Importance of Other Leaders to Change Leaders

All three leaders interviewed identified that one of the most important drivers of successful change leadership was their relationship with other leaders in the organisation. Ms Hackula, the then newly appointed Accounting Officer and Head of the Office of the Premier put it succinctly:

So really it's actually critical ... I can't over-emphasise the importance of your relationship between the leaders in the organisation (Bea, transcript: 14).

The notion of a supportive, collective and joint change leadership was a refrain repeated often within the context of the transformation initiative postulated by the creation of the provincial Shared Legal Service. Ms Hackula referred to the shared vision of the need for change (Bea, transcript: 10) amongst the leaders of the Office of the Premier and noted that these leaders recognised that:

...we're one unit because we are the leaders of this organisation ... we have to drive [strategic change] (Bea, transcript: 13).

Dr Tom also intimated this notion of the supportive and complementary leadership of change at the commencement of his interview. He noted that whilst he regarded Joe Lukwago-Mugerwa and his team as “the brains behind the Shared Legal Services concept. However, they shared their ideas with me ... so I was not really the initiator of this transformatory (sic) process ... much as I shared what was being brought forward to me at that stage” (Mvuyo, transcript: 1).

Furthermore, Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa reflected on the importance of attitudes within the top management of the Office of the Premier to the chances of success of the change initiative that he was driving:

But what I was saying is that the very fact that we had on (sic) the top leadership of the department, people who had the same vision and the structured approach to service delivery ... with what we, as the Shared Legal Service, had in mind ... helped us also as Shared Legal Services to be able to achieve our objectives. And also allowed us to put into [effect] innovative measures that we were coming up with as Shared Legal Service. To be able to grow Shared Legal Services (Joe, transcript: 22).

In a nod to the crucial supporting role of his own fellow leaders in the organisation, and to emphasise the importance of this point, the Chief State Law Adviser continued by stating that:

If we did not have an administration that understands (sic) where we are coming from ... that had a different agenda - [one] that was rule driven – some of the

achievements that we have been able to do, would not have been done (Joe, transcript: 22).

Echoing this refrain, Head of Department, Ms Hackula, considered this factor vital in obtaining the critical mass necessary to move any change initiative forward:

It is very important ... that support ... because people actually look at you ... how you're driving this organisation. And if they see the crack there [between leaders], you're not going anywhere (Bea, transcript: 14).

She also acknowledged the support that the then Premier, Makhenkesi Stofile, and the provincial Director-General, Dr Tom, had given to her during a sensitive restructuring initiative conducted soon after she had taken up office:

They gave me full support. I still remember when we had a meeting with management at the State House where I had to present [the restructuring] there, and they stood up and said "we're one-hundred percent behind this recommendation and we [are] now delegating her to drive this process ... but it is our mandate ... the three of us" (Bea, transcript: 13).

She recalled (with a pride that was all too obvious to me) the diagram that her administrative and political leaders had drawn to illustrate this unity of purpose:

Remember that circle that they drew ... the circle showing the Office of the Premier, the DG's [Director-General] office, my office ... as one! We even had a session with our own staff members to say "fine, there's a Premier's office, there's the DG's office, but we're one unit because we are the leaders of this organisation ... we have to drive" (Bea, transcript: 13).

Ms Hackula also reflected on the need for change agents to engage in a complementary form of change leadership. When I advised her that in an earlier interview Joe Lukwago-Mugerwa had pointed out the crucial role he considered her to have played in the success of the transformation of provincial legal services, she responded:

So, I'm actually pleased to hear that ... even people like Joe ... they could see we complemented one another in some ways ... from what I was doing and the support that I was [giving them]. I tried because I knew that my success was dependent on them as well ... and even them, their success and [that of] their units was dependant on me respecting them to be able to drive their institutions

effectively. By giving guidance and making recommendations when necessary, but without taking over their responsibilities (Bea, transcript: 14).

Commenting on the role of leadership in circumstances of change, Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa noted the failure of earlier efforts to effectively harness the strength of all legal professionals within provincial government, stating that:

There was no leadership, there was no ownership ... so that did not materialise (Joe, transcript: 4).

His experiences with his own leaders within the organisation had taught him that it was only through a collective, shared and collaborative leadership that a critical mass impelling this change initiative forward could be achieved:

What was required now was the need to create leadership, to have leadership. That benefits the provincial administration and it also benefits the people – the officials themselves, the lawyers. It benefits them because you are able to share issues, you'll be able to share best practices, and you look at challenges and then your challenges cease to be your own challenges – it becomes a collective leadership challenge (Joe, transcript: 4).

Change leaders require the ability to build networks with other persons of influence within their organisations. They develop an ability to identify the prominent individuals that can assist them to translate their vision into reality. Change agents, such as Chief State Law Adviser, Joe Lukwago-Mugerwa, had the foresight to involve other leaders in the Office of the Premier in his efforts to transform the provision of legal services to the provincial administration.

Moreover, he had the skill and wisdom to forge a 'change alliance' with these leaders – assisting them with their initiatives and ensuring that his own transformation was aligned to the goals of these leaders. These vital alliances between the leaders within the organisation served as a crucial bulwark against all those who sought to undermine and resist the transformation that these leaders were seeking to drive.

The next section examines how these change agents had to deal with resistance to change and seeks to identify how they - as effective leaders - coped with the challenges posed to the transformation initiative by the prevailing organisational culture.

4.4. People Saying “No”: Organisational Culture and Change Leadership

One of the major challenges for leadership in the context of the creation of the Shared Legal Service within the provincial administration was the existing public service culture. Director-General of the Province, Dr Mvuyo Tom, was at pains - despite having been asked a question on a different, but related point (Mvuyo, transcript: 12) - to stress this vital organisational aspect:

I’ll come to that, but let me also mention one point... We often neglect the environmental [organisational culture] issues that are there... [The public service paradigm] ... That’s a very challenging environment in terms of what happens in the ‘politics’ of the environment, what happens in the economic (sic) situation of change. You might have a vision and then those [factors] are suddenly changed. So that’s a political, legal [organisational] type paradigm that you have to look at (Mvuyo, transcript: 13).

An awareness of the nuanced issues of organisational culture is a crucial ingredient required by successful leaders of change initiatives. Dr Tom argued that change leaders were able to intuit the climate and to act when the time for organisational transformation was opportune:

And so you have these hierarchies that ultimately take decisions. The belief that you might have ... in fact ... even the change that we had with the Shared Legal Service did not occur at the time when we wanted it to happen. We had to look at that environmental type of situation ... in terms of political change in government (Mvuyo, transcript: 13).

He also considered that Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa, as the individual driving the transformation of legal services in the provincial government, was well aware of the political, economic and cultural realities of the environment in which he, as change agent, was required to operate:

But I think Joe was very cognisant of such factors. If you go to some of the submissions that he was making [to the Cabinet] to drive this change, he knew that it could take long (Mvuyo, transcript: 13).

The then newly appointed Head of the Office of the Premier, Ms Hackula, reflected on the challenges that she faced as a leader moving into the public service as follows:

The resistance. People were used to the non-reporting culture ... you know its strange ... because in the public service they often talk about 'accountability', but the issue of accountability starts with you being able to report. If you are given funds [by the legislature], you must be clear in saying: "this is what I'm going to deliver on" and therefore you must be able to account. That was the biggest challenge (Bea, transcript: 3 – 4).

She continued by sketching a further aspect of the public service culture that she found challenging in operating as an agent of change within her new environment:

Secondly, the issue of efficiency. If you say "I'm going to commit to certain things" ... rather be upfront and say: "it's not doable". That's another thing in the public service ... the issue of promises, promises, promises. It is still prevalent ... it comes from people not applying their minds ... it's still a challenge. (Bea, transcript: 4)

Ms Hackula also struck an important cord: the fact that existing management attitudes were getting in the way of innovative change in the public service. She reflected on the fact that preoccupation with the issue of 'status' within the existing hierarchical structures was hampering the ability of leaders to connect with people as the crucial building blocks of any change initiative:

Because the issue of status is one of the things ... I'm a DDG [Deputy-Director General] ... I can't deal with the Deputy- or Assistant-Director... Because for people to have passion in what they are doing, you must show interest as the leader. And the best way of showing interest is getting involved without taking [away] responsibility. And the hierarchical structure in government does not allow that ... because if you are a Head of Department or DDG, you have to go to the Chief Director before you can reach a Director or a Deputy-Director who is actually maybe key. There is that sort of 'turf' ... if I can put it that way ... [a culture] of [people] saying: "No" (Bea, transcript: 9).

The former Head of the Office of the Premier also talked about how culture often came to be entrenched in the organisational structure, and reflected on the debilitating effect of the existence of sixteen different employment levels within the public service:

It's even getting worse since we have all the ranges [within those levels]. Instead of getting better, it's actually getting worse. So it really needs to be challenged ... because you can't talk about efficiency and improving service delivery ... if you're talking about it [post levels] (Bea, transcript: 10 – 11).

Furthermore, she also reflected on the role of leaders in effecting changes in the culture of the organisation:

So really there's a lot that needs to be done in the public service and I think that it needs to be driven from the top (Bea, transcript: 10).

Leaders of strategic change realise that it is frequently the organisation, and the culture that it nurtures, that is the most potent obstacle to transformation. They recognise that in order to effect change they need to challenge the negative attitudes and assumptions that their prevailing environment has entrenched. Effective leaders are able to break the cultural mould created within their organisation. In so doing they release the potential of their employees and harness their collective ability to imagine a new culture: one where old attitudes of government can be transformed into effective public service delivery.

In the next section, the research participants reflect on the need for the organisation to identify and empower the change agent most likely to successfully foment the required transformation in the culture of the organisation.

4.5. Moving the Wheelbarrow: Choosing the Right Change Leader

The importance of choosing the right person to drive strategic change is vital. According to the provincial Director-General, Mvuyo Tom, in a culture such as that which prevailed in the public service at the time, no recipe for a change initiative would have succeeded without the appropriate balance between sound management and effective leadership:

There are always two aspects when you are in a bureaucracy. There is the management issue, then there's the leadership issue. I know that some people try not to separate these two, but I think it's necessary to separate them from my own perspective. There are managers who are not necessarily leaders and there are leaders who are not necessarily managers. So you have to strike that balance in the person that you wanted to get (Mvuyo, transcript: 9).

Dr Mvuyo Tom was also aware that the change agent tasked with creating the new service would need to be sufficiently well-rounded so as to demonstrate “the soft skills of managing people, not just managing the hard aspects of technical issues” (Mvuyo, transcript: 10). However, he was nonetheless clear that the challenges to be confronted required strong change leadership:

That's one of the striking areas that you need to have. And there was an approach there that we were aware of ... in terms of references [to Joe's suitability] ... that this was a person who can drive. He was a driver if you want to put it like that ... which to some extent, we required. Because if you're having these scattered leaders or senior legal administration officers in the departments, you need somebody who can really hold them in the centre. You needed to have a strong person in the centre ... so that things don't fall apart (Mvuyo, transcript: 10).

This insight was shared by Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa, the person who was to be selected to lead the change initiative. He reflected on the form of leadership that would make the difference between success and failure:

Without strong leadership, the domino effect would [be] set in motion (Joe, transcript: 13).

Nevertheless, provincial Director-General, Dr Tom, was mindful of the fact that in selecting the right person to lead the transformation in the provision of provincial legal services, a balancing act needed to be performed:

You also needed to counterbalance that with the overall strategic vision of a person. And have somebody who can drive the process, manage the people and to be able to have, himself, his own vision of where he would like to take this particular shared service to. Now that's the whole issue of having somebody who can transform the particular branch which was in this case Shared Legal Services. (Mvuyo, transcript: 7 - 8).

The Director-General of the Eastern Cape Province reflected on the recruitment of Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa as the change leader:

So he knew the old, he knew the new, and he was quite open to the ideas ... not a conservative type of person. So basically that's part of the characteristics that we were looking at ... because if you had a conservative person, you'd never be able to drive changes in a department (Mvuyo, transcript: 8).

However, Dr Tom remarked that Joe Lukwago-Mugerwa was not “a striking transformational leadership person” (Mvuyo, transcript: 8). However, using a particularly memorable metaphor of ‘moving the wheelbarrow’, he reflected that the panel had a particular view of why Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa was considered the most suitable candidate to lead the change in legal service provision to the province:

So we had to strike a balance ... so that we'd be able to choose the candidate that would still develop into what you would like to see ... a leader of change. But he did make his impact, I think, in that Shared Legal Service. I did not need to do what we normally call ‘the moving of the wheelbarrow’. If you take a wheelbarrow and you move it with a load, it would remain there once you've put it [down], and you have to come back and lift it and move it. That was not my impression of the person that we hired (Mvuyo, transcript: 9).

The selection of the right individual to drive strategic change within an organisation is crucial to the success of any transformation. In some instances, it is the result of ‘lucky foresight’ but in most it involves an appreciation by top management that successful change leaders must be identified, and then allowed to bring their unique skills to bear in driving the process forward. In the next section, attention is focused on the first crucial task of any newly appointed change agent – that of building support for the transformation that they have been mandated to drive within the organisation.

4.6. You are a Member of a Family: Building Support for Change

In driving the transformation in the provision of legal advisory services to the provincial administration and its constituent departments, the responsible leaders had to confront the

ambiguities, conflicts and contradictions that this change initiative elicited within the context of the prevailing public service organisational culture.

Provincial Director-General Mvuyo Tom made a vital point when he reflected:

So like in any change process ... there would be those who are for change, and there would be those against the change and [who] resist that change (Mvuyo, transcript: 5).

Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa, as the formative change agent in this process, had to build both the personal and professional support of the legal administrative officers most acutely affected by the change initiative. According to him, it provided him with one of the crucial tests of his ability as a leader:

That required leadership. That required leadership that would be able to engage, that would be able to interact with stakeholders... Yes, it was a special challenge. So we started. One of our biggest challenges was to create a culture ... that you are not an employee of that [particular] department. You are an employee of the Office of the Premier... So we tried to create a culture within the lawyers themselves. To be dedicated. To say: "You are a member of a family which is Shared Legal Services" (Joe, transcript: 9).

This approach required a strong, but sensitive, form of change leadership. One that balanced the need to drive the transformation of provincial legal services with an appreciation of the reality of the situation in which this initiative was being facilitated:

You had to sell the idea. You ... sometimes had to take decisions which were not popular ... but yourself as a leader, you had to explain the reason why you were taking the decisions and you had to give the person an opportunity to voice their disagreement. And if they make a valid point, you had to listen... And you back off from what you intend to do. And that is not a sign of weakness, but is still a sign of mature, strong leadership (Joe, transcript: 13).

Furthermore, the leaders had to build the support of the key decision-makers elsewhere in the provincial administration utilising a similarly balanced approach to driving strategic change in the provision of legal services. Provincial Director-General, Mvuyo Tom, stated in this regard that:

We knew where we wanted to go as the Office of the Premier with the Shared Legal Service team ... Joe and his team. But we also needed to convince others of that route. So that they had to see what was going to come out of this ... what is the future state compared to the current state. We had to really look at the weaknesses of the current state as much as possible. But also there were positives [in the existing state] ... you can't deny that ... So we needed to counterbalance that with the positives that we were envisaging in the [transformation] process (Mvuyo, transcript: 6).

Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa evidenced an appreciation of the need to build sufficient consensus between all the key parties to the change initiative. He worked hard not only at winning the support of his professional colleagues, but also at forging bonds of understanding inside the top management of the Office of the Premier:

Without vision, there wouldn't be buy-in. You need to create a vision so that not only do you bring into the umbrella the people who are implementing that vision – that is the lawyers themselves – but also a vision to structure ourselves in the overall umbrella in the Office of the Premier. For the Premier's Office to understand our role, to understand the benefit of having a strong Shared Legal Service (Joe, transcript: 14).

And furthermore, the leadership had to build political support for their vision of a Shared Legal Service. This was a process that had to be approached in an incremental fashion, as the Director-General, Mvuyo Tom, explained:

I remember when we proposed this structure to the Premier, he did not agree to the structure that was forwarded at that stage ... which needed to have a higher level of representation. There was a proposal for a DDG [Deputy Director-General] to head the Shared Legal Service. But the Premier said let's have an interim phase with a Chief Director and the minimal structure rather than the bigger structure. Let's see how it works so that we don't start big and then have to shrink ... let's start small and build up from there (Mvuyo, transcript: 7).

Change leaders need to have an appreciation that transformations are often achieved in just such an incremental fashion. Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa evidenced an eminently sanguine attitude towards this situation and reflected that, whilst he had hoped for more, he was prepared to settle for a working alternative if it was what was required to drive the proposed changes:

And when you look at the approval from the Premier. [It] was to put it at the lowest (sic) as possible – though there were other structures that had been proposed. But they are saying: “In the interim ...” and we have been struggling to be able to change that mindset. Even with the provincial administration ... to look at the needs of the departments and improve on the structure. But unfortunately we’ve not been able to achieve that as of yet (Joe, transcript: 25).

Effective leadership in turbulent, changing environments requires the ability to make a strong case for transformation. Change agents however seem to evidence the sense to know just how much support – and from which individuals – will be necessary to secure the success of their initiatives. They appear to be experts at creating the ‘simple majority’ necessary to drive the strategic change mandated by their organisations.

In addition, as will be shown in the next section, successful change leaders understand the employment context in which they are required to operate, and particularly in an area such as legal advisory services, exhibit the flair to navigate transformation in the often choppy waters of the so-called knowledge economy.

4.7. Part of a Winning Formula: Change Agents and the New World of the Knowledge Worker

The Shared Legal Service initiative had a particular dynamic of special relevance to an increasing number of public service workplaces: that of the need for change leaders to be able to bring the best out of knowledge workers. Chief State Law Adviser, Joe Lukwago-Mugerwa, described this important organisational factor in the following terms:

One of the challenges was to create a better environment, a better working environment for lawyers. You found that in some departments, lawyers were not given their dues in terms of office space, equipment and other requirements that they needed to perform their work (Joe, transcript: 10).

Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa, as the driver of strategic change within a professional services environment, operated from a simple premise:

You can always get the best results from an employee who is happy at his or her place of work. So one of the first challenges we did as management, myself as Chief State Law Adviser, was to try to improve the working environment ... To show them [the legal professionals] that together, collectively, we may be able to achieve a better working environment (Joe, transcript:10).

A further important change leadership consideration for the General Manager of the Shared Legal Service in dealing with his new component of knowledge workers was to ensure the proper utilisation of their skills and competencies:

And the other issue of leadership was to look at the skills base of the individuals and to say: “Who is best skilled in what and where would the person be best utilised?” (Joe, transcript: 11).

Similarly, once the new component started to obtain recognition for its transformation in the provision of legal services to the provincial administration, Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa was at pains to spread the credit as widely as possible:

This cascaded downwards to the colleagues in the departments and they started to say that we were valued; we are part of a working, valued establishment in the Office of the Premier. We started getting praises from the Standing Committee [of the Provincial Legislature] saying we are doing a splendid job. We were moving away from the characterisation of ‘before the Shared Legal Services’ to an appreciation of efforts and work done ... [effort] which has been put into Shared Legal Services (Joe, transcript: 15).

The leader of the Shared Legal Service was astute to link the need of its professional component to have their worth recognised and appreciated with his goal of forging a strong and united core of knowledge workers:

People always want to associate themselves with a winning formula and our formula was working. And once people started associating themselves with a working formula, then people who are within that formula start to portray themselves as part of the overall ensemble of Shared Legal Services. And then you are creating a family (Joe, transcript: 15).

The special challenges posed to change agents by the rise of the knowledge worker are clearly evident in the approach adopted by the leader of the transformation in legal service delivery to the Province of the Eastern Cape. Successful change leadership

involves an ability to deal sensitively and appropriately with the dynamic of a particular workplace. Core to this ability is the talent - and the desire – to place a concern for people at the centre of their drive to transform the organisation.

In this final section, I seek to express the reflections of the research participants on the characteristics that they considered the important part of a successful change leader.

4.8. It's Your People that Makes You Tick: TLC - Total Leadership of Change

Effective leaders of strategic change exhibit certain fundamental characteristics that enable them to drive transformation in their organisations. In this last section of the data analysis chapter I have drawn together some of this theme's most important strands from the interviews with all three of the leaders involved in driving the strategic transformation of legal services in the Eastern Cape Provincial Government.

All that I am able to achieve is simply to reflect - in their own words - the research participants' understanding of these very intimate qualities, and in so doing aim to briefly touch on some of the personal aspects of successful change leadership:

4.8.1. The Most Loving Person: A Connection with People

The Head of the Office of the Premier, Bea Hackula, talked with evident fondness of Joe Lukwago-Mugerwa, the person who had brought about the transformed Shared Legal Service. Her words - spoken with a smile and a laugh she could not suppress - conjure something of the special characteristics of successful change leaders:

He would even joke about his skin colour [Joe was a Ugandan by birth] ... that's what made him different (laughs). He had such a sense of humour ... you won't believe ... if he would say something [and] I would repeat it, it wouldn't make the same impact. And the most loving person ... really ... the most loving person (Bea, transcript: 19).

She also mentioned Joe's rare talent of touching the lives of his subordinates beyond the confines of the normal organisational environment:

He dealt with his employees beyond their work environment. He would understand their lives beyond the work environment ... which is the same thing he practiced in his own family ... they were a loving couple, him and his wife. He was different in that way ... the warmest person. If I were to use just two words: he was very warm ... welcoming ... with such a sense of humour. (Bea, transcript: 19 – 20)

Furthermore, Bea Hackula recounted an example of this special ability that Joe Lukwago-Mugerwa had to connect with his people:

Even with the 'aunties' [the office cleaning staff] ... he could connect. He knew [them] ... he could tell you about the 'aunty' in the department ... in the unit. He was the one person, in fact ... when I introduced ... [at] a farewell function for people that go on retirement ... he was the one manager who could stand there and talk, in detail about the 'aunty' who was assisting in your department ... that's the warmth I'm actually talking about (Bea, transcript: 20).

She went on to finally add (in answer to a question of whether change leaders really needed these people skills to be effective) that:

You do ... you do!! Because when you have that ... when [people know where] it comes [from] ... people know that [any criticism] is not personal ... it's meant to assist and develop. It's in the interests of the organisation. But if you're such a snob that every time people come to your office they don't know whether you're happy or not happy ... and all that. They start doubting, so they don't open up ... you won't be effective as a leader without that ... you need a bit of that ... so the people can easily open up (Bea, transcript: 20).

Provincial Director-General, Mvuyo Tom, mentioned the importance of emotional intelligence. He considered that successful change leaders ought to be able to leverage this 'mature emotional stability' in all aspects of their work:

Emotional intelligence does not just mean being aware of the others, but also being aware of yourself. And managing yourself ... as well as how you react in particular situations ... and be cognisant of the fact that you may not have acted properly in this particular instance. And you need to improve in terms of that mature emotional stability that is required of leaders (Mvuyo, transcript: 16).

In a very real sense, it is this sincere connection with people that informs the levels of emotional intelligence that leaders are able to bring to bear in circumstances of strategic change. This mature emotional stability is what enables change agents to develop the style of leadership most effective to the particular organisational situation.

4.8.2. Collective, Co-operative and Complementary: Balanced Change Leadership

Change agents have the ability to recognise that it is only through shared leadership that transformations can become reality. Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa appreciated at the outset of the Shared Legal Service odyssey that it was crucial to forge an effective working partnership with his employees:

And we were saying that if we come together through a structured leadership, we would be able to define our terrain ... So we were saying to colleagues – if we had a shared legal service we'd be able to look at our expectations, be able to collectively indicate to our employer what it is that is required to be able to do the job you are employing us to do (Joe, transcript: 6).

The leadership style of Joe Lukwago-Mugerwa was based on a collaborative approach to the driving of change within the provincial legal advisory services. This aspect of the initiation of the transformation was noted by the provincial Director-General:

So that was the submission that was made, and this submission incidentally came from managers themselves ... before the politicians ... a typical 'bottom-up' process was evolving in that process (Mvuyo, transcript: 4).

Furthermore, in selecting his own leadership team, Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa demonstrated the same balanced approach:

I looked for people with a strong leadership background. Not particularly my type of leadership ... a complementary type of leadership ... because you realise where you are weak and you want to bring on board persons who will be able to assist you, as the head, in fostering better leadership overall (Joe, transcript: 15).

This aspect of balanced change leadership needed to be exercised both on an organisational and on a personal level. The Head of the Office of the Premier, Bea Hackula, reflected on her own approach in the following terms:

You know for me ... I would like to believe that I have a combination of two characters. One being strong, but the other one... is the fair side of me. Because first, before I can be firm I have to make sure people understand. They have to understand what I expect. I also have to understand where they come from ... so my approach has got that combination. My approach is more of assisting before you can ... sort of ... 'pull the shambok' (Bea, transcript: 5).

The Chief State Law Adviser, Joe Lukwago-Mugerwa, also used a similar leadership style in his dealings with employees. He reflected on the collaborative approach he had adopted in the sensitive issue of the redeployment of professional staff that took place following the creation of a unified legal service in the province:

And when the issues arise from the departments [and] are now brought into the collective – into a meeting form – and when you go back to the official later on, and say: “I am moving you from this department to that department” because you have that problem, he knows the problem because he has been part of the discussion of that problem. He may not personally like it, but he will understand it is for the better... for good intentions, because he is aware of the problem ... and we need to deal with it as a collective (Joe, transcript: 12).

This balanced form of change leadership is both situational and contextual, and has as its premise the fact that it is the people within any organisation who form its most vital strategic resource. It encompasses a belief that a working environment must be both fair and just: that there is an equitable social compact between all parties. It must counterbalance the needs of the organisation to deliver on its mandate to the people of the Eastern Cape Province with the competing requirements of public service employees who desire that these imperatives be achieved in a fashion that is empowering and relevant to them as individuals within the employment context.

Director-General, Mvuyo Tom, noted that some people viewed Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa as somewhat autocratic, whilst others felt that Joe's style of leadership was a little too relaxed. He took the view that Joe Lukwago-Mugerwa's change leadership was

finely balanced to the situation “in terms of ensuring that there is some sense of responsibility and responsiveness from people that are supposed to do the work” (Mvuyo, transcript: 11).

He agreed that this demonstrated a “flexibility to know when to go hard on the hard issues and soft on the soft issues” (Mvuyo, transcript: 11), stating that it was important for a change agent to use the right leadership style in the right situation:

What to use in terms of ... that’s why I referred to situational leadership issues ... what to use at a particular time ... that would make you more effective in terms of leading people (Mvuyo, transcript: 11).

Bea Hackula, as the Head of the Office of the Premier, reflected on this ability of Advocate Joe Lukwago-Mugerwa to lead with balance – and with consideration for the feelings of others within the organisation:

He was persuasive ... but in a nice way. You wouldn’t feel that you are being persuaded ... but with that smile of his, he’ll put facts up front and he would have a way of actually making you see things the way he does (Bea, transcript: 8).

In driving transformation, successful change leaders have this innate ability to balance competing demands in such a fashion as to make the most out of their precious human capital whilst at the same time achieving organisational objectives.

4.8.3. Allow Your People to Grow: Getting the Best out of Employees

Effective leaders of strategic change always seem to get the best out of the available human resources because they realise that their people are the essence of the organisation. They have the special skill to see this vital issue:

...the issue of people as the treasure of this organisation, because it’s your people that makes you tick (Bea, transcript: 10).

Head of the Office of the Premier, Bea Hackula, continued by emphasising the fact that:

Your people, the strategy ... the leadership must be very clear on the vision, the mission and the strategy. Where are they going ... and the people buy into that ... and the organisation [is away and running]. So that focus should be there ... and Joe really was a peoples' person. He actually would fit in and actually make people feel part of that institution ... which is the trend that we should actually [be following] ... the leadership should be moving towards that. So really there's a lot that needs to be done in the public service and I think it needs to be driven from the top (Bea, transcript: 10).

Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa also realised the value of his people as a crucial success factor in the leadership of sustained strategic change:

That you can only achieve by the confidence that you build, by the expertise you have in your fold (Joe, transcript: 22).

Bea Hackula spoke with an appreciation of the ability that Joe Lukwago-Mugerwa had to get the best out of his people:

He got everyone involved. So there was ownership of what was happening in the department. That's why even when he left there was no gap because you [referring to me as Joe's successor] could fill in the gap. Because he didn't see that he's entitled to that position forever. So he nurtured, he mentored. He was a mentor actually ... which is the culture of leadership required in the public service. We need mentors. We need people that are dynamic ... who challenge issues ... that are really for the principles of government and good governance (Bea, transcript: 8).

Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa provided further insight into the methods that he adopted to mentor the individuals who served with him:

And my mentorship was identification of skills ... and giving that person an opportunity to enhance and deal with the skills gap after having identified those skills gaps. Provide him the training (sic) that is required; take him to short courses and also participate in our internal management meetings ... to be able to deal with all those issues and for them to be part of [the] decision-making processes ... You allow them to take charge (Joe, transcript: 18).

The Head of the Office of the Premier, Bea Hackula, also raised the importance of trust and integrity to the work of a successful change agent. She reflected on how Advocate

Lukwago-Mugerwa had turned the potentially divisive redeployment issue into an affirming, team-building exercise:

It's an issue of trust and building that relationship ... as a sense of ownership. When you deploy people, you are saying: "you own this ... this is your baby, I trust you enough to do well" (Bea, transcript: 11).

Bea Hackula lamented the fact that so many public sector leaders lack the confidence to give their staff the space to succeed, and reflected on the loss that the leader, the organisation and the individual would suffer as a result:

You tie your hands ... but also, you don't grow yourself. So ... it's because I used to work for myself ... that was my principle ... I worked myself out of a job. So that I'm given more. And therefore, if you don't delegate and allow your people to grow, you don't grow because you suffocate yourself. You have to do what they could have done ... and you stagnate (Bea, transcript: 21).

She considered that giving responsibility to others was one of the key success factors in the leadership of strategic change stating that:

So for me ... that's my principle. So, the first thing I look at ... I empower people, but I have to identify people that have the potential. Because ... really, we have to be realistic. Within an organisation of so many people ... although you motivate them all, there are those that you can actually nurture and be able to say ... really ... I can develop ... to a certain level. Because people are gifted in various ways. So as a leader you must identify people with various potentials and nurture that ... so if you don't do that, you don't grow yourself. Later on the people that you are leading [will suffocate] ... you actually [will] suffocate yourself (Bea, transcript: 22).

In concluding the interview in her inimitable personal style, Ms Hackula repeated the refrain:

How you present yourself is how people respond. So they will easily open up to you ... they will be able to share their ideas ... because as a leader you don't expect that you should know everything ... but you can learn from people as well. So they open up ... they come up with brilliant ideas! You assist [in the] implementation of that ... and in the end, you become successful ... they are happy ... so you both win. That's the end (Bea, transcript: 20).

Change leaders are a rare breed of individuals who achieve success in turbulent, disruptive environments due to their ability to connect with their people, and in so doing, get the best out of them. This opportunity to interact with individuals in challenging circumstances is no doubt one of the reasons that they relish the environment of change, but is not itself sufficient to drive them towards ensuring the strategic transformation of the organisations that they lead. So, one may ask: What drives them?

4.8.4. It was a Special Challenge: What Drives Change Leaders

Change leaders thrive on challenges. They have a sense of adventure and a desire to fulfil the promise presented by opportunities to drive transformation. Successful leaders of strategic change operate very much in the present, even while they seek to create a new future for themselves, their people and their organisations.

Change leaders, for all their people skills, are also tough and resilient characters who make for very demanding managers. Bea Hackula recognised that her abrasive approach came as a shock to many in the public service:

Some people thought that I was too harsh, but I didn't see that side. Maybe it's from the other side ... that people [think that] ... they're on the receiving end. But I think in the end they will really thank me for where they are ... most of them. Because of that ... those standards that you set ... for yourself first. Then other people can actually emulate. And once you get used to it, it actually becomes a way of life (Bea, transcript: 5 - 6).

Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa too realised that his leadership of the transformation of the provincial legal services would be a difficult assignment that required a firm hand on the tiller of his part of the organisation. The task left him apprehensive, but excited by the prospect: one on which he remarked with evident feeling: “Yes, it was a special challenge” (Joe, transcript: 9).

Bea Hackula, the Head of the Office of the Premier, was convinced that Joe Lukwago-Mugerwa was the right person to accept such a special challenge:

He was [the right person] ... Joe was ... You know, when you're a leader, one must be prepared to be challenged. So Joe, pleasant as he was ... if he felt strongly about something, he would raise it with me and even the former DG [Director-General]. He would raise it and put facts on the table without taking issues personally ... which is very critical for a leader (Bea, transcript: 7).

Provincial Director-General, Dr Tom, in a remarkable echo of these sentiments, also described the manner in which Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa was able to rise to the challenges posed by his role as a change agent:

He could face up to me and say that: "in this particular situation I think I was right, and these are the reasons for me saying that I was right". You need that type of person who has ideas and can challenge other people's ideas and practices (Mvuyo, transcript: 11).

Bea Hackula spoke for many change leaders in describing that they were motivated by a desire to rise to the challenge of organisational transformation:

That's how I approach things. I don't want to be there for long because I want challenge all the time. Challenge! Challenge! Challenge! Challenge all the time (Bea, transcript: 7).

It will come then as no surprise that all three leaders involved in driving the strategic transformation of the provision of legal services in the Eastern Cape Province have since left the public service. However, none of these change agents left without ensuring that they left a legacy of successful change leadership.

4.8.5. I Leave Behind a Structure that has Delivered: The Legacy of the Change Leader

The Head of the Office of the Premier, Bea Hackula, recalled with a palpable sense of appreciation the role that had been played by Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa in the leadership of the strategic change in the provision of legal advisory services:

We need people like that for the public services to transform. So he was the kind of leader ... if we had any other way, we should have kept him ... even if he was somewhere [else in the provincial administration] because we need that kind of

leadership ... [leaders] who actually nurture people to believe in themselves, but secondly, challenge ... because it's an old system. What more do we need than people like him who would actually challenge and say: "why are you still doing things like this, why don't we look at the changes" ... so that we approach transformation from various angles (Bea, transcript: 8).

Ms Hackula was also quick to acknowledge the living legacy that Advocate Joe Lukwago-Mugerwa, had left behind:

I think we had a very good relationship ... working relationship ... with Joe. He actually added value in the Province. Where Shared Legal Services is now is because of him (Bea, transcript: 8).

The interview with Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa was conducted on 26 April 2005, his last working day as Chief State Law Adviser, and afforded him the opportunity to reflect on what he had been able to accomplish in four brief years:

I'm leaving a child who wasn't stillborn. I'm leaving a structure which has been tested ... which has won accolades in the Provincial Administration and Legislature – from where the biggest criticisms came. I leave with a sense of achievement ... in that though not the full mile ... that myself as the leader of the Shared Legal Service, I leave behind a structure which the administration thinks, and the legislature thinks, has delivered (Joe, transcript: 26).

In my concluding question, Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa was asked what he would be feeling when he closed his office door for the last time. He replied as follows:

I feel I'm leaving family members. People I've been working with ... people I've shared challenges with in leading the Shared Legal Service. I'll feel a sense of want. But at the end of the day, I feel that I've left behind an institution of a Shared Legal Service that as a programme can grow ... and be able even to improve service delivery outputs in the provincial government and administration (Joe, transcript: 26).

4.9. Conclusion

My research, and the data that it has provided, have afforded me the rare opportunity to give an account - through the creative process of describing my findings - of a particular reality in the lives of my research participants ... and indeed, in my own life.

In concluding this chapter, I am aware that I have undertaken a responsibility that has required me to both fully and faithfully piece together this compelling 'jigsaw puzzle' of effective change leadership.

I have sought to do this in a way that not only presents a coherent, interpretive summary of what has been discerned through the telescope of my methodology, but also to ensure that these research findings are told in celebration of the life experiences that gave rise to their existence.

The task that now lies ahead is to ensure that the meaning of these discoveries are neither misrepresented nor lost ... but that the truth is stated.

CHAPTER FIVE

LEADING STRATEGIC CHANGE

Kites rise highest against the wind – not with it.

(Sir Winston Churchill, war-time political leader)

5.1. Introduction

The winds of political change that gave birth to a unified nation and resulted in a revitalised public service also provided an opportunity for leaders within that new organisation to rise to the challenges of delivering the fruits of democracy to all South Africans. The dramatically changed circumstances of provincial government in the Eastern Cape Province created a unique opportunity for the exercise of effective leadership in the interests of all service delivery stakeholders.

The data that has been presented in the preceding chapter constitutes a picture puzzle of one such challenge put together from the jigsaw pieces of the experience of the leaders involved in the strategic transformation of the provision of legal advisory services to the provincial administration and its departments. The picture presented by this jigsaw puzzle of individual understandings of what happened during this particular transformation is a rich portrait of effective change leadership that deserves an appropriate ‘picture frame’.

In this penultimate chapter, I provide such a frame and in so doing seek to use this device to demonstrate, with reference to my research goal and questions, the relationship between the data collected from my participants and the literature on effective change leadership. The chapter has been arranged in line with the seven major themes identified in the data analysis section and seeks to critically analyse and synthesize the experiences of the leaders of the strategic transformation in service delivery brought about by the creation of the Shared Legal Service in the Office of the Premier.

5.2. Aims, Understandings, Themes and Their Importance

The goals of my research have been to use the creation of the Shared Legal Service as a vehicle to pursue the following aims: firstly, to describe the influence of leadership and its impact on driving transformation; secondly, to appraise the success factors in the leadership of strategic change; and thirdly, to identify and evaluate the critical drivers in the leadership of strategic change within organisations.

In the pursuit of these aims, I examined a diverse array of existing literature seeking possible answers to the following questions: What is effective leadership? How does effective leadership interact with the culture of an organisation? What leadership styles and behaviours are most appropriate in situations of organisational change?

Interviews with the three primary change agents involved with the transformation of the provision of provincial legal services were conducted with a view to eliciting their understandings of how their leadership – and that of their fellow leaders – had impacted on the strategic initiative that they had been tasked to drive in the organisation. These understandings have been arranged under various themes captured in the previous chapter. I now seek to evaluate, make sense of, and give meaning to, these findings and in so doing address the research questions posed in this dissertation.

In the literature review I asked the question: How can leadership influence change within an organisation? The answer has been one that has focused attention on the continued relevance of traditional leadership theories. These theories have emphasised the importance of the characteristics and behaviours of leaders, and have focused attention on the fact that the situation in which a leader is required to operate often provides the litmus test of effective leadership. They form the bedrock of an understanding upon which the more nuanced contemporary theories have been able to be constructed.

In evaluating the relevance of these newer theories, it is easy to commit the error of viewing them as hermetically complete expositions of the nature of effective leadership

rather than appreciating that they are simply new, and possibly more appropriate, views of leadership that are linked in an ever-evolving spiral of understanding. In fairness to many of the contemporary leadership thinkers, this fact is implicit in the modern theories discussed on pages 13 and 14 of Chapter 2 under the headings of ‘Global Leadership’, ‘Level 5 Leadership’, ‘Emotional Intelligence’ and ‘Leadership that Gets Results’.

Other recent thinkers such as Harvard University academic Michael Feiner share the sentiments of the traditional theorists that effective leadership is a ‘situation-specific leadership’, which he refers to as “a view of leadership through a situation-specific lense” (Feiner, 2004: 165). This type of leadership is one that also acknowledges the importance of relationships and is a recurring theme in the data that characterises much of the understandings of the research participants on the nature of effective change leadership.

The picture formed by the themes identified in the previous chapter falls now to be ‘framed’ by a closer scrutiny of their importance within an ever-evolving discipline:

5.2.1. The Acknowledgement of the Need for Change

Feiner postulates certain ‘Laws of Leading Change’, the first of which he has called “The Law of the Burning Platform” (2004: 9). He considers that “if change is not presented as a burning platform, it can’t hope to succeed” (2004: 209).

The requirement that leaders need to have the capacity to change forms an important part of the theory of ‘Strategic Leadership’. In addition, the work on ‘Transformational Leadership’ discussed in the literature review similarly emphasises the need not only to adapt to changing circumstances, but also to create the changed circumstances necessary to achieve organisational objectives. These theories however place an emphasis on vision, charisma and certain other leadership characteristics (notably the ‘Four I’s’ of idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration) that did not find particular resonance with the understandings expressed by

the research participants, Dr Mvuyo Tom, Ms Bea Hackula and Advocate Joe Lukwago-Mugerwa.

Rather than ascribe the success of the transformation of legal services to great vision and insight, the participants emphasised the importance of the ordinary, everyday ability of effective change leaders to ‘see beyond the walls’ that constrain their organisations. This, they described, was a nuanced, but simple understanding of the situation in which they were called upon to lead: a reflection that change agents have “character, not charisma” (Binney, Wilke and Williams, 2005: 17).

The data emphasises that change can only be made possible through the act of bringing their real selves to the role they play as leaders. In truth, without that effort, the scales of ‘business-as-usual’ that form over their eyes will prevent them from seeing, from acknowledging the need for change, and from creating the ‘burning platform’ necessary to drive strategic transformation in their organisations. This furthermore finds expression in the literature review as one of the important roles of a change leader, identified by Graetz (2000) as that of “challenging the *status quo* and creating a readiness for change within the organisation” (2000: 550).

These understandings provide a crucial insight into effective change leadership: “It’s substance and character, not style, that determines followership. That’s why charisma can’t sustain followership in the long run” (Feiner, 2004: 163). And it’s why change agents are special, yet very ordinary, individuals who “are most effective when they bring ‘themselves’ to leading” (Binney *et al.*, 2005: 8).

5.2.2. The Importance of Relationships between Change Leaders and Other Leaders

A second insight into the nature of effective leadership is the understanding of the research participants of the need for mutually supportive relationships with other important role players within the organisation.

The issue of the importance of other leaders to change leaders is not a concept that was encountered in the literature review as a separate feature of effective leadership. It was however mentioned by Graetz (2000: 550) that one of the key dimensions of the roles played by the change leader is that of “enlisting the support of key sponsors and supporters at various levels of the organisation” (2000: 551). Similarly, Hamel (2002) identified the need for the change agent to understand, and be able to influence, the “political model which refers to the way power is distributed throughout the organization” (2002: 154).

One of the threads that runs through many of the themes identified in the data is that “leadership happens between people” (Binney *et al.*, 2005: 6). Effective change leadership involves ‘relationship management’ described as one of the components of social competence in ‘Emotional Intelligence’, a contemporary leadership theory addressed in the literature review. Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2003: 64) state that “relationship management is friendliness with a purpose: moving people in the right direction”. They also talk about the importance of effective leaders developing an ‘open-loop’ emotional system: “In other words, [they] rely on connections with other people” (Goleman *et al.*, 2003: 7).

Similarly, a concept that occurs frequently in the interviews is a sense of the importance of effective ‘relational leadership’ to the work of the change agent. In the context of the transformation of legal services to the Eastern Cape Province, one of the key success factors was the ability of its primary change agent, Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa, to develop sound working relationships with those other leaders within the Office of the Premier considered crucial to the success of the initiative.

In a very real sense, this understanding demonstrates the view that “the leader is interdependent with the business and organizational context” (Binney *et al.*, 2005: 55). This insight has further importance in considering the findings relating to the organisational culture that existed at the time of the transformation.

5.2.3. Change Leadership and Organisational Culture

One of the most important dynamics of driving transformation was identified in the literature review as the effect of organisational culture on the leadership of strategic change. In essence, effective leaders were the ones that understood their environment and were able to harness the possibility of cultural change within the organisation so as to successfully drive their strategic initiatives.

Attention was also drawn to the fact that the culture of public service organisations was characterised by four common features, namely: political imperatives, prevailing legislative framework, hierarchical processes, and the bureaucratic, rule-enforcing nature of its largely technocratic leadership. It was noted that significant challenges were posed to change agents as historically such organisations “have lacked an orientation towards adaptability, change and risk-taking” (Parker and Bradley, 2000: 130).

The research participants all remarked on the importance of effective leaders being able to acknowledge the existing environment and appreciate the differences in culture between public and private organisations. Change agents needed however to be more than just skilful ‘scanners of the environment’, they needed to apply this knowledge in nurturing behaviours within their own sphere of influence that would maximise the success of their change initiative in the achievement of the goals of their organisation.

In a culture such as the one existing in the provincial administration at the time of the initiation of the Shared Legal Service concept, it was important for change agents such as the then Chief State Law Adviser, Joe Lukwago-Mugerwa, to ‘manage the meaning’ of his planned transformation. Schraeder, Tears and Jordan (2005) listed six culture embedding mechanisms that leaders could use to lever organisational change. These mechanisms highlight the importance of the actions of effective change leaders and echo the fact that “the leader’s way of seeing things has a special weight ... leaders manage meaning for a group, offering a way to interpret or make sense of and so react emotionally, to a given situation” (Goleman *et al.*, 2003: xiii).

All three research participants recognised the importance of ‘organisational context’ to their efforts to bring about transformation in the provincial public service and emphasised the high degree of pragmatism that is required of effective change leaders. This is a theme identified by Binney *et al.* (2005) in their work on ‘Living Leadership’. The authors reflect that “context shapes the nature of the leadership that is provided – and largely determines the results” (Binney *et al.*, 2005: 55).

The research findings on the relationship between change agents and organisational culture also throw up fresh concerns over the value of the contemporary ‘Transformational Leadership’ theory. The understanding expressed by the participants was that rather than being visionary cultural pioneers or examples of a new generation of exceptional leaders, effective change agents are actually ordinary, fallible people who “dare to admit vulnerability ... to admit ‘I don’t know’ ...” (Binney *et al.*, 2005: 49). Such leaders follow a more humble, but more resonant form of ‘relational leadership’ that according to Feiner (2004: 163) is “the foundation of effective leadership, and by effective leadership I mean leadership that achieves business results in the right way: without demeaning, demoralizing or destroying people”.

If the voices of the research participants are to be heard and understood, it is perhaps time to re-evaluate the usefulness of the concept of transformational leadership and to pay more attention to the value of the social, cultural and emotional intelligence needed by effective change leaders. Tom Peters (2003: 335) remarked that “You can’t change people ... but you can change culture” and by this process of “reculturing” (Fullan, 2001: 44), leaders of transformations such as the one that occurred in the provision of legal services to provincial government can hope to change people.

If, as is suggested by Binney *et al.* (2005: 239) “transformational leadership is a symptom of a lost awareness of our connection with others”, special attention does need to be given to selecting change leaders who have the ability to relate to others within the environment in ways that tilt the prospects of success in favour of the organisation.

5.2.4. Choosing the Right Change Leader

The research findings point towards the importance of choosing the right individual to drive strategic change within an organisation. The provincial Director-General, Dr Tom, used the striking “moving the wheelbarrow” metaphor (Mvuyo, transcript: 9 - 10) to describe the need for a sufficiently dynamic change agent who could both manage and lead - a person capable of embracing not only the ‘hard, technical issues’ of driving the provision of legal advisory services but also the ‘soft skills of managing people’.

The work of Daniel Goleman (1995) on ‘Emotional Intelligence’ (EI) was alluded to in the literature review as an invaluable tool for use in profiling the individual psychology of an aspirant change leader, and was to form the basis for the contemporary theory of ‘Leadership that Gets Results’ (Goleman, 2000). This theory postulates a more situational and contextual approach to effective leadership and in the light of the deficiencies identified in other contemporary theories – notably, transformational leadership - merits some further consideration if the research goal of appraising the success factors of effective change leadership is to be realised.

Subsequent writing by Goleman *et al.* (2003) identified EI as a key component of ‘the new leaders’ that the authors envisage will prove to be most effective in this millennium. EI has two major components: personal competence and social competence. Under the first competency, effective leaders are said to exhibit two attributes, namely, self-awareness which is described as “having a deep understanding of one’s emotions, as well as one’s strengths and limitations and one’s value and motives” (Goleman *et al.*, 2003: 49) and self-management which is described as “the component of emotional intelligence that frees us from being a prisoner of our feelings. It’s what allows the mental clarity and concentrated energy that leadership demands, and what keeps disruptive emotion from throwing us off track” (Goleman *et al.*, 2003: 57).

The second major component - social competency - requires a social awareness that is often equated with the ability to empathise. Goleman *et al.* (2003) postulate that “EI

leaders spread emotions in the positive register: they move people by articulating a dream they hold that elicits optimism, or compassion, or a sense of connection – aspirations that point to a hopeful future” (2003: 61). This competency also requires relationship management and “managing relationships skilfully boils down to handling other people’s emotions. This, in turn, demands that leaders be aware of their own emotions and attuned with empathy to the people they lead” (Goleman *et al.*, 2003: 64).

The leader of the Shared Legal Service initiative, Joe Lukwago-Mugerwa, was identified as a change agent not because he impressed the interviewing panel as a “striking transformational leadership person” (Mvuyo, transcript: 8) but because he was the candidate who, as an individual, evinced a “mature emotional stability” (Mvuyo, transcript: 16). Indeed, as became increasingly apparent as the themes of the data unfolded, the resonative nature of effective change leadership was one of the strongest influences on the driving of successful organisational transformation.

5.2.5. Building Support for Change

In the recent work on ‘Living Leadership’, it is stated that:

...to change starts with you, compliance is not change; you are more likely to change things when you open a space between you and the group that is safe and free enough to bring the whole person, good and bad, into the exchange designed to find a way forward (Binney *et al.* , 2005: 200).

Indeed, it is these sentiments that underpin all of the remaining themes identified in the research data - no more so than the requirement of change agents to build support for transformation within the organisation.

In the literature review, Goleman (1998) is cited as suggesting that the leader plays an instrumental role in ensuring the correct organisational design and the control of an environment necessary to manage the change process. Furthermore, one of the key dimensions of this role was identified as “inspiring and communicating a shared vision of

the direction of organisational change both to participants and stakeholders of the process” (Graetz, 2000: 550).

The leaders of the transformation of the provincial legal services had to use their own hard won personal insights into the nature of effective change leadership to clear a path for the implementation of the initiative. The findings illustrate however that the leaders of the planned strategic change were astute enough to realise that small steps had to be taken before the newly created Shared Legal Service could get into its stride. In a sense, it can be said that they did what could be done within the prevailing organisational climate, following the admonition of “context, context, context: practice the art of the possible” (Binney *et al.*, 2005: 55). Both Dr Tom and Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa asked for more from the political authorities required to sanction the new structure than was eventually given to them, but as effective change leaders were prepared to “seek a good enough consensus, a working majority” (Binney *et al.*, 2005: 68).

In the same manner as he was prepared to accept an ‘interim’ structure for his proposed Shared Legal Service, the Chief State Law Adviser was also prepared to gradually build support for the new initiative with the legal professionals who would be affected by its implementation. In this regard, the data illustrates most sharply the influence of effective leadership and its impact on driving transformation.

Advocate Joe Lukwago-Mugerwa was undoubtedly what has been called a ‘resonant leader’ - described as follows: “They share ideas, learn from one another, make decisions collaboratively, and get things done. They form an emotional bond that helps them stay focused even amid profound change and uncertainty. Perhaps most importantly, connecting with others at an emotional level makes work more meaningful” (Goleman *et al.*, 2003: 25). The Chief State Law Adviser successfully made others feel part of the transformation process. Director-General, Mvuyo Tom, referred to “Joe and his team” (Mvuyo, transcript: 6). Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa too reflected that he was often at pains to remind his colleagues that: “You are a member of a family which is Shared Legal Services” (Joe, transcript: 9).

In many respects the ‘emotional resonance’ that was exhibited by the change leadership in building support for the transformation process was the recipe that also proved successful in Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa’s task of managing a service delivery component made up almost exclusively of ‘knowledge workers’.

5.2.6. Change Agents and the New World of the Knowledge Worker

One of the success factors in the leadership of the strategic change in the provision of legal services to the provincial administration was the ability of the change agents to deal sensitively and appropriately with the legal professionals that were to constitute the bulk of the new Shared Legal Service.

In a world fast becoming dominated by the service industry and the knowledge worker, the ability and the desire to appreciate that people are the core of the organisation is a prerequisite for successful change management. Jack Welch, reflecting in his autobiography on the acquisition of a certain financial services business, stated that: “The talent goes up and down the elevators every day and can go in a heartbeat ... all you’re buying is the furniture” (2003: 218). Similarly, in an environment such as the envisaged Shared Legal Service, the very success or failure of the initiative was to turn on the success of its change leadership in eliciting the behaviours from its knowledge workers necessary to drive the transformation.

A further important role envisaged by Goleman (1998) in the writings considered earlier in this thesis was one where change leaders motivated, empowered, inspired and energised their followers. In the review of the literature, this also found expression in the dimension of “enabling others to act by providing the necessary emotional, intellectual and material support for the change initiative” (Graetz, 2000: 551).

In the context of the creation of the Shared Legal Service, Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa fulfilled just this sort of role: ensuring not only that the working environment was

improved, but also that the status of the legal professional in the public service was properly recognised, and that credit was given to employees once the initiative started to receive kudos from the provincial legislature. These actions helped instil a sense of unity and purpose that built on the human desire to be “part of a working, valued establishment” (Joe, transcript: 15). Steps were also taken by the Chief State Law Adviser to enlarge and enhance the skills of the legal professionals and to actively manage their career-paths within the administration. This people-centred leadership was one of the key drivers of the successful implementation of the initiative.

The concept of ‘followership’ was not an aspect that arose in the literature that was initially surveyed, but is of particular importance in the new knowledge economy. Employees are often said to be volunteering their services (albeit for a wage) but it is a truism that loyalty and the extra commitment that comes with it cannot be bought – it must be earned. Effective change leaders realise that “to enhance your followership, you must grow their followership” (Feiner, 2004: 175).

There is often a fine line that the change agent needs to tread, one that balances change and continuity. In all too many instances, leaders ruin any prospect of a successful strategic realignment by adopting a ‘change or else’ approach to those affected by the transformation. If the understandings of the research participants that were interviewed are to be appreciated, it must be acknowledged that:

...far better to recognize that change and continuity must be balanced and that the leader needs, in connection with others, to take responsibility for weighing up how much continuity and how little change is needed at any one time (Binney *et al.*, 2005: 208-9).

The data on dealing with knowledge workers illustrates furthermore the importance of the leader’s ability to set the emotional standard. Effective change agents “can guide in ways that give people a sense of clarity and direction in their work and that encourage flexibility, setting people free to use their best sense of how to get the job done”

(Goleman *et al.*, 2003: 11). This clear, but daunting challenge sets the stage for the final theme established in analysing the data obtained from the research participants.

5.2.7. TLC - Total Leadership of Change

The concept of ‘total change leadership’ as a theme emerged as an amalgam of many different strands or sub-themes that arose from the interviews conducted with the three leaders responsible for the conception, creation and implementation of the Shared Legal Service initiative in the provincial administration.

These various sub-themes are considered separately for purposes of this portion of my discussion of the research findings, but it must be remembered that collectively they appear to be suggesting that a fresh, new approach to leadership is required: one that recognises that effective agents of organisational change will “need to hone a completely different range of leadership skills” (Graetz, 2000: 550).

(a) *A Connection with People*

One of the key dimensions of a change leader’s role was identified in the literature review as “providing the necessary symbolic and substantive actions required to nurture and embed the necessary behaviours of subordinates” (Graetz, 2000: 551). Whilst this view is certainly substantiated in the findings, a deeper insight provided by the research participants has been the importance of the leader’s emotional connection with the people affected by change initiatives.

The word ‘love’ does not occur in the literature review of this thesis, but emerged as a strong theme in the data collected under this sub-theme as the participants reflected on the special characteristics of successful change leadership. A re-reading of the recent work ‘The New Leaders’ however unlocks the meaning of the heartfelt sentiments expressed particularly by Ms Bea Hackula : “Great leadership works through the emotions” (Goleman *et al.*, 2003: 3). The authors state in the preface to the work that “the

fundamental task of leaders, we argue, is to prime good feeling in those that they lead. That occurs when a leader creates resonance – a reservoir of positivity that frees the best in people. At its root, then, the primal job of the leader is emotional” (2003: ix).

The word ‘humour’ will also not be found in the literature review although it is highlighted in the data as one of the most noteworthy and prominent features of the leadership style of Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa. Once again, Bea Hackula was able to unlock another door of perception: the understanding that “... the artful use of humor typifies effective leadership” (Goleman *et al.*, 2003: 41). Its use also appears to be a highly relevant tool in circumstances of organisational transformation. This is also echoed in the work of Goleman *et al.* (2003) who note that: “The most effective leaders, then, use humor more freely, even when things are tense, sending positive messages that shift the underlying emotional tone of the interaction” (2003: 42).

The special ability of the change leader to touch the lives of the people in the organisation was an attribute that was of particular value to the Chief State Law Adviser, tasked as he was with implementing challenging transformation. The ‘human touch’ of Joe Lukwago-Mugerwa made a vital difference in his change leadership: one that allowed people to “easily open up” (Bea, transcript: 20). It was this ability that the provincial Director-General considered was the fruit of “the mature emotional stability that is required of [effective] leaders” (Mvuyo, transcript: 16).

In a similar vein, Goleman *et al.* (2003: 6) state that:

The key, of course, to making primal leadership work to everyone’s advantage lies in the leadership competencies of emotional intelligence: how leaders handle themselves and their relationships. Leaders who maximize the benefits of primal leadership drive the emotions of those they lead in the right direction ... Whether an organization withers or flourishes depends to a remarkable extent on the leader’s effectiveness in this primal emotional dimension.

The important insight afforded by the findings is that leaders need to exercise the full range of appropriate emotions in leading strategic change, and furthermore that the most

successful drivers of transformations are the ones that effectively harness the emotions to establish a connection with the people affected by organisational upheaval.

(b) *Balanced Change Leadership*

The findings also illustrate the fact that effective change leadership is collective, co-operative and complementary. It is leadership that obeys Feiner's 'Law of Ownership' that decrees: "If you want people to own the outcome of a change process, give them a vote along the way" (2004: 210).

The research participants talked frequently about the leadership of the transformation of provincial legal advisory services being a collaborative exercise, truly, a 'Shared' Legal Service. Furthermore, Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa was described as a change agent who used the right leadership style in the right situation (Mvuyo, transcript: 11). The literature on the contemporary theory of 'Leadership That Gets Results' comes closest to this finding in postulating that the true test of the efficacy of leadership lies in the results that are achieved by the organisation.

Goleman's earlier work (2000: 78) on leadership styles has found further expression in his recent studies (2003: 68) where an effective leader is described as an individual who best applies the most appropriate 'resonant' leadership style (namely, visionary, coaching, affiliative and democratic) to the specific situation in which the leadership needs to be exercised. In a nod to the work of earlier traditional theorists on 'contingent leadership', it is stated that effective leadership is "leading with style – the right one at the right time" (Goleman *et al.*, 2003: 17).

An important insight into successful change leadership was the opinion of the Director-General, Mvuyo Tom, who considered that the approach adopted by Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa was finely balanced to the situation "in terms of ensuring that there is some sense of responsibility and responsiveness from people that are supposed to do the work" (Mvuyo, transcript: 11). An important contributing factor to his success in motivating

people, was the Chief State Law Adviser's ability to be "persuasive ... but in a nice way" (Bea, transcript: 8). This is a reflection of the fact that "when leaders drive emotions positively ... they bring out everyone's best" (Goleman *et al.*, 2003: 6).

In describing the influence of leadership and its impact on driving transformation, the findings emphasise the ability of successful change agents to lead with style and poise, balancing the competing demands of the organisation with their own, and their employees', hopes, dreams, desires and expectations - and in so doing giving the most to the initiative, but also getting the most out of their people.

(c) *Getting the Best Out of People*

One of the critical drivers in the leadership of strategic change within organisations is the ability of leaders to get the best out of their people. The literature that was reviewed spoke of a move towards leadership that focused more on people than on processes: one that was characterised by leaders who were able to "unleash the human spirit" (Bartlett and Ghosal, 1995: 132).

The literature review also isolated a number of common characteristics shared by effective change leaders that *inter alia* envisaged that "they act as framers of the change environment for both the organisation and the affected individuals" (Moran and Brightman, 2001: 113). Similarly, the theory of 'Transformational Leadership' pointed to a transcendent, almost spiritual, ability to move people towards what such leaders perceived to be for the greater good of both the organisation, its shareholders and the people who were employed in its environment.

The deterministic nature of these views of change leadership is not borne out by the research findings. Determinism is described as "the philosophical doctrine that all acts, choices and events are the inevitable consequences of antecedent sufficient causes" (Collins Dictionary of the English Language, 1983: 404). However, rather than confirming that change agents initiate an irresistible chain of events leading to

transformation, the data suggests that effective change leadership is premised on an understanding of 'free will' – described as “the apparent human ability to make choices that are not externally determined ... the doctrine that human beings have such freedom of choice” (Collins Dictionary of the English Language, 1983: 579).

The data is rich in understandings by the research participants that reflect the views of the Head of the Office of the Premier, Ms Bea Hackula, that “people [are] the treasure of this organisation, because it's your people that makes you tick” (Bea, transcript: 10). Effective change leaders realise that their people hold the keys that unlock the door to successful organisational transformation. These individuals practise a “humanistic leadership” (Goleman *et al.*, 2003), one that appreciates and honours the value of people and that recognises that “the central theme of a humanistic philosophy is that close, personal relationships give meaning to life” (Goleman *et al.*, 2003: 157).

Effective change leaders allow employees to express their full selves through their work. They harness the free will of their employees allowing them the space to contribute to organisational transformation in their own unique and often unanticipated ways: they know that “if you don't do that, you don't grow yourself ... and you suffocate” (Bea, transcript: 22).

(d) *What Drives Change Leaders*

The research findings point towards an understanding that effective change leaders are drawn to the challenge of transformation. They have a sense of adventure and a desire to seize opportunities, to fulfil them and to move on to some new and exciting venture. Ms Bea Hackula spoke for many change agents in reflecting: “That's how I approach things. I don't want to be there for long because I want challenge all the time. Challenge, challenge, challenge! Challenge all the time” (Bea, transcript: 7).

Hamel (2002) considers that “these are the ‘gray-haired revolutionaries’, and they are the rarest breed of all. Their gray hair comes not from years, but from the experience of

having lived through several strategy ‘lifetimes’. They have repeatedly turned themselves inside out and their industries upside down” (2002: 211).

The literature review has also served to isolated a number of common characteristics of effective change leaders that indicate a select group of individuals that embrace uncertainty, ambiguity and complexity, and who have the force of character to be “the exemplars of change, providing a highly visible and credible role model for the organisation” (Moran and Brightman, 2001: 113).

The findings illustrate that there is a tough, resilient streak in all effective change leaders. Director-General, Dr Mvuyo Tom, talked about the need to recruit a change agent that could form the cohesive core of the Shared Legal Service initiative. He memorably remarked that: “You need to have a strong person at the centre ... so that things don’t fall apart” (Mvuyo, transcript: 10). Ms Bea Hackula also realised the need to be an exemplar of change within the Office of the Premier stating that: “Because of that ... those standards that you set ... for yourself first. Then other people can emulate. And once you get used to it, it actually becomes a way of life” (Bea, transcript: 5 – 6). This insight also illustrates the fact that change agents are alive to an environmental reality that is often, unfortunately, only dimly discerned by those who run the organisation: “Living with permanent transition is the disturbing context of leadership” (Binney *et al.*, 2005: 231).

The findings furthermore highlight what Feiner identifies as ‘The Law of Cascading Sponsorship’ that “leaders cannot delegate responsibility for implementing change” (2004: 210). Similarly, in the literature review, the final key dimension of the roles played by the change leader was identified as that of “demonstrating the personal commitment necessary to become the role-model for success of the transformation process” (Graetz, 2000: 551).

The transformation of the provincial legal service was a task that left the Chief State Law Adviser, Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa, apprehensive, but excited by the prospect of rising to “a special challenge” (Joe, transcript: 9). The findings accordingly emphasise

that effective change leaders have a sense of adventure and a desire to fulfil the promise presented by the opportunity to drive strategic change. Such leaders subscribe to the maxim: “Change – be a part of it” (Binney *et al.*, 2005: 195).

(e) *The Legacy of the Change Leader*

Whilst the understandings gleaned from the research participants indicate that change agents operate very much in the present, by their very actions they seek to create a future for themselves, their people and the organisation. They desire to stamp their unique mark on the environment and leave a legacy that will resonate positively long after they have moved on to different challenges and new vistas.

In the literature it was noted that the challenge of effective change leadership was not simply the creation of a new system, but the ability to institutionalise the new approaches necessary to achieve organisational objectives (Kotter, 1995). It is these fresh insights into the benefit of a fluid approach to the organisational environment in which they operate that they are often able to entrench amongst the people that have been privileged to work with them. In a very tangible sense, successful change agents are able to mould and fashion a new, more appropriate culture, and in so doing materially alter the perceptions of people towards the constant need for transformation. It was also noted in the review that the legacy of the effective leader of strategic change is often one of institutionalising “the process of continually renewing an organization’s direction, structure and capabilities to serve the ever-changing needs of external and internal customers” (Moran and Brightman, 2001: 111).

The Head of the Office of the Premier, Ms Bea Hackula, reflected on the lasting value that a change agent such as Advocate Lukwago-Mugerwa would have on the provincial administration by stating that: “What more do we need than people like him who would actually challenge and say: ‘why are you still doing things like this, why don’t we look at changes’ ... so that we approach transformation from various angles” (Bea, transcript: 8). The Chief State Law Adviser himself was constrained to acknowledge this legacy in

stating that: “But at the end of the day, I feel that I’ve left behind an institution of a Shared Legal Service that can grow ... and be able even to improve service delivery outputs in the provincial government and administration” (Joe, transcript: 26).

Effective change leaders are driven by challenges, but they exhibit an inner sense of purpose that allows them to drive strategic transformation. This purpose can best be put as a desire to better themselves, better their organisations ability to deliver results to its stakeholders, and better the lives of the people that they have had the opportunity to lead. It is a legacy of leadership that frees the best in all that it touches.

5.3. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have endeavoured to make sense of the completed jigsaw puzzle pieced together in the preceding data analysis chapter from the insights and understandings on effective change leadership offered by my research participants. In so doing, I have reflected on the themes that were established in such a way as to use the literature review and my subsequent reading and re-reading of the relevant academic writing to frame the picture presented so as to best address my research goals.

I have sought to probe the phenomenon of effective change leadership through the examination of the understandings of the three change agents involved in driving the transformation of the provision of legal advisory services to the Province of the Eastern Cape. In the concluding chapter that follows I summarise my main findings, assess their potential value and address their potential limitations.

But for now, I conclude where I began this chapter: with an appreciation of the fact that ‘kites do rise highest against the wind’, but with the understanding that effective change leadership ought to be “leadership that soars” (Goleman *et al.*, 2003: 33).

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

The life of man is a dubious experiment. It is a tremendous phenomenon only in numerical terms. Individually, it is so fleeting, so insufficient, that it is literally a miracle that anything can exist and develop at all.

(Carl Jung, psychologist)

6.1. Introduction

Whilst not all case studies will have a revelatory quality that challenges the existing order of things, it is a method that does allow an account to be given of the reality experienced by the leaders of the transformation in the provision of legal advisory services to the Province of the Eastern Cape. A simple, although fleeting insight into people's lives is often the best that can be achieved in the hope that an account of their understandings will ensure that the meaning of these discoveries may lead to a fuller expression of the nature of effective change management.

This concluding chapter thus seeks to summarise the main findings of the research. It furthermore examines the potential value of my case study, detailing certain recommendations for leadership practices and setting out some possible avenues for further research on effective leadership. Finally, the chapter evaluates the limitations of the study that I have conducted into the Shared Legal Service change initiative.

6.2. A Summary of the Main Findings of the Research

The understandings of the research participants point towards the need to view the nature of effective change leadership through a situation-specific lens: one that appreciates the role of relationships and emotions, and that recognises the importance of culture and its impact on the success of organisational transformation.

The main research findings are expressed in seven main themes with the final theme being reflected in five separate sub-themes:

6.2.1. The Acknowledgement of the Need for Change

Effective leaders are able to see beyond the walls that form the boundary of their existing environment. They have both the intuitive ability to recognise the need for change and the force of character to create the sense of urgency required to galvanise the organisation towards the necessary strategic transformation.

6.2.2. The Importance of Other Leaders to Change Leaders

Effective leaders realise that they cannot operate without the support of other influential individuals within their organisation. They find ways to harness the abilities of others within their sphere of influence, building relationships with like-minded leaders and in so doing creating the unified critical mass needed to drive strategic change.

6.2.3. Organisational Culture and Change Leadership

Effective leaders understand that it is organisational culture that is frequently the most potent obstacle to change. They are able to challenge negative attitudes and assumptions, breaking the mould created by their environment, and in so doing releasing the potential of their people both to embrace change and to achieve meaningful transformation.

6.2.4. Choosing the Right Change Leaders

Effective leaders recognise the importance of identifying the right people to drive strategic change. They appreciate that the prospect of successful organisational transformation will be enhanced by selecting people who can both manage and lead, and then allowing these individuals to bring their unique skills to bear in striking the right balance required to ensure the success of the initiative.

6.2.5. Building Support for Change

Effective leaders have the ability to make a strong case for organisational transformation. They evidence the sense to know what support will be required to ensure the success of the initiative and are experts at creating the required levels of consensus necessary to drive the strategic change that they have been mandated to implement.

6.2.6. Change Agents and the New World of the Knowledge Worker

Effective leaders are able to deal sensitively and appropriately with the growing number of knowledge workers within the modern employment environment. They have the talent, the emotional capacity and the desire to place a concern for people at the centre of their drive to strategically transform the organisation.

6.2.7. TLC - Total Leadership of Change

Effective leaders of strategic change exhibit certain fundamental characteristics that enable them to drive transformation in their organisations:

(a) *A Connection with People*

Effective leaders evince a sincere connection with people. They lead with a loving kindness and a sense of humour that informs the levels of mature emotional stability that they are able to bring to bear in situations of strategic change.

(b) *Balanced Change Leadership*

Effective leaders have the ability to recognise that it is only through shared leadership that transformations can become a reality. They lead in a collective, co-operative and complementary manner that is well suited to driving strategic change.

(c) *Getting the Best out of Employees*

Effective leaders realise that their people hold the key that unlocks the door to successful organisational transformation. They lead in a manner that drives strategic change without demeaning, demoralising or destroying their valuable human resources.

(d) *What Drives Change Leaders*

Effective leaders thrive on challenges. They lead in the realisation that their people are the real treasure of the organisation and they drive strategic change by nurturing a sense of trust and a shared ownership in the transformation process.

(e) *The Legacy of the Change Leader*

Effective leaders invest emotionally in their work. They lead with a sense of adventure and a desire to seize opportunities, to fulfil them and to move on to some new and exciting venture leaving behind the legacy of a successful organisational transformation.

6.3. The Potential Value of the Shared Legal Service Case Study

Whilst not all case studies find particular resonance in a different context, it is a research method “not to be wasted on issues that are unimportant. Its real power is in part a function of the uses to which it is put” (Gillham, 2000: 102).

Organisations such as the Provincial Administration of the Eastern Cape are responsible for the provision of public goods such as infrastructure, job creation and the development of agriculture, trade and industry that are vital to the regional and local economy. It is also the provider of crucial welfare services such social security, health and education to the people of the province. The nature of many public sector institutions are still however

characterised by excessively rule-driven and autocratic leadership which has the potential to stifle effective, innovative and efficient service delivery initiatives.

There is a growing need for public service leadership to break the entrenched bureaucratic culture of the provincial administration. Effective change leaders will need to be identified and nurtured as they are the ones who will need to drive the strategic change towards service excellence in government.

As a consequence of my findings, the following recommendations for practice are made:

1. The existing senior management competency profiling must be expanded to include increased and refined measures of the ability of leadership to effectively drive strategic transformation in the public service.
2. Human resource management practices must place greater emphasis on psychometrical and other appropriate methods used in evaluating the levels of emotional, cultural and social intelligence exhibited by the leadership cadre.
3. There ought to be a renewed focus on the recruitment, selection, placement, remuneration, and retention of individuals found to exhibit the resonant, relational leadership abilities needed to drive public service transformation.
4. Programmes must be put in place to develop effective change leadership skills including the use of formal executive training and the deployment of experienced change agents as mentors to public service managers.
5. Use ought to be made of existing national and international assistance programmes and provincial twinning agreements to benchmark best practices and to facilitate the transfer of effective change leadership skills to public service managers.

In addition, the following broad recommendations for further research are made:

1. The study has reflected on the potential deficiencies of the contemporary theory of transformational leadership, and a thorough examination of this model may well expose its significance and evaluate its applicability to the effective management of public service organisational transformation.
2. My research has indicated the need to explore the particular dynamic of effective change leadership and to develop the concept of 'Total Leadership of Change' as a theory distinct from any of the existing contemporary leadership theories.
3. A wider, deeper and more transversal study of change leadership within the public service may serve to more fully illuminate the issue of driving strategic transformation in the delivery of services by the provincial administration.
4. Broader and more substantive research into the nature of public service organisational culture and its impact on the leadership of change is also indicated.

6.4. The Limitations of My Research into Effective Change Leadership

There are specific limitations to the research that I have conducted:

1. My study has been limited to a change initiative in a single component of one department within one of nine provincial administrations in the country.
2. A small number of participants were interviewed, namely the three leaders involved in the transformation of the provincial legal advisory services.
3. There were no research participants from any of the other lower levels of management or from the ranks of the legal officers in the administration.

4. The research has been coloured by my own involvement as a senior manager of the legal advisory service during the period of the transformation.

Furthermore, there are certain general limitations to the value of my research into the nature of effective change leadership that must be noted:

1. The research has been aimed at understanding how the individual leaders involved in the creation of the Shared Legal Service have experienced this transformation, and hence they will of necessity have constructed their own meaning of effective change leadership within this particular situation.
2. The findings of my research are also not necessarily transferable to other contexts, and are not contended to be generalizable, either elsewhere in the provincial administration or in the wider public service.

6.5. A Concluding Reflection

Sometimes, the best that can be achieved by any qualitative research is to give an insight into people's lives and the way they experienced or perceived the challenges posed by transformation in the hope that their views will illustrate a different, and possibly relevant, understanding of the nature of effective change leadership.

What is effective leadership? I somehow doubt that a definitive answer to such a moving target will ever be found. However, such challenges are worthy of the endeavour in the knowledge that my objective will have been achieved if the insights of the research participants have illustrated but one successful approach to effective change leadership.

More so, if these understandings resonate with some leaders and stir a breeze under their wings that will assist them in soaring to new heights.

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APPENDIX

MBA RESEARCH DISSERTATION - INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- What constitutes good leadership?
- How does the public service parameter/environment impact on the ability to exercise leadership?
- What opportunities did the creation of the Shared Legal Services afford to the development and exercise of leadership skills?
- What were the key success factors in implementing the strategic change required to nurture the Shared Legal Services concept?
- What roles did leadership play in the implementation of the Shared Legal Services?
- What did the leaders do right?
- What did the leaders do wrong ...or should have done differently? And why?
- How did the leaders understand their role as leaders in driving the strategic change involved in creating and nurturing the Shared Legal Service concept?
- What role did the leaders and leadership play in eliciting the results achieved in the transformation process?
- And what role did leaders and leadership play in the failures experienced in the change initiative embodied by the Shared Legal Services.