

***DIVERSITY INTERVENTION RESEARCH***

***PROJECT:***

***A Case Study of Air Traffic and Navigation***

***Services Company Ltd***

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***June 2006***

Diversity Intervention Research Project

A Research Report

presented to the

Graduate School of Business Leadership

University of South Africa

In partial fulfilment of the

requirements for the

**MASTERS DEGREE IN BUSINESS LEADERSHIP**

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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June 2006

This report is dedicated to God Almighty for His guidance, mercy and love through His son Jesus Christ, with sincere thanks to my wife Christelle, my mother Juliana for their faithful support and in loving memory of my dad Wessie.

I certify that, except as noted above, the report is my own work and all references used are accurately reported.

Jaco van der Westhuizen

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## Abbreviations and terms

AA	: Affirmative Action
Afrocentric	: Uniqueness of African culture that calls for an 'own' business identity (contradictory to Eurocentric)
AIM	: Aeronautical Information Management
ATC	: Air Traffic Control
ATS	: Air Traffic Services
ATSA	: Air Traffic Services Assistant
ATNS	: Air Traffic and Navigation Services
BEE	: Black Economic Empowerment
CEO	: Chief Executive Officer
CDP	: Career Development Plan
DEISA	: Diversity and Equity Interventions in South Africa
Educats	: ATNS's attempt to fast track some new recruits in training them to become air traffic controllers, as an answer to addressing the continuous shortage of personnel
EEF	: Employment Equity Forum
FNB	: First National Bank, South Africa
GATCSA	: Guild of Air Traffic Controllers South Africa
GM: HR	: General Manager: Human Resources
HIV	: Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HR	: Human Resources department
IATA	: International Air Transport Association
iNCUDISA	: Institute for Intercultural and Diversity studies of Southern Africa
Isisthunzi	: Zulu translation for 'shadow' – concept reflects the moral weight, reputation, status and respect of a person or group in a community / business environment

SADC	:	South African Developing Countries
SANPAD	:	South African–Netherlands Partnership for Alternatives in Development
SAQA	:	South African Qualifications Authority
SATCC	:	Southern African Transport and Communication Commission
SDO	:	Social Dominance Theory
SETA	:	South African Education Training Authority
Solidarity	:	Union representing ATNS employees since 2005
Ubuntu	:	'A person is a person because of other people'. It describes the solidarity in African cultures that stresses supportiveness, sharing and co-operation
UACC	:	Upper Airspace Control Centre
UPSIDE	:	Unleashing Potential – Skills in Diversity and Equity for ATNS, the training manual for diversity workshops
Vuka	:	Zulu translation for 'wake-up' – diversity intervention of First National Bank, South Africa
Westernised	:	Individualistic cultures that focus on the 'self' (first world businesses)

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## CHAPTER 1

### ORIENTATION

#### ***1.1 Introduction***

At present, South Africa is in a diverse situation that is unique in the world. It is a country that has eleven official languages (plus another six languages spoken in the country), ethnic groupings that are greater than the number of official languages as well as eleven types of religion. This is a country that has a history of apartheid rooted in the oppression of black people (that represent 79% of the population) by a white minority of only 9.6% of the total population (Statistics South Africa, 2001). In the new South Africa's business world companies, managers and employees had to work together and deal with the business manners of a vaster diversity than during the conservative apartheid era. The new South Africa was now suddenly confronted with great challenges as the change from apartheid opened up international business opportunities that placed even more stress of changing and adapting on local businesses.

The new South Africa has a Constitution built on an acute awareness of the injustices of the country's past and a Bill of Rights regarded as the most progressive in the world. The country is a constitutional democracy with a three-tier system of government and an independent judiciary and the multiparty political system has sixteen parties represented in Parliament. Even traditional leaders from minority communities living under traditional law and custom have the right to influence the way in which the country is run, as traditional leaders play an advisory role in government. The change of the political structure and laws within the country from apartheid to democracy has the government pushing for racial and gender equity, but the ending of apartheid placed the challenge on all the individuals of the country to adapt to the new era of integration and working together. This challenge, encompassing the need to share knowledge, skill and trust, has already cost the country dearly with talent leaving South Africa

and some companies experiencing financial hardships simply due to the inability of some South Africans to embrace the new dispensation of integration. Government passed legislation to ensure integration of all races and genders in the workforce and assist organisations in reaping the rewards of embracing diversity. The most significant of these was the Employment Equity (Act 55 of 1998) that had two aims, namely the eradication of unfair discrimination and the implementation of affirmative action. Although the Act demanded compliance, it was flexible in the development of employment equity plans and their subsequent implementation. Organisations had to set up participative committees, analyse their staff composition, consult with staff, identify discriminatory policies and practices and submit employment equity plans to the Department of Labour, followed by the implementation of the aforementioned plans. Due to apartheid laws, certain ethnic groupings did not receive sufficient education and skills training. As a result, the new government implemented Adult Based Education and passed a Skills Development Act (97 of 1998) and a Skills Development Levies Act (9 of 1999) to motivate organisations to train and develop their staff at all levels to equip the South African labour market with the skills it needs for economic and social development. Despite all these efforts, South African businesses still struggle to implement their employment equity plans and fail to reap the benefit of a truly diverse workforce. Much of this has occurred merely because people in general failed to understand this uniqueness and inherently lacked the willingness to take on the challenge of a new unknown era. Today this is still a clear and present danger, even though the country has achieved so much since the inception of its democracy in 1994.

Unfound riches are locked up, as a potential for greatness on a global scale is awaiting those willing to challenge the norm and realise success through leveraging the diversity within companies and the country.

The purpose of this study is to identify the success factors for diversity interventions in South Africa. This will enable organisations to benefit from South Africa's diverse background and histories.

## **1.2 Research objectives**

This research was part of a larger study of diversity interventions being performed by a group of investigators under the auspices of SANPAD. This research contributed one case study of an organisation in the aviation transport industry within Gauteng to the project. The overall aim of the SANPAD Project was to establish the nature and efficacy of diversity interventions taking place in South African organisations.

The ultimate aim of the SANPAD Project was to identify the orientation and approach of successful and/or unsuccessful diversity interventions in South Africa. The aim of this particular case study was to identify and explore the positive and negative aspects of a diversity intervention in a company by the name of Air Traffic and Navigation Services Company Ltd (ATNS). Describing the effects of this diversity intervention indicates successful and unsuccessful practices pertaining to the specific organisation and its diversity service provider. The intervention was evaluated from the organisation's Employment Equity objectives' setting to determine its relevance. The former academic literature of the service provider/facilitator regarding cultural diversity and equity was investigated to determine the effect it had on the quality and success of the intervention. The process of monitoring and evaluation on a short- and long-term basis was assessed in order to establish the quality of success achieved in the intervention. The extent of change in organisational culture was also assessed to determine the organisation's ability to address occurrences of marginalisation, alienation and unfair discrimination.

### ***1.3 Importance of the study***

This exploratory study attempted to define success in South African diversity interventions and derive from this the shortcomings that need to be adjusted in order to address the underdeveloped factors as well as identify and promulgate the success factors in these interventions. The results of this case study will enable managers to understand their workforce better. In growing this knowledge and improving inter-personal managerial skills, should enable better planning to increase the value of diversity training and interventions.

### ***1.4 Contribution to the existing body of knowledge***

Employment equity negatively impacted employees directly and indirectly simply due to ignorance and a lack of awareness and understanding. An example would be of a white employee that verbally doubts the ability of the new black manager. The black manager fails to perform because he/she falls victim to a negative self-fulfilling prophecy due to the lack of support of colleagues (Human, 1996b). The result of this study gives insight into the effective use of diversity interventions to address the aforementioned issues. This will enable organizational leadership to increase company performance as personnel develop and learn to leverage diversity as a whole, especially across race and gender. While there is great deal of research and literature on diversity, very little of it addresses the unique manifestations of diversity in the South African context. Thus, the study contributes to the body of knowledge by identifying successful/unsuccessful approaches to leveraging diversity. This includes the lessons of planning and proper communication of the value and process of the intervention to all employees beforehand, getting employees involved in the design of the intervention's workshops and starting with diversity awareness training to be followed by a continuous drive from management to allow employees to make it part of the corporate culture.

## **1.5 Problem statement**

What is the nature of the diversity intervention used by ATNS and why is it successful/unsuccessful?

Sub-problem 1 - To what extent has the chosen organisations gone beyond an employment equity approach to managing diversity?

Sub-problem 2 - To what extent has the chosen organisation leveraged diversity potential for strategic benefit?

Sub-problem 3 - To what extent did the diversity intervention sufficiently equip the personnel with soft skills to leverage diversity potential within groups?

Sub-problem 4 - What role did managers play in the success of the diversity intervention?

Sub-problem 5 - To what extent did personal attitude/experience regarding diversity within the workplace, contribute to the success of the diversity intervention?

Sub-problem 6 - What approach was used by the diversity service provider and what role did he/she play in the success of the intervention?

Key assumptions underlying this case study were that managers understood the importance of managing diversity and were appointed to lead employees (not only manage an office), but also that the organisation applied the diversity intervention because it valued the diversity of its employees and aspired to reap strategic and return-on-investment rewards from it. A further assumption was that diversity, as a key to business success, was not defined as only a matter of skin colour differences. Affirmative Action and Black Economic

Empowerment are not diversity interventions but plays an important role in the development and application of the diversity intervention.

The case study focused on ATNS as an organisation that believed their diversity intervention was successful. Thus, a key goal in conducting the research was to explore the reasons why the intervention was perceived as successful, i.e. what did they define as successful and why? The method of measurement for success of the intervention on long and short terms was also investigated and compared to the objectives of the intervention. Awareness training may be successful in itself, but the ultimate test of the company's diversity management success may only be achieved when managers embrace and leverage on the workforce's diverse demographics.

## CHAPTER 2

### FOUNDATION OF THE STUDY PROJECT

#### ***2.1 State of the art***

The South African society has benefited from the remarkable political and legal transformation towards creating an equitable society, free from all forms of discrimination. Ten years after the democratic elections, nation-building projects that aim to build a 'normal' multicultural society with our rich diversity are well underway. On the ground, however, the South African society is a long way from reflecting this, as deep social divisions persist within the context of a region grappling with conflict, political upheaval and poverty. Deep social divisions and inequities continue as the diversity of the population remains largely untapped as a resource, and more often than not it is even regarded as a source of difficulty (Zegeye, 2001).

As we are sadly reminded by violent and abusive incidents that continue to hit the headlines, a great deal of work still needs to be done to establish a national culture in which differences are appreciated and valued. While race-motivated killings and the sexual abuse of children are the shocking manifestations of a troubled society, important daily events also occur that are unseen by the media and international community, but which continue to reinforce division and discrimination. These are the silent, entrenched practices within organisations that maintain hidden barriers to equity and these must be addressed for real social transformation to take place (Essed, 1991). International thinking on human rights increasingly recognises diversity as a human rights issue, as can be seen explicitly stated in documents such as the Declaration of the World Conference against Racism, held in 2001 (United Nations, 2001). With the pressures of rapidly changing internal demographics within national states, as well as ever-accelerating interconnectedness of communities across the globe, the study of diversity is recognised as an area of

academic priority. Consequently, there is an enormous thrust to theorise questions of diversity, co-existence and identity, on which sound progressive policy and practice can be formulated (O'Hara Devèreaux & Johansen, 1994). The Critical Diversity theory focuses on the multiple axes of differences where power dynamics operate to create centres and margins. Increasingly there is an emphasis to focus on gender, race, ability, sexual orientation, age, etc. and how these intersect in different positionalities. This entails a radical look at the constructions of difference that underpin institutional culture and interactions, and moves beyond merely tolerating or assimilating differences into dominant practices. Critical Diversity interventions prepare the ground for transformative processes to be set in motion towards increasingly democratic and equitable modes of organisation (Deetz, 1992). Though much academic effort has gone into theorising diversity issues elsewhere, the conclusions drawn from one context cannot be generalised simplistically to another. South Africa has not yet paid sufficient attention to producing good local research that grounds and relativises the research coming from academic centres such as the United States (Steyn, 1996).

Theoretically, the research project locates diversity and equity interventions as crucially linked to understanding power dynamics within organisations, operating on questions of social justice and inform interdisciplinary theorising on issues of diversity, transformation and identity. The position which the researches adopt in relation to the material can best be described as a Critical Multiculturalism (Giroux, 1997). The strength of this position is that it does not present itself as value-free, but rather declares its social agenda up front.

In brief, this particular stance towards diversity:

- Departs from a profound commitment to the values of democracy, social justice, equity and empowerment;
- Recognises that the incorporation of people that have been marginalised should not involve a process of assimilation, but a transformation of the

cultural milieu in order to bring about new social meanings and representations;

- Rejects essentialised notions of identity, naturalised notions of race, gender, etc. and discourses that reify homogeneity;
- Stresses that identity and differences are constructed within specific historical, cultural and power relations.

## ***2.2 Relevance to development in South Africa***

Widespread reform has taken place in the labour sector since 1994. Government has introduced new legislation affecting labour relations, basic conditions of employment and employment equity, providing the basis for far-reaching changes in South African employment practices. The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration and the Labour Court, as well as other structures set up to monitor labour standards, provide the means for unfair labour practices to be challenged and rectified. It is now compulsory for companies to demonstrate progress in diversifying the workplace in such a way that previously excluded groups are now fully represented and promoted.

Although the majority of organisations have been compelled to employ people from previously disadvantaged groups to facilitate the integration of the workplace and change the remarkably white profile of senior positions, progress remains very slow (Nkomo & Kriek, 2004). Most organisations still do not recognise the necessity of skilful training and management of personnel to ensure functional organisations (Swanepoel, Erasmus, van Wyk & Schenk, 2003). Although organisations are employing consultants or setting up internal departments to deal with management and organisational issues that have arisen with the challenges of the new legislation, there are considerable differences between the ways in which they deal with changes in staff profiles and cope with the challenges of a diverse workforce. Relatively few tackle the deeper issues such as the culture of whiteness still prevailing in most organisations, and how

marginalisation continues to exclude and alienate 'others' to the mainstream (Essed, 1996).

In the absence of any quality assurance for this work, the diversity/equity/transformation training being provided in South African organisations varies considerably in quality and approach. There is little research being conducted to show how successful these programs and interventions are, or how different approaches work for different organisations and different problem areas. As diversity work has become fairly lucrative, the people employed to undertake diversity training do not always have real knowledge of the deep-seated issues at stake, and their work can be superficial and ill-advised. In the absence of locating interventions centred on analyses of inter alia whiteness, transformation, empowerment and multiculturalism, many approaches are little more than polished versions of appreciating cultural differences (Koopman, 1997; Ferdman & Brody, 1996; Hayes & Russell, 1997). This is not to say that all diversity training is conducted in order to make large sums of money, but just to acknowledge the motivation for some. More importantly, these interventions have to deal with complex and emotional issues, and if badly handled can have long-term effects on an organisation (Smit & Carstens, 2003; Hayes & Russell, 1997). Such interventions can slow down the achievement of equity in organisations if anti-discrimination is not squarely on the table (Kersten, 2000; Koopman, 1997). The longer that this type of work continues unregulated and uninvestigated, the longer dangerous practices may continue, and less we will know about successful and positive interventions. Much of the comments provided so far on these programs nationally are based on anecdotal and impressionistic evidence.

The National Skills Development Strategy sets out a vision for skills development that has the "promotion of equity" prioritised as one of six central goals. Skills development is one way in which equity can be achieved and through the Skills Development Act and the Skills Development Levies Act, the

government is compelling organisations to widen opportunities, build equity and encourage collaboration to make this happen (Swanepoel, Erasmus, van Wyk & Schenk, 2003).

Diversity and equity training interventions are critically placed within the multi-layered approaches needed to build equity and social justice in South African society. South African organisations need to develop skills and attitudes within their domain that are functional for a multicultural, yet still deeply inequitable society.

The research project seeks to address some of the gaps apparent in the theorisation and delivery of diversity and equity work in South Africa, with the possibility of developing quality assurance mechanisms. This will take place in line with developments in the labour sector, including the recommendations of the King Commission reports.

There are many types of interventions that would classify as dealing with diversity, i.e. race, gender, human rights, employment equity, disability, affirmative action, organisational change, organisational transformation, leadership, etc. Diversity embraces various types of interventions that aim to change or transform existing social relations in organisations and institutions. Therefore there is a need to list the whole range of interventions and then develop a typology. The total project will also expose management practices that apply diversity for window-dressing purposes and those aiming to change the deep structure and values of the organisation.

Based on the first-hand experience of iNCUDISA staff and associates and the other participating researchers, the following are some preliminary observations related to the 'state of the art' in the South African diversity industry that have informed our research design:

- i. Though there are numerous service providers in the field, South Africa lacks information on what individuals, consultancies or institutions specialise in or offer as part of their services in equity and diversity interventions.
- ii. There is a lack of information on prior training, qualifications or experience by those who offer these services.
- iii. There is no recorder monitoring or evaluation of existing interventions.
- iv. There are no nationally agreed indicators or benchmarks of good practice in the delivery of diversity and equity interventions, or of the outcomes of such interventions. This becomes pressing in the light of a number of government initiatives, such as the Investors in People best practices standard, franchised by the Department of Labour and piloted throughout the country from January 2002, as well as by the Department of Education to achieve a national standard in the implementation and practice of co-operative governance.
- v. The education and training context provides an opportunity for this work, with the setting up of Sector Education and Training Authorities, as well as the strong links that can be established with initiatives around the values and education.

All of these observations justified the need for systematic research like that contained in the present case study to interrogate the nature of diversity interventions as well as their effects.

## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### ***3.1 What is diversity?***

The Oxford Dictionary explains diversity as the state of being varied. The scholarly definition of diversity is as diverse as the academics defining the concept and this concept is often positioned as a problem or something that is to be contended with/managed (Miller, 1998: cited by Smith, 1999: 1). However it can be commonly defined as “any dimension that can be used to differentiate groups and people from one another” (Howard, 1999: cited by Smith, 1999: 1). Nkomo & Stewart (2006:520) define diversity as “a mixture of people with different group identities within the same social system”.

Research demonstrates that people use these differences to categorize people into in-groups and out-groups (Tajfel, 1972). The famous eye-colour experiment of Jane Elliot illustrated people's ability to create different realities through categorisation (Maier, 2002). Synonymous to this may be stereotyping. Although it is a concept that evokes either fear or aggression in most people, Human (2005) indicates that societies/individuals will not be able to exist without a certain amount of permitted (healthy) stereotyping in order to enable individuals and groups to make sense of their world on a holistic and particularistic level. Thus diversity flows from such stereotyping via every society and group of people's construct of its own system of relevant categorisations and their particular frame of reference. Another factor is, however, the challenge to distinguish between the personal and collective attributes that support diversity in groups. According to the definition of diversity in the previous paragraph, it appears that diversity overarches the personal and collective attributes that form the make-up of any human being. People, especially in South Africa, would define diversity in the workplace as the difference in culture, skin colour, ethnicity and gender. This neglects many other attributes of diversity such as religion (Northern Ireland's

preoccupation with religion as the most important categorisation), language (Sri Lanka's British rule categorised any people speaking English as elite), bodily and facial features (taller and lighter complexion Tutsis in Rwanda being favoured by German and Belgian colonisers above the majority Hutu group) (Bowen, 1996). Social class, education, demography, age, occupation, marital status, intellect, self-confidence, health and sexual orientation are also some relevant dimensions of diversity that may influence employees and managers in the South African business context – to name but a few. Maier (2002) calls the list of possible diversity dimensions infinitely expandable. The fact remains that any experience that an individual or group is exposed to at any age, will contribute to the diversity within that society (this can be further explored via the personal kaleidoscope, fig 3.3).

Why are people different? Since the beginning of time there were distinct differences between people, as each person grows up in a sub-culture called a family and furthermore has a distinct personality formed by the environment and genetic make-up. Going into the individual diversity is beyond the scope of this dissertation, thus the focus will be on cross-cultural differences. Why are people the same? Due to people's inherent need for affiliation and the influence of history (i.e. marginalisation/oppression), people with a certain similarity will tend to form a group. People from South Africa will tend to stand together in a foreign country, but back at home the same group will be redefined as people of a similar culture will experience some level of cohesion due to their race or colour similarities or due to a commonality in their sub-culture for example language, church, job, etc. Maier (2002) classifies this as the theoretical layers of culture and these are the same layers that cause the issues those companies and managers have to deal with in managing diversity. This phenomenon underscores the difficulties confronting researchers in defining the concept of diversity.

Adding to the dilemma is the difference in meaning of constructs used in organisational diversity research, i.e. the meaning of words like leadership, organisational behaviour and racism to different countries, companies and individuals like researchers, managers and employees. These concepts as found by numerous researchers like Smith, Misumi, Tayeb, Peterson & Bond (1989) and Mendenhall & Oddou (1986), proves to have different meanings for different culture groups and supports the theories of many African academics that Africa is in need of its own business culture because Africa differs from Europe and America, the origin of most managerial research. However, the researcher wants to take this a step further and argue that if this is true, should South Africa not focus on establishing its own business culture (even away from the African management theory) as the difference between South Africa and any other African country is as great as one would find in the difference between South Africa and the United States or Europe. Why? According to Cray and Mallory's (1998) statement it is very difficult to establish cross-cultural theories or to generalise models that were born from one particular culture and thus South Africa's unique diversity can't be compared to any other country in the world. Furthermore and closely related is the fact that every researcher is a product of his/her own background and adding the person's value system may together result in traces of parochialism (the ignorance of another's way) or ethnocentrism (the belief in the superiority of one's own ethnic group or culture) (Maier, 2002: 31 & Hill, 2003) that may also influence research results. In the same manner each individual is a product of his/her background that may depict a frame of reference dictated by concepts of racism and sexism that they express as synonyms to diversity. This proves the importance of finding respondents' definition and experience of diversity during the primary data collection (for example, respondents may raise issues that relate to severe cases of racism, although it may have been blown out of proportion due to the individual's background of apartheid and whites being in position of power at all times).

### **3.2 The rise of Diversity Management**

A pioneer in managing diversity, Roosevelt Thomas, urged corporate America in 1990 to move beyond affirmative action to managing diversity. He drew their attention to future workforce predictions of the growing diversity and suggested that the USA should fully tap their talent pool to stay globally competitive. Affirmative action is only a pipeline approach that is not capable of creating a diversity culture fostering upward mobility of women, oppressed and minority groups (Thomas, 1990: 110). In 1991, Thomas reiterated that managing diversity is closely linked to corporate culture which means that in essence most, if not all, companies in South Africa's focus is off-centre. Companies' focus is on implementing affirmative action/equity and incorporating diversity workshops into the equity program for all personnel, whilst missing the main root of evil that obstructs all future plans, attitudes and corporate success – corporate culture. This is confirmed by Employment Equity Reports of the Employment Equity Commission. They found corporate culture to be one of the most cited obstacles to employment equity (Department of Labour, 2004).

An intricate part of a company's culture is the way newcomers are accepted into their new environment, i.e. making them feel part of the "in-group" and not the "out-group". Again Thomas (1999b) touched a sensitive subject, stating that the burden of change must not be placed on the newcomers that are different in their culture and personal background. Commitment to diversity is a commitment to all employees, not an attempt at preferential treatment. In all, diversity goes beyond race and gender and refers also to age, background, function, lifestyle, sexual preference and personality differences, etc. Thomas (1996b) made it clear that diversity is not synonymous with differences, but encompasses both similarities and differences. This statement should motivate managers to focus on the positive relationship of similarities and then prove the benefit of differences to all employees. Investigating the similarities and differences that the managers and diversity interventions within the relevant

organisation focussed on may shed light on the success/failure of the intervention.

Maier (2002: 69) stressed the importance of recognising the probable constellation of various subcultures and very distinctive workgroup situations within a company as well as the interpersonal contacts within groups and with management. This indicated the relevance and importance for managers to establish a binding factor in a company – the corporate culture. When an individual is able to identify with the culture of the company, he/she will form part of the group/s within the company even if there are other defining characteristics that distinguish the person from the rest.

Morrison (1992) sets out a framework to plan and conduct an effective diversity effort by means of three basic elements namely: strategy, procedure and action. The strategy implies clarification of benefits of leadership diversity, barriers to opportunity and sustainable leadership development. The procedure is based on accountability, development and recruitment. The leadership diversity action comprises of five steps:

- a. Discover/rediscover diversity problems;
- b. Strengthen top management commitment;
- c. Choose solutions to fit a balanced strategy;
- d. Demand results and revisit the goals;
- e. Use building blocks to maintain momentum.

What appears to be most significant is Morrison's agreement with various other academics that top management involvement is of paramount importance in the success of diversity management. The other interesting factor is that the framework for an effective diversity effort indicates great similarity with the change of corporate culture and organisational change as found in Hill (2003: 467) and Yukl (2002: 289-300). This proves the fact that companies need to focus on diversity change and not management, but also that diversity leveraging

must form part of corporate culture and strategy change to be completely successful (Human, 2005).

Thomas and Ely (1996) identified the three paradigms for how organisations might approach diversity. The discrimination-and-fairness paradigm appears to be the dominant way of understanding diversity that focuses on equal opportunity, fair treatment and compliance with employment equity legislation and the authors label these companies as only conforming to colour-and gender-blindness. This appears to be the case with most companies in South Africa who are also not reaping any reward from the diversity within the company. This was also confirmed by the research findings of Thomas (2003) that was focussed on diversity intervention practices in South African organisations.

The second paradigm is that of access-and-legitimacy that only focuses on the differences of employees within the workplace. According to Thomas and Ely such a company merely accepts the differences and aim to benefit from this diversity solely for the purpose of improving the company's penetration ability of the relevant different markets, a factor causing minorities or previously oppressed talent to experience their role within an organisation as an authority on race relations for marketing purposes instead of a specialist (Caver & Livers, 2002).

The new paradigm of learning and effectiveness allows companies to tap the true benefits of diversity because they incorporate employees' perspectives into the main works of the organisation, thus improving/enhancing the company's effectiveness by means of rethinking primary tasks, redefining markets, products, strategies, business practices and even cultures (Thomas & Ely, 1996: 85). According to Maier (2002) the study of Thomas and Ely failed to position their paper within the field of managing diversity and it also falls short of presenting a comprehensive framework or structured approach to diversity. Maier continues

by stating that they did not adhere to the frequently cited mainstream benefits of diversity, but on the contrary perceived them as insufficient and thus they pursued an explorative study into the real virtue of diversity. However, the study proved exactly that! The researcher wants to point out that it was an explorative study challenging conventional wisdom of the academic audience, thus setting out a comprehensive framework would be futile. Is the intent of explorative studies not to identify new fields or paradigms for future research? The researcher wants to add that in not positioning the paper within the field of managing diversity, Thomas and Ely (1996) proves the earlier statement made in this paper that managing diversity is equal to the discrimination-and-fairness as well as the access-and-legitimacy paradigms. The full potential of diversity can not be explored if companies do not change their corporate culture and set a trend as leaders to bring all to the table with a learning attitude to leverage diversity. (Although Thomas and Ely based their work solely on qualitative data obtained from twelve American companies over a six-year period, it beckons further research to prove a universal application of their paradigm shift).

This brings us to a very clear definition of managing diversity as it "refers to a strategic organisational approach to workforce diversity development, organisational change and empowerment of the workforce. It represents a shift away from the activities and assumptions defined by affirmative action to management practices that are inclusive, reflecting the workforce diversity and its potential. Ideally it is a pragmatic approach, in which participants anticipate and plan for change, do not fear human differences or perceive them as a threat, and view the workplace as a forum for individual's growth and change in skills and performance with direct cost benefits to the organisation" (Lorbiecki & Jack, 2000: 19).

Thomas (1990: 112) supports the definition when he states that managing diversity does not mean controlling or containing diversity, but that it means enabling every member of your workforce to perform to his/her full potential. It

means getting from employees everything the organisation has a right to expect and in addition to doing this right, giving everything they have to give. Managing diversity according to Thomas and Ely (1996) required eight preconditions for making a paradigm shift away from just increasing the number of different identity groups on an organisation's payroll:

- a. The leadership must understand that a diverse workforce will embody different perspectives and approaches to work and they must truly value variety of opinion and insight.
- b. The leadership must recognise both the learning opportunities and the challenges that the expression of different perspectives presents for an organisation.
- c. The organisational culture must create an expectation of high standards of performance from everyone.
- d. The organisational culture must stimulate personal development.
- e. The organisational culture must encourage openness.
- f. The culture must make workers feel valued.
- g. The organisation must have a well-articulated and widely understood mission.
- h. The organisation must have a relatively egalitarian, non-bureaucratic structure.

This re-aligns the focus of diversity back to culture, although it has shifted from the societal cultures and family sub-cultures that causes diversity to the corporate culture that needs to manage and leverage this diversity. The participating organisation's intervention, culture and policies may be compared to the previously mentioned preconditions to determine the reasons for success/failure.

### ***3.3 Diversity research***

A research consortium known as the Diversity Research Network found specific relations between race and gender diversity and business performance

carried out in four large firms during a project exploring the business case for diversity. One study was on a Fortune 500 information-processing company with over 26 000 employees, where each business unit is required to submit annual reports on their performance regarding its diversity objectives. These reports gave the researchers quantitative data on diversity, i.e. hiring and promotion of women and minorities. Additional data were collected by means of content analyses of qualitative data from the organisation's human resource programs that identify employee capabilities as well as increase accountability of managers via their Development Plans for their respective workgroups. This research project revealed the following (Kochan, Bezrukova, Ely, Jackson, Joshi, Jehn, Leonard, Levine & Thomas, 2003: 9):

- a. Diversity-focussed HR practices enhanced the positive effects of gender diversity on constructive group processes.
- b. Training and development-focussed HR practices, including coaching, open communication and interactive listening as well as providing challenging assignments and opportunities for development, reduced the negative effects of racial diversity on constructive group processes.
- c. Diversity had a significant effect on group processes, but the nature of the effect depended on whether the diversity was in gender or race. Specifically, gender diversity had increased constructive group processes, while racial diversity inhibited it.

On a larger sample of groups they examined the role that organisational context plays in shaping the relationship between diversity and performance (Kochan, 2003: 10):

- d. Gender diversity was positively associated with group bonuses in business units with a people orientated organisational culture, diversity focused human resource practices and customer orientated business strategy, but not in units that lacked those specific cultures, practices and strategies.

- e. Racial diversity was negatively related to performance in business units with competitive organisational cultures, growth orientated business strategies and training focussed human resource practices, but not in units that lacked those specific cultures, practices and strategies.

In conclusion, the researchers found that the negative relationship between racial diversity and group processes was absent in groups that received high levels of training in diversity management and career development.

A lacuna arises from this study that is of importance to the implementation of successful diversity interventions, namely that the researchers don't state what these diversity-focussed human resource practices were that enhanced the positive effects of gender diversity (a). Furthermore, it would be of importance to know why racial diversity inhibited the group processes (c). Without knowing the cause of it, it will be impossible to plan any rectifications. Could it be possible that the training mentioned in (b) did not address the skill and open-mindedness required for diverse workgroups? Although not mentioned, it is noted that only gender diversity was positively associated with group bonuses (d), but consistently it was found that racially diverse groups performed better on the long run with complex challenges requiring flexibility, especially in organisations that are diversity focussed and employee orientated (short term underperformance due to anxiety was however acknowledged) (Richard, Barnett, Dwyer & Chadwick, 2004). A competitive organisational culture that is focussed on growth (e) is in most instances connected to the old westernised individuality in which very few groups flourish. As noted, it thus appears that the value of relevant and continuous diversity training must not be discarded in an organisation's effort to attain or maintain a competitive advantage by means of its employees.

Richard (et al, 2004) studied the diversity in management and its influence on organisational performance. The study was performed on 535 banks with a

qualitative questionnaire sent to the president of each bank enquiring the entrepreneurial orientation of the bank. Thereafter each banks' human resource executive was requested to report on the demographic characteristics of the bank's management. The researchers found that in firms with highly innovative strategic postures, both the high and low management group heterogeneity were associated with higher productivity than was moderate heterogeneity (Richard et al, 2004: 263). This effect was also strongest for racial diversity. Thus, focussing only on establishing a diverse workforce for whatever reason, may prove to the detriment of an organisation – what is required is a complete diverse composition of decision-making groups (this is especially relevant in the South African context and may explain why organisations struggle to leverage diversity – because the decision-making group composition is based on moderate heterogeneity. Refer to sub-heading “Is South Africa unique?”). They further discovered that high diversity reduces agreement seeking, social cohesion and decision speed. What does this mean for the business environment? Simply that quality decisions will come from total heterogeneous groups, but it requires time. It also means that a decision group will stand a greater chance not to fall victim to group think (as discussed under sub-heading “Social psychology of diversity”). On the other hand, in a context that demands aggressiveness, it may be difficult for heterogeneous groups to respond to situations in a rapid manner. This finding supports the reality discussed later by the researcher under the sub-heading “Is South Africa unique?”, in that no business can operate exclusively on only individualism or collectivism. Organisations in the business world require a balance of decision-making skills that require both approaches to be applied on relevant decision-making scenarios.

In a 47-nation study, Smith, Peterson and Schwartz (2002) studied the sources of guidance to managerial behaviour by means of a quantitative questionnaire focussing on eight different event management scenarios. The relevance of this study to the research project of diversity interventions is to indicate the necessity of diversity interventions to include a focus on the

adaptation of managerial skill of managers and expectations of employees that are dictated by widespread beliefs, unwritten rules and verticality of societies. They found, contrary to common belief, that nations in which the participatively orientated guidance sources are most employed are those characterised not only by high individualism, but equally by cultural autonomy, egalitarianism, low power distance, harmony and femininity – being the nations of Western Europe rather than North America. On the other hand, reliance on superiors and rules is associated with collectivism, cultural embeddedness, hierarchy, power distance, mastery and masculinity. They found that most African nations were high on these cultural dimensions (Smith et al, 2002: 202). This proves that South Africa is in a challenging situation as the two worlds (described above) collide within one country. The cited researchers do however mention that frequently employed cultural contrast between hierarchy and participation can be enriched by employing a more comprehensive range of value dimensions (diversity kaleidoscope of societies). They also found that unwritten rules could be more important in organisations where informal agreements have emerged from long-established interactions between organisation members (in South Africa mostly established by apartheid policies forcing marginalisation on the majority). This confirms the origin of conflict brought forth by introducing diversity into an organisation that is set in its way of operating that requires a corporate culture change (refer to sub-heading “The challenges of diversity”).

Rynes and Rosen (1995) had seven hundred and eighty five human resource professionals responding to a questionnaire in a mail field survey to determine the factors associated with the adoption of diversity training and the perceived success of such training in their respective organisations. The respondents were all non-consultive, non-self-employed members of the Society for Human Resource Management (assuming in the USA). Out of the total mentioned only 32% of the organisations conducted diversity training, of this, 72% had training for only a day or less, 31% had no budget for the training and the rest was below 20% up to an allowance of 20% of the total training budget.

More alarming are the figures indicating that less than a third of the organisations had any type of long-term evaluation of their diversity training impact and that 50% of respondents felt that the success of the training was neutral/mixed. It is important to take cognisance of the fact that 91% of the respondents were of the white race, which in turn may reflect on the race and diversity composition of the organisation (the question arises whether this study's findings can be relevant to South African organisations where the majority was marginalised by the minority). Rynes and Rosen found the following hypothesis to be supported by the data analysed:

Diversity training is more prevalent:

- a. In larger organisations (although where to draw the line in definition of a large or medium or small organisation is not clear and should state the case for larger organisations to participate in this intervention project, in order to allow for a thorough diversity intervention evaluation).
- b. Where a diversity manager is in place (a factor that coincides with larger organisations).
- c. Where top management is perceived to hold positive beliefs about diversity and shows strong support as well as place a high strategic priority on diversity training relative to other competing priorities.
- d. Where a wider range of other policies and practices exist to support diversity (also part of larger organisations that took time to grow – policies tend to develop from issues arising within the organisation and its environment).

More successful diversity training programs were associated with:

- e. Mandatory attendance for managers (crucial – because managers are responsible for managing and leveraging diversity within their departments, but they tend to rather focus on the job at hand – what they were appointed for in the first place, i.e. meeting production deadlines).

- f. Long term follow-up of evaluations of training (without this it will be impossible to identify unaddressed issues pertaining to diversity and the relevance/success of the current training. Rynes and Rosen admit that explicit needs assessment is virtually non-existent in diversity literature, as most training content seemed to have assumed that the major obstacle of diversity training was the lack of participant awareness or sensitivity).
- g. Explicit managerial rewards for increasing diversity (this will only be relevant to managers involved in recruitment and promotion decisions – however, to increase diversity per se may become a pitfall in itself – as is the case in South Africa with numerous organisations only playing the numbers game because of legal requirements and in the end these matters evolve into great human resource and diversity management issues).
- h. Using a broad definition for diversity inside the organisation.

Support was not found for:

- a. Mandatory attendance of diversity training for non-supervisory employees (this proves that diversity management lies squarely on the shoulders of management to enforce, also linking it to the importance of building it into the corporate culture).
- b. Larger proportions of the training budget allocated to diversity training (this may be used as leverage/motivation for future diversity training planned in organisations that disregards the importance of such training).
- c. Longer and more content-comprehensive programs.
- d. Diversity training being more common in organisations experiencing more rapid changes in employee diversity (this is especially relevant in South Africa where the change in diversity of the workforce has not evolved in a spontaneous implementation of diversity training programs – even 10 years down the line).

- e. Diversity training being more common in organisations with more diverse top management teams (again South Africa is an example of this, where diverse changes in top structure did not result in automatic greater requirements for diversity training. Another likely explanation by Rynes and Rosen is the notion that top managers' values and beliefs are more important than their gender, race or ethnicity).

This study above all indicates the importance of diversity management. It is not a spontaneous occurrence in any organisation. Management needs to be trained and educated on the responsibilities and possibilities of setting the trend (refer to Culture Diversity model for corporate South Africa – fig 3.4).

A limitation mentioned by Rynes and Rosen (1995) was the responses supplied by human resource managers, who may respond to diversity matters in a different manner than other employees not involved in managing diversity interventions, but experiencing it. Another limitation was that certain groups perceived diversity related issues in different ways due to their ethnic, cultural or gender background. These two limitations spell caution to academics involved in diversity research, as they need to be aware of these factors.

Cognisance must be taken of the gender power dynamics within cultures that may distort the success of diversity interventions and the optimal gain that could have been achieved through diversity leverage/management. Fernandez (1993) found contributing factors to the gender barrier in Japanese businesses in the author's book 'The Diversity Advantage'. The findings stated that managers questioned the commitment of female employees due to their domestic burden and that there were not enough women occupying power positions within an organisation (the ration was double), but this was further constricted by the organisational policies that restrained real power from females and the positions they filled. In addition, Fernandez found that female managers served as their

own barrier in treating female colleagues in the same manner as their male counterparts. The study indicated that these female managers, as with their male counterparts, perceived female colleagues as a threat to their position and future career progression. Note that the study was performed in a country with a strong collective undertone. The researcher would like to point out that it was possible in a male dominated arena, that these female managers have acted in the same manner as their male counterparts in an attempt to be recognised in order to be perceived 'as one of the boys'. Their behaviour might have been motivated by their need for acceptance or a perceived requirement for promotion – though the deeper psychological reasoning was not addressed in Fernandez's study.

### ***3.4 The social psychology of diversity***

In 1961 Hoffman & Maier (cited by Maier, 2002) found heterogeneous groups scoring significantly higher or at least equal in quality of solutions to problem solving experiments. Groups were made up of four individuals each and performed in a laboratory on an undergraduate course in human relations psychology at the University of Michigan. The homogenous groups consisted of students with high positive profile co-relations between their scores in the Guilford-Zimmerman Temperament Survey (personality test), while the heterogeneous groups had near zero or negative co-relations.

Watson, Kumar and Michaelson (1993) found that cultural diversity principally represents an asset that could allow diverse groups to outperform more homogeneous groups on tasks that call for a variety of viewpoints. However, their study also found that culturally diverse groups experience initial difficulties in engaging in an effective interaction process to solve complex problems. The researcher is of the opinion that this proves the requirement within companies for a balance between individualism and collectivism, as some decision making situations require immediate action from one individual, while other situations call for quality, long-term decisions for which a diverse input will

increase the quality of a decision. The fact that the heterogeneous groups experienced only initial difficulties in engaging in effective interaction indicates that an individual may in due time draw more from his/her smaller group's potential in medium term decision-making processes.

Already in 1965 Triandis, Hall and Ewen (cited by Maier, 2002) found that the heterogeneity of attitudes and abilities causes social stress and communication difficulties and the study went further to establish that without treatment this leads to less creativity of heterogeneous dyads compared to more homogeneous ones. Maier (2002) summarised the factors influencing the performance of diverse groups performances as: i) Stress and tension; ii) Group cohesiveness; iii) Groupthink; iv) Cognitive conflict.

Stress and tension in diverse groups are caused by factors like low levels of mutual attraction that in turn causes dislike and mistrust (Adler, 1992). Visible demographic dissimilarities in particular provoke feelings of unease (Milliken & Martins, 1996). According to Adler (1991) communication inaccuracy can also contribute to tension, a matter that is especially relevant to South Africa with its eleven official languages that may cause tension due to the translation of meanings and even body language. Hall (1976; cited by Maier, 2002) states that communication styles differ from culture to culture and even from person to person, as some group members may prefer assertive and direct speakers, while others may prefer a soft spoken and indirect style. Evidently misunderstanding and lack of knowledge of the other person's background easily evokes negative stereotyping (Human, 1996a).

Cohesiveness is principally grounded on the phenomenon that people are attracted to similar peers (Schneider, 1987). This indicates the difficulty brought forth by diversity and the importance of managers to attain group cohesiveness as absenteeism and group turnover are lower (Jackson, Brett, Sessa, Cooper, Julin & Peyronnin, 1991). High mutual attraction and cohesion lead to a

reasonable level of trust within the group that allows for group members to share their ideas and concerns, as well as committing themselves more easily to common tasks and goals (Forbes & Milliken, 1999). Cohesiveness also leads to higher morale that reinforces team spirit, motivation and social integration and in turn all these factors are likely to induce higher quality decision making (Smith, Smith, Olian, Sims, O'Bannon & Scully, 1994).

Groupthink brings balance to the situation, just as a person may think that group cohesiveness rather calls for homogeneous group formation in order to attain all the benefits mentioned in the previous paragraph. One of the most common norms appears to be that of remaining loyal to the group by sticking with the policies to which the group has already committed itself, even when those policies are obviously working out badly and have unintended consequences that disturb the conscience of each member. This statement also partially challenges the consequences of 'ubuntu' and collectivism, but the researcher wants to state that there is a place for collectivism in South African business, although it requires a balance with individualism.

Cognitive conflict may affect the performance on different tasks in different ways, as it may be detrimental to performance tasks requiring productivity, but appears to be beneficial to creative and judgemental decision making tasks. Although stress and tension are likely to cause withdrawal, apathy, frustration and other kinds of emotional conflict (Adler, 1991), cognitive conflict refers to a disagreement on the underlying cognitive views, perspectives and judgement patterns of group members (McGrath, 1984). Cognitive conflict is believed to have a positive impact on the quality of decision-making, but as mentioned earlier it will require a learning attitude and mature approach to any problem challenging a group.

### ***3.5 The challenges of diversity management***

Joplin and Daus (1997) outline six pre-eminent challenges confronting leaders of diverse work groups. The first challenge is the constituency of management in the form of changed power dynamics in an organisation. This is especially true in South Africa as the power base of many "personal kingdoms" are threatened by law as new appointments on middle and high level management have to be made. It also emphasises the importance that the change effort must come from the leaders.

The second challenge is facing and synthesising a diversity of opinions. This matter also identifies a gap in managerial training in South Africa because very few if any, incorporates the development of a manager or leader in the field of inter-personal skills (including the ability to identify and recognise the different frames of reference within a work group). The researcher sees this challenge as the leadership trait that will determine the success of leveraging diversity and not human resource strategies.

To overcome a perceived lack of empathy by establishing an emotional identification with followers from a variety of backgrounds is the third challenge. The researcher supports this challenge but is of the opinion that a balance is required and this refers to the individual's kaleidoscope of Human (1996a) that indicates that manager's need to be able to identify and use only those sectors of the kaleidoscope that is relevant to the situation. If this is not the case, managers will spend their days infinitely gathering frame of reference/background information on employees. The fourth challenge is for leaders to address real or perceived tokenism. The basis of this challenge has its origin in the perception that less qualified people are being hired. This is typical of South Africa as Whites fail to support their new Black managers due to this tokenism and Black managers/employees dives into a negative spiral as they lack support to establish and improve their own abilities and qualified skills. This can also result

in low self-confidence and underperformance despite the fact that these new Black managers may possess the actual ability (Human, 1999) (Human refers to this phenomenon as a negative self-fulfilling prophecy). The effect that such tokenism (valid or invalid) has on the individual and work force is evident in the eye-colour experiment of Elliot (Maier, 2002). Managers at all levels need to acknowledge the reality of real tokenism because it is inevitable in any country where historical oppression has been addressed by law. Empathy is required towards the historical oppressed and oppressor societies for both will be experiencing anxiety and fall victim to some sort of tokenism. Ignoring the reality of real tokenism may be detrimental to the success of any business, as employees and managers experience and live the reality of tokenism inflicted by equity laws. Thus an active acknowledgment of the reality as well as a positive attitude/approach towards the negative experience of personnel is of utmost importance. Human's (1996b) fundamental principles of effective people management are a great guideline to acknowledge and defuse the impact of tokenism and will be discussed under the next heading.

Ensuring participation is the fifth challenge. Linked to the previous paragraph, this challenge can contribute to the success of leveraging diversity. As soon as a "learning attitude" corporate culture is established, employees on all levels will be comfortable in sharing their diverse ideas. The researcher believes that this may be the only successful manner to make employees believe that their opinion/input matters. It encompasses the learning attitude of peers, subordinates and managers.

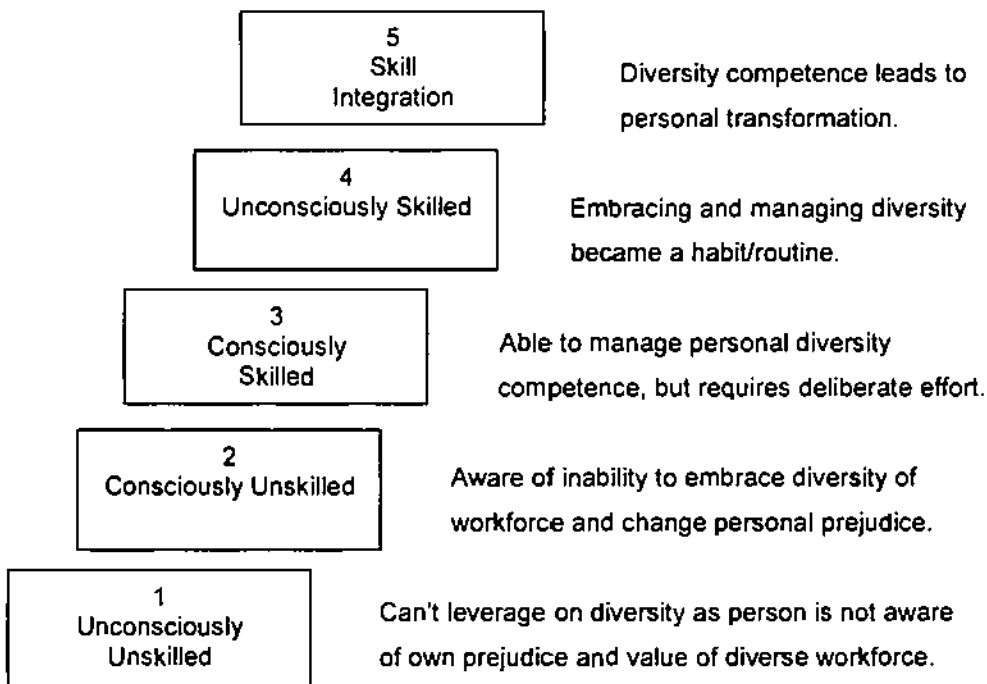
The sixth challenge is to overcome inertia. In South Africa this is forced upon all companies due to decades of apartheid and supports the suggestion that inertia can only be countered by a corporate culture change enforced by top management.

These six challenges confirm that a paradigm shift is required from all employees confronted by diversity in their work place as well as their social sphere. Some authors such as Young (2000) and Johnson (1997) are of the opinion that power issues are predominantly responsible for the negative connotation made to diversity in the work force. The fact of the matter remains that power dynamics play a role in every individual's life on this planet, regardless of their specific environment. In the same instance the application of power to the detriment of others may be experienced or observed as a negative impact on the individual/group located on the receiving side of such a power issue. The misuse of power is not restricted to a specific culture, gender or race, although the media may report more events of power misuse pertaining to a specific denominator. Nkomo and Stewart (2005) referred to two incidents where executives of renowned companies were making racist and discriminatory remarks and talking about obstructing the progress of a discrimination lawsuit, despite the fact that these companies had exemplary diversity management programs. The two authors state that these incidents are proof of the very point that diversity management has nothing to do with discrimination or race and gender. However, the relevance of the social dominance theory (SDO) as "the degree to which individuals desire and support a group-based hierarchy and the domination of 'inferior' groups by 'superior' groups" (Nkomo & Stewart, 2005: 30), has to be acknowledged and countered by a paradigm shift to restrict the negative influence that a deformed power base may inflict on the success of a diversity intervention.

Schneider (1987) echoed the predominant overarching challenge of the diversity management effort, in that organisations attempted to change by changing their structures and processes when it was the people that needed changing. This connects to the theory of Human (1996a) that stated diversity management is nothing else than managing people and managing/understanding oneself (Refer to 'South African diversity research'). This challenge requires effective communication and getting the meaning, not just their words, as only

the observation and analysis of a particular culture and the situation involved, can guide a manager's answer to effective diversity management (Adler, 1991). The knowledge and skills continuum (Fig 3.1) also referred to as the five stages of learning, is relevant to this scenario. The continuum depicts the importance of diversity awareness training in order to facilitate an individual/group to become aware of his/her own inherent prejudice caused by their surrounding privileged or unprivileged environment. The continuum indicates that a conscious decision needs to follow this awareness in order to entertain the attempt to gain knowledge of oneself and other employees and adapt to change and changing your own prejudice. Only once this has been achieved within some groups and individuals within an organisation, will integration become possible, where employees/managers could not only tolerate each other's significant differences, but even experience it as a valuable asset to the growth of the organisation as well as personal transformation and development. This continuum is relevant to employees and managerial staff alike in developing diversity competence.

**Figure 3.1 Knowledge and skills continuum**



Adapted from: Graham & Englund (2004: 201)

Asking the right questions to get the answers to the relevant context is a prerequisite for obtaining and sustaining a competitive advantage and in understanding modern day market trends. This is especially true for this era of knowledge and information that are the keys to economic growth (Brah, 1994: 812). Organisations will be more capable to adapt to market changes and demands when they start to ask questions about employees and customers in order to gain knowledge of differences and similarities.

The ultimate challenge lies with management that needs to not only become aware of their own prejudice and preconceived ideas on how their employees work and live, but in actual fact the defusing of power dynamics through a willingness to empower employees by forfeiting some of their own power and control over situations. The art of it all will be to develop a sensitivity that will enable managers to determine the level of empowerment and freedom for creativity that each group or individual requires. This level may also change over time for each group and individual (Refer to research of Booysen, 1999 – 'South African diversity research'). This concept also coincides with the mentioned 51% business/49% employee orientation due to the fact that managers will still remain accountable for business success and thus will need to maintain a certain level of decision power that affects the bottom line for which he/she will be held responsible.

This brings to light the question whether there is not too much responsibility laid upon the shoulders of management and which levels of management are relevant at given times. The researcher would like to suggest a paradigm shift in managerial responsibility and levels of responsibility. Managerial levels are usually occupied by several different types of disciplines, i.e. strategic decision making, productivity or staff management. To expect all managerial levels to be conversant with all these facets of management will contradict the personal diversity kaleidoscope (refer to fig 3.3) that indicates each person's inclined talents, abilities, background and preferences. Why this

statement? Simply because companies are people and people are companies. Although not part of diversity management per definition, it is important for those managers responsible for/working with employees on a daily basis, to be equipped/trained to identify and defuse the inevitable 'isms' of humans in business, i.e. sexism (including sexual orientation), ostracism and marginalism of minorities, majorities or individuals.

### ***3.6 Leading or leveraging diversity?***

Leading diversity may also be a misconception due to the fact that leadership needs to come from a person and this person is sculpted by his/her own background, gender, ethnic origin, etc. This leaves the researcher with the question how a person can lead diversity when he/she only forms a part of the holistic concept? This coincides with the fact that a person is not able to be absolutely objective in a matter that involves him/her, which brings us to the previously argued matter of a 51% business/individualistic and 49% employee/collective orientation by management that will enable them to make economic-sensible decisions that will benefit the company as well as its employees. In a collective approach to any issue, a company still requires the manager to take the lead and make a decision on which input to combine and use for optimal performance, but it also requires employees' and managers' maturity to agree to better suggestions than their own. Therefore the researcher suggests a paradigm shift towards leveraging diversity by means of a corporate culture of learning attitudes.

Where does a learning attitude start? It has been stated that top management need to take the lead and that the corporate culture needs to change in order to facilitate this. Human (1996b) however enlightens this perspective by stating "managing diversity is not about managing them, out there; it is all about managing me, in here". The researcher is of the opinion that this is the only scenario where 'managing' diversity is used in the correct context,

as a person needs to manage him/herself in opening up to the world of diversity. Maturity is also required for this step because a person's own opinion/idea is not the only opinion.

Human (1996a) believes that people are multidimensional and that an individual comprises a kaleidoscope of identities which change according to the situation and over time, in other words that diversity is present everywhere, even in the seemingly most homogeneous group. She argues that managing diversity is no more than the effective management of people and gives three fundamental principles to achieve this: i) Positive expectations of individuals and their competence; ii) Open, honest and constructive feedback; iii) Evaluation of performance based on results achieved in terms of short and long term objectives.

These principles do however require a great deal of maturity and open-mindedness from managers at all levels, in essence a learning attitude towards employees' frame of background reference, i.e. their kaleidoscope. This matter also strengthens the case for a requirement of individualism, to enable open, honest and constructive feedback as well as collectivism to set the scene for acceptance and support towards under-performers.

Adèle Thomas (1996a) presented a model of managing diversity comprising of six phases based on American and South African best practices: i) Creating the business case for managing diversity; ii) Organisational diagnosis; iii) Communications strategy; iv) Broad-based education; v) System and structure review; vi) Ongoing monitoring and evaluation. The researcher questions the need to create a business case as this only creates motivation for tolerance of diversity. This will be discussed in the following paragraph. The greatest shortfall is the fact that Thomas does not acknowledge the importance of establishing a new corporate culture within this model. Instead she only sets out a diagnosis of the organisation and follows it up much later with a system and structure review.

The change of corporate culture and thus including corporate strategy is the backbone of a successful diversity leveraging, especially as Human (2005) and Thomas (1999a) confirms the importance of executive management involvement. If this is not the case it will relate into top-level management not being part of the diversity intervention and definitely not driving the intervention either. The model also reflects purely the managing or maybe the leading of diversity, but fails to leverage on diversity due to the focus on broad-based education which is indicative of diversity awareness programs that fail to tap the true potential of collectivism in all aspects of business processes. In other words what is missing is the relevance of training and motivation of managers to enable them to not just set/achieve headcount targets but to empower, stretch and develop his/her subordinates – leveraging the diversity within the group/department.

### ***3.7 Culture dynamics of diversity***

Literature followed to build awareness to cross-cultural managers in sensitising them to differences in cultures in the broader spectrum, and this literature confirmed that people are not the same – as they differ in mindsets and basic assumptions. However, this literature only states that managers and/or employees need to be aware and sensitive towards the differences in culture and the diversity in the workforce. Hofstede (Hill, 2003) is most probably one of the leaders in setting this “awareness table”, as we all need a starting point for approaching the diversity in workforces (i.e. healthy stereotyping to make sense of one's environment). Nevertheless, the leader/manager needs to be aware of sub-cultures and the dynamics of all cultures all over the world. Is being aware of the ever-changing phenomenon sufficient in addressing the diversity issues and enabling those involved to leverage on the diversity of a relevant group?

Culture is dynamic because people are dynamic, this can be proven by the case of Phillips versus Matsushita (Bartlett, 1999/ Hill, 2003) where the

Japanese company started off with life-time employment and a 250 year strategic plan and then ended up with the pressure of offering short term contracts to younger employees that demanded additional benefits like opportunities for personal development and stretching personal innovation. Bear in mind that this was as much demanded from employees that required a possibility to seek better employment as it was forced by capital market that Matsushita was competing in. The researcher is of the opinion that capitalism/materialism is the drive behind the dynamics of any culture, as most people seek self-actualisation after their lesser needs have been addressed. Maslow's hierarchy indicates this, as the poorer rural people in most countries still seek to satisfy lower needs on the hierarchy, while their children may be privileged to attain schooling, meaning that they already stepped up one level on the hierarchy (due to parents satisfying their lower needs) and indirectly put them in a scenario of learning about world capital markets and economical growth (Louw, 1990). A simple example would be the schooling systems of governments that dictate oppression of any group/s resulting in these people's continuous struggle to satisfy basic needs and the lack of a free capital market (the post-modern materialism versus the Marxist theory is evident in the ongoing trade off between the individual versus the masses – even within each individual). What does this say about diversity management? Simply that managers, employees and diversity service providers need to be aware of the reality of change within groups and individuals and cautious not to stereotype and allow stereotyping beyond what is required as a starting block for leveraging diversity. In other words you need to find the communal tie within the organisation as well and focus on the positive binding factor of diversity – what makes us the same?

Is this the case in South Africa? Most of the black majority were oppressed as if a minority and enforced a focus on the lower level of Maslow's hierarchy. Opening capitalism to all through schooling for all and a free market economy, South Africa is living proof of the researcher's opinion.

Facing these previously mentioned challenges of transformation is in fact the exposure of previously disadvantaged people to climbing the Maslow ladder. This means that South Africa's sub-cultures are constantly changing. This is not a westernisation but a capitalisation as people are striving to improve themselves and sculpt a better future for their coming generations. This became evident in Asian and African countries as governmental oppression disappeared.

The free capital market may roughly translate into materialism, as what we see we want and the only way of getting it is through stretching oneself. This can be translated into leveraging your own diversified background as you continuously come in contact with a diverse society or world and develop your own sphere of being and growing as you take what you need from each influence to enable yourself to grow to the next level of self-actualisation. In this a connection can also be found with 'ubuntu' that is discussed in the following paragraph, as well as the diversity kaleidoscope of Human (1996a).

### ***3.8 Is South Africa unique?***

South African authors such as Binedell (1994), Khoza (1994) and Lessem & Nussbaum (1996) expresses the need for an African orientation to business management. Adonisi (1994) states that management concepts in South Africa must take into cognisance the realities of the African continent within which the country is located and the authors of the African Management Movement argue that South Africa will never reach its full potential simply by imitating management models and philosophies drawn from Europe, America and Japan (Lessem & Nusbaum, 1996, cited by Maier, 2002). Khoza (1994) calls this the 'Afrocentric' approach to business that has its expression in the African concept of 'ubuntu' meaning 'a person is a person because of other people'. 'Ubuntu' embodies the significance of group solidarity in many African cultures and stresses supportiveness, sharing and co-operation (Mcfarlin, Coster & Mogale-Pretorius, 1999). These authors also emphasise the meaning of spiritualism in

African cultures as well as the collective nature of the African value system as it fosters interdependence and responsibility for the community.

Koopman (1994) states that Whites are focussed on the individual, their own development and self-fulfilment while Blacks seek collectivism and finding your place in a society and subordinating to that societal needs. He adds that South African companies have to adjust in order to incorporate the communal interest and consensus nature of the majority of the workforce by establishing small workgroups that are involved in the company's processes. The researcher wants to offer another view. The South African Blacks were oppressed as the "Afrikaner" was when they arrived in South Africa in the 1600's and were forced to stand together and again during the Anglo Boer War, the communal strength was realised and drawn upon during times of oppression (Jackson, 2004). Note that the influence of colonialism, apartheid and power dynamics still remains relevant to the situation, as with several examples in Africa mentioned by Jackson (2004) and Bowen (1996). As circumstances allow for greater freedom in any society, the people of that nation will become more individualistic as there is no common threat. Already this is evident in South Africa as some Black businessmen lay down the past and focus more on the prosperity of their business and not on the communal good alone. Establishing small workgroups is an international phenomenon and was realised by individuals that saw the potential for business growth as well as individual growth by drawing on the collective nature of people. A human being is a balance between individualism and collectivism and to leverage on the diversity of a business, a leader needs to focus on balancing these factors within themselves and his/her employees. This may be substantiated by the female characteristic in business, as it is proven that female managers on average have a better ability to motivate a group, as they are more focussed on the collectivism (Booyesen, 1999) – but that doesn't make women of all colours more black or white? Additionally, more black males and females are becoming stronger on individual power and assertiveness and this is

only possible because their society allowed them to become more individualistic and this scenario had to be sculpted by the free capital market/materialism.

The previously mentioned balance between individualism and collectivism may be translated into the same balance required by business leaders, that is an orientation of achieving a balance between the importance of being business focussed and employee focussed, the latter ideally required to be 49% and the business focus 51%. The reason being that without the innovative participation of all employees in a company it will be impossible to maintain a competitive advantage over one's rivals, but without a profitable company the individual employees will be unable to sustain life. A perfect example would be the case of Gordon Bethune and the turnaround of Continental Airlines in America (Thompson & Strickland, 2003).

Boon (1996, cited by Maier, 2002) added to Koopman's statements as he describes 'ubuntu' as being about morality, humanness, compassion, care, understanding and empathy. He criticises the negative stigma that has been attached to the African belief in ancestors and supports this with an empirical study conducted in South Africa that found ancestral worshipping is still playing an important role in rural and urban areas. Boon compares this to the concept of psychologists in western cultures. The researcher disagrees with Boon's statements for in the essence of business no empirical evidence exists to support the use or influence of ancestral worshipping in business. Furthermore he refers to the spiritual realm for which it appears that he has no background or knowledge of. There is even a great amount of people practicing ancestral worshipping that fail to understand or realise the implications and meaning/influence of these rituals. The study of the influence of the spiritual realm on business and people is beyond the scope of this research, but may be a suitable topic for future research in diversity influences. What Boon describes as 'ubuntu' is exactly what the businessman's focus should be, but that focuses only on the 49% described in a previous paragraph. If this was not the case, Africa as

a continent should have been the global leader in successful business interventions.

The "African" authors lack substance and research proved theories (Maier, 2002) although the researcher admits that there is truth in their focus of 'ubuntu'. They also fail to notice the absolute diversity within South Africa that must include minority groups like the Coloured and Indian societies. Surely an even greater approach to any problem can be obtained from a diverse group that includes the Xhosa, Zulu, Sotho and Tswana perspectives to name but a few. This proves that South Africa has the greatest potential to become a world leader in diversity leverage. South Africa is not like any other country in the world and that includes the African continent. The researcher proposes a move away from the African Management Theory into a South African or "Safrikan" Management Theory, as South Africans have the resources within their diverse society to develop race, gender, ethnical differences into a business model that balances the 51% - 49% business orientation required to stretch individual and collective innovation abilities of employees i.e. facilitating commitment and self-actualisation and at the same time providing vision to sustain the competitive advantage of business.

### ***3.9 South African diversity research***

Numerous academics, diversity service providers and authors as well as professionals/managers in the business arena are putting their experiences, perspectives and believes pertaining to diversity on paper in an attempt to make diversity in South Africa concrete and more relevant to the business and cultural context of the country. However, it appears that the greatest shortfall in South Africa is the lack of research-based diversity theory. The questions that arise are:

- a. Is international, mainly USA, research findings/theory applicable to the South African context?
- b. What are the main diversity issues in the South African society?

- c. Are race or ethnicity differences really the greatest hurdle in the business environment?
- d. What do South Africans understand under the concept of diversity management or leverage?
- e. What role does cultural differences play in business practices?
- f. Do the numerous different cultural/ethnic backgrounds have any impact on business practices? (Or is it only prejudice based on skin colour?)
- g. What effect does a person's HIV status and personal health have on diversity management in South Africa?
- h. What issues does gender diversity bring into the business environment?

A significant study on this topic was conducted on South African businesses by Booysen (1999) and the following was found:

- a. An emerging trend towards collaborative styles of working across organisational departments resulting in i) team work, ii) innovation and iii) creative problem solving.
- b. Organisations are shifting from transactional to transformational and relationship management.
- c. Organisations are becoming flatter, enabling flexibility, networking, team trust, information sharing and empowerment – this stresses the importance of a new corporate culture, as without it there will be no mutual trust and thus no sharing of information.
- d. In the sample, employees preferred the following leadership styles in order of merit i) inspirational/team leadership, ii) considerate, iii) bureaucratic and iv) individualistic.
- e. Attributes of managers preferred by employees in order of merit i) integrity, ii) inspirational, iii) diplomatic, iv) performance orientation, v) visionary, vi) decisive, vii) humane orientation.

These findings were relevant to black, white, male and female respondents.

Recommendations from the research were as follows:

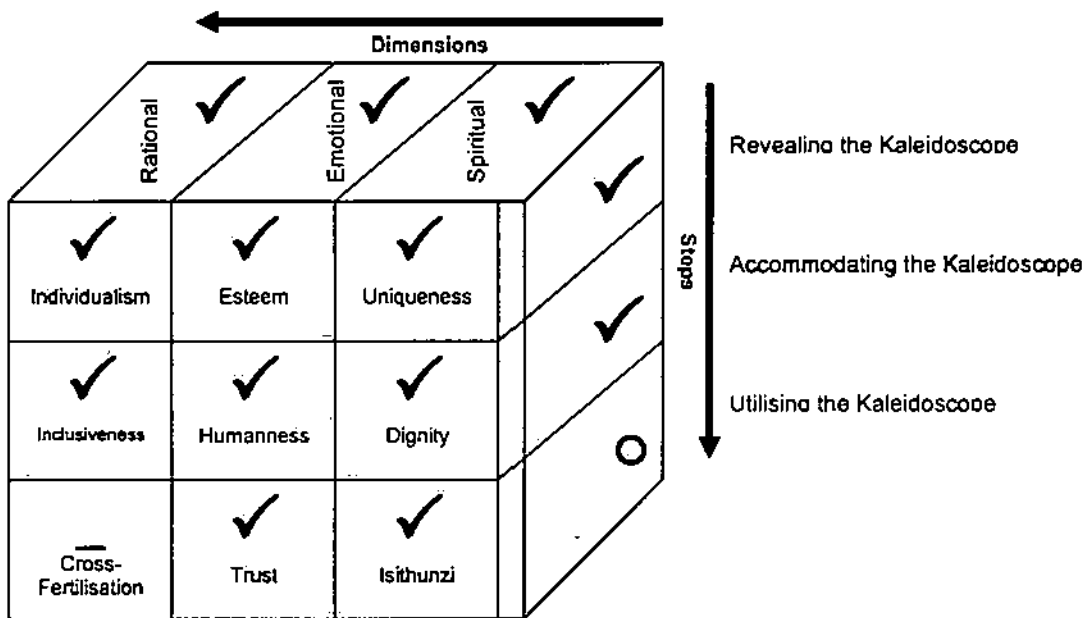
- a. Female and Afrocentric leadership styles must be developed. These styles must be adopted and strengthened in order to bring about effective change and lead to skills of women and black people being more readily accepted, valued and utilised.
- b. Diversity training and managerial development should involve:
  - i) Understanding of differences in culture and preferred leader attributes that may cause conflict;
  - ii) Knowing what differences are and understand subculture strengths and preferences in order to respect and accommodate differences;
  - iii) Becoming aware of large degree of similarities and leveraging this to cultivate support for one another and working together more effectively (also coincides with Van der Wal and Ramotsehoa's model – fig 3.4).

Discussed as part of 'The challenges of diversity management', this study confirms that employees, regardless of their diverse backgrounds, has the same general need - people as social beings prefer to work in teams, want to be inspired and empowered as well as be treated with integrity. The missing link is opportunity.

Another fascinating study was completed by Christoph Maier (2002) in a single embedded case study format based on an initiative called 'Vuka' (Zulu for 'wake-up'), a large-scale 'transformation through diversity' intervention that was masterminded and executed by Mike Boon as an external consultant to First National Bank (FNB), South Africa. Maier tested a conceptual framework for leading diversity (see fig 3.2) on 'Vuka' that identified three dimensions namely rational, emotional and spiritual. Three steps were identified in leading diversity: i) revealing of kaleidoscopes (refer to fig 3.3 - a process of discovery that encouraged delegates to see others from others perspectives), ii)

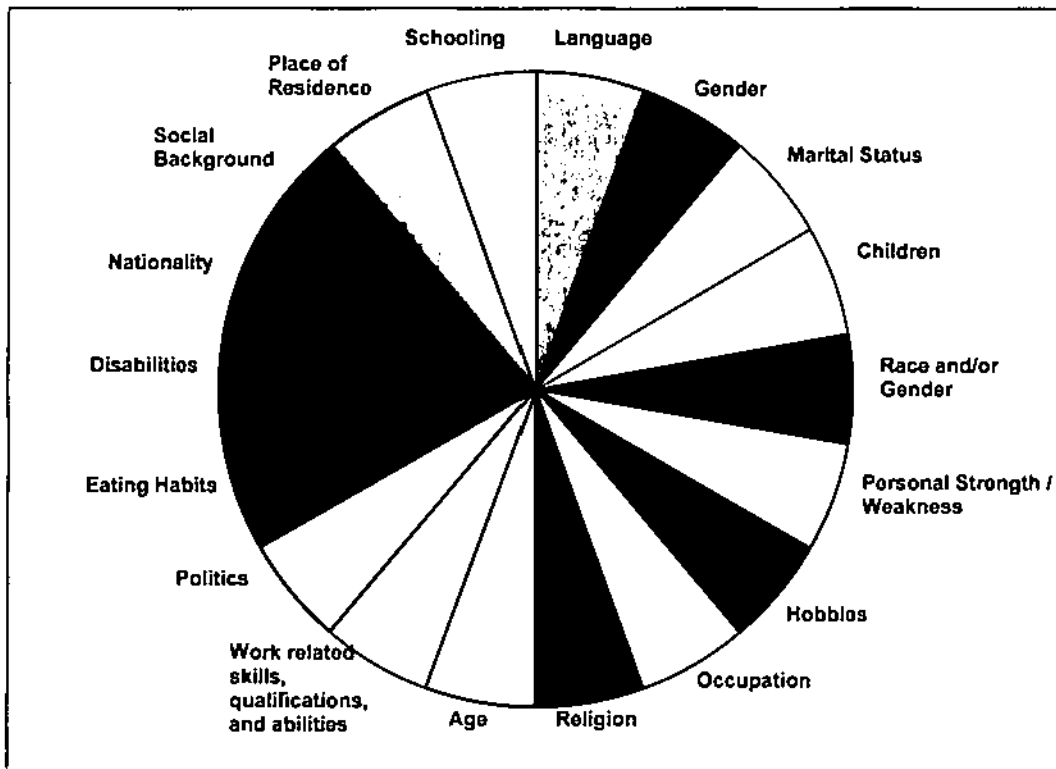
accommodation of kaleidoscopes (the realisation that one needs somebody else's view and attempt to disperse assumptions) and iii) utilisation of kaleidoscopes (evidence moderate in relation to the strong evidence found for steps i and ii. Maier believed this to be due to a lack of cross-fertilisation). Strong evidence was found for eight elements of leading diversity, namely individuation ('I'-stories, connecting with individuals – Human's 'managing people'), esteem (sincere listening and appreciation), uniqueness (embrace your African-ness and acknowledge your scars), inclusiveness (no 'them' and 'us'), humaneness (act like human being), dignity (respectfulness and sensitivity), trust (confidentiality and a safe environment) and isithunzi (the purpose of life and collective goal). Evidence for cross-fertilisation was almost absent as Maier states that this did not form part of 'Vuka's objectives, nature and background (Maier, 2002: 391-393).

Figure 3.2 Conceptual framework



Source: Maier (2002: 392)

Figure 3.3 Personal diversity kaleidoscope



Source: Human (1996a)

'Vuka's' objectives were to transform the culture within FNB. It aimed at the diversity, empowerment and shared values/vision components of its workforce in order to culminate into a superior customer experience (Maier, 2002: 259). This proves that it is important to review the objectives of the current researched organisation in order to determine the relevance, success and failures of the intervention. However, the researcher questions the lack of cross-fertilisation not being an objective of 'Vuka' because it would make the whole project a diversity awareness program at best and will declare the business case for diversity leverage null and void. The researcher finds it impossible to empower employees and develop shared values and vision without cross-fertilisation and the fact that a new shared and transformed culture was called for. Van der Wal and Ramotsehoa (2001) state in their cultural diversity model for corporate South Africa that apart from a commitment to respect differences and

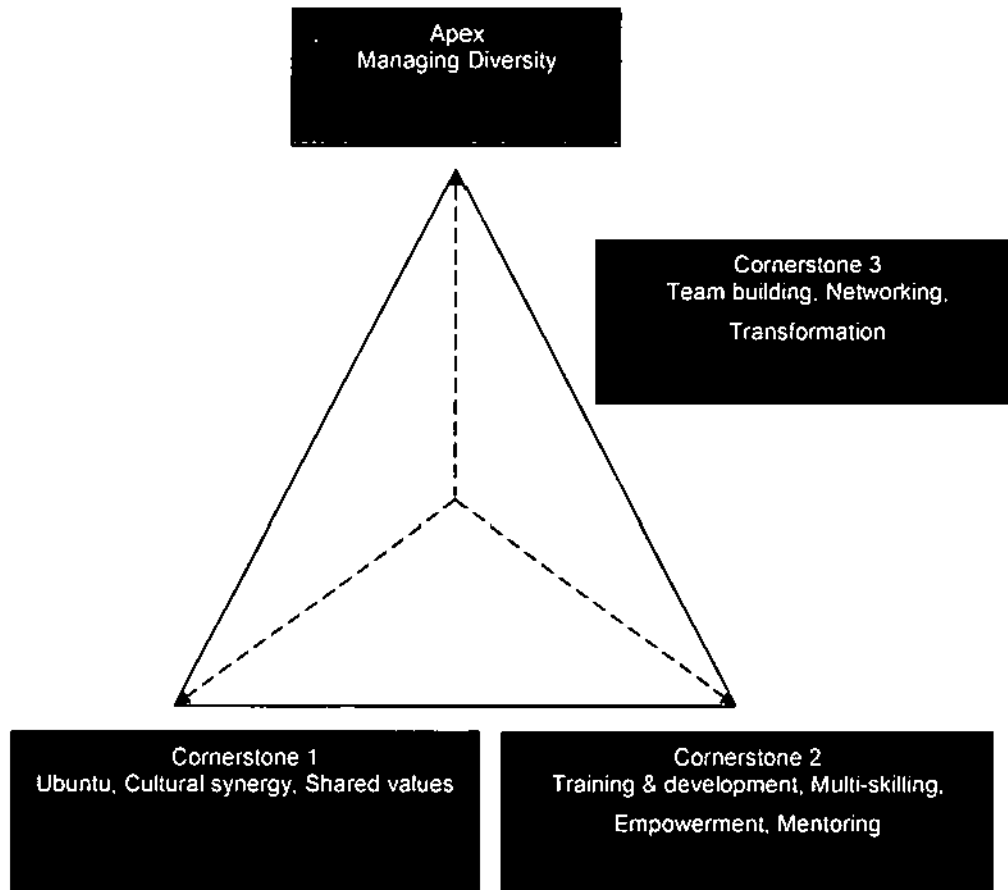
understand values, customs and preferences, effective diversity training also improves skills in listening, interpersonal communication, conflict resolution and negotiations. This proves that effective training beckons cross-fertilisation.

'Vuka' used race explicitly as an entry strategy that successfully induced delegates to reveal their personal perceptions and assumptions, in the end not just about race but also gender, military service and personal traumas (Maier, 2002: 395). However, an important phenomenon emerged from this as delegates criticised 'Vuka' for its overemphasis of race. The researcher is of the opinion that this may indicate a significant personal growth of employees as they embrace diversity, because it leads the way for questioning the true origin of disruptive conflict in the workplace. It appears that race differences may not be the hurdle to success, as many may believe that standards are lowered in the new South Africa. This shows that FNB's employees were able to bridge racial differences, but for future research it will be interesting to explore the issues that do cause disruption in their diverse workforce and the lack of cross-fertilisation. In conclusion it was stated that the framework was an interconnected whole, where delegates repeated, combined and connected the steps, dimensions and elements in order to reach higher levels of leading diversity. The framework was experienced as neither prescriptive nor deterministic, but an interactive and experiential process with a need for conceptualising discomfort (Maier, 2002: 396-398).

Comparing Maier's framework (fig 3.2) to that of the model Van der Wal and Ramotsehoa (fig 3.4), it appears to be a mirror image that confirms the relevance to the South African business environment. The researcher is of the opinion that 'Vuka's' shortfall concerning cross-fertilisation can be found in the Van der Wal and Ramotsehoa model's second cornerstone of mentoring. This brings to the forefront two factors of importance. Firstly, the importance of managerial commitment to lead and leverage diversity and secondly the importance of an overarching learning attitude required from all levels of

employees, i.e. managers, supervisors and blue/white collar workers. To mentor may be the responsibility of all, as a concept of 'each one teach one' can be conformed to an attitude to learn from each other and take turns to mentor in your field of expertise or background.

**Figure 3.4** Culture diversity model for corporate South Africa



Source: Van der Wal & Ramotsehoa (2001: 15)

In essence the personal kaleidoscope of Human (1996a) must be brought into her concept of managing diversity as nothing else than managing people. The cultural diversity model of Van der Wal and Ramotsehoa as well as the conceptual framework for diversity of Maier should be read and understood with the kaleidoscope forming the basis of understanding/ leading/ managing/ leveraging diversity within a workgroup. In other words it will be impossible to

understand yourself and others if you do not recognise all the facets that formed you as a person until that moment. Human's (2005) theory is based on coaching experience within the corporate world, where managers' inability to manage diversity surfaced as a need to be developed. The manager needs to know which facets of the employee/s kaleidoscope need to be drawn from to make sense of a situation and be able to understand and use these facets in order to empower and stretch each individual and group to the benefit of individuals and the organisation.

Without the kaleidoscope it appears to be impossible to make sense of 'ubuntu', achieving cultural synergy, effective mentoring, team building and networking (referring to cultural diversity model). It is also of paramount importance in the conceptual framework for leading diversity, as the rational dimension and diversity utilisation step resulting in cross-fertilisation, will not be reached without building on the previous steps and dimensions by means of attempting to understand and utilise the relevant facets of the personal diversity kaleidoscope of colleagues.

### ***3.10 What is different in South Africa?***

Rynes and Rosen's (1995) study in the United States of America had 90% of its respondents/workforce represented by the majority Whites, where the minority groups were the Blacks and Hispanics. In South Africa it is quite the opposite as the minority White group dictates business in most instances, meaning that the findings must be interpreted with this factor in mind. HIV-status is another distinct and semi unknown diversity factor in South Africa that causes pain, prejudice and uncertainty among employees. However, when comparing the studies of Booyesen (1999) it appears that people on a global perspective are as much alike as they are different and this announces the relevance of Human (1996a) and Maier's (2002) individuality kaleidoscope pertaining to the training of managerial staff to manage and leverage the diversity of their workforce.

The 'ubuntu' way of doing things is by no means a dead end, but empirical research will have to be completed in order to prove the sustainability of such a managerial approach – not referring to teamwork, as western organisations already adopted this method, but to rituals, story telling and celebrations forming the basis of the 'ubuntu' concept (as mentioned by McFarlin, Coster & Mogale-Pretorius, 1999). The fact remains that South Africa still needs and wants to compete in the global business arena and therefore certain western principles must still be adhered to in order to not offend international business. This fact was supported by a Singapore study that demonstrated the power of culture in influencing organisational performance. Lee and Yu (2004) completed a study on ten companies selected on the basis of their market share that included the high-tech manufacturing, hospital and insurance industries. The results supported the idea that cultural modes do evolve to fit industry dynamics and demands, especially in cases where new entrants to an industry occurred, but more importantly found that strong cultures are only valuable if they exhibit adaptive and learning qualities. Thus South Africa needs to guard against becoming fictitious on a single dominant Black or White business culture, as the research indicated such a culture to become a liability during periods of accelerated change. Noteworthy was also the finding that the power of industry membership limited unique cultural types and that industry dynamics led to the development of distinguished values that characterised the industry. Lee and Yu for example found hospitals to be significantly more team orientated and insurance firms task orientated. This fact elevates the importance of testing in personnel selection and employees' self-knowledge according to their personal kaleidoscope fitting a specific type of industry or career.

The dominance of White managerial staff in South African businesses is a further obstacle for reaching the utopia of leveraging diversity and the establishment of a greater Black economic power in the future, can cause the same lacuna that we as a country experience at present. Why? Mainly because

people in power positions lacking the insight or maturity in realising the value of diversity factors in company performance, causes preferential treatment in selecting employees. This is where the whole idea of diversity management and leverage is negated. Manshor, Jusoh and Simun (2002) found this to be true in a study completed in Malaysia that used questionnaires received from 156 respondents, compiled of 60% males, 55% Malayan and 35% Chinese and 10% Indian. They found two variables of hiring managers' demographic characteristics to influence a decision to hire a candidate, namely race and religion. In many instances managers' general decision-making were influenced or motivated by their cultural background, beliefs and behaviour. Furthermore, it was discovered that both male and female managers indicated a high preference to select qualified candidates of their own gender when the candidates were equally qualified. Although Malaysia is a far cry from South Africa in religion and race, there are definite lessons to be learnt from this research. If top management suspects their recruitment managers to be tunnel-visioned in terms of diversifying the workforce, a diverse recruitment committee with equal voting power would be recommended. Another factor may also be that some managers that created a personal kingdom over time may not be willing or may fear losing this power to new up-and-coming individuals or departments. This may be relevant to any race, but tends to be a bigger possibility with performance driven White males within South Africa.

As with power dynamics within an organisation and even industry, there are also subgroup cultures that may influence employee identification and cooperation within a company. Polzer (2004) completed a research on 177 graduate management students from two different business schools in the USA and confirmed the importance of subgroup powers within an organisation that will limit newly formed team efforts due to certain employees' affiliation being far greater than that of their commitment towards the company itself. This has significant relevance to the diverse workforce especially within South Africa and proves the importance of employee buy-in to a corporate culture that will delete

negative subgroup cultures as well as the importance of proper induction programs that allows new employees entering into the 'in-group'.

Proper induction for new employees or even just new members transferred to another division may prove to be of far greater value than most people think, even more so when we consider HIV policies and status. The threat of AIDS on industry and business within South Africa and beyond may force companies to act more visibly in order to assist all employees affected (those infected and their colleagues) by this pandemic, in order to ensure productivity, succession planning and talent retention as long as possible. Within an inclusive culture these effects can be managed and supported far more effectively and in similar fashion proper induction efforts will set inclusive and manageable scenarios ensuring continuous corporate growth. The onus is however again on management to be equipped to plan, handle and enforce proper reporting, treatment and support for HIV effects on employees and business. The fact is that HIV broadens the diversity pool that personnel have to adapt to and managers need to vigilantly manage.

### ***3.11 EE and AA versus Diversity Management***

Is employment equity (EE) and affirmative action (AA) as regulated by law in South Africa diversity management? Thomas (1999) states that employment equity legislation intends to achieve equality in the workplace through the elimination of unfair discrimination and affirmative action strategies. The South African Employment Equity Act (Republic of South Africa, 1998: 12) explicitly refers to its purpose of achieving equity in the workplace "by promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination and by implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups." Affirmative action is a process designed to achieve equal employment opportunities and includes specific plans involving preferential treatment of members of target

groups in appointments, development and promotions (Thomas & Robertshaw, 1999).

The answer to the question in the previous paragraph is no, affirmative action and employment equity are the enablers of leveraging on diversity. Diversity management is in its current essence also not answering to the call of millions of employees and thousands of companies to focus on/strive towards the optimal performance of each individual and company. Managing diversity is like managing a problem or managing to get through the day or to be in charge of or make decisions in a business (Oxford Dictionary, 1998). In other words by managing diversity, a manager and employees are aware of the presence of diversity in the working environment and issues flowing forth from this are addressed by diversity workshops or isolated cases of intercession. This means that affirmative action and employment equity are the best things that happened to business in South Africa since Jan van Riebeeck landed in the Cape in 1652, because it forced the South African business market including the civil servant sector into a diversity intervention process. Although there is a long road still ahead for achieving complete equity, the next challenge is for companies and organisations to embrace this "headache" by empowering managers and employees to come to the table with a learning attitude and leverage diversity by growing individual and collective innovation at all levels in order to achieve optimum performance, i.e. a global sustainable competitive advantage. To achieve this goal a company will require individualism (strong enough to state your ideas) and collectivism (allowing others' input to add to a solution).

Note that the law states the elimination of unfair discrimination, thus fair discrimination is inevitable at this stage and puts an added stress on managers to develop the tenacity to embrace the growing pains of such a reality. The reality is that it is painful for the white employees/managers to learn that none to very little career progress is possible in the near future and as a result many resign or take up early retirement and not many companies can afford to lose quality

experience that has not yet been transferred and can't be bought. It is painful equally for black employees and managers that lack experience due to earlier oppression and insufficient opportunities, to prove themselves in an unforgiving environment.

According to Adam (2000) in the book 'The colour of Business: Managing diversity in South Africa' there are a few factors negatively impacting the AA policies of South Africa. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, self-esteem from all ethnic backgrounds are lacking due to reasons already mentioned, a degree of resentment and fear exists as well as accusations and a beneficiary perception still exist on the selection criteria of organisations. The solution was embedded in understanding the aim of AA as bringing economic change and not rectifying past injustice as the drive. It was also mentioned that the educational system was unprepared, escalating into a skills shortage that hampers economic growth. In addition, AA established a new type of black consumer market and this made some businesses attempt to woo allegiance with the upcoming black middle class.

### ***3.12 The business case for leveraging diversity***

To state the business case for diversity management Cox (1993, cited by Maier, 2002) linked it to organisational effectiveness, stating the potential benefits of diversity as attracting and retaining the best available human talent resulting in a reduction of costs due to lower levels of absenteeism and personnel turnover); enhancing marketing; increasing creativity; improving problem solving and fostering organisational flexibility. He adds that the objective of managing diversity is to create organisations in which members of all socio-cultural backgrounds can contribute and achieve their full potential – and through this the organisation will benefit. When the organisation benefits, the employees in turn will benefit. In other words it forms a circle, which in most companies is a

vicious circle (viewed from the top) instead of a circle viewed from the side that presents a spiral of growth.

Numerous academics and professionals in industry have already cited much evidence, but the fact remains that diversity is the child born from equity. Equity is like the equilibrium in nature where all strives to attain a balance. In the face of historical oppression all over the world, equity have to be enforced by laws in some countries. Thus regardless of the fact that there is a business case for managing diversity, South Africans have to deal with it and the sooner companies decide to leverage their diversity, the sooner the country and its economy will benefit from equity. The business case for managing (leveraging) diversity can however be applied as a magnificent tool to motivate participation of managers and employees in diversity interventions.

### ***3.13 Summary statement on literature***

A lot has been said and written on the topic of diversity throughout the world. African authors have stated that Western and European models and theories have no relevance to the unique African scenario. This appears to be only partially true because many connections can be found between African and Western theory and concepts. However, the uniqueness of Africa and South Africa cannot be ignored any longer in the domestic and global arena. The greatest shortfall is a limited body of research and theory on diversity management, especially its effectiveness.

Regardless of colour or race, research has proven the importance of mutual trust, an inclusive/shared corporate culture, managerial involvement, empowerment, respect and a learning attitude for all as keys to successful diversity management. It also highlights the key driver of such success as the attitude/approach/ability of managers to leverage on the diversity within their respective departments. Diversity management research also indicates the need

for diversity awareness training as well as the importance of managerial staff training that will equip managers in the softer people skills of communication and empowerment.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Research design**

Since the purpose of this study was to understand how organisations in South Africa were approaching the management of diversity, a qualitative research design was utilised. Specifically, the case research method was the major method for addressing the research problem. One case study was conducted in an organisation in Gauteng. This case study formed part of a greater research project that combined several case studies in order to identify successful diversity interventions in South Africa.

##### **4.1.1 Research Sample**

Fourteen organisations were approached to participate in the study, but all of the organisations declined for various reasons. However, an organisation in the aviation transport industry agreed to participate. The organisation consists of 716 employees and has been working on issues of diversity and transformation since November 2003. A diversity intervention did take place throughout the country at the various centres of the company, i.e. Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, Bloemfontein, Port Elizabeth, Nelspruit, Pilansberg, etc. Due to logistical reasons, the sample was only taken from the Johannesburg region that made up the majority of the staff compliment, namely 350. The organisation was assisted by an external consultant to conduct awareness training and assist in transformation process of the company. The external consultant will be identified only as the 'consultant'. A more thorough description of the participating organisation is provided in the results section.

The data collection for this case study involved three steps. First, agreement had to be obtained from an organisation willing to participate in the

research. The next steps are explained below and consisted of secondary and primary data collections from the identified organisation. It was important to begin with the secondary data collection in order to be familiar with the organisation and its diversity intervention prior to the primary data collection.

Noteworthy was the fact that this diversity intervention research project within ATNS took place 12 months after the completion of the final awareness workshops and in addition the workshops/transformation process were administered over a time period of 17 months (November 2003 to March 2005).

#### **4.1.2 Collection of secondary data**

The secondary data collected relied upon multiple sources of evidence as recommended by Yin (1984). This evidence included the following:

##### **4.1.2.1 Documentation**

- i. Letters, memorandums and other relevant communiqués.
- ii. Agendas, announcements and minutes of meetings as well as written reports of events, i.e. Employment Equity committee meetings.
- iii. Administrative documents, for example proposals, progress reports and other internal documents.
- iv. Formal studies or evaluations of the company in general as well as those pertaining to external and internal diversity issues of the company.
- v. The organisation's intranet, including findings on levels of access for different employees (type of information available to whom) and the level of traffic on the intranet.
- vi. Current personnel distribution, i.e. different types of positions filled by relevant ethnic origins, gender etc.
- vii. Employment Equity reports.
- viii. Statistics on training, promotion, resignations, retirement and career development for all levels within the organisation.

#### **4.1.2.2 Archival records**

Personal records for example diaries and calendars (This was to determine what types of diversity programs/training have occurred, what levels of the organisation participated and what follow-up action was taken/how success was measured).

#### **4.1.2.3 Consultant's intervention reports**

The consultant's intervention reports identified the main issues that the company still had to address after the workshops as well as the change that was observed during the intervention, i.e. employees' knowledge of diversity as well as personal growth and changes in previous prejudice.

The assessment also indicated the level of managers' ability to effectively deal with diversity issues and in managing/leveraging diversity to the benefit of ATNS and its employees. Thus the degree to which diversity was integrated into the every day organisational life was visible through the experience of employees and the organisation's success in aligning the diversity management with performance management. All this is discussed under 'Consultant's feedback on employee responses to workshops'.

Organisational records regarding the diversity of the workforce, previous diversity interventions/programs as well as personal and group problems experienced/addressed in past.

#### **4.1.3 Collection of primary data**

The next step consisted of the collection of primary data on the diversity intervention. This included a description of the intervention and interviews with the organisation's change agent and the consultant responsible for the diversity

intervention. Focus groups were also held with employee groups and interviews with managerial staff.

Once all the secondary information had been reviewed, the interviews and focus groups' schedules were conceptualised, i.e. adapted from the pilot study of the larger research project in order to ensure relevancy to the organisation's environment.

#### **4.1.3.1 Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted at various levels within the organisation. Respondents were interviewed for approximately an hour at a time and although a conversational manner was utilised, a semi-structured interview protocol was followed (refer to Appendix A). The following managers were interviewed (in order of seniority starting at the lowest level):

- Pool Manager: AIM (white male)
- Pool Manager: Approach (white male)
- Pool Manager: ATSA (white female)
- Principal: Aeronautical Information Management Office (white female)
- Acting Manager: Air Traffic Services Training (Section Head ATS Training) (white male)
- Talent Manager (black female)
- Manager: Central Air Space Management Unit (white male)
- Manager: Employee Relations (white female)
- Manager: Recruitment, Selection and Retention (white female)
- Manager: Technical Support Johannesburg (white male)
- Centre Manager: ATS Johannesburg International Airport (white male)
- General Manager: Air Traffic Management (white male)
- General Manager: Human Resources (black male)
- Chief Executive Officer (coloured female)

- External consultant (interview with her associate on contract at ATNS, black female)

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of ATNS was interviewed by means of questions that did not include her comment on the diversity intervention and awareness workshops because she was appointed as CEO only after the intervention took place. These questions were more focussed on the way forward for ATNS pertaining to diversity management. In addition, the external consultant (residing in Stellenbosch), was requested to respond in writing to the 'consultant's questions' pertaining to the success of the diversity intervention. Unfortunately she was not able to do this and referred the researcher to her associate on contract with ATNS on a full-time basis since May 2005. As the associate was not present for the duration of the intervention, the researcher requested her to respond to the relevant questions with reference to the feedback that she received from the initial consultant.

The managerial staff compliment of ATNS changed significantly since the transformation process/workshops were completed, and thus a very limited amount of managers of colour (other than the dominating amount of white managers), was available to share their experience of the intervention. As an example 5 of the 7 executive managers were new to the company at the time of the research project.

#### **4.1.3.2 Focus groups**

The external diversity consultant identified departmental silos as the main cause of diversity issues within the organisation, thus focus groups were composed based on that information (refer to Fig 5.5). Although the consultant identified no race and only minor gender issues during the workshops, the decision was initially made to include at least one female group and one black group. After the completion of the first two focus groups, it became evident that



	duration 65 min
Isando Head Office:	7 respondents (1 white male, 1 coloured female, 1 indian female, 1 indian male, 1 black female, 2 white females); duration 85 min
ATA	5 respondents (1 black female, 1 white female, 1 white male, 1 coloured male, 1 black male); duration 60 min
CAMU:	5 respondents (2 white males, 3 white females); duration 55 min
Technical Support:	6 respondents (2 black males, 1 white female, 1 black female, 2 white males); duration 80 min
ATSA:	1 <sup>st</sup> group: 3 respondents (2 black males, 1 indian male); duration 40 min 2 <sup>nd</sup> group: 6 respondents (2 white females, 1 black female, 1 white male, 2 black males); duration 70 min
ATC:	4 respondents (3 white males, 1 indian male); duration 45 min.

As a result of shift work, the researcher found it extremely difficult to gather respondents from the ATSA and ATC pools. The researcher observed a distinct unwillingness to participate from staff of these pools. Only four respondents from the ATC department took part in their focus group. Noteworthy was the fact that respondents from the ATC group appeared more conversational on diversity issues once the tape recorder was switched off. The ATSA focus group was conducted twice in order to gather more information.

At the start of each focus group, the researcher explained the aim of the project and specifically the focus group to the respondents and they were offered the opportunity to ask questions. Respondents had to complete a consent form and received an ATNS aeronautical calendar and a chocolate as a sign of appreciation for participating. It was explained to each group that their anonymity were guaranteed and that personal remarks would remain confidential. The researcher made notes during each focus group and in addition everything said was recorded on tape for future reference.

Interview/focus group questionnaires (Appendix A & B): As the literature review indicated, a lot of prejudice regarding diversity issues were based on peoples' perceptions and maturity towards approaching challenges. It was therefore of great importance that respondents were required to define their comments (preferably by means of examples from personal experience within the workplace) during the focus group sessions when referring to diversity, racism, sexism and power dynamics, etc.

African authors on diversity matters all agree on the importance of sharing stories and experiences in order to facilitate the understanding of diversity and tolerance thereof. Thus respondents were prompted to share experiences from the workplace as they answered the questions posed.

#### **4.1.3.3 Direct observation**

The researcher conducted continuous observations on an informal basis of the surrounding environment and employee behaviour. This period stretched from 06 March 2006 till 05 April 2006. In addition a team-building day was attended on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May 2006. The attempt to make repeated observations as a special type of time-series analysis in the field was unsuccessful, mainly due to the time that passed since the completion of the company's diversity intervention program. The aim of the observations were to identify the influence that staff had

on each other as they adapted to their diverse environment after the workshops. The response from the focus groups and interviews explained it well - as a lot of employees mentioned that they were not able to recall what happened during the workshops because it was such a long time ago. As discussed later, one of the shortfalls of the intervention was that workshops were held over a long time period, i.e. 18 months. This resulted in some staff being excited about the changes and embracing diversity while with other staff it was old news and the excitement had worn off.

The team build did however shed some light on the situation. However, the team build was directed at staff at the Johannesburg ATS centre only and due the shifts, approximately seventeen people participated in the team build effort each day for a period of three weeks. Given the long period since the intervention, the researcher wanted to identify group dynamics. Three distinctive observations were made, the first being groups that had a member from a dominant department (silo) took the leadership role automatically in that group. Secondly, there was good teamwork from everyone regardless of their race or gender, though two black male individuals did appear to feel not part of their respective groups. Finally, at the conclusion of the team build and moving on to lunch, three distinct racial groups formed to social (one black and two white). Those employees that did not join the groups, however, did immediately mingle among each other across sexual and racial boundaries.

#### **4.1.3.4 Physical artefacts**

This included the analysis of office layout and setting of company culture by means of slogans, posters, dress code and traditions. Culture comprised of underlying assumptions and meanings that formed the set of artefacts and practice that an organisation expressed (Schein, 1992), thus artefacts expressed information regarding an organisation's ideology (Levin, 2000). As it was mentioned in the literature study it appeared that a corporate culture change

depended on a corporate strategy change. All managers interviewed were aware of the company's new strategies, but very little of this was evident from the focus groups with staff. The company's vision and mission was only displayed at their head office in conjunction with some framed photos of people from the head office having fun (staff at a team building event, an airshow and a social event at an extended management meeting). At the ATA and Head Office there were big vision, mission and values displays up on wall that was signed by each staff member. In addition, the ATA displayed a few nature photos with slogans of victory, teamwork and focus. All offices and centres visited displayed numerous pictures of aircraft and ATS equipment. Otherwise no artefacts were visible that was portraying employees having fun, working together as a team or portrayed as being proud of their job. The ATS centre at Johannesburg only displayed some large photos of aircraft will indicate from what level and had one display case that housed centre awards and some certificates received for best operational centre/service provider, but it appeared to be of no significance to employees.

The financial department had an open plan office lay-out and the ATA adapted this lay-out during the time of the research information gathering. This clearly indicated the divide within the organisation as well, i.e. being either individualistic or part of a single silo. All other staff, excluding the ATC centre were divided into offices. Operational and technical staff at the Johannesburg ATS centre had separate tea/rest rooms and this was evident of the departmental divide that the external consultant observed. The dress code for Johannesburg ATS staff was casual, although the head office staff dressed smart casual to semi-formal. The dress code could also be indicative of the professional connection that employees had with their company or even their job importance.

## **4.2 Data measurement**

The interview questions were pilot tested in an earlier phase of the larger research project. As a member of the team, the researcher attended a three-day training session in May 2005. This training session covered definitions of relevant aspects, i.e. diversity, anonymity, confidentiality. Procedures for securing an organisation for the research as well as interview and focus group techniques were discussed that included structuring of questions and probing more information. Case studies were also dissected in order for researchers to gain experience in evaluating a company's hierarchy and underlying diversity issues.

The interview and focus group process was conducted on the principle of Guba's model of trustworthiness (Guba, 1981; cited from Krefting, 1991), achieving credibility with truth obtained from the discovery of human experiences as they are lived and perceived by informants and where the researcher is confident with the truth of the findings based on the research design, informants and the context. Sandelowski based credibility on the accurate description of human experience in such a manner that other people sharing a similar experience will recognise the description (Sandelowski, 1986; cited from Krefting, 1991: 216). Applicability was proved via the findings of the research when it fitted into context outside of the study situation. Consistency was established by replication of the study's findings in several departments of the company and by the comparison of information among the ten case studies performed. The key to qualitative work is however to learn from the informants rather than to control them, it also emphasises the uniqueness of the human situation and not the identical repetition necessarily, as the respondent may not be representative of a group, but his/her experience is considered important (Krefting, 1991: 216). Neutrality was addressed by the training of participating researchers in order to limit biases motivations and perspectives.

Triangulation of Knafl & Breitmayer (1989, cited by Krefting, 1991) was used as a strategy for measurement. It was based on the convergence of multiple perspectives for mutual confirmation of data to ensure that all aspects of the phenomenon had been investigated. Three methods were identified, namely: i) triangulation of data methods – data collected by all the means available will be compared; ii) triangulation of data sources – all personnel were interviewed, but at different times during a period of 2 months and at distinctly different venues i.e. in a conference room, at their office and outside of the working environment; iii) theoretical triangulation – this was useful as well as challenging due to a lack of research-based theory in South Africa as well as international literature that mainly originates from the USA that was not always applicable to the South African context.

### **4.3 Data analysis**

The approach to data analysis was multifaceted and consisted of: statistical analysis of the workforce profile within the organisation; content analysis of organisational policies; stakeholders' perceptions of diversity intervention; analysis of consultant's perception of diversity within the organisation; reflections and analysis of the organisational culture. Together, these analyses were integrated into a case study that captured the diversity intervention in the organisation as well as its effects. This case study was then content analysed to gain an overall understanding of the organisation's approach to diversity, its effects within the organisation, and its degree of success. A deeper analysis was also done to understand the assumptions about difference/diversity embedded in the organisation's approach. An effort was made to identify patterns in the data. From this, rival explanations were explored to assess what the data suggested about diversity management within the organisation. In other words if one explanation was valid, the other cannot be (Yin, 1984: 111). The independent variables may have involved several different types of characteristics, but of importance to the case study was the overall

pattern of results within the particular organisation. Because this was only a single case study, theoretical propositions couldn't be articulated.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **RESEARCH RESULTS**

#### ***5.1 ATNS Background Information***

The Air Traffic and Navigation Services Company Limited (ATNS) was established as a State owned, limited liability Company by the enactment of Act No 45, dated 31 March 1993. The legislation established ATNS as a provider of Air Traffic Control and related services on a commercial 'user pay' basis.

The introduction of charges for services provided by ATNS took effect with the vesting of the company in August 1993. The company took personnel from the South African Government Department of Transport involved in these services into employment with effect from 1 April 1994.

ATNS has, since the 1995/96 financial year, operated entirely from the revenue generated from its customer base. The company had its first Managing Director from the period 1993 to 1998. ATNS's second MD restructured the company and took office of a new position as Chief Executive Officer and handed over this responsibility as CEO in 2005.

Whilst ATNS is a commercially successful business organisation that meets the demands and requirements of its customers, the company retains various links with the State for the purpose of responding to economic regulation and the setting of service and safety standards. In addition, a normal board/shareholder relationship applies between the ATNS Board of Directors and the Company's State Shareholder, the Minister of Transport.

Operationally, the mission of the company is discharged in South Africa's continental and adjacent oceanic airspace. The latter comprises the vast area within the boundaries of South Africa's coastal borders – due West (into the

Atlantic Ocean) to 10° West longitude, due East (into the Indian Ocean) to 75° East longitude, and along these longitudes due South to the South Pole (excluding the Mauritius FIR which extends to 45° South).

Overview: ATNS is principally involved in the supply of air traffic and navigation services and the maintenance of the air traffic navigation infrastructure in South Africa's area of responsibility. Other operations in the company include the supply of aeronautical information services, technical maintenance and aerodrome services along with the training of registered air traffic controllers and avionic technical staff.

The ATNS Company also fulfils numerous roles that are of critical importance to the air transportation industry in Southern Africa. Its extended influence in the industry relates to its extensive complementary aviation services in:

- 1 Aeronautical consultancy.
- 2 Communication services.
- 3 Search and rescue.
- 4 Aeronautical information services.
- 5 Aviation site surveying.

Regional development: Air traffic services are constantly evolving in pace with the relentless march of global technology. ATNS, along with global air traffic services, is compelled to adapt accordingly.

ATNS participates in the development of integrated, world-class ATC (Air Traffic Control) systems across Africa. Southern Africa Developing Countries (SADC) members are focussed on the feasibility of establishing a regional upper airspace control centre (UACC). ATNS participated in preparing, securing, funding and executing a detailed study on this proposal, which was approved in principle by the Southern Africa Transport and Communication Commission (SATCC) committee of Ministers.

The SADC VSAT network provides ATS/DS and AFTN co-ordination services between the following ATC centres located in the SADC Region:

Maputo	Beira	Lilongwe	Gaborone
Kinshasha	Dar Es Salaam	Maseru	Matsapha
Luanda	Mauritius	Harare	Windhoek

Aviation Training Academy: ATNS has the strategic role of maintaining a loyal and productive workforce. Therefore rigorous training and watchful mentoring are used to ensure that employees are capable of meeting the high safety standards demanded by the aviation industry. Constant investment in training, not only for ATNS, but also for their partners in the Southern Africa region, has resulted in the Academy catering for the training needs of 27 countries. The latest of these developments was the agreement of co-operation with the International Air Transport Association (IATA) for the training of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's air traffic control personnel (Air Traffic and Navigation Services, 2005: no page)

## 5.2 The ATNS Workforce profile

### 5.2.1 Workforce profile by Job Level 2003 and 2005

Fig 5.1: Workforce Profile by Job Level 2003

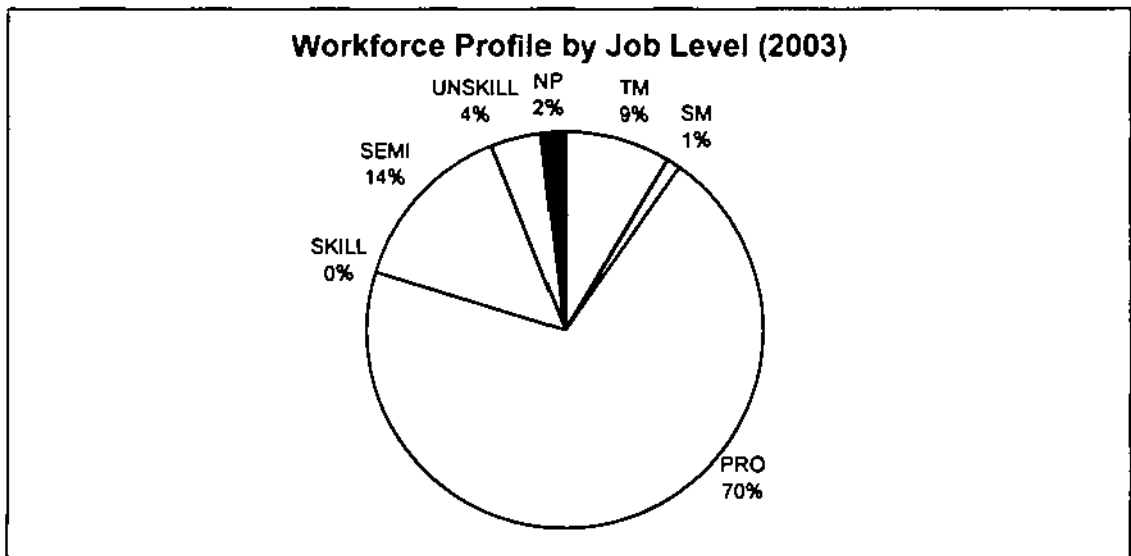
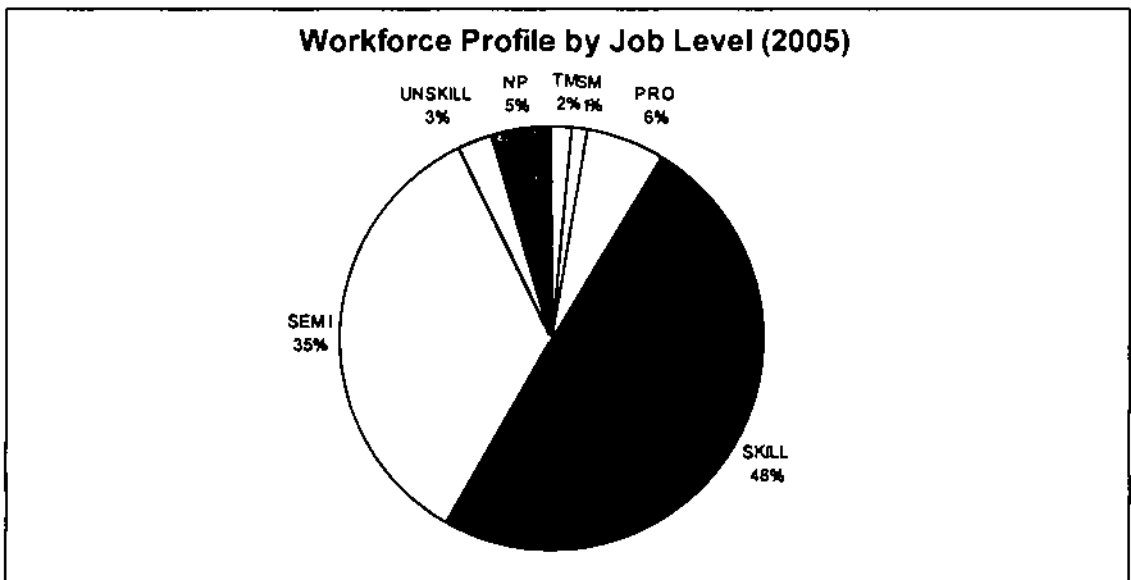


Fig 5.2: Workforce profile by job level 2005



	Count	Cumulative	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
<b>TM:</b> Top Management	56	56	9%	9%
<b>SM:</b> Senior Management	7	63	1%	10%
<b>PRO:</b> Professional	456	519	70%	80%
<b>SKILL:</b> Skilled	0	519	0%	80%
<b>SEMI:</b> Semi-Skilled	93	612	14%	94%
<b>UNSKILL:</b> Unskilled	26	638	4%	98%
<b>NP:</b> Non-permanent employees	13	651	2%	100%

Table 5.1: Workforce profile by job level (2003)

	Count	Cumulative	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
<b>TM:</b> Top Management	11	11	2%	2%
<b>SM:</b> Senior Management	8	19	1%	3%
<b>PRO:</b> Professional	44	63	6%	9%
<b>SKILL:</b> Skilled	344	407	49%	58%
<b>SEMI:</b> Semi-Skilled	243	650	35%	93%
<b>UNSKILL:</b> Unskilled	19	669	3%	96%
<b>NP:</b> Non-permanent employees	32	701	5%	100%

Table 5.2: Workforce profile by job level (2005)

ATNS was different from most organisations as the greater workforce being ATCs had to be highly skilled in their profession for the company to maintain its core business. Around the world there was a constant move of ATCs and thus a constant attrition of professional staff to the foreign market. Due to this fact, skilled ATCs were often recruited from the South African Air Force and new recruits trained by the company itself in order to cope with a greater demand of staff as aircraft movements increased globally – thus the high count on semi-skilled staff that represent staff performing supporting duties, i.e. ATSA in preparation for becoming qualified ATCs.

A significant change occurred in the workforce profile due to the grading changes in the company, as was visible for the great changes in what was considered as top management, skilled, semi-skilled and professional staff. The grading changes occurred due to the Department of Transport's request for a change in job level profiles reported by the organisations that resorted under their

authority. In some instances the new method of reporting required some job levels to be combined, i.e. reporting was according to job levels 7, 8 and 9, but then the Department of Transport required level 8 and 9 to be a combined figure. Some specialist disciplines also had to be reported in a separate grouping, for example ATCs.

### 5.2.2 Workforce profile by gender 2003 and 2005

Fig 5.3: Workforce profile by Gender 2003

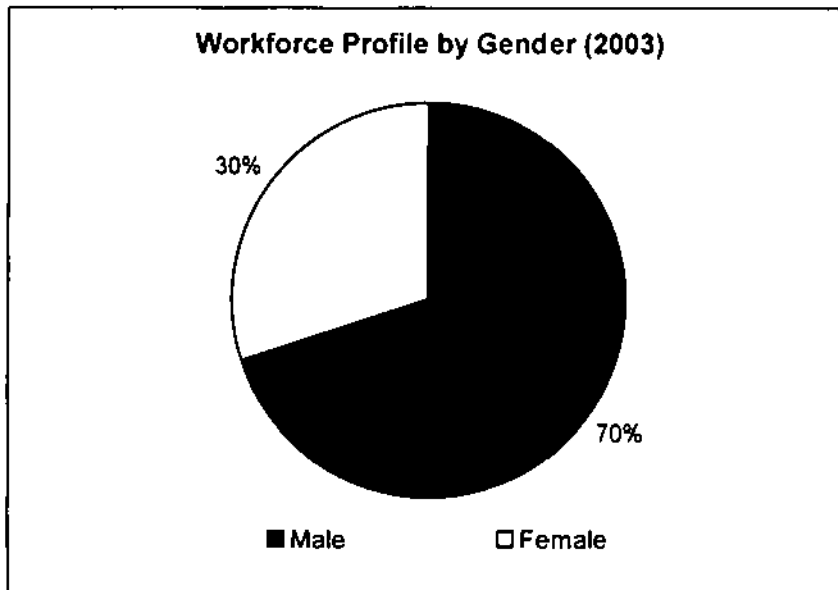
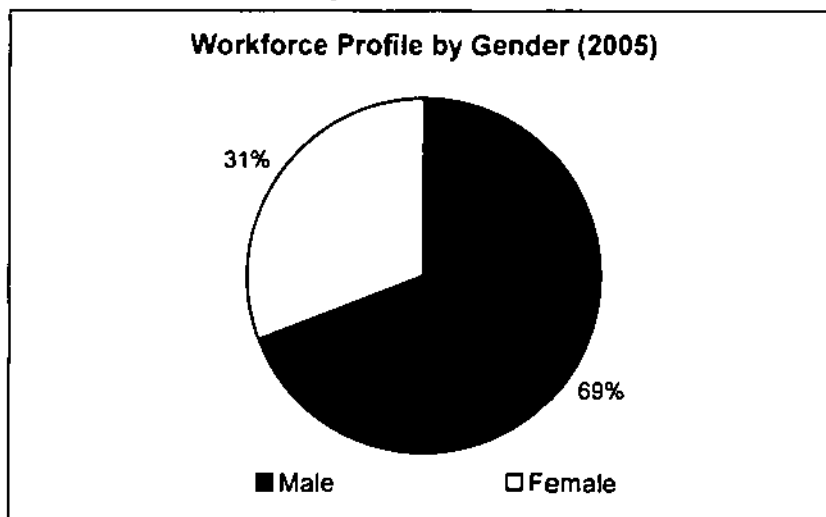


Fig 5.4: Workforce profile by Gender 2005



	Count	Cumulative	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Male	456	456	70%	70%
Female	195	651	30%	100%

Table 5.3: Workforce profile by gender (2003)

	Count	Cumulative	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Male	485	485	69%	69%
Female	216	701	31%	100%

Table 5.4: Workforce profile by gender (2005)

Not much changed over the three years pertaining to the female gender representation within ATNS. The figures do however indicate that the workforce increased with a relatively equal amount of male and female employees.

### 5.2.3 Occupational Level by Gender 2003, 2004 and 2005

Fig 5.5: Occupational level by gender 2003

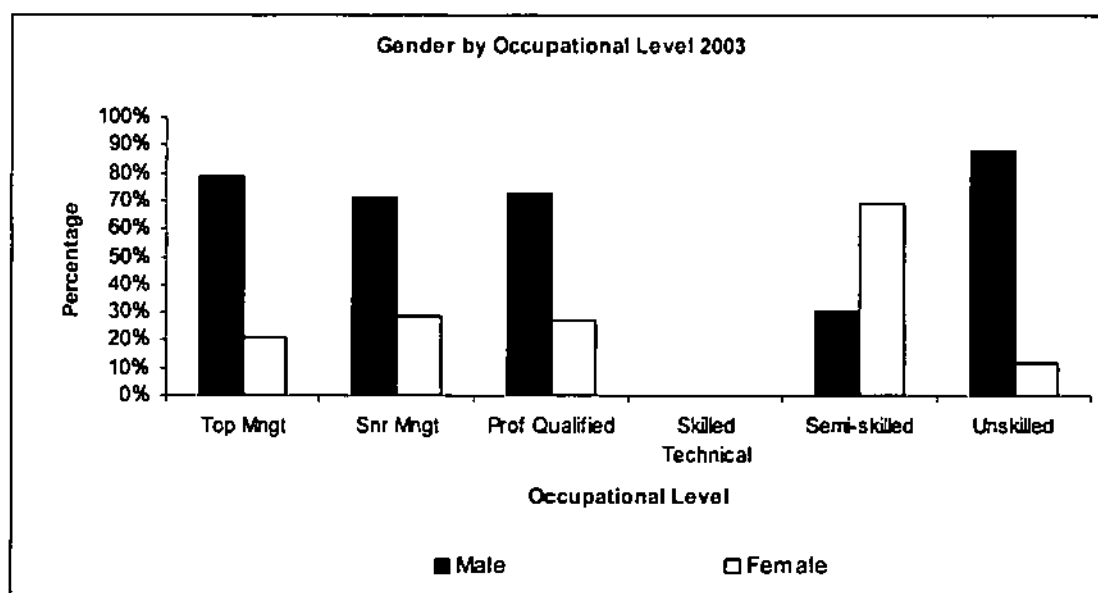


Fig 5.6: Occupational level by gender 2004

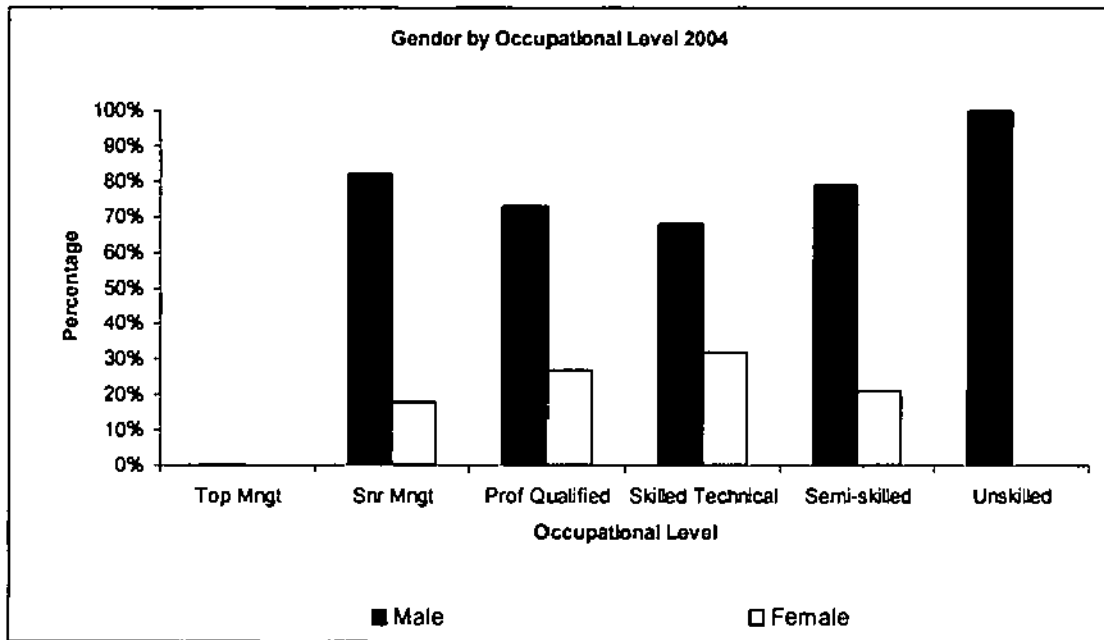
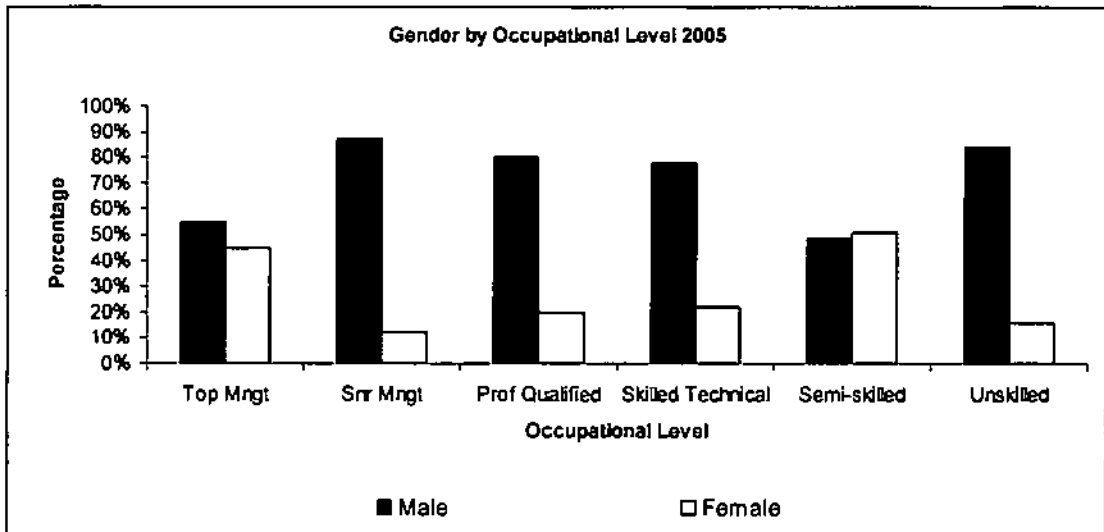


Fig 5.7: Occupational level by gender 2005



The female gender representation within ATNS changed considerably for top management, but the other occupational levels were not as representative. The changes in top management were due to the external appointments and

thus the company still had a lot of ground to cover in order to develop future female leaders internally.

The non-indicating bars that differ from year to year were again due to the lack of information that resulted from reporting requirements that were changed by the Department of Transport.

#### 5.2.4 Workforce profile by race 2003 and 2005

Fig 5.8: Workforce profile by race 2003

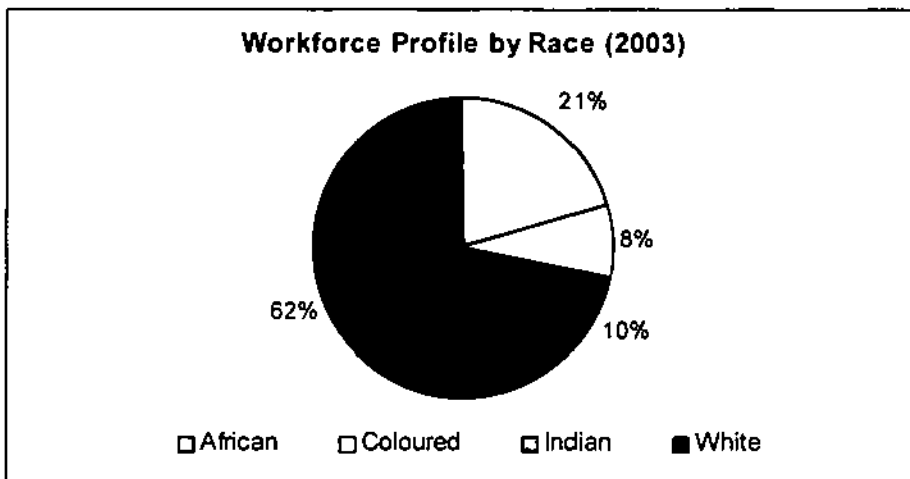
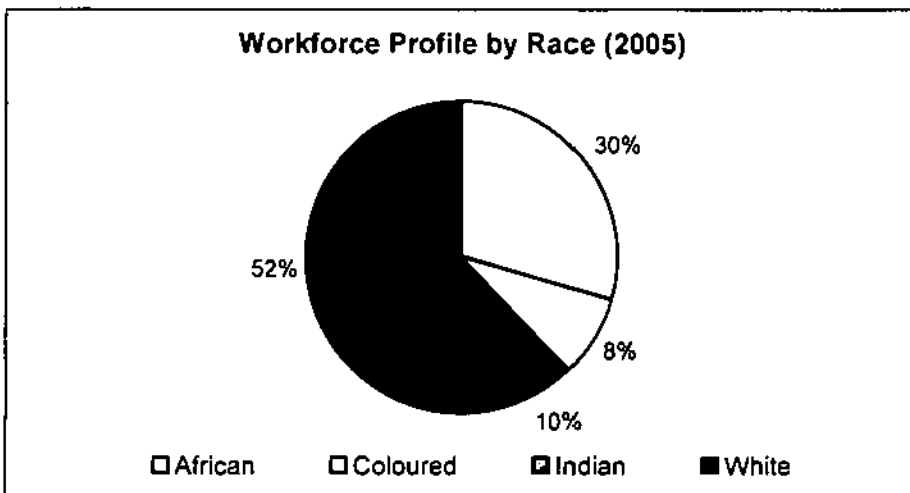


Fig 5.9: Workforce profile by race 2005



	Count	Cumulative	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
African	135	135	21%	21%
Coloured	49	184	8%	28%
Indian	63	247	10%	38%
White	404	651	62%	100%

Table 5.5: Workforce profile by race (2003)

	Count	Cumulative	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
African	207	207	30%	30%
Coloured	57	264	8%	38%
Indian	72	336	10%	48%
White	365	701	52%	100%

Table 5.6: Workforce profile by race (2005)

According to race the workforce profile did change significantly enough for it to remain healthy in the sense of maintaining expertise from current staff for skill transfers to newcomers. African appointments increased as per the demographics of the main stations within South Africa, i.e. Johannesburg (Africans), Cape Town (Coloureds) and Durban (African and Indian) Airports. Although the staff that left ATNS were predominantly white, the company did grow in their number of employees in all three the minority races, with the majority of that being African.

Comparing the growth figures from the year 2003 to year 2005 according to race indicated a 34% growth in the African staff complement, 14% growth in Coloured staff and a 12% increase in Indian employees. In addition, the White staff complement decreased by 8.6%. With regards to the Affirmative Action it did serve as an additional benefit that the company grew in numbers as well by a total of 6%.

### 5.2.5 Workforce profile by occupational level, race and gender for permanent staff 2003 and 2005

Fig 5.10: Occupational level by race and gender 2003

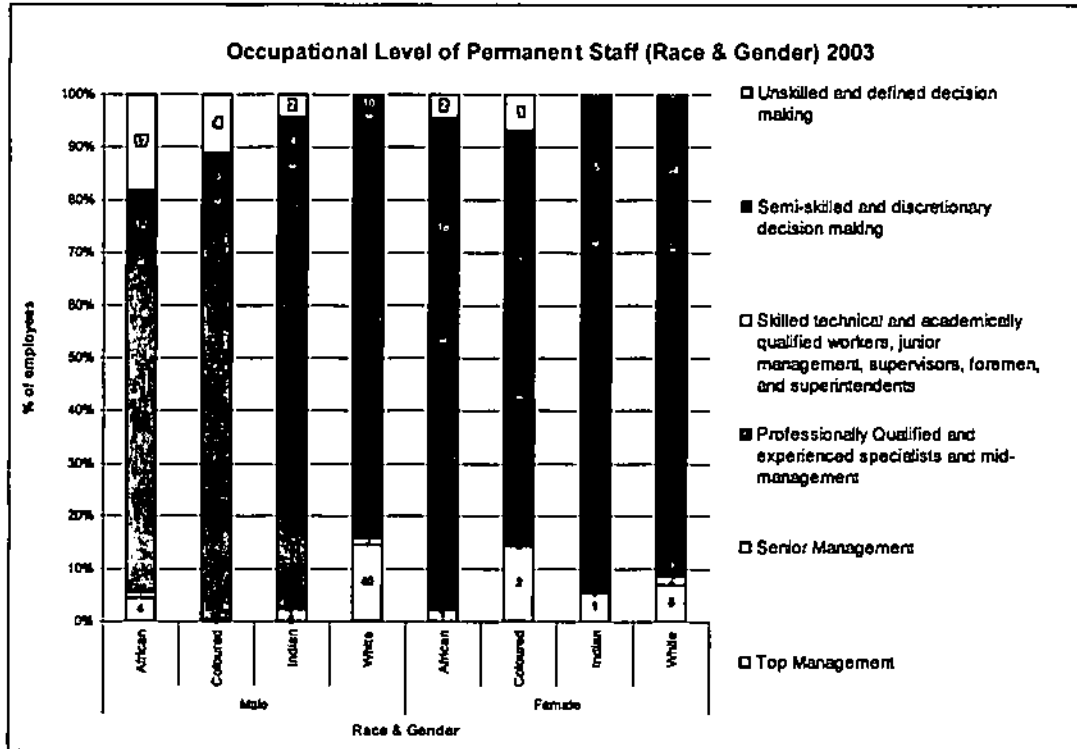
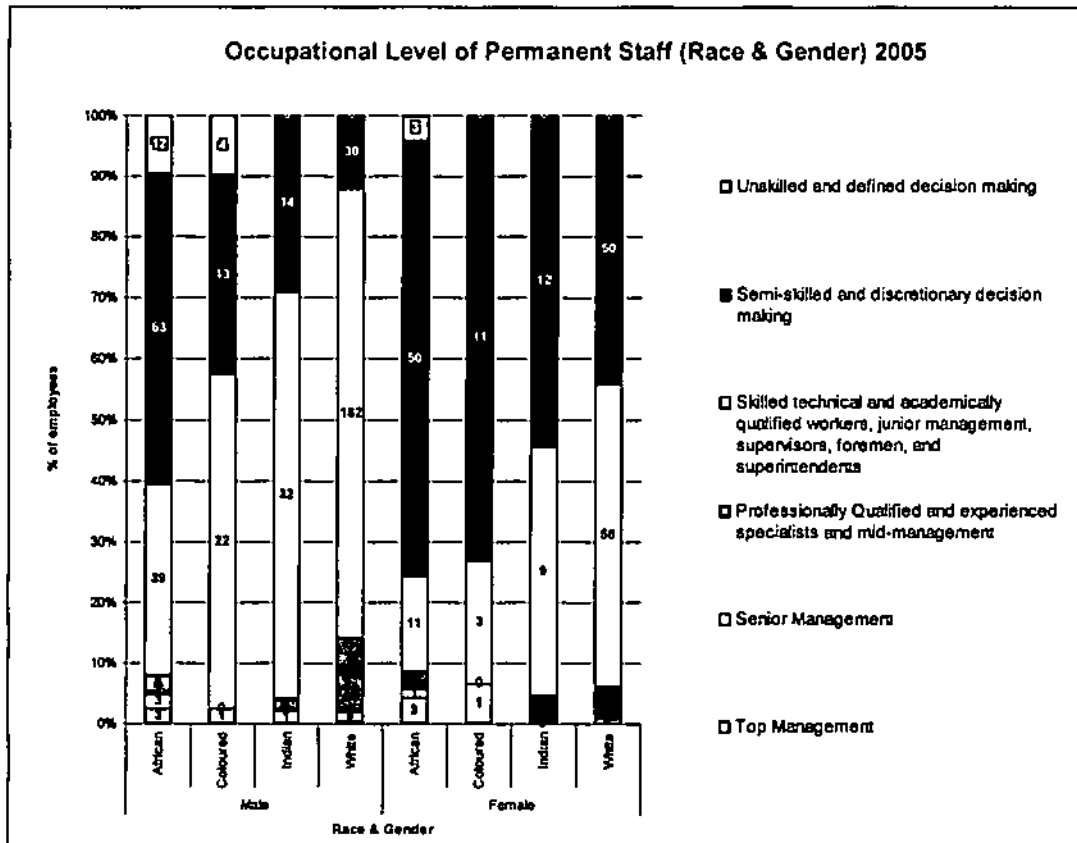


Fig 5.11: Occupational level by race and gender 2005



The challenge of turning unskilled staff into semi-skilled staff, proved to be a pat on the back for ATNS. The change in profile for top management to be more representative of all races and gender was also of significance, but the African female representation for skilled technical, academically qualified or junior management required more attention, though an increase in numbers was visible. Unfortunately percentage changes could not be derived to indicate significance in growth due to the Department of Transport that changed the job profiles reporting requirement during this time.

### 5.2.6 Workforce Profiles by Disability 2003 to 2005

Refer to EEF discussions pertaining to the company's attempt to make ATNS more environmentally friendly towards disabled people. Of interest was the fact that disability was discussed due to other companies with disabled staff

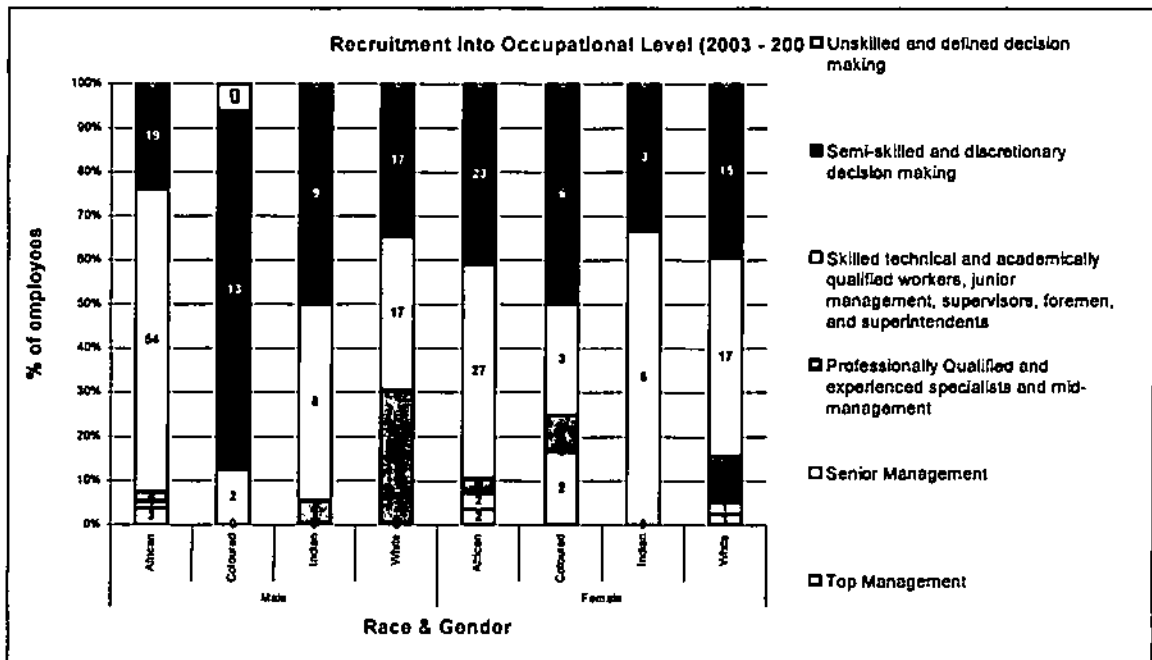
making use of ATNS conference facilities. At present no target has been set and further information was unavailable, the company does however have three disabled employees.

### 5.3 Workforce movement 2003 and 2005

#### 5.3.1 Recruitment

The graph indicates that ATNS was focussing on the correct job levels, race and gender in order to rectify the workforce profile. However, recruitment of white males for categories semi-skilled and skilled/junior management as well as professional qualified was still high in relation to this group's representation in the total workforce profile. Possible reasons may have been due to recruitment of qualified ATCs (overwhelmingly white) for operational requirements that was dictated by International Aviation Law, and the time consuming effort of training ATCs.

Fig 5.12: Recruitment into occupational level by race and gender 2003 to 2005

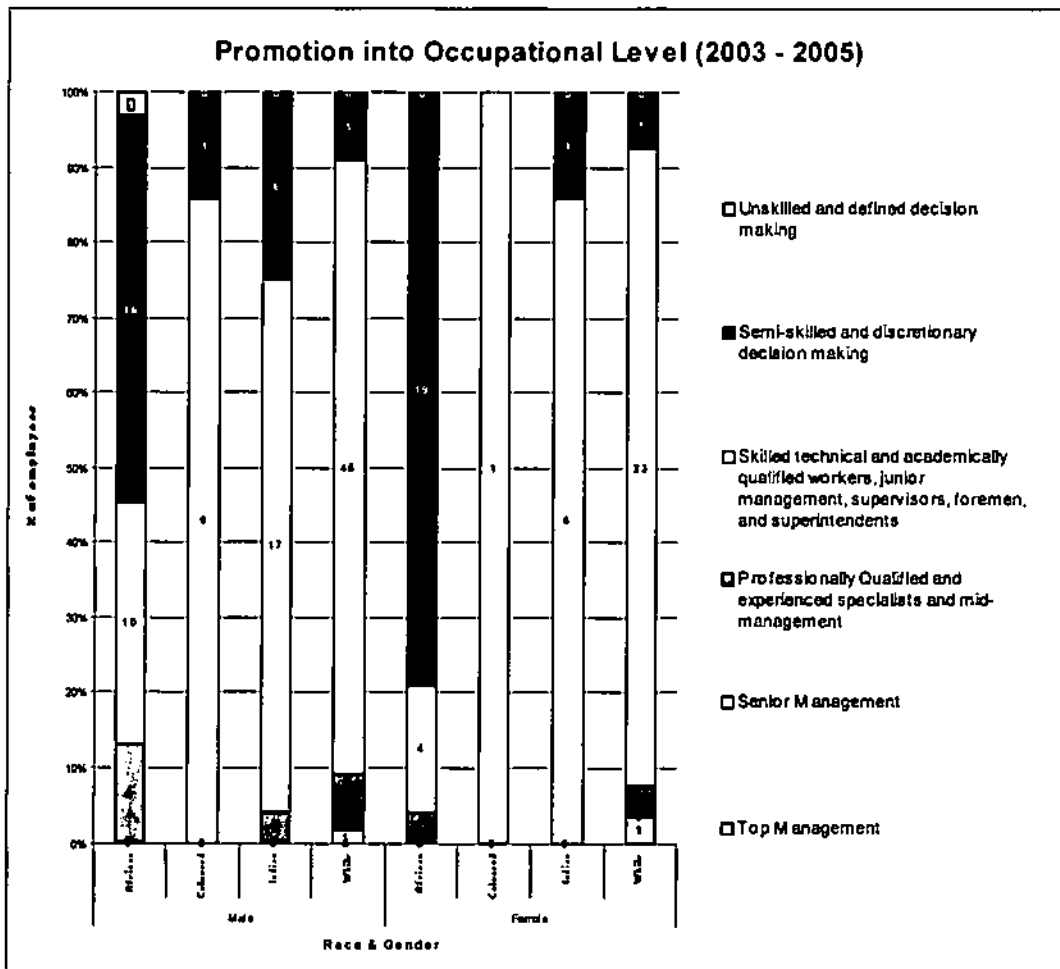


### 5.3.2 Promotions

Promotions did favour male candidates significantly during this period, but promotions for semi-skilled African woman did increase, hopefully in an attempt to develop these employees further for future higher-level promotions.

Again the white male group was over represented, but mostly due to promotions into categories of skilled technical/academically qualified/junior management and supervisors. Possible reasons may be due to a change in operational requirements and capacity building (new posts were created to cope with the growth of the company) as well as managerial resignations in ATC-orientated posts (not resigning from company, but only resigning as manager) that required new staff to be promoted into positions that relied greatly on an ATC-background, i.e. Pool Managers investigating aviation-related incidents of pool members. An added reason was also due to the overall whiteness of established ATCs that validated on a senior ATC position that did constitute a promotion, but not to a managerial position (Typical career in ATNS starts as ATSA trainee, followed by qualified ATSA, ATC – tower controller, then the final promotion were to Principal ATC – approach or area controller).

Fig 5.13: Promotion into occupational level by race and gender 2003 to 2005



### 5.3.3 Terminations

Resignations in terms of numbers appeared to be reason for concern as it picked up a trend over the three years. This may prove an expensive flow of staff, especially pertaining to the costs involved for training ATCs as part of the company's core business. A commitment from managerial staff towards the transformation of the company and valuing the diversity in its employees may have been of greater importance than just focussing on the awareness of differences. Exit interviews did also shed more light on causes and solutions for the resignations.

On comparing the percentages of terminations in relation to representivity of each gender and racial group within the company, it appeared that there was a great outflow of white males, but adding to the dilemma was the staff from all the other ethnic groups terminating their employment with the company as well, that added up to a significant total. In addition, this may have been an indication of the corporate culture that struggled to establish an in-group experience. According to the minutes of the EEF meeting of 23 June 2004, the following reasons were aired at exit interviews: Remuneration, lack of development opportunities, communication, lack of career opportunities, the working environment, conditions of employment and the relationship with management.

The type of organisation that ATNS was, made it difficult to address factors such as the lack of development opportunities, but more so the lack of career opportunities. The remuneration issue pertaining to operational staff was impossible to address as the CEO indicated that it was impossible for ATNS to compete with the operational salaries of the Middle East. Although the feedback on exit interviews did not indicate remuneration issues of other departments within the organisation, it appeared that ATNS was under-paying certain job levels. As the aim was to establish an employer of choice, the CEO did order a review of salaries in 2005 to elevate certain job categories the national median (refer to 'Discussion' for information on the other reasons provided).

The graphs indicate two types of 'other' also due to the Department of Transport's reporting requirement changes. 'Other – Immigration' indicated the amount of staff that left the employment of ATNS to work for foreign countries (mainly relevant to ATCs that went to the Middle East for bigger pay cheques). 'Other – Incapacity' indicated new recruits that were employed on a probation period during their ab-initio training whose employment was terminated on the failure of their ATSA training.

Fig 5.14: Terminations by type 2003 to 2005

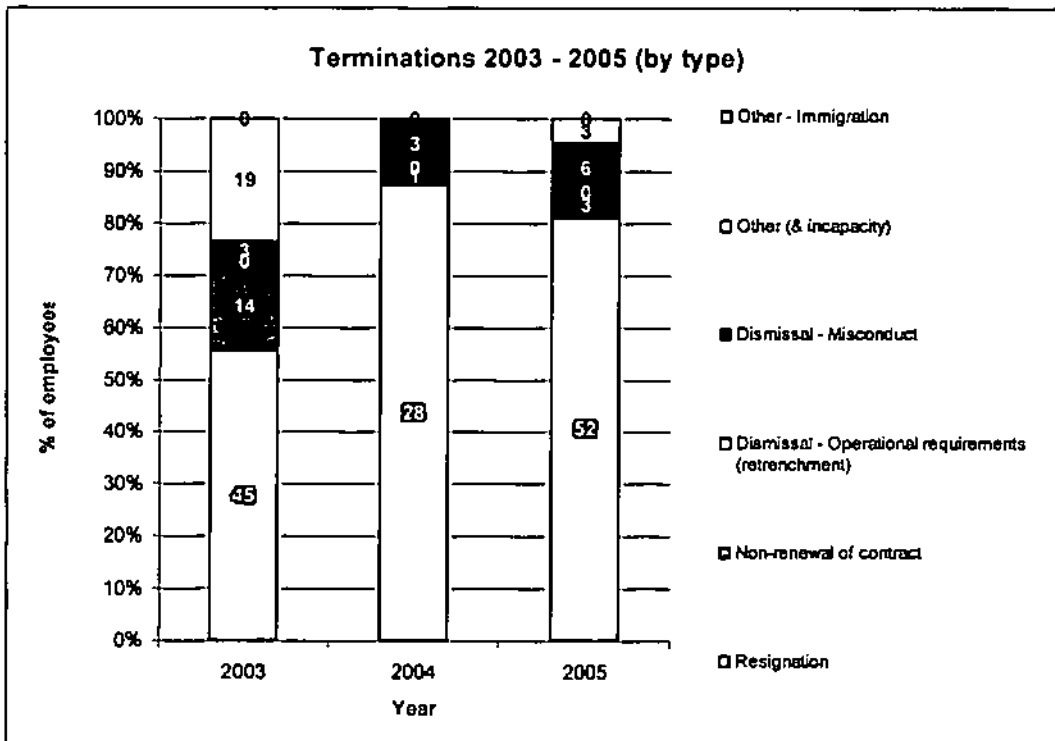


Fig 5.15: Terminations by race and gender 2003 to 2005

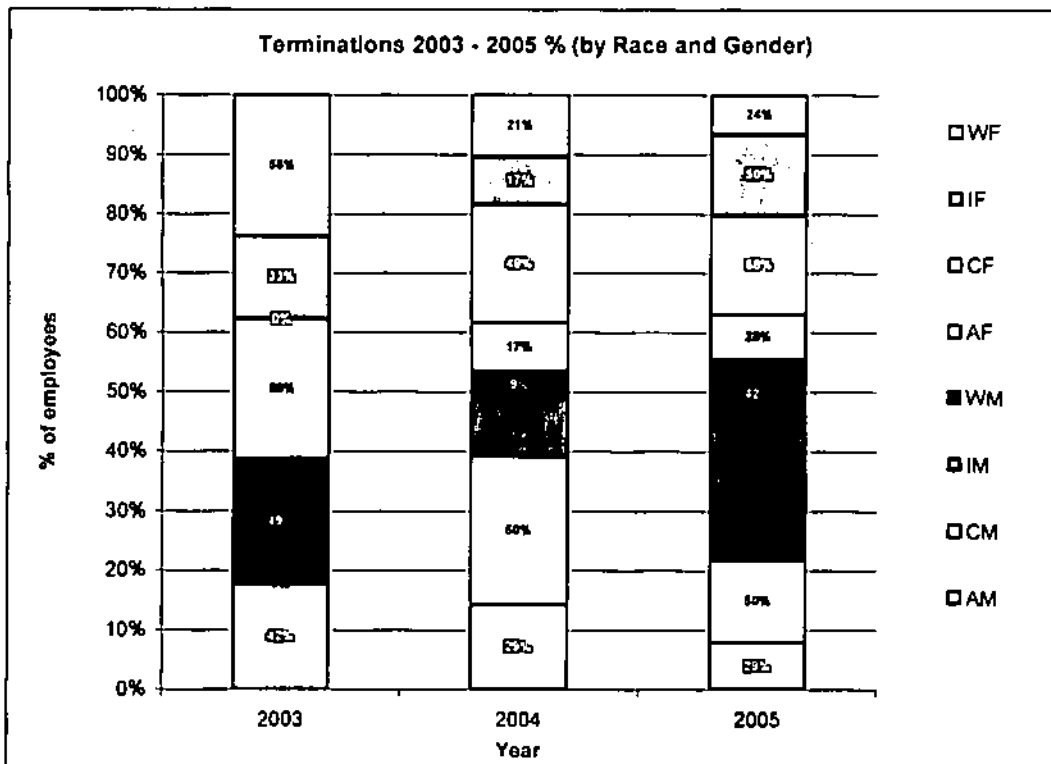


Fig 5.16: Terminations 2003

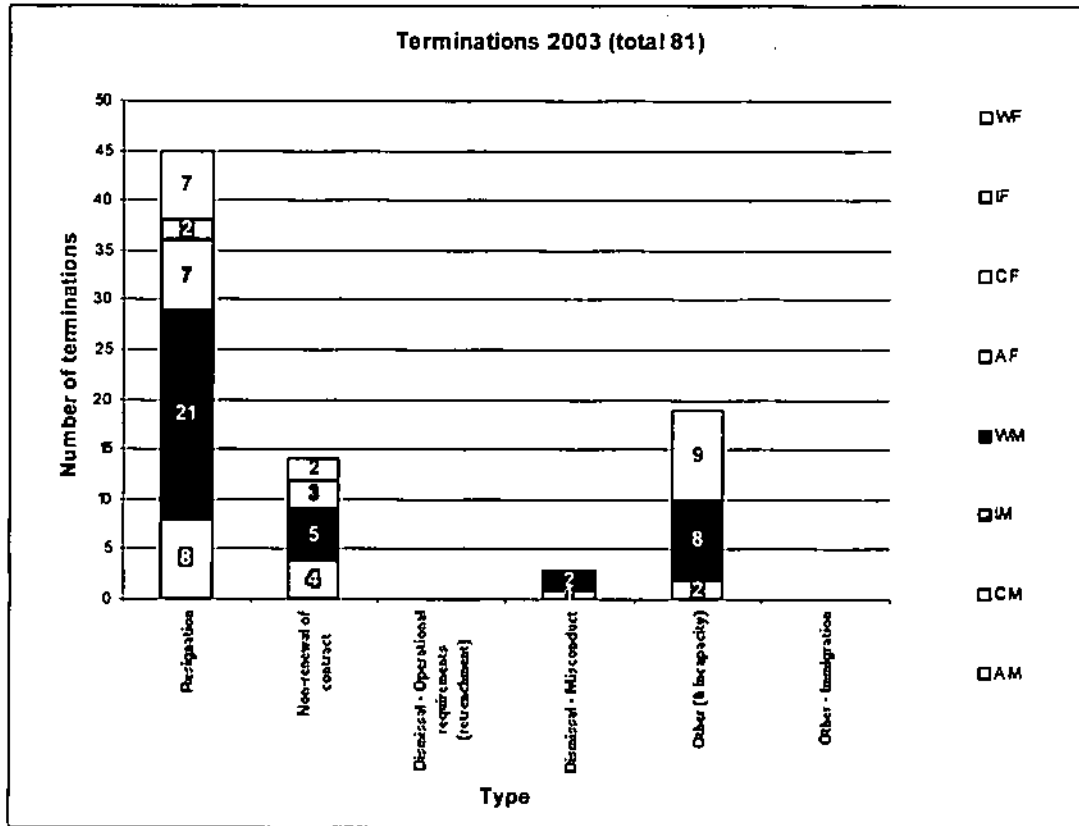


Fig 5.17: Terminations 2004

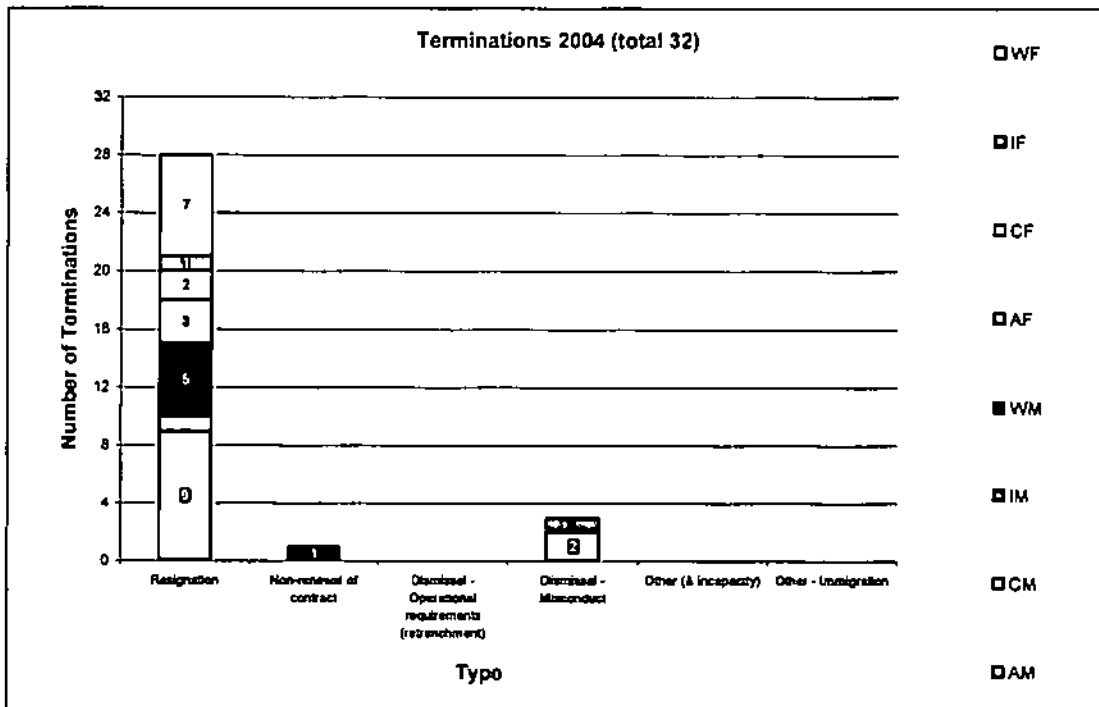
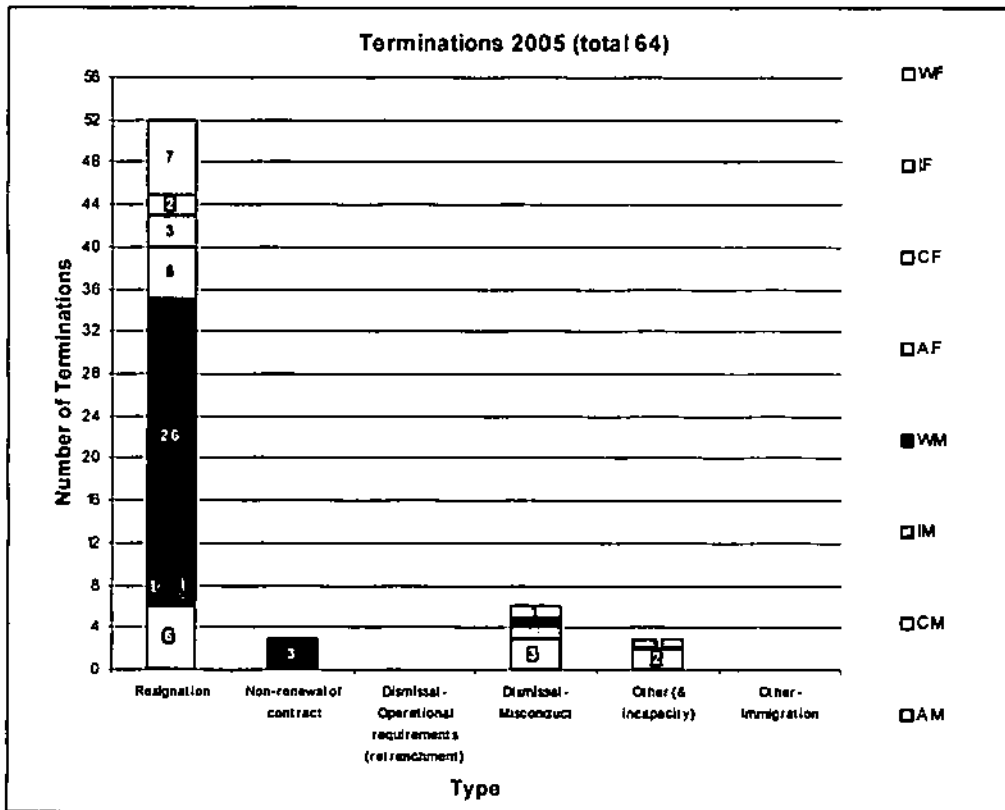


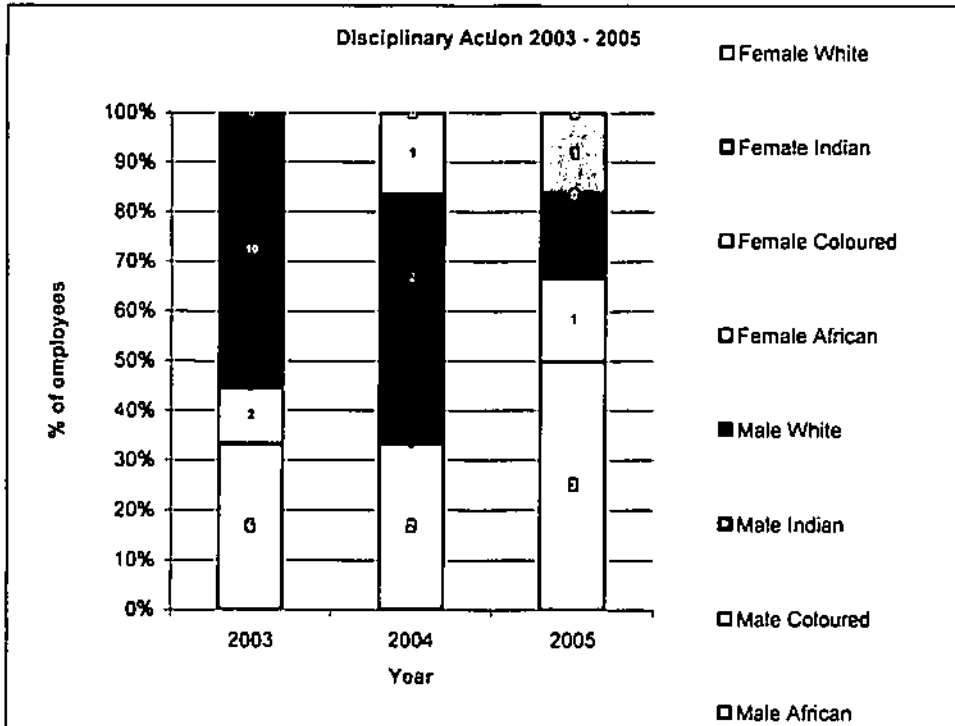
Fig 5.18: Terminations 2005



### 5.3.4 Disciplinary action

In general the statistics indicated no significance towards specific race or gender groupings, thus the researcher concluded that disciplinary actions in that sense were executed in a fair, non-discriminating manner. The question was however posed at which job levels these disciplinary actions were aimed, as possible power dynamics may have significance with regards to senior personnel not being subjected to disciplinary hearings.

**Fig 5.19: Disciplinary action 2003 to 2005**



### **5.4 Diversity Intervention Consultant's Departure Point**

The researcher is of the opinion that organisations may fail in their diversity intervention at the inception phase already due to their failure to determine the consultant/diversity service provider's point of departure in order to establish whether the organization and the consultant/provider's frameworks are compatible.

The external consultant administered a total of eight focus groups in Johannesburg and Cape Town initially to determine the culture of the company and to identify the specific facets of diversity that may need greater attention at the workshops to follow.

The consultant made her point of departure and approach towards diversity management clear in her presentation document to the executive management of ATNS and also backed it up with numerous references to

recognized academics and authors on the relevant topic. A lot of the focus was on leadership as a factor identified during the initial workshops as mentioned. Following is an example from one of her initial documents forwarded to ATNS entitled 'Leadership, branding, transformation in ATNS: An integrated approach' (2004a: 2, 5, 13-15):

*'It will be argued that, leadership, and diversity competence as an aspect of leadership, depend on 'situational adaptability' by both the organisation and the individual.*

*Castells (1996) argues that three forces, two of which are complementary and one contradictory, have redefined the world in which we live. The two complementary forces were the technological revolution and the restructuring of world capitalism. These have revolutionised production on a global scale and thus also impact our work and private lives as well as our experience of time and place.*

*The contradictory force is the search for identity, which has moved from looking for identity in civil society to communal experience such as religious fundamentalism, nationalism and territory. According to Stern (2000:100), "the exclusion of the excluder by the excluded" inspires both our best hopes and worst nightmares." The information society challenges the current ways in which people construct their identity. The shift to network enterprises is a shift to more flexible production, new models of labour/management relations and the growth of inter-company networking.*

### GENERATIONAL TRENDS

*According to the literature and from conversations with senior managers in other companies, Generation 3 employees are those between the ages of 19-34. Unlike their parents and grandparents, Generation 3 employees do not plan on staying with one job or company throughout their career, although very*

*ambitious, neither are they prepared to compromise their family lives for their jobs. Some of them may have grown up with working parents and in divorced family situations. Mintzberg (2004) argues in favour of the type of leader whose purpose is to leave behind a strong organisation – and not just in terms of share price. He argues that management is a practice that has to blend craft (experience) with art (insight) and science (analysis).*

*This distinction leads Mintzberg (2004) to define three styles of managing (which are basically ideal types along a continuum):*

- *Calculating management.*
- *Heroic management.*
- *Engaging management.*

*In Calculating management it takes a deep appreciation of the past to develop a rich vision for the future ‘...Calculating managers tend to get stuck in the present’ (Mintzberg, 2004: 101). According to Mintzberg (2004) calculating managers tend to be very clever. However, their people skills tend to be limited as their understanding of people tends to be intellectual or cognitive and often emotionless.*

*The following attributes were allocated to Heroic managers:*

- *The higher “up” these managers go, the more important they become. At the “top”, the chief executive is the corporation.*
- *Down the hierarchy comes the strategy – clear, deliberate, and bold – emanating from the chief who takes the dramatic acts. Everyone else “implements”.*
- *Implementation is the problem because while the chief embraces change, most others resist it. That is why outsiders must be favoured over insiders.*
- *To manage is to make decisions and allocate resources – including those human resources. Managing thus means analysing, often calculating, based on facts from reports.*

- *Rewards for increased performance go to the leadership. What matters is what's measured.*

Engaging managers tend to embrace the following:

- *Managers are important to the extent that they help other people who develop products and deliver services to be important.*
- *An organisation is an interacting network, not a vertical hierarchy. Effective leaders work throughout; they do not sit on top.*
- *Out of the network emerge strategies, as engaged people solve little problems that grow into big initiatives.*
- *Implementation is the problem because it cannot be separated from formulation. That is why committed insiders are necessary to resist ill-considered changes imposed from above and within.*
- *To manage is to bring out the positive energy that exists naturally within people. Managing thus means engaging, based on judgment, rooted in context.*
- *Rewards for making the organisation a better place go to everyone. Human values matter, few of which can be measured.*
- *Leadership is a sacred trust earned from the respect of others.'*

## **5.5 A business case for managing diversity in ATNS**

The external diversity consultant's point of entry was via an invitation from the CEO of ATNS to facilitate an initial workshop for the executive management team of ATNS.

The objectives of the initial workshop for senior managers were:

- To understand the strategic business case for effective people management and development.
- To develop an understanding of what diversity is and how it makes practical business sense for organisations to manage diversity effectively.

- To understand how the way we think about, and communicate with people, affects their performance and productivity and the implications of this for the manager, the team and the business.
- To critically assess their own people management orientation and skills.
- To understand the broader organisational issues surrounding the effective management and development of people.

The consultant confronted the executive management of ATNS with the following questions in preparation of defining the transformation process: In the ATNS context, whom do we want to lead? Why do we want to do business and manage our human capital differently from in the past? What benefits will accrue to the organisation as a result of such changes? Moreover, as managers will be required to lead and manage an increasing diversity of employees, how do we incorporate diversity into our assessment of what the future manager will be required to do?

As a result of the internal need for the transformation of ATNS and the above-mentioned workshop, the executive management of the company realised the importance of developing a business case for managing diversity that was aligned with company strategy. The following information was retrieved from the ATNS intranet to illustrate how the company connected their vision, mission and strategic imperatives to the business case for managing diversity (Air Traffic & Navigation Services, 2005):

#### The Vision of ATNS

Be the preferred supplier of air traffic, navigational and associated services to the African Continent and surrounding regions.

### The Mission of ATNS

To provide safe, orderly, expeditious and efficient air traffic, navigational and associated services.

### Strategic imperatives:

- 1 Continuous improvement of our safety performance.
- 2 Become an employer of choice.
- 3 Become a performance based service provider.
- 4 Maintain long-term financial sustainability.
- 5 Position ATNS to secure a continued role in the changing global air traffic management system.

Initiatives/sub-strategies listed on the intranet that sorted under the above mentioned imperatives that depended on the successful management of diversity/transformation process were:

Monitoring and improving staff wellness, development and implementation of an optimum retention and reward framework, create an organisational culture which enables all employees to realise their full potential and which embraces diversity, an equal opportunity employer, create a positive working environment, ensure consistent performance management, continue to participate in international benchmarking initiatives to lead and maintain best practice, improve operational efficiency, remain the preferred supplier for regional services and actively manage the ATNS brand.

It was obvious that all the strategic imperatives and sub-strategies could not be achieved in the absence of the successful management of diversity and this brought the senior management of ATNS to the following conclusion, cited from their document 'Towards a Business Case for Diversity in ATNS' (ATNS, 2004: 7):

*'In ATNS, the effective management of diversity would help secure our future by:*

- *Taking advantage of the widest pool of talent available.*
- *Ensuring the productivity of this talent.*
- *Improving staff loyalty, morale and retention.*
- *Giving a multiplicity of perspectives.*
- *Ensuring a productive, efficient organisation.*
- *Finding new market opportunities, particularly to meet our regional strategy'.*

To this end, they decided on the following process as cited in the same document as mentioned previously (ATNS, 2004: 7):

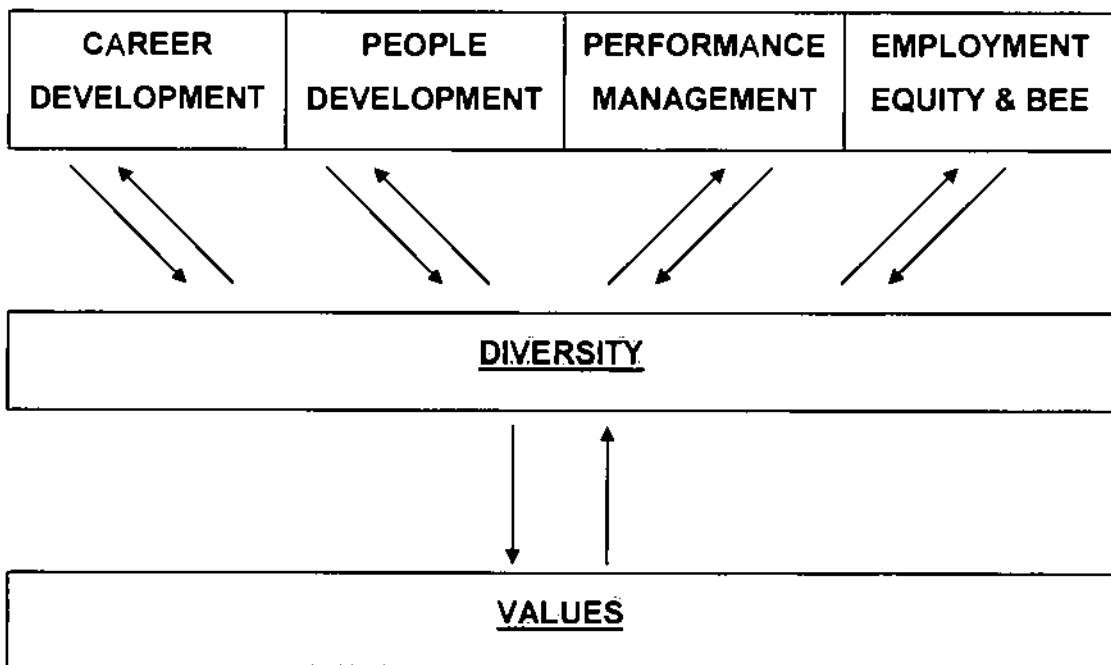
- *Definition and clear communication of the business case for diversity in ATNS.*
- *Development of a monitoring and performance management system for diversity management.*
- *The development and approval of departmental diversity action plans.*
- *The development and agreement of individual action plans.*
- *Monitoring and performance management of departmental and individual action plans to create a sustainable and improved service delivery capability.*

It was stated in the document that it was the responsibility of all ATNS employees to develop competence in the management of diversity. It continued by stating that the presence of a commitment to improving diversity competence and climate would then be assessed amongst all current and future employees and would be viewed as an important criterion for promotion to and the retention of a managerial role.

## 5.6 Policies and procedures

ATNS's transformation process required continuous change and forced the company to develop adaptability to an ever-changing environment. ATNS's executive management in conjunction with the external consultant identified four key focus areas to assist the company in its drive towards this transformation and adapting to the change.

Fig 5.20: Key focus areas for ATNS transformation



Source: Diversity Management Directive 1/2005

The executive management of ATNS started off by connecting the company values to the transformation process and they redesigned it as follows:

### ATNS VALUES

- Open, honest communication & information sharing.
- Superior quality service & customer focus.
- Innovation & continuous improvement.
- Wealth creation & added value.
- Trust, respect & equity.

- Aviation safety.
- Recognition & reward.
- Participation & teamwork.
- Continuous training & development.
- Clean, healthy & safe work environment.

To sustain this transformation, ATNS required policies that were supportive of the mission, vision, strategic intent and values listed previously. Policies supporting the four key focus areas as well as the company's diversity and values were dissected accordingly:

People Development - This key focus area was supported by the HR Directives 7/95 and 2/98 pertaining to management development and study assistance. ATNS engaged in assisting employees willing to study provided that the qualification could be of use to the employee within the ATNS working environment. The assistance included financial assistance as well as study leave. The company's training policy (HP005) also placed the onus on managers to identify training needs to ensure the necessary qualifications/experience of personnel related to their responsibilities.

The HR directive 1/2001 pertaining to the Training and Development policy stated that the development of all staff had to be conducted in a structured, transparent manner to ensure fairness in a system where people were grown to their full potential. Special focus was placed on the development of previously disadvantaged individuals, but a Career Development Plan (CDP) had to be drawn up for each employee. To pre-empt subjectivity and dissatisfaction, an employee would annually be assessed on competencies attained in that year, followed by the formulation of a new CDP for that employee. However, the ownership rested with the employee to use the opportunities identified in his/her CDP.

The training policy further stated that a mentorship/coaching process was implemented to facilitate the development of employees. It stated that managers were responsible and accountable for training and development of their personnel by means of well-defined mentorship programs and that the oversight of the mentorship programme resided in the HR department. The intention was to enhance competency in management and leadership through implementation of the leadership development programmes such as the mentorship program. Diversity management formed part of this training as it enabled the transformation process.

As ATNS was committed to establish an inclusive culture and working environment, as promulgated by its values, the HR Directive 2/97 pertaining to recruitment, selection and placement, placed emphasis on the need for induction training. Though the policy presented guidelines for aspects to be covered, the responsibility for such induction training rested with relevant managers at unit/station level.

ATNS Directive 1/99 Sexual Harassment Policy stated that the Sexual Harassment Code had to be brought to the attention of all employees at the time of their employment with the company, i.e. induction training. The policy was applicable to all employees and defined sexual harassment as 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' and that sexual attention became sexual harassment if i) the behaviour was persisted in (it was added that a single incident of harassment can constitute sexual harassment), ii) the recipient made it clear that the behaviour was considered offensive, or iii) the perpetrator should have known that the behaviour was regarded as unacceptable. Forms of sexual harassment were described as unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct (some examples were given in addition to a statement that such offences were not limited to these examples). The General Manager: Human Resource was designated for victims to approach for confidential advice and assistance. In addition the policy allowed for a formal and informal procedure to deal with

complaints of such a nature, but the employee was under no duress to accept one or the other option. The formal procedure constituted an investigation and disciplinary while an informal procedure would give an employee the opportunity to explain to the person engaging in the unwanted conduct that the behaviour in question was not welcome (questionable whether such a victim of harassment would want to confront his/her harasser even in a controlled environment – especially if it was the employee's manager). The policy did mention that an unsatisfactory outcome to an informal procedure still allowed the victim to pursue a formal procedure.

The HR Directive 8/2004 pertaining to Staff Retention and Exit Policy stated that ATNS would only endeavour to retain employees if it was in its business and operational interest. The policy also acknowledged the fact that employment equity imperatives may result in the reduction of staff or new employment of new staff. Regarding the exit policy, the company made provision for staff that may be permanently ill, but have been refused medical boarding by the applicable pension fund. This indicated that the company was willing to make it their responsibility to provide support to staff for example suffering from HIV related illnesses, i.e. where a common flu had a severe impact on the employee's life/health. The detail on how they would go about in assisting such an employee, especially pertaining to HIV support, was not clear.

Career Development – Most factors relevant to career development indicated a strong connection/overlap with People Development. In addition it is worth mentioning that the Training and Development Policy focused on succession planning. The Policy indicated that the succession planning had to be in accordance with the spirit of the ATNS Employment Equity Policy. It indicated that a department underrepresented by previously disadvantaged groups, had to give preferential treatment to such candidates for succession planning.

ATNS established a Training and Development Committee according to the Management Directive 2/2005 that had the aim of identifying the strategic training objectives for the company. The committee also had the responsibility to consult with employees in the workplace on training needs and then to make recommendations on the training and development needs of employees. The committee had to ensure that feedback was given to employees on the skills development within the company. In addition, the Directive made it the responsibility of this committee to assist in the development of the Workplace Skills Plan in line with the Transport Education Training Authority (TETA). Sourcing trainers, recording and monitoring training progress as well as identifying problems and solutions added to the responsibilities of the committee (supported by the Training and Development Policy, HR Directive 1/2001).

ATNS had a Reward and Recognition Policy (ATNS HR Directive 2/99) that allowed for corporate annual, regional, six monthly and ad hoc rewards. Stations or regions could award these ad hoc awards subject to approval by the functional General Manager. Nominations for awards had to be submitted by any employee or client on the standard Recognition Reward form that were then submitted to a Reward and Recognition Committee.

The nomination criteria focussed primarily on service delivery but three criteria that possibly motivated diversity competence and leadership were recognising achievements in line with the ATNS mission and values as well as setting an exceptional example and leadership performance.

#### Employment Equity and other aspects of BEE

Employment Equity - ATNS intended to utilize the diversity in South Africa by developing a representative workforce in line with the overall demographics of the country and according to set Employment Equity targets.

The constitution of the ATNS Employment Equity Forum was promulgated in the HR Directive 1/2005. The Directive stated that ATNS was committed to employment equity and satisfying the requirements of Act 55 of 1998. It mentioned that the company recognised the diversity within the workforce and was committed to addressing the need to remedy the negative effects of past discrimination and the removal of discriminatory barriers to employment and promotion. The Directive also mentioned that ATNS was committed to the establishment of internal goals and timetables towards the achievement of employment equity.

The Forum was established to give execution to the Employment Equity Plan of ATNS by ensuring compliance to Act 55 of 1998, discharging the consulting obligations imposed by the aforementioned Act, ensuring communication and consultation with the workforce, in co-operation with management draft and amend the EE Plan, ensuring successful communication and awareness of the ATNS EE Plan as well as ensuring adherence to this Plan by means of internal audits and reviews. The Executive Manager HR had to act as chairperson according to the Directive and a member from each occupational grouping had to be nominated by employees and voted in within each occupational grouping (a representative from Solidarity as the recognised Union and a representative from each race had to make up the compliment of permanent members of the EEF). Each member had to receive training and hold office for two years. In the absence of specific legal guidelines, the EE Forum had to approve the following audits:

- Audit of workforce composition (to assess compliance to Section 42a-b of the EE Act).
- Audit of policies and procedures (to assess compliance to Section 42d of the EE Act (including audit of income differentials – Section 27)).
- Audit of attitudes and perceptions (to assess compliance to Section 42c-d of EE Act). Audits had to be completed for each department on an annual basis.

The forum had to make recommendations based on these audits, oversee the implementation of the ATNS Equity Plan and the procedural fairness in the implementation of EE. The Directive stated clearly that the Forum was not responsible for changing policies and procedures, but rather to oversee that it was implemented and applied as intended. The Forum had to meet on a monthly basis and these minutes had to be distributed via notice boards within a week thereafter. This Forum had no power to implement discipline or penalties, but had to channel equity grievances. Managers had to consult with and present to the Forum, their respective diversity action plans and the Forum had to ensure appropriate communication and feedback to all involved.

Decision-making on EE involved the designated manager of a department consulting and reaching an agreement with the EEF on matters as referred to in Section 17 of the EE Act. Where this was not possible, an agreed dispute resolution mechanism had to be brought into play (50% plus one were considered as majority vote). The Directive specified that the scope of decision-making had to be guided by the purpose of the Forum its development, implementation, monitoring and reporting on progress of the EE plan.

Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) - ATNS focused on BEE procurement to ensure that they empower BEE companies that meet their performance criteria. ATNS applied the principle of preferential procurement as per the ATNS Preferential Procurement Policy, which was aligned with the guidelines for state enterprises.

Performance Management - Performance management in ATNS was enhanced in 1999 with the implementation of a performance incentive scheme that focussed on rewarding the extra mile. Until 2002/3, their performance management focused mainly on financial and operational improvement and targets. It also became apparent that the system focused more on performance assessment than performance management. Thus, the objective was established

to move the focus to a fully supported performance management process that focused on achieving the ATNS key strategic objectives. Each employee had routine objectives that were focussed on the relevant department's objectives and the employees' job description (allocated weight of 90% of total for individual performance incentive scheme). In addition, on a voluntary basis staff could present their manager with one to four individual change objectives that would add to the company's performance. The change objectives were only relevant to the annual incentive scheme where it was allocated 10% of the total performance evaluation (the bonus also depended on the percentage performance of the company).

During 2003/4 a total of 67% of ATNS employees participated in the individual performance incentive scheme (individual change objectives). The scheme was under review to ensure applicability in all areas of ATNS as well as the fair and consistent setting and measurement of objectives. The revue was due to an inconsistency in the level of effort that employees had to apply in order to successfully complete their individual objectives, i.e. one employee had an objective approved that only required the updating of aeronautical information publications (required 3 hours of work per month), while another employee had an objective of writing and implementing a complete emergency evacuation procedure for a centre. In addition, the company objective was to motivate 100% of employees to participate in the individual part of the incentive scheme. The MD: HR added during his research interview that the company was even considering the appointment of an external auditor to ensure a fair performance driven incentive scheme (the auditor would have to evaluate the fairness in approving employees' individual performance objectives).

The General Staff Incentive Scheme (ATNS Directive 2/2000) stated that an individual's performance on routine job and change objectives had to be reviewed at least twice per annum, but the policy noted that once a month constituted best practice. The policy failed to explain the manager's responsibility

in assisting the employee to improve on personal performance or the level of performance growth that was acceptable. In the same instance employees appeared to be left to their own devices for attaining competence or achieving team and individual objectives.

As ATNS transformed, diversity management had to be incorporated into the performance management and evaluation of all staff. This constituted a change where a manager's ability to manage diversity had to contribute at least 30% of any manager's objectives (i.e. executing their respective departmental diversity action plan). In addition, diversity competence had to be incorporated into the each individual's performance assessment as well. As was evident from the interviews and focus groups, it was clear that this section of individual performance evaluation was not performed. The GM: HR did however explain the way forward for ATNS with regards to diversity management, as each employee in the future had to present his/her manager with objectives to improve their diversity competence/management. During a performance evaluation, an employee would then have to motivate his/her achievement of these diversity objectives (This was however in a developmental phase at the time of the research project).

Diversity Management Policy. In addition, the ATNS Management Directive 1/2005 pertaining to Diversity Management embraced all four of the key focus areas of the company as it stated the following: The intent of the transformation in ATNS was to establish ATNS as a fully:

- commercial,
- performance driven,
- service and customer orientated,
- demographic and representative,
- employee focused

organisation with an inclusive diverse culture that recognised the basic quality and dignity of all people. The directive continued by stating that in an increasingly

diverse internal and external context, given globalisation and the changing nature of the workforce and technology, managers had to realise that without the effective management of diversity, the transformation process would not succeed.

The company defined diversity as i) the basis of effective people management culture was a belief in the basic equality and dignity of all people, as people, irrespective of their position in the company, their race, gender, physical or mental ability, wealth, sexual, orientation and so on. ii). It was underscored by a respect for individuals and an understanding of the negative consequences of stereotyping individuals on the basis of generally irrelevant criteria. iii). There also existed a belief that most individuals, managed and developed effectively, had a great deal to offer the organisation and are the most important factor in determining its success. iv). That success would not only increase productivity, but also resided in the interface with customers, suppliers and other stakeholders as well as in the image of the organisation in the broader community.

The Diversity Management Directive further stated that the creation of an inclusive diverse culture would receive high priority through the Diversity Management Process, of which the process was: i) awareness creation to all employees, starting at management level, ii) departmental workshops to identify key diversity issues, iii) development of departmental action plans, which would be presented at the Employment Equity Forum (EEF), iv) individual diversity action plans, v) provision of tools to continue discussions around diversity and mentor the diversity climate on a regular basis, vi) external review process and vii) integration of diversity into the broader people development strategy.

The Directive also emphasized responsibilities of the Chief Executive Officer that included commitment to transformation as a key strategic objective, to demonstrate personal commitment towards this transformation and monitoring

the progress of sub-ordinates and departments, as well as ensuring the appraisal system pertaining to rewards and sanctions were linked to the success/failure of the transformation process to a significant extent.

The responsibilities of line managers stipulated in the Directive that were of significance were that they had to ensure that they knew the objectives of their department as taken from the business strategy as well as the reinforcement and communication of their commitment towards the business case for transformation management. The rest of their responsibilities were pertaining to their staff, i.e. succession planning, training, recruitment, induction, performance, coaching, career planning and appraisal as part of the transformation process with reference to individual needs as well.

The responsibilities of ATNS's executive managers were similar to that of line managers with the exception of their responsibility to develop and implement a workforce plan with particular attention to transformation (including targets). In addition they were responsible for translating the business strategy into objectives for their own departments. It is interesting to note that it was expected of the Executives to understand and communicate the business case for transformation to all employees, but communicating their commitment towards the process was not mentioned as required from the line managers. (In retrospect it appeared that the executives did promote the business case for managing diversity, but they as well as the line managers failed to communicate their commitment to the process).

Executive and line managers were required by the Directive, to work on their strengths and weaknesses as identified by themselves or their superiors, peers and subordinates.

The responsibilities of non-managerial staff were to understand the transformation process, as well as their responsibility to self-development. It was

further expected of them to develop positive expectations and attitudes towards people development, consciously avoid and discourage stereotyping and to communicate in an adult-to-adult manner at all times. Finally, commitment was required for raising transformation-related issues in an open and constructive way and similarly for finding and implementing solutions.

Under Monitoring and Measurement in the Directive it was reiterated that it was the responsibility of all employees to develop competence in the management of diversity. It was also confirmed that the presence of a commitment to improving diversity competence and climate had to be assessed amongst all employees and in addition, also viewed as an important criteria for promotion.

A Diversity Steering Committee was appointed by the CEO to oversee the broader organisational wide diversity issues and to ensure that those were addressed appropriately. The focus of the committee was to ensure alignment, transparency and buy-in of all stakeholders through a focussed process towards transforming ATNS. They had to meet quarterly, report on transformation progress and highlight and discuss challenges. The permanent members of the committee were the CEO as chairperson, the Chief Operating Officer, the Chief Financial Officer and the GM: HR as well as the Diversity Facilitator. The chairperson was allowed to co-opt any members for specific input. The following channels were established for the reporting of diversity related issues: i) Directly to the CEO or any members of the committee, ii) from the Employment Equity Forum or iii) through the Diversity Facilitator or delegated person.

A Diversity Facilitator had to be appointed to take charge of the day-to-day issues and practical considerations of the transformation process, but the Directive stated clearly that the responsibility for formulation, communication, monitoring and evaluation of the diversity strategy rested with the CEO. The

facilitator had to be someone from the HR department and the person's role included:

- Acting as a diversity facilitator to the CEO and as an ombudsperson and trouble-shooter assisting with equity and diversity issues as it arised.
- Acting as facilitator for outside consultants working in the diversity/EE area (this included ensuring policies and procedures were abided by and ensuring follow-through from workshops to work environment.
- Present diversity workshops in the work environment when required.
- Coordinate the diversity audit and provide audit findings and recommendations to all relevant parties, as well as revising the diversity strategy for consideration by senior management.
- Establish consensus around changes to the diversity strategy on a company wide level and facilitate agreement on additional specific interventions at departmental level.
- Monitor the implementation of any changes made to the diversity strategy and the performance of managers in their roles and responsibilities.
- Establish agreed procedures to deal with disputes over diversity-related matters.
- Coordinate the keeping of records on diversity-related matters.
- Ensure revised diversity strategy was communicated to all employees.

### ***5.7 The ATNS Diversity Plan***

Following on the success of the initial workshop with the executive management of ATNS and acceptance of the consultant's point of departure, the process of developing and implementing an integrated approach for ATNS took on the following format/order:

- i. Development of an integrated model (refer to Appendix C) and a definition of the business case and associated competencies, roles, responsibilities and performance management criteria.

- ii. Communication of the integrated model, the business case and associated competencies, roles, responsibilities and performance management criteria (This was to ensure visible and undivided top management commitment to this process).
- iii. Formulation of Business Unit/departmental diversity plans to support an integrated ATNS strategy.
- iv. Development of Individual Diversity Action Plans by means of workshops focussing on personal diversity competence.
- v. Significant Performance Management of integrated department and individual plans with real consequences, positive and negative.

### **5.7.1 Diversity implementation**

The implementation plan of the diversity management process consisted of:

- Awareness creation amongst all managerial staff at all levels.
- Departmental diversity workshops. These workshops were designed to ultimately achieve two important outputs: a departmental action plan and an individual action plan.
- Departmental action plans. Departmental heads were informed of a date when they had to present their diversity action plans to the Employment Equity Forum and senior managers. It was also important for the Board to critically review these plans and to comment on them. Progress had to be reported and critically reviewed by the Board on a six-monthly basis. This reporting process highlighted the commitment of the Board and senior management towards diversity and ensured that progress was constantly reviewed.
- The establishment of a Diversity Steering Committee with the aim to monitor the diversity climate on a regular basis.
- External review process (diversity competence audits on managers).
- Integration of diversity into the broader people development strategy.

### **5.7.2 Communication**

The CEO informed all personnel by means of a personal letter of the intention of ATNS's transformation. The letter stated that the responsibility for successful transformation and diversity competence rested with all personnel. It further mentioned that the diversity competence would form part of future assessments and promotion criteria and that individuals needed to focus on their own development in this regard as well as departments that will be responsible for developing, presenting and managing their respective diversity plans – in alignment with that of the company.

Although the CEO communicated the business case for transformation via the previously mentioned letter and internal newsletter, a substantial number of employees still indicated that they were unclear of why the company was doing transformation, the definition thereof and how diversity fitted into the transformation strategy. It was then agreed at the Diversity Steering Committee that communication around transformation and diversity had to be reintroduced. A further concern was that managers were communicating different perspectives on transformation and diversity. The Diversity Steering Committee further recommended that all executives had to communicate an agreed perspective on transformation and diversity in order to avoid confusion amongst employees. In response, the executive management committee compiled their stance on and definition of transformation at a follow-up executive management meeting.

### **5.7.3 Means of delivery**

ATNS were given the options of all training conducted by the consultant and/or a diversity of associates. A train-the-trainer option was also available, as well as an interactive CD ROM (stand alone or intranet) version of the programme.

#### **5.7.4 Accreditation confirmation**

The UPSIDE workshop was formally accredited by Services SETA (South African Education Training Authority), and learners (delegates) who completed the course had to be assessed and would obtain credits towards an appropriate Skills Qualification (still had to be finalised, but indications were that the completion of the UPSIDE programme and assessment would provide learners with 5 credits on Level 6).

The significance of such accreditation was not only in the formal recognition by Government, but more so in the motivation for managerial staff participating in such workshops, to gain credits towards other formal managerial studies (at universities, etc.) that they could consider to further their own careers.

#### **5.7.5 Departmental workshops**

The diversity process started with eight focus groups held in November 2003 in order to determine the major diversity and cultural trends within ATNS and to assist the diversity consultant in adjusting the workshops towards these trends. Subsequent to that departmental diversity workshops commenced in January 2004. In total, forty-two diversity workshops were conducted and seven follow-up workshops were facilitated. All employees of ATNS attended at least one workshop and some workshop groups did have managers mixed with staff in the same group. The seven follow-up workshops were facilitated for departments that requested more guidance with internal issues or for compiling their departmental action plans. The Johannesburg ATS department's managers did have a separate workshop that was more aimed at presenting them with tools to compile a departmental action plan and the implementation thereof and to counter possible non-responses from employees due to their managers being present at the workshops (included were the Centre Manager and Pool managers from Tower, Approach, Area, AIM, ATSA).

The objectives of the UPSIDE (Unleashing Potential - Skills in Diversity and Equity) workshops were as follows:

- Develop an understanding of what diversity is and how it makes practical business sense for organisations to manage diversity effectively.
- Provide the opportunity for you to assess yourself and to develop practical skills.
- Develop an understanding of how diversity management and affirmative action form the basis of effective employment equity and how the skills relating thereto underpin all our communication with others in the work environment.
- Provide the opportunity for you to begin the process of devising a Business Unit or Departmental Diversity Action Plan.
- Provide the opportunity for you to put together your Personal Diversity Action Plan.
- Provide tools to continue the discussion around diversity and monitor the diversity climate on a regular basis.

### **5.7.6 The Inside of the Workshops**

The awareness workshops were divided into 5 sections in the UPSIDE training manual that each employee received (Human & Associates b, 2004):

- i) Foundations of people management;
- ii) Self-assessment;
- iii) Practical skills;
- iv) An effective people management strategy;
- v) Putting it all together: linking diversity/people management and BEE.

The main focus of the workshops was on the self-realisation that people differ at various levels within society, but not to the detriment of others. The tool used in these workshops was mainly group discussion exercises based on

scenarios given. People could learn about their own preconceived ideas and the reasons of other people's ways by means of these exercises. An integral part of these exercises was for people to reach a stage of learning the value and importance of asking the right questions at the right time, pertaining to the understanding of diversity in the workplace.

The awareness workshops discussed the inner dialogue of "I'm OK and you're not, because I expect you to fail/you haven't got what it takes/you are just like the rest of them/you must do it my way because my way is the right way, or that of you're OK and I'm not". The aim was to bring employees to the realisation that the company needed employees/managers to live the inner dialogue of "I'm OK and you're OK". This had to result into the focus of "I expect you to do well/you've got what it takes/I will try to accommodate your differences as long as it does not negatively affect the business/I am flexible to process; not flexible about output or standards".

People were asked to describe their own approach to work situations and then apply what they have learnt to these situations. In addition a Power Management Inventory had to be completed by each individual in order to determine his or her personal diversity management style. The test depicted the level of assertive (I'm OK, you're OK), affiliation (You're OK, I'm not OK) and personal (I'm OK, you're not OK) power styles used in everyday situations. In addition tools that could enable these changes on a personal and organisational level were discussed. Finally the importance of personal diversity competence (growing an assertive power style) within the greater organisational environment/goals was discussed to depict the requirement for organisational growth.

Most of the departments that completed their diversity workshops presented their diversity action plans to the Employment Equity Forum (EEF) and

were being implemented and monitored. These departments would then be requested to present a progress report to the EEF on an annual basis.

During October 2004, a diversity audit was conducted on all managers who had employees reporting to them. In total sixty-one managers were audited. Feedback was presented on the results to these managers between December 2004 and February 2005. Employees also had to receive feedback on the outcome of the audit for their respective managers, and managers were required to develop action plans to address areas that required improvement.

### **5.7.7 Results from the diversity audit**

In general the areas where it seemed most managers needed to improve were:

- *Performance Management* – honest feedback, the frequency of feedback and how it was done. Employees also felt that managers, in general, did not always tell them when they had done something wrong or assisted with them to improve. They also felt that they did not get enough praise for a job well done.
- *Career progression* – was also a concern with most employees, and they felt their managers did not do enough to facilitate their career progression.
- *Motivation* – in some environments employees felt that their managers created an environment that demotivated them.
- *Understanding Diversity* – some of the managers needed to work on improving their understanding of his/her shortcomings in relation to managing diversity.

### **5.7.8 Departmental Action Plans**

The departmental action plans were drawn up by the managers of relevant departments and were focussed on the actions that the department had planned

for managing diversity more effectively. These plans were then presented to the EEF and thereafter to the top management of the company for approval.

The action plans indicated the strategic diversity challenges of the department and then a detailed plan for addressing these challenges. The action plans included workshops to identify diversity barriers, discussing development needs with all the departmental staff, reviewing EE targets as well as promotions and recruitment, articulating the business case for diversity management, setting of standard agenda points for discussing diversity, setting departmental codes of conduct, performing regular audits on employee perceptions as well as BEE initiatives.

Most of the action plans indicated that the departmental leaders understood the need for change, but it also indicated a lack of understanding of the broader definition of diversity management for strategic benefit. Although there were exceptions, the action plans did not attempt to play on the benefits of managing diversity, identifying the binding factors of a department's staff or the importance of teamwork and team building. It appeared that these leaders/managers only saw the plan as something they had to do in stead of embracing the diversity within and allow the department's staff to develop the action plan, formulate and enforce the code of conduct and embrace the diversity within the department to facilitate discussions around diversity issues as well as creative project/business solutions.

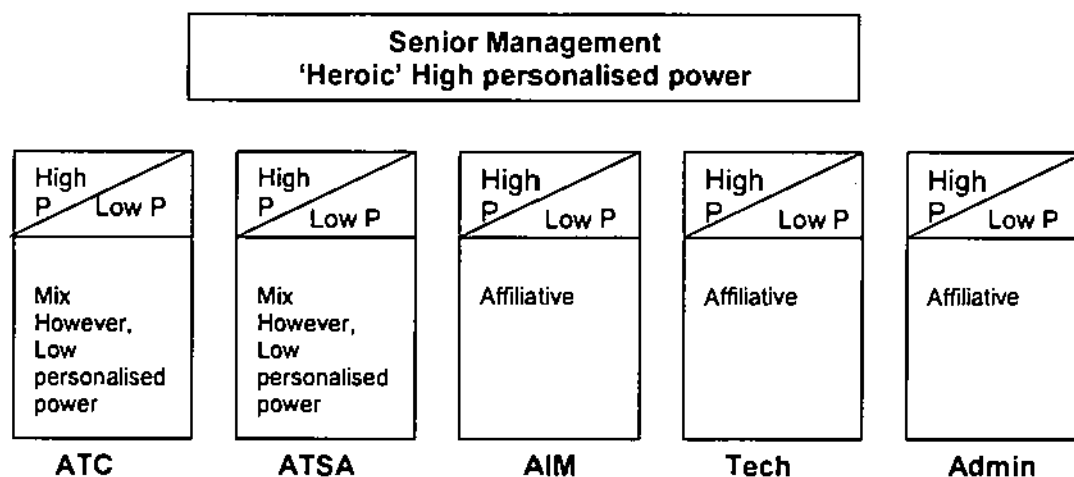
### **5.7.9 Facilitator's feedback on employee reactions at the workshops**

The diversity facilitator mentioned that many of the delegates to the courses had shown an interest and commitment. Similarly, some senior managers had shown a real interest in improving relations within their functions. At the same time, however, she mentioned that certain trends were emerging which could jeopardise the process unless a firm stance was taken.

The perception of the facilitator and her associates were that the most important of these trends were the scepticism of certain senior managers about whether this process should be taken seriously or could basically be ignored, together with an autocratic style that disempowered and demotivated team members. It was added that the problem was further exacerbated by what appeared to be a level of 'learned helplessness' amongst some managerial and many non-managerial personnel.

The facilitator mentioned that some technical and administrative staff that entered into consultation with her to discuss departmental and individual action plans, showed signs of reluctance to talk about issues due to fear of victimisation. The consultant's suggestion was that the Board or Senior Management had to make a statement that any proven victimisation would result in disciplinary action in order to facilitate the process of consultation.

**Fig 5.21: Consultant's silos identification for ATNS**



Source: Diversity management in ATNS and its links with transformation and leadership: Final report and recommendations (2005)

The diversity facilitator found that the majority of ATNS employees did not identify with ATNS as a company. The majority were also not particularly happy at ATNS. Although many employees (especially ATCs) loved their jobs, ATNS, as a company, tended not to imbue a sense of pride.

She suggested that this was perhaps because ATNS did not appear to be a cohesive company with a clearly defined identity, vision and mission, which encouraged pride, identification and teamwork. Rather, it appeared to her to be a series of quite distinct silos or even empires, which appeared to unconsciously breed separation, stereotyping and a 'pecking order'. This problem was compounded by the very different 'power styles' between levels of the occupational hierarchy (refer to Fig 5.21).

The consultant found that the majority of senior managers appeared to practise 'heroic management' (high levels of personalised power), personal power levels were generally low in the rest of the organisation (although many ATCs would communicate in a more aggressive way than comes naturally to

them). This implied the following to her (Diversity management in ATNS and its links with transformation and leadership: Final report and recommendations, 2005: 31-33):

- *Senior managers tended to dominate and were perceived as autocratic by the majority of employees (who feared victimisation and tended to be submissive almost to the point of 'learned helplessness').*
- *The ATCs were generally stereotyped by other employees as aggressive, even though, in themselves, they tended to lack high levels of personalised power. In times of stress, however, some resorted to a flight-fight or passive-aggressive response.*
- *The ATCs tended to stereotype ATSAs as lazy and disinterested (although they admitted that there were some pro-active exceptions). They also tended to stereotype technical, AIM and administrative staff (although probably to a lesser extent than is imagined by these groups). However, senior managers were generally perceived as autocratic and many of the 'middle' level managers are perceived as not standing up to them, and as not taking sufficient responsibility and accountability. Younger ATCs were not as aggressive and as arrogant in practice as admin, technical, AIM (and some ATSAs) perceived them to be. Indeed, levels of personalised power motive (and not necessarily style) were low.*
- *There were high levels of affiliation (and hence, low levels of assertiveness) amongst many technical, admin and AIM employees. They tended to perceive senior managers and ATCs as aggressive and arrogant; however, their lack of assertiveness often created a situation in which many employees took on the role of powerless victims, a condition sometimes known as 'learned helplessness'.*
- *Intra-silo issues included not only the rather disempowering relationship between older and younger ATCs but also a similar type of relationship between senior ATC management and middle and pool-management. Possibly to offset the high levels of task-orientation at higher levels, perceived 'people's people' were brought into middle- and pool level*

ranks. Although some of these individuals were effective managers of people, some frustrated both ATCs and their colleagues by appearing to be powerless in relation to their managers. They were thus seen as relatively weak and lacking the responsibility and accountability to make meaningful decisions and to 'fight the corner' for ATCs when representing them (a blunt conclusion here was that some if not most of those in managerial positions could be technically competent but lacked some of the people management skills to be effective leaders).

- There existed a strong perception that the ATSAs job had been reduced to the extent that they spent long and frustrating hours of boredom. Many ATSAs readily admitted that they needed to appear less apathetic and demotivated. Many ATCs agreed with this description for the majority of ATSAs. Some ATCs added that they openly encouraged enthusiastic ATSAs but tended to 'write off' those who appeared demotivated or had irritating habits (such as spending lengthy periods on phone calls to friends). Some ATSAs felt that not enough was done to stress the need for proactive personal development.
- Many of the more longer-serving ATSAs felt disgruntled about their perception that they had to train up new Educats without having a date for their own training. Some perceived themselves as 'cheap labour' and found it ironic that ATCs often complained about staff shortages whilst they were not accredited themselves.
- Amongst most ATSAs, there appeared to be a fear of victimisation if they were to speak up about their dilemma. Victimisation was seen to be prevalent in the sense that 'if you speak your mind, you won't go on training'.
- Some older ATCs appeared to have negative expectations of Educats and some (black) technicians. They would also appear to dismiss those ATCs who have not passed all their courses the first time or who struggled to complete their training in 300 hours.

- *Some gender stereotyping was also felt to exist amongst some older generation ATCs and managers.*
- *It should be noted, however, that there appeared to be greater levels of integration and fewer diversity-related concerns outside of Johannesburg. However, problems between management at Isando Head Office and the perceived lack of autonomy of 'regional' stations were raised on many occasions.*

The consultant concluded that all of this suggested that there was an urgent need to create higher levels of assertiveness and cross-functional teamwork across the organisation. The consultant suggested that the formation of horizontal cross-functional teams would not only break down the silos but also, if managed effectively, create a more common corporate identity. She pointed out that it would thus appear that the culture at that stage was not as functional and effective as it could be. Furthermore she identified two main orientations amongst ATCs namely those that were more akin to the traditional workplace (Generation 1) and a large number in 'Generation 3' or new generation workplace ATCs.

Finally, it was reported that the pull by a personally ambitious generation of young ATCs towards a new generation workplace combined with generally low levels of personalised power amongst young ATCs and ATSAs, administrative, AIM and technical staff, seemed to create an interesting paradox or set of contradictions. As far as diversity management was concerned it tended to create amongst most staff (Diversity management in ATNS and its links with transformation and leadership: Final report and recommendations, 2005: 34):

- *A willingness to spend a great deal of time talking about the issues amongst their peer groups but a perceived unwillingness by many to take responsibility for putting action plans and monitoring systems in place. This could only serve to exacerbate already strained relationships.*

- *A tendency to want to talk about oneself (often as a 'victim') rather than about solutions which would support the development of an inclusive and supportive diversity climate.*
- *A vested interest in the status quo.*
- *A 'blame and shame'; 'fight-flight' culture.*
- *In some instances, too much leniency with respect to diversity (which could have already negatively impacted the business).*

Some senior managers were also struggling to change from an autocratic style of management and adopted a chameleon style. Some ATCs in turn, were quite individualistic and perfectionists and found staff in the other silos quite frustrating. The consultant was of opinion that none of this augured well for teamwork.

### ***5.8 Recommendations by Diversity Consultant***

The consultant mentioned that she was not sure how one would solve these problems practically and realistically in ATNS, without a major transformation of the status quo. It appeared to her that solutions were required given the investment made in ATC training and the paucity of ATC's worldwide. Similarly, inter-departmental issues, 'world view' and communication patterns amongst personnel could create a situation where issues were attributed to a poor 'diversity' climate (in the sense of race and gender) rather than rank. This was particularly the case given the demographic profiles of the various subcultures.

The suggested recommendations from the diversity consultant to be debated in ATNS were as follows (Diversity management in ATNS and its links with transformation and leadership: final report and recommendations, 2005: 36-38):

- *With the introduction of a new CEO, ATNS could cascade the message that it was now reinventing itself – not in terms of the technical aspects of the business but rather in terms of how its people are led and managed. This could have included the rebranding of ATNS as a global ‘Generation 3’ – friendly organisation in which the effective management of all diversity is taken very seriously. This would in turn involve: i) The formulation of a set of leadership competencies, ii) the assessment of managers against these competences, iii) the training of managers in the competencies they lacked, iv) ongoing performance assessment of managers against the leadership competences (including diversity), v) the opportunity to accept alternative (non-managerial) placement for those not making the grade.*
- *The consultant mentioned that the diversity report had to be distributed to all staff who should be invited to respond to it either by attending feedback sessions at which the CEO was present or by writing personally to the CEO.*
- *The appointment of a trusted and respected ombudsperson who would take up complaints, unresolved issues and victimisation at the highest level.*
- *The strict management of those who were jeopardising the process because of high levels of autocracy.*
- *Putting in place a process to discuss interdepartmental divisions and to agree a way of moving forward and to improve teamwork.*
- *Changing the physical lay-out of buildings and rest-rooms to create greater levels of inter-silo interaction.*
- *The provision of life-skills (and especially assertiveness training) could be included in all induction programmes and in the initial training of ATCs.*
- *The delegating of certain responsibilities and accountabilities to stations, i.e. decisions concerning the qualification of ATSAs, minor incidents and certain aspects of people management currently undertaken by HR.*

- *Ensuring the timeous investigation of incidents and that incidents are seen as group learning opportunities. ATCs involved in incidents should also receive on-going support and encouragement.*
- *The regular acknowledgement of everyone's good work rather than the perception that 'favourites' get recognition and rewards.*
- *Manage diversity and reasonable accommodation more effectively, i.e. transport when on shifts, ATCs with small children on shift work sometimes require assistance (institute a 'rotating nanny' system) and in some instances, pay more attention to special days and religious observance.*
- *Instil assertiveness, discipline and punctuality from time of training.*

## **5.9 Employment Equity Forum**

In order to determine the contribution and importance of the Employment Equity Forum, the minutes of these meetings had to be analysed. The EEF and Diversity Steering committee came into existence in 2003, but only functioned as a fully active forum in 2004. The following minutes were available for analysis.

	2004	2005
EEF Meetings	4	3
Diversity Steering com	1	1

**Table 5.7: Frequency of diversity related meetings for 2004 and 2005**

### EEF minutes 13/02/2004:

During this meeting it appeared that not all EEF members were sure what their role was and it was decided that explanatory documents would be forwarded to all. A concern was also raised to the level of contribution EEF members were making to the efforts and aim of the forum. The following suggestions for addressing these issues were tabled for consideration: i) Forward the EEF attendance register to the EEF members' General Manager for action,

i.e. discuss the lack of attendance or nominate an alternative representative. ii) Create understanding of the importance that representatives had to give feedback to their departments and that their managers had to understand the importance of the representatives' involvement in this forum. iii) EE be part of each member's performance contract.

The Technical Solutions department's GM was the first to be present at a EEF to present the department's profile and targets. The person gave a presentation on the department's EE targets indicating a staff profile of total 59% white and 41% black. The following concerns were raised:

- The small amount of females in the Technical Solutions department.
- Moving black employees into managerial / supervisory positions proved problematic due to the fact that some candidates did not want to move into these available positions as they had other interests and then others did not have the relevant experience for the vacant positions.
- The relevant manager was of the opinion that the Recruitment- and Staff Compliment Policy needed to be revised in order to change the process of recruiting technical staff (normal attrition of white technical staff was zero and alternatives had to be sought for correcting equity as skills were scarce and the performance of staff was on par).
- If the compliment of Technical Solutions were to be increased to comply with regulating targets, that there would not be enough work for everybody.
- Technical services generally did not attract woman to this industry.

The chairperson was tasked to re-evaluate the Recruitment Policy for technical staff. The relevant manager did however confirm that should the staff compliment be increased that the efficiency level would then move from 85/15 to 70/30, leaving 30% spare capacity for training, leave, etc. The EE Forum had to convey the message to the Board by means of a formal report.

Concerns were raised around people issues, transformation, employment equity, career planning and performance management as all projects were either dormant or very slow in progress. The concern was that people were very laid back while the Board expected ATNS to deliver on these imperatives. Although the company focus was on finances and prominent projects, the executives were satisfied with the diversity process. It was reported that the resignations were high in November 2003 due to the failure rate of the ATSAs. It was mentioned that managers were not communicating the purpose of the diversity workshops prior to the workshop being held, however, the communication on EE issues via the Plug-in/Insight newsletter got very positive feedback from employees. It was decided that a team building session would be held with the new January 2004 intake of ATSAs, focussed on the diversity and transformation of the company. A diversity workshop was also scheduled with the canteen staff (private contract on the ATA premises) and the guest houses (providing accommodation to ATSA trainees) in order for all to understand how to relate to different people / cultures.

EEF minutes 23/06/2004:

The importance was stressed for each new representative to sign the Code of Conduct of the EEF.

It was confirmed that the EE Targets had been included as part of the general managers' performance evaluations.

Feedback was given to the EEF on the diversity process and a report had been submitted to executive committee for action. The forum decided to review the recommendations of the consultant in order to determine implementation.

Reasons for resignation were found to be remuneration, lack of development opportunities, communication, lack of career opportunities, work environment, conditions of employment and relationship with management. An ongoing concern pertaining to the resignation of Black men was raised again (no

further details were provided by the minutes). It was suggested that the exit interview questionnaire be reviewed in order to change the questions and enhance the information retrieved from these interviews.

The new EE targets were discussed, but the Forum confirmed that all Peromnes job gradings had to be finalised before the new EE targets were communicated. A plan had to be drawn up to achieve these targets and early retirement and packages had to be considered to achieve the targets. Meetings were held with each general manager to confirm that the targets were realistic. A concern was raised with regards to the number of women included in these targets and it was suggested that this be considered before final approval.

The Human Resources Committee of the Board still had to allocate the budget for an HIV/AIDS audit within ATNS. The chairperson requested all to forward their suggestions on how this budget should be spent i.e. training, workshops, audit or trend analysis (The researcher was of the opinion that the company's focus was incorrect, as the focus had to be on how to prepare ATNS for the HIV impact, i.e. informing staff, assistance programs, succession planning with regards to a possible health pandemic).

A concern regarding the recruits that were appointed in October 2003 was raised, as it was communicated to them that they would become ATCs within 18 months after their appointment. In addition, there were no ATC positions available and resignations could have escalated due to this irregularity.

There was still no clarity on the role of the Forum and it was suggested that a workshop be held to clarify the role of the Forum. A suggestion was made to invite other companies to share their information, experience, view and knowledge on their EEF.

Finally the importance was reiterated for all committee members to provide feedback to their managers/departments.

EEF minutes 16/07/2004:

The Corporate Development department and the ATA presented their departmental diversity plans to the Forum, but the CEO required more detail from the ATA plan before it was presented to the executive team. The GM: ATA also added that the department had a lot of diversity issues (no further information was available to determine what the EEF's response was to the issue).

The minutes indicated that the EEF was still awaiting the alternate representative nominations from six departments. The Chairman added that this was an indication of a possible lack of commitment from departments towards the EEF.

The suggestions for the HIV campaign were to attend an HIV workshop presented by another company in order to gain more insight into options; a risk assessment within the company; the third suggestion was for a survey on the willingness of employees to participate in a risk assessment drive. The decision was then made to forward a communiqué to explain the intentions of the EEF regarding HIV and to continue exploring other options.

Due to the ongoing uncertainty regarding the role clarity of the EEF, the members decided on a workshop during the month of August.

EEF minutes 13/08/2004:

It was mentioned that a communication plan was set out for the transformation process (mainly via Insight newsletter), but that it remained the responsibility of the managers to communicate to their staff.

The forum agreed that an investigation was required into the lack of development opportunities and career development within ATNS. In addition a concern was raised with regard to the trainee ATSAs that did not have clear development plans. It was added that the ten-year staffing plan with its relevant time frames would have addressed this issue, provided that it was communicated to all trainees.

All committee members were required to forward their inputs on the previous exit interview format and a suggestion was made that the individual had to be asked to describe his/her relationship with their manager (this matter could have been identified earlier in an attempt to prevent the great number of resignations by means of a 360 degree performance assessment).

EEF minutes 18/02/2005:

That the EEF had insight into the staffing/recruitment plans of ATNS in order to ensure compliance with Act 55 and targets set for the company (feedback presented to the Forum on the 10 year staffing plan of ATNS).

Issues around exit interviews were addressed and information on these interviews discussed in an attempt to determine and address reasons for the constant attrition of staff (the Forum had to find solutions to reduce the number of resignations, but no specific details were indicated in the minutes). Some committee members still had doubts on the success of the exit interviews. A decision was made to allow individuals who resigned to nominate someone to conduct their exit interview. Thereafter followed by three resignations not nominating someone to conduct their interviews, it was decided that HR had to supply such resigning individuals with at least 3 options of people who they can approach for an exit interview.

The EEF monitored the frequency at which departments presented their departmental diversity plans and the progress reports on its implementation.

It was reported to the EEF that the feasibility for an employee letters column on diversity matters was investigated, but space in the newsletter was an issue. It was also indicated that a similar column already existed for executive management feedback and duplication was feared. A procedure was however developed to deal with letters from employees for submission to the Insight/Plug Inn newsletter. The requirement for a mechanism to ensure regular evaluation of job descriptions was discussed.

EEF minutes 15/04/2005:

The Aviation Charter prescribed that 5% of the workforce had to be disabled, in addition only certain positions within ATNS were suitable for disabled people. The EEF proposed that HR got the support of all managers to identify these suitable positions for disabled people.

It was also confirmed at the Forum meeting that other races were not excluded when a qualified affirmative action person was not found. It was decided that all vacancies had to be forwarded to the EEF for evaluation. An EEF task team was reviewing the following processes: i) The recruitment and training process, and ii) the recommendations regarding validations.

The minutes noted that a total of 451 employees were trained during 2004. ATNS achieved 95% of their training target that included diversity training. ATNS exceeded the target to train 70% (set by TETA) of its employees.

EEF minutes 27/10/2005:

Members felt that job descriptions had to be re-evaluated annually to ensure the currency thereof. A mechanism was required to ensure that managers re-evaluated the job descriptions and HR had to oversee this process.

A suggestion was forwarded for an EE task team to be created for looking at all policies that involved employees.

Solidarity commented that it was important that the CEO was involved in the EEF and that she had to be the owner of the Forum. It was equally important that the general managers be involved and that the role of the forum had to be communicated to all staff. Solidarity also had a concern regarding the Training and Development (T&D) committee running separately from the EEF, as other companies had this as a combined committee. It was however decided that the Training and Development committee had to remain separate due to serious training issues that had to be discussed pertaining to the training of ATC and technical staff.

The corporate EE targets for March 2006 were 52% black and 48% white. The Forum was reminded of their importance to regularly monitor these targets and recommend changes, where applicable. Solidarity suggested that the EE targets became part of the general managers' performance evaluation due to the fact that the EE figures were only met at lower levels.

The purpose and position of the EEF in relation to the total transformation process was still vague and a decision was made to invite the CEO for insight and guidance as well as a re-evaluation of the EEF's directive and required changes for the new year.

Note: As the EEF constitution stated that the minutes of each meeting had to be distributed to all staff/departments, the EEF decided that this had to be done via the representatives of each department seated on the EEF. Although numerous times in the minutes it was indicated that these representatives did not even inform their departmental managers on the progress and changes that were discussed during the Forums.

As a solution to the uncertainty that reigned among the EEF representatives, the external diversity consultant was approached to conduct a

training session on the responsibilities and expectations of an EEF representative.

### **5.9.1 Diversity Steering Committee**

The diversity steering committee had only two meetings and the only difference in matters discussed was to be found in the greater detail of the progress of the diversity workshops per station and department. It appears that there was no need for an additional committee as the meetings were merely a discussion of progress between the CEO, General Manager: HR and the Manager: Employee Development (designated internal diversity facilitator).

### **5.9.2 Insight: The company newsletter**

The internal weekly newsletter was used as the main method of information sharing with employees to convey most of the information pertaining to the diversity workshops and the transformation process as a whole. Following is an extract from the responses of ATNS's general managers to transformation/diversity questions that were published ('Your name goes here – interim to name change of newsletter', Edition 2: 3). The newsletter also had a change of name during the transformation process from 'Plug In' to 'Insight'.

#### **'GM People Solutions'**

##### ***Why do you think transformation is necessary within ATNS?***

*We live in a dynamic world, since 1994 South Africa has been exposed to the Global World i.t.o. interaction regarding business, more specifically our business of air traffic and navigation services. With this globalisation, we realised we need to change to be in line with the world as a country we have been isolated at the tip of the African continent. To change we need to change the way we manage people and we need to change the environment and be more efficient. Transformation is not a nice thing to do, but is a necessary imperative for any business especially for ATNS.*

##### ***What does it mean to you personally?***

*For me it means that I need to look at what I do and determine whether there is a need to change and if so I will start a journey to change to the way I need to be – it must be a tangible change from what I was to something new. It means to*

*change the profile of the company as to reflect the demographics of South Africa. We need to create an identifiable business culture, accepting/appreciating differences helping to build ATNS to be successful.*

***What are some of the transformation challenges you see for yourself and your department?***

*Transformation is easy to talk about but difficult to do. I believe I am transformed, therefore as a person it is difficult to see the room to be transformed and this becomes a personal challenge. For us as a team we need to play a significant role in the facilitation of the transformation process and it is therefore imperative that we continually critically evaluate ourselves in terms of where we have short comings and then address them to ensue we provide the necessary support to our clients.*

***How would you overcome these challenges?***

*For me and my team we need to do a lot of introspection and continually seek feedback from others on transformation to get an understanding of where we are in the process, then use this feedback to form the basis for our own development.'*

#### **'GM Technical Support'**

***Why do you think transformation is necessary within ATNS?***

*We have a culturally diverse workforce and we live in an ever-changing environment from a social, economical and business perspective. As ATNS is a micro-organism of the country, we need to adapt and transform in reaction to the environment around us.*

***What does it mean to you personally?***

*Provides an opportunity to grow and learn in respect of your understanding of the people within ATNS.*

***What are some of the transformation challenges you see for yourself and your department?***

- Employment equity is a challenge given the age profile of the people within Technical Services as well as the low attrition rate and we need to find creative ways to address this.*
- Opportunities / potential for growth within the department is also limited given the low attrition rate and age profile*
- Providing people with the skills and competencies within in an ever-changing technology environment will always be a challenge. The change in Technical Services moved from hardware to a software environment that requires a different set of competencies and skills and provides the opportunity for people to develop in other areas.*
- For me personally, through this process I have identified specific development areas, which I will be working on to ensure change takes place not only within myself, but within the Technical Services division.*

***How would you overcome these challenges?***

*I cannot overcome these on my own and require a dedicated effort from every member of the team. We all need to assess how we can contribute to bring ideas, opportunities and solutions to the challenges we face.'*

What may have been questionable with regards to the company newsletter was the decision to publish only the opinion and commitment of senior management towards the diversity process, but staff had much more contact with middle level managers than those higher up. Possibly this may have been an issue, as senior management announced their commitment, but voicing the transformation need and commitment at lower levels could have dissipated in urgency due to a lack of opportunity and perhaps communication skill.

Other newsletter publications included the CEO's announcement of the transformation process, an explanation of the function and responsibilities of the EEF and an introduction of the EEF representatives as well as an end of year feedback (2004) on departments that presented their departmental action plans to the Forum. Updates on the company's EE figures were also published at regular intervals to highlight the progress made. In addition there were some occasions where Succession Planning policies and the Workplace Skills Plan were explained. One of the December 2004 editions had an enjoyable article on how to wish your colleagues a happy festive season in all eleven official languages.

The newsletter also reported on South Africa's Businesswomen's Association that entered into a partnership with Catalyst (the leading businesswomen's organisation in the United States, to conduct a South African census on the state of women within corporate leadership positions in the country. The census determined that 13% of South African companies (49 in total) had 25% or more of their director positions held by women and the newsletter stated that ATNS was one of them. ATNS was listed showing great achievement within this field with 33% of the company's directors being women.

## 5.10 Research Focus Groups and Interviews

Focus groups were conducted with staff and interviews with managers in order to establish their experience and role in the diversity intervention. The perceived success of the diversity intervention indicated the true level of success because transforming the culture of the company meant that its employees had to change. The results of the focus groups and interviews were as follows:

### 5.10.1 Focus groups (AppendixB)

Approximately eleven respondents from the eight focus groups administered, mentioned that they could not exactly remember what took place at the diversity workshops. This highlighted the issue that the focus groups were administered between 12 to 24 months after the different departments attended their diversity workshops. The respondents' comments also raised the question on the level of impact that the workshops had on staff, i.e. did they really learn something of significance? On the other hand, when referring back to the comments of numerous managers, it appeared that the workshops had a significant impact on those employees that wanted to learn something valuable and wanted to change.

#### Need for the diversity workshops.

*"I think the diversity workshops were a start to something that was obviously important in any company, uhm just just I think everybody always had ideas that you know we've got to have to start addressing differences between ourselves, but the workshops helped you concentrate on that and then realise you know things that that are beyond general thoughts. It was beneficial because it started that process"...."It sort of like highlighted some of the things that was sort of like hidden behind you see, sometimes you know I can't say a thing because you know of previously disadvantaged, I cannot answer you direct or tell you direct, that is what you need...it helped us to live according to the rules and*

*regulations of the company to reach the same destination together in one force, indespite of colour”.*

As the previous quote indicated, almost all respondents confirmed that there was a need for the workshops, with the exception of 5 people. Most respondents were of the opinion that the workshops encouraged open-mindedness and taught them toleration. During two focus group sessions with relatively new/young employees within ATNS, individuals within these groups responded in a similar fashion towards the probe into the need for the diversity intervention. They all mentioned that the company was in need of an intervention, but that they as individuals did not need it.

*“Personally I did not need the workshop, because I don't have a problem with anything like religion or that type of stuff”.*

As an after thought the same respondents did mention that they learnt from the workshops. In addition some of these groups' respondents were still at the ATA at the time of the workshops and thus participated in a three-day session that they described as more beneficial. In contradiction to not needing the workshops, the respondents stated that the operational environment had only shortened one-day workshops, but that this section had a greater need for a more in-depth intervention.

#### Issues dealt with at the workshops.

*“For me racial issues were brought into the picture, stereotypes stereotypes. I found it helped me a lot and highlighted a lot of perspectives that people get of each other and that in many cases it was incorrect. I'll never forget the blue color brown color, what was that? It pretty much proved to us you know that perceptions, what a person think of another. A person must not make the mistake of stereotyping. It helped a lot in giving a person a fair chance”.*

The comment indicated the significant effect that the Jane Elliot video had on numerous respondents that served as proven fact the impact that stereotyping had on people. Other issues that were dealt with were stigmatisation and judgement. Most respondents were of the opinion that their perception towards other people changed as a result of the workshops. Language, culture, class and gender were also addressed. Every focus group's initial response was silence and once the probe was used (refer to Appendix B) most respondents mentioned that not much of any of those issues were discussed. A substantial amount of respondents did express their experience of the workshop as "*people speaking about their own experiences*" and that not enough time was spent on talking about discrimination, racism and organisational hierarchy. One black male respondent suggested that a question should be asked before these discussions, namely "*does this issue really affect the person's work or that of other people?*" It was stated by respondents that in ATNS it was not race but occupation that mattered.

A black respondent said the following: "*...there is too much of a generalisation of colour and race issues, white people were lied to because my dad is a racist, it is not just white hating black but racism between Zulus, Xhosas and Twanas. A far greater problem within the company was the underlying phenomenon: Lets not say it in front of so and so*".

This response indicated the importance of diversity interventions that had to address racism in general. Employees' minds had to be opened to the concept of racism that existed in peoples' minds in several compartments of society. This matter was especially relevant to ATNS that started to deal with international customers more frequently.

Another respondent mentioned that the workshops allowed for that specific group to question why black people had to speak to each other in a loud voice, which gave the opportunity for the black employees present at the

workshop, to explain that this custom was actually a compliment to other individuals present, because it was their way of showing respect and that they were not gossiping about those in the vicinity and that these individuals were welcome to listen to their conversation.

Change within the organisation because of the diversity workshops.

"Whether its in a joking manner or if people are taking it seriously they...diversity is there now, it's a word now, everyday".

In general it appeared that diversity now had a presence within the company, as the statement indicated. Specific groups did also see change after the workshops in their own working environment as they themselves and their colleagues developed a greater sense of pride in what they were doing. These departments' lack of pride were mainly induced by other departments that perceived these departments as *"dumping grounds for people who could not make the grade, those people could not pass all their courses, and then something will go wrong so the managers and the ATCs then automatically think we have made a mistake again, even if we had nothing to do with it, they always suspect us first, that's demotivating"*.

Other respondents did observe a change within the organisation after the diversity intervention, but only for a short period of time. Some still believed that much of it was just window dressing *"because people's behaviour would change under pressure, when they become emotional or angry, and soon their background comes out again"*. They believed it takes a substantial amount of time to change a person's attitude. It was mentioned that the workshops were a good platform for discussion, but that they required guidance thereafter as a follow-up on how to bring change about.

*"...the troubles and problems of before were more targeted at the African people, they are the ones that have to be uplifted by this, so they must actually*

*give us comment on how the guys have been doing. I personally have seen a remarkable change in all my colleagues from old to young, people are accepting African people and socialising with them, they are understanding, sometimes they don't agree, but I mean people are like that, but I have seen a great improvement".*

The remark indicated the good that came from the workshop as the corporate culture became more inclusive, but possibly also indicated the misperception that some staff may still have that it was about making Africans feel at home. This confirmed the importance of a well defined communication strategy and business case for managing diversity that had to stipulate the company's intent to a corporate culture change that was focussed on universal change that would encourage diverse input for strategic and personal growth. The following comment confirmed the previously mentioned suspicion: *"People are not coming out of their shells yet, that's the problem. There is a lot of factors there you know, its coming from ...there is a barrier between Head Office, managers, Technical Support and ATC".*

*"The fact that we are three companies in one, I feel like if you are Technical Support you are Technical Support, ATC is another company, Isando (Head Office) is another company....you feel like ATCs are not part of your company, you don't want anything to do with them because they think they are better....But its not an ATC thing, its inside the different levels, its within the department."*

Again the silo operation was indicated as a stumbling block for the change of corporate culture and in establishing an inclusive culture.

#### Are you behaving differently because of the workshop?

A white female respondent admitted that the workshop she attended made her realise the unfairness of her comment towards a black co-worker's eating

habits and enabled her to change her attitude towards the matter and apologise for her comment.

*"I changed in myself, starting asking questions why like this, why like that, then after a while I would see things in P and ask him hey P why are like this today, and we started talking and we don't bottle up. I've learned its about communication, its communication if we don't communicate more frequently, if I said something to you uhm a comment that you didn't like, I'd like you to call me around and say hey V that was a bit harsh, then we talk, then we solve it man to man. In future I know if I talk I know what's the limit, I know where's the red tape".*

This remark pointed out how important it was to set the scene in a company by means of a diversity intervention to facilitate future conversations and teaching employees to ask internal diversity related questions.

*"The workshops created tolerance and the evidence was visible within our section, but on corporate level there was no change"* was the comment from a focus group respondent that consisted of younger employees. On enquiring why there was no corporate change, the reply was that the majority of employees within the company did not practice what they have learnt. *"Controllers think they can get away with everything"* was offered as the common excuse for the disrespect that was shown to certain staff groupings, i.e. ATSAs and AIM staff – *"some people will speak to you in certain way all the time"* implied that the respondent was spoken to in a disrespectful manner on a continuous level and his tone of voice indicated that he had no respect for the mentioned individuals, but that he was also demotivated by these individuals' communication manners. Respondents in this group felt that the individual had to be respected and not the position or skill/qualification. Even ATSAs that became ATCs did not mingle with other ATSAs thereafter, *"they were already brain washed on validation"*.

Although the suggestion for an ATSA suggestion box came from this staff grouping some time after the workshops, it was added by these respondents that they did not expect any diversity issues to be forwarded or addressed by this means (same occurrence surfaced than in the Technical department where opportunities were provided during meetings to raise diversity issues, but no response came from the employees).

Two groups felt that they were diversity competent even before the workshops, but that they became less tolerant of people that still did not change after these workshops. It was however mentioned that the underlying diversity competence and awareness had been established, it was now a matter of reinforcing it. In addition, one focus group elaborated on the significant change that they observed in their manager's behaviour, as she became dramatically more open to staff issues, improved her staff relationships and took initiative to talk to staff about their personal lives (this manager mentioned that the audit feedback that was given to her by the consultant was painful, but that she actively wanted to change her behaviour). The same group consisting of only junior staff added that there were no diversity issues within the group, more personality differences that were dealt with during the workshops. The comments from the younger staff supported the generational trend issues that were identified by the consultant, as these youngsters grew up in an environment where diversity was already at the order of the day.

Some respondents found workshops to be useful as opportunities to get to know everybody in the group and their different backgrounds. One respondent found it interesting to hear that most people in his group had family priorities that they rated more important than anything job-related. Following the workshops, one department had a few informal sessions thereafter where staff actively engaged in learning how to greet others in all the different languages represented there. Another department's staff compiled a code of conduct, got a mascot for their diversity drive and laminated the code for use as a continuous

pocket reminder for each individual. This proved the response to the workshops that was possible had managers incorporated their staff's input into the development of departmental action plans and the implementation thereof.

To raise or not to raise (a concern), that was the question?

None of the respondents were aware of any formal mechanism in place to raise concerns, although one respondent mentioned *"I am sure there is something in place, but I am not sure what it was"*. For this reason the respondents were obviously unable to answer any questions regarding concerns raised or follow-up on any concerns raised.

Ad hoc concerns mentioned to managerial staff at different levels by only a few respondents, were left unanswered. Especially answers to their question on career plans and development were outstanding for quite some time already. A few focus groups voiced a need for an ombudsperson that would allow them to ask for guidance, specifically pertaining to the relevance and merit of possible diversity issues that they were contemplating. Another suggestion was for an independent forum for raising concerns. Victimisation was brought up as a matter of concern, as certain managers only responded to questions and complains in a negative manner. It was mentioned that some managers were approachable while others portrayed the reasoning of *"this is the only right way, my way"*. Another concern raised was colleagues that victimised each other in the past, i.e. gossiping and attempting to gain the manager's favour.

These matters raised a question on the communication channels within the company, as the EEF constitution clearly stated that the Forum had to handle all diversity and EE concerns. The fact that the Directive stated that the internal facilitator had to act as an ombudsperson for addressing diversity issues was unknown to employees. Clarity appeared to be an issue on this matter as there was invitations extended to staff during the workshops that they could raise any concern with the consultant or the facilitator. The issues surrounding the

behaviour of certain managers also indicated the importance of the internal diversity facilitator's responsibility to establish an agreed procedure to deal with diversity disputes. The following quote illustrated the issues that staff were dealing with:

*"I think victimisation is still a reality, I have seen victimisation, it's not just a fear within. And to solve this who do you go and speak to, cause the other manager is friends with the one that is victimising you....and they talk to each other. To whom do you go?... but we need someone who can mediate, that someone impartial, somebody that's impartial. I can maybe be open to this guy (colleague within department), but still it's a problem cause I have a problem with the manager and I go and talk to somebody and he makes a comment, and then I come back and that guy has still got a grudge feeling against me and I have to work with him and the team. If I have a problem with one of my colleagues and speak to the manager about it and that guy finds out, that's also a problem, tomorrow I have to drive with him to Nelspruit and he is cross with me."*

#### Most successful part of the diversity workshop.

A good factor was that diversity became part of the company's everyday vocabulary that they found the brown/blue eye experiment video of Jane Elliot extremely useful. One group specifically mentioned that the follow-up assertiveness workshops assisted them greatly in addressing communication issues within their working environment.

#### Least successful part of the UPSIDE workshops.

A significant point of discussion was the awareness of company values that were not emphasised and recognised as the common binding factor, i.e. trust, respect, teamwork and participation. Another respondent called it "*practice what you preach*", though it appeared that the relevance was directed to senior management that did the preaching, but middle and lower level management not practicing the formerly mentioned preaching. One respondent mentioned that he found it difficult to elaborate on the impact of the diversity workshops or the

changes it brought forth in managers, due to the numerous leadership changes within the company structure.

Three white females did find the workshops to be negative as one of them felt that she was left to "defend the white race". One black individual did however find the workshops to be negative as well due to a racist remark that was made by a white colleague. His response confirmed the importance of experienced external consultants that were able to deal with such scenarios and assist with counselling where needed. It also showed how ignorant or blatantly vindictive employees can be towards each other, his experience was as follows:

*"But on some things that were said, they also had a negative impact on other people like myself for example, uhm the fact that uhm the fact that black people learn slow, that they are not as competent, I have to be honest it haunted me for about four months, because there were situations where I could give my input by showing initiative, you know in the work environment you don't only do what you are told to do...you can foresee this will be a problem tomorrow, let me be creative and solve it now. But you know living with that feeling that I'm not as creative as other people, you know it you know it really gets you into a situation where you do what your expected to do, you don't see the importance to show initiative....I even discussed it with other people, this workshop brought some negativity because I really felt very bad after that. It was just an attack, a way of attacking other races. It shows a lack of respect to other people, I remember another remark, I would not say who made that remark, but he said he said 'these people, these people cannot file flight plans because they are capable of cutting wood.'"*

In one focus group (five out of seven respondents were female) the power dynamics between men and women came under discussion and regardless of colour, these women agreed that the social-political background of some older white males caused conflict in their dealings with women. "Sometimes some of these males develop an issue because they have to listen to a female manager

*and in other instances it appears that these males do not always know how to react to these situations where I am the senior to make the decision".* In general, these respondents said that it all came down to respect. The female focus group was of opinion that this issue was not significantly addressed during the workshops.

These scenarios confirmed the importance of having an experienced diversity service provider that could deal with such situations when they occurred, but also the need for an active reporting system of not only unresolved diversity issues, but also for reporting of treatments required by victims of diversity incompetence.

The workshops for the financial department were at a crucial time and made it difficult for these respondents to focus on the diversity workshop (timing of workshops were important in order to enhance benefits, ATNS had to be sensitive to the 'season' that certain departments were in during the diversity intervention planning and execution period, i.e. financial year end, etc).

#### What would you change about the intervention or workshops?

On asking focus groups what parts of the diversity intervention should be changed, the general feedback was aimed at a continuous process with more informal opportunities to discuss differences and learn from each other. Other respondents added that the interventions should be longer, less formal and with opportunity to be outside the working environment with a greater mix of departments within these groups, but it also had to be fun. The forced attendance and discussion was not enjoyed and it was rather suggested that a situation had to be created where group members were dependent on each other in order to facilitate a learning experience. The time lapse between the initial start of the intervention, the completion and follow through was too vast. In addition, more depth was required for follow-up activities and greater feedback from the personality tests that were completed during the assertiveness workshops.

Respondents were unsure about the new CEO's stance on the issue of diversity management, but they also expressed their concern regarding the lack of experience and knowledge that managers had pertaining to diversity management and the broad spectrum of management in general. Approximately half of the focus groups wanted senior management to listen to their complaints and suggestions more often, thereafter they could decide to "use it or lose it". The respondents did however mention that they were willing to listen to what managers had to say. A need was expressed for Head Office to also become more involved in the process. Some respondents were of the opinion that the workshops had to focus on a check mechanism in order to allow for staff and managers to measure if they were changing. Thus incorporating more managerial participation in some future diversity initiatives was requested by the staff, but they also wanted to see if they and their managers were progressing according to a type of measurement.

Respondents wanted colleagues to share more about themselves, i.e. background, family etc. Suggestions for motivational speakers and additional videos on diversity matters were also made for maintaining a continuous diversity drive. An open door for ATNS's management after the workshops may have been the fact that some respondents developed introspective questions of fear and uncertainty regarding their own diversity competence that they needed answers for. They suggested informal group discussions and again voiced their need for an ombudsperson as an independent mediator for raising discussion on diversity issues. The following quote also indicated the danger of diversity awareness training without the availability of an ombudsperson or follow-up discussions that may also leave employees with serious introspective questions that could possibly hamper personal growth.

*"From my point I'd say yes, I've seen them (change) but now there's some barriers I need to sort of like deal with, like when I open myself to one part I know what is diversity now and what diversity should do, but I still got these questions*

*that are sort of like introspection questions that I need to sort out. And there is still fear in there you see, you are not sure of things”.*

An earlier initiative of ATNS was brought up as a good method to break down barriers between staff of different departments, i.e. the annual action cricket tournament. This time it was suggested that each team had to be representative of each department. It was mentioned that some people would still think it was only a party, but departmental barriers could be broken down between departments by means of such initiatives. The respondents were of the opinion that such team building efforts did not have to be in a competition format.

*“Uhm for me, uhm with this diversity its now a name but we aren't doing enough as well, we just call it on Wednesday meetings, we got this subject on diversity and well I don't know if anybody is too scared to say anything or just to uhm to get the meeting over or they don't know what to say. I think there should actually be ...its like the same as managers or the Head Office, we ask them to be more involved. Why don't they come or we get somebody to speak a little bit on or to give us a seminar, some people say we should get a motivational speaker to talk about diversity. I for example or uhm my opinion of HIV is totally different from S. There is nobody here that come to seek to us about HIV and what implications its got on our jobs and the future and even the future of our country”.*

Other respondents confirmed that it still appeared that employees were afraid to air diversity concerns. The respondents mentioned that trust and confidence were issues that had to be dealt with and in addition the current culture within the company was not setting a platform for making a person's HIV status public. Employees also expressed a need for informative HIV discussions. In addition, the researcher found that staff had to be educated first (due to misconceptions) before a supportive HIV program could be launched.

### Diversity competence assessment.

None of the respondents were previously assessed on their diversity competence, individual action plans or their progress regarding diversity competence. Three respondents did however mention that they were aware of their individual action plans that had to be assessed sometime in the future, but that it never happened.

### Manager competence in diversity management.

Staff from the ATA had strong feelings towards the lack of opportunities for students to raise concerns towards their training and diversity matters, *"if you are nice and agreeable you will be fine, but being intelligent, and forceful is not good and some of the instructors, the Training Manager and the General Manager will stick together against you .....your attitude is only right if you lick the right asses"*.

*"Its there, but its sort of like window dressing, you I like to see things in action, its there, but very slow."*

The two comments illustrated how some managers still made a half-hearted effort to facilitate window-dressing without any real change. The respondents called for an independent and authoritative person to act as a mediator to protect staff and the well-being of students/employees. It appeared that the workshops added to the dilemma as people were invited to confront issues, but the situation backfired, *"a lower level person has no backing, it is still us and them"*. The comments raised during these workshops resulted in vindictive reactions i.e. letter on personal file, but also left some staff with a fear, *"I am too scared to say anything now"*.

*"...the manner of talking, it can it can spoil your day, arrogantly speaking to you, nananana and off he goes (the relevant manager). At the end of the day it breaks one and once you start your working under stress, suddenly you are unhappy and nothing will happen and you loose concentration, you loose*

*concentration. You feel like packing your bags and make like Donald and duck for the day. But if we can talk this on a daily basis or maybe like whatever times and then get a feedback.... It's so nice sometimes, I've seen something that was not good and its tiffing me, but when I come back they can say but that issue of yours have been solved, this is how it was solved. You know it makes me one happy ATNS employee."*

Obviously the remark spoke of the disrespectful manner that some managers still communicated in, but also how certain issues were dealt with in a constructive manner with the required feedback. In addition, it proved that some managers did not gain the necessary insight into their lack of communication skills/behaviour and also the importance of creating a managerial understanding of the implication of such incompetence (by means of the intervention).

There were three people that attended the focus groups that were not employed by ATNS at the time of the workshops. Their response to the question of their manager's diversity management competence was that they were not sure what the competence entailed. In addition this would have made it unfair to expect individual action plans from employees that did not attend the diversity workshops and even more unfair to assess them on these action plans.

*"Difficult to say, that would only be done in the in the, where by there will be a CEO or COO that would be coming and that would be done. And then sitting in the boardroom and saying 'how are you, are you well, how is the family?' Just because he sees the CEO, he is just there to impress him. Then they think this somebody loves the team."*

The remark suggested that senior management within the company may possibly have been misinformed about the behaviour and people skills of certain line managers. It also supported the other comments of possible window dressing.

### Company policy and procedure.

ATNS's policies and procedures brought up the question of selection and induction training for new recruits and the diversity culture that they would have to subscribe to in the new ATNS. The opinion was mainly that the diversity transformation within the company did not filter through to these aspects of the change. Respondents wanted more feedback from the EEF and unfortunately none of the respondents were aware of the function within the EEF to raise concerns pertaining to diversity issues. Some complaints were lodged at staff treating respondents in a disrespectful manner due to their own lack of knowledge regarding procedures for certain queries, i.e. study assistance, pay adjustments etc. Some respondents also felt that policies were too directed towards operational requirements and performance, that it did not support diversity competence significantly. Some respondents added that due to being frontline staff, they had to deal with verbal abuse from customers on a regular basis, but that ATNS condoned this behaviour by not establishing written procedures for action in order to address such unprofessional behaviour.

Contract workers felt left out when it came to the performance policy that disqualified them for such bonuses, even if the contractor worked for the company for several years, *'I worked just as hard to achieve the success of the department, in fact, when other employees meet to negotiate performances etc, the contract staff still has to continue working'*. The performance management system came under scrutiny as employees aired their opinion on the inability of managers to manage the performance of employees and other managers according to an insufficient Directive. *'My immediate manager has too much power in deciding on my bonus'*, was the concern of another employee that mentioned that the person's quality of work should be measured by asking that person's juniors how they perceive his/her effectiveness.

## 5.10.2 Interviews (Appendix A)

### Strategies to leverage on diversity.

None of the managers interviewed had a personal or departmental diversity strategy in place. Given the strategy of the diversity intervention that all departments required a departmental action plan, the reason was possibly due to these action plans not incorporated into the performance management system of the company. The response to the question of diversity strategies in place was always silence and a bit of confusion, almost as if none of the managerial respondents were aware of diversity strategies they had to have in place. Interesting enough was that most managers were of the opinion that the departmental diversity plans rather stipulated departmental values that they had to live by, and thus could not be physically implemented, or measured.

*"I think, I think when you look at strategies that are in place, you look at the diversity workshop which has been from an ATSA perspective every single ATSA in the system has been to diversity workshops. Uhm when you have diversity issues you try and sort them out as they come along. And I think, I think it is more company focused, more company focused strategies than pool focused strategies".*

*"This is one of our standard agenda topics in our weekly meetings, we try address this on a continuous basis and uhm we talk quite a lot about the diversity in the work environment and also try to get feedback. But the staff still seem to not share their views and opinions openly, uhm its as if they still hold back quite a bit on diversity....We had an incident the other day when a black guy, one of our assistants which is at the lower level of skill and competence he uhm, his son died and the funeral arrangements...and it came forward, you know people don't want to talk about it, as if it's a secret. I'ts a funny experience I had, that people don't want to share how they operate in such a sad situation."*

Two departments had diversity as a standard agenda point for monthly/weekly meetings, but the response was always silence (as was illustrated in the above mentioned statement), to such an extent that the one department deleted the agenda point. In the other case, the manager assumed that the staff had no diversity issues, as staff never raised or discussed any diversity issues at these meetings. Another two managers placed more emphasis on an informal discussion, mainly in conjunction with a social atmosphere that allowed for open discussion that included any matter, including diversity. A senior manager pertinently expressed the importance of taking staff out of their comfort zone or normal surroundings to allow the group to find a common denominator that will forge a new relationship of trust and respect as the situation dictated a necessity to work together, because staff were dependant on each other (according to the consultant's silos identification, the company's departmental configuration and operation did not allow for this interdependent relationships to be formed across departments). This manager also made use of such an event to take his team on a river raft adventure as part of a strategy to forge greater interdependent relationships.

*"We actually have a diversity plan which has been submitted probably two years ago already. I don't, we really, actually have got a specific set of targets although we've got the plan in action, we try to live the plan on a daily basis. So we don't really measure ourselves to say we have achieved a certain few things."*

This comment indicated why certain departments found no link between diversity management and the business aims of ATNS partially due to the lack of performing measurable changes in stead of just living the plan.

#### Diversity strategies linked to Employment Equity.

The GM: HR stated that all the strategies of ATNS were linked to EE, while referring to the integrated transformation model (refer to Appendix C). He mentioned that the integrated model was based on the strategic imperatives of

ATNS and thus as EE was linked to staff retention, so it was linked to moving traffic safely and in doing so again linked to financial growth.

Other managers had mixed responses, but their explanation that followed did however indicate that the strategic imperatives of the company were linked to EE.

*"Uhm, no I don't think so, I don't think so and don't get me wrong, we are here to work together as a team and employment equity is part of our business, that is not a new thing, its to its to get the people to work together and not necessarily only uhm for an employment equity perspective".*

#### Diversity strategies linked to business objectives.

*'The workshops and transformation process were company-focused and this made it difficult to have pool-focussed diversity strategies in place'.*

This comment proved that certain managers still had difficulty in understanding the business case and need for the transformation within the company as a whole. The comment may have been an indication also that managers struggled to make the connection between the company's transformation strategies and the day-to-day management of their staff.

One manager stated that there was a significant fear within the white males in the particular department towards losing their jobs and rumours even spread that their predecessors were already identified. During the intervention the staff was, however, re-assured that they did not have to fear losing their jobs, as was the case. Again it appeared that the managers did not understand the transformation strategies or more relevantly how the company planned to achieve these strategies. If the strategies were communicated more effectively and in greater detail, staff should have been enabled to link it to the business objectives that did not dictate lay-offs.

### Successes of ATNS's diversity strategies.

The success of the diversity strategies was high on implementing the awareness workshops process, the changes in leadership and the increased involvement of the union (Solidarity) in negotiations. The GM: HR added that the downside was that they failed on the follow through of departmental and personal action plans.

Certain departments employed staff only for entry-level positions and as such a manager remarked, he did not mind whether staff used their opportunity in ATNS as a stepping stone. Career prospects within ATNS were limited and in addition the manager of this department found it difficult to motivate staff, he mentioned that they were high on affiliation, low on self-esteem and team work, but also required a lot of effort to stay focused on a goal. This matter illustrated the other side of the coin and thus left a strain on the success of the company's diversity strategies because of the financial investment that the company had to make in each employee's training that related in experience gained over a significant time period. To attain the strategic imperatives of the company required that staff in even entry-level positions had to be retained in order to guarantee sustainability in performance by means of training conducted by experienced instructors.

### Measurement of diversity strategy successes.

It appeared that none of the managers were aware of how the successes of the diversity strategies were measured. Three managers mentioned that staff retention and resignations were good indicators of these successes although it was too early yet after the 2005 changes to tell.

The GM: HR stated that the successes of the diversity strategies had to be measured by means of the performance evaluation of managers and staff as it was linked to the departmental and individual diversity action plans. The implementation of the individual performance evaluations linked to the diversity

competence did lack drive and had to be re-focussed. The GM: HR mentioned that once the process was up and running, it simply meant the manager of any employee (managers included) only had to ask the individual to motivate the parts of the diversity action plan he/she successfully completed. As with the individual performance objectives, each individual in future had to set personal objectives based on the departmental aims and objectives, but all subject to an audit approval administered by HR.

*"I have never really been sure how one measures diversity climate...you know to me its not a tangible thing, it's a feeling that one can feel and say things seem to be better or seem to be worse, there is more tension or there isn't, people is more accepting of each other or not. But how you physically measure it, I don't know."*

The respondent confirmed the issue on numerous other managers' minds, i.e. how do I measure the diversity performance of my department or managers? It appeared as if it was the opinion of most managers that diversity was a way of living and not measurable at all. This could possibly be why so many managers did not change, because their superiors had no idea of how to manage their diversity competence.

#### Impact of ATNS's diversity strategies on the business.

The impact of ATNSs diversity strategies on their business success had different responses. Some responses were that ATNS was able to recruit competent affirmative action employees, but they did however have difficulty in retaining these staff, the relevant manager recalled the response of such a resignation as being *'This still feels like a white company and I am an outsider'*. This highlighted the importance of the company to change the corporate culture to an inclusive/in-group culture, as it appeared that the atmosphere was still dictated by certain authoritative figures that failed or refused to change and embrace diversity.

*"From my perspective its quite difficult to say uhm, when I look at uhm, I'll use an example, uhm of our Aeronautical Rescue Co-ordination Centre launch, companies do want to do business with you"*

Referring to the impact on staff, the same manager responded with an explanation that indicated that an individual only became part of the company's success when he or she successfully completed an ATC course and validated on a position. *"Uhm, well remember that from the pool's perspective (ATSA) you must remember that uhm they are all in the process of becoming something, they're not there yet. So it is quite difficult to say they are successful until they are all successful. I, we look at the Tower failures last year, the Tower course failures, no then we have not been successful".* This comment was echoed by other managers as well and proved to be a contributing factor to the high resignation rate, as managers' opinion possibly culminated into their approach towards dealing with staff.

The General Manager of Human Resources (GM: HR) described the diversity workshops as part of a bigger transformation process and that diversity management was one of the tools for embracing the change within the company by embracing its people at different skills levels, backgrounds, views and perspectives on life. He continued by saying that the diversity workshops were intended to prepare the mindsets of employees for the greater transformation process, because so many people still thought everything revolved around black people in and white people out. It was decided at the previous extended management meeting that the company had to change as people of ATNS. The meeting wanted to create a culture within ATNS of *'I win, we win'*.

The change of leadership, restructuring of posts within ATNS and resignations were mentioned as reasons for the lack of drive and greater success of the diversity intervention. All agreed that the workshops were a great start to the whole process, but the follow through and lack of leadership drive high jacked

the process. They noted that the resignation of the internal diversity facilitator left everybody in uncertainty. As this was not the most managers' primary or even secondary focus, they needed a person to drive and guide them towards the change in diversity management that was required after the transformation process. They were left with the question after 8 months of silence: "*Was the diversity process that important?*"

#### Managers' diversity performances measured.

An interesting factor mentioned by two managers were that the company subscribed to performance management, but that non-compliance to diversity management was not punished, nor could a person/manager be rewarded for being a good diversity manager (everything was too focused on operational performance). According to the Reward and Recognition Directive of the company the means were available to recognize diversity performance, thus the conclusion was made that managers did not make or were unaware of the Directive. As a result very few managers indicated a desire to improve their diversity management competence as it would have remained a non event.

*"We get assessed all the time, nothing in this place is a secret, so obviously, and I mean I mean that is true, so obviously when there is issues your immediate managers will know whether you have dealt with it or not, uhm also remember there is from a Centre Manager's perspective there is a lot of communication between him and his Pool Managers. He knows what is going on and its its its my job as a Pool Manager to actually keep him informed. So he knows, he knows all the time what you're doing".*

This response indicated that on line manager level that there was no concrete measurement of diversity performance nor incident specific performance management. It appeared that managers were measured on a personal perspective level of their own superior. This obviously had its own

pitfalls by default and hampered the drive towards a successful performance management system.

#### Role of the diversity intervention in achieving business aims.

*"At least it got everybody thinking", this was a comment by a manager that painted the exact picture of the importance to follow through on the diversity process to bring about real change and achieve the business aims. It was clear that the diversity process did not achieve the same level of success in every department and this was a factor that companies need to take cognisance of because the follow-up action requirement will differ between departments.*

*"I'm not 100% sure whether we had a specific role as a company. I think we identified maybe a shortcoming but it wasn't really part of the business process, business output and maybe that's where we are perhaps lacking in the actual measurement. I think it was a requirement, it has been identified as a specific requirement within ATNS to really address diversity issues and to achieve business successes by managing diversity."*

This remark also indicated that the business case for managing diversity was perhaps not sufficiently driven and communicated to all managers, or in addition they might have failed to secure the complete diversity/business case understanding for line managers.

#### Greatest achievement of the diversity intervention.

Everyone agreed on the great starting initiative of the transformation process, but none of the managers were able to describe significant success stories. Quite a few times it was mentioned that the change in leadership, the time delay on the total process and lack of drive, measurement and feedback after the initial workshops, resulted in a toned down ending. A senior manager did however mention that for his specific department, the black employees were of the opinion that they did not require the workshops to be diversity competent.

It was mentioned that there was too much focus on departments and the company and not enough on the group in the workshop. A senior black manager shared a learning experience from a workshop that indicated the success of awareness training, *"Black people believe that whites need to change to accept their views, but blacks need to change as well"*.

*"I think it was the sole idea of actually uhm explain the concept. As we said before people thought diversity was a black white thing so they were very negative until such time as they actually went to the workshops and it was explained to them in that, or the concept was explained to them and initially sold to them, and you can't have success unless people buy into the concept"*.

#### Most successful part of the UPSIDE workshops.

Most managers felt that there was a need for the workshops and that it assisted staff to better understand each other and themselves. A manager mentioned that significant change was visible between ATSA and ATC staff.

*"You must remember that in any, in any group of people you will always have people that will be negative forever. Its unfortunately like that, its its it's a people thing so uhm some people will not be as open to buying in to the concept as other people.... Understanding each other, especially there was there was always an ATSA ATC rift uhm that has definitely changed. Its still there, but its much better"*.

It was mentioned that some lower skilled black staff had very high expectations of power changes within the company, but that the diversity process did change these persons' vision and that a visible impact on personal growth were achieved by the skills training initiative within ATNS.

In addition, only one manager commented on the change in personal performance, as this manager was more focussed on diversity after the workshop, especially referring to the hand-out of tasks and social function

arrangements, i.e. food requirements of different cultures. A senior manager added that the workshops equipped him better for managing diversity, simply because it was a learning process for everyone, *"I thought I am a good profile, then a colleague gave me honest feedback that I am only open to other people's views when it coincides with mine, but that I close up when it was not the case"*.

With the exception of two, all managers believed that the workshops made them more aware of their own pre-conceived ideas towards others, especially other cultures. One manager mentioned that the workshop explained the difference between EE and AA, something that did not make sense previously. A senior manager interviewed, rated the executive workshop very high, with special reference towards the individual assessments that gave him *'the ability to embrace change and understand the barriers within'*.

According to a manager from the ATA the intervention sensitised the ATA staff to the needs and requirements of international students/clients. The catering for devoted Muslims in particular demanded new sensitivity and planning towards the management and treatment of a new type of diverse clientele. The workshop also enabled ATA instructors to become more flexible towards family related issues of students on course.

#### Limitations of the intervention.

The GM: HR said that the limitations of the intervention were their failure to prepare employees in advance for the transformation process. In addition, the planning and roll-out of the intervention coincided with one of ATNS's greatest operational challenges, i.e. a new Air Traffic Management system that involved approximately 80% of the company's staff. He added that the company fully relied on an external consultant for the total transformation process and they were left ill-prepared to drive the effort thereafter. The external consultant had responsibilities towards other companies as well and thus was not available to

ATNS on a full time basis. Finally the GM: HR mentioned that the process was owned by HR and that there was no real line ownership.

*"I also think that you must remember from a Pool Manager and Centre Manager perspective, perspective we are all under a lot of pressure all the time, uhm which make which doesn't make it easy to always attend these things and give your total uhm uhm total self to the workshop, uhm that specific workshop that I went to there was two search and rescue incidents that day, so while you were busy with your workshop, you still had to do what you had to do".*

A limiting factor mentioned by all managers was the company's great emphasis on the operational responsibility and pressure. Lower level managers specifically indicated that their resources (especially time) were exhausted long before they got to the softer issues of performance and diversity management, etc. A senior manager was of the opinion that some individuals *"never started to listen and did not buy-in because they had more important business to deal with"*. One manager noted that they only had operational experience, but lacked other skills required for developing into a good manager. With no time available to develop these skills, the pressure mounted when other tasks had to be completed outside of the operational requirement and in turn such a task then required more attention due to their lack of discipline-specific experience. An example mentioned was that even with training in disciplinary hearings, a manager was expected to handle his/her first case a year after training completion. A junior manager admitted that he did not always ask for assistance, sometimes he was not aware of available assistance or sometimes he just tried to get things done so that he can get on with the job. What became evident is that most ATCs did not have good people skills, as this is not a requirement for the job. Most middle and junior level managerial posts required some level of ATC related experience, but a manager's task went far beyond that, and still the ATCs got appointed to deal with softer managerial tasks as well. It appeared that this factor could have been partially responsible for the great staff turnover. As a

result of the lack of experience in human factor issues and the operational pressure, operational managers simply ignored their diversity management responsibilities and thus limited the success of the total intervention.

*"Resistance to participate, people even even with the focus group trying to get people just to take part, they always think hey that I can't, maybe I'm going to be put in a position where I will be focused on or looked at or penalized. They don't want to really say I have taken part in a specific project."*

Attitude of staff and a resistance to participate were labeled several times for the lack of success in the diversity workshops. Most managers mentioned that staff did receive great benefit from the workshops, but that some were just not interested from the start. All were of the opinion that those staff wanting to participate did derive a useful learning experience from the workshops. A junior manager even mentioned that he himself had feelings of *"just another ATNS process that will not be followed through, a flavor of the month"* and then he still needed to motivate his staff (with the same attitude) to at least go with an open mind to the workshops. This factor also indicated the possible need for low employees to forward or develop their own initiatives for diversity, but also as mentioned by an HR manager, the importance of assuring staff buy-in to the diversity/transformation process via personal diversity competence development plans.

Adding to the dilemma within ATNS was the matter of getting staff to meetings, social events and team building interventions due to the large amount of the staff complement working shifts. Included was the lack of staff resources. The consultant identified the greatest issue to be that of ATNS operating in departmental silos. This was also mentioned by half of the managers interviewed, that the workshops had to be more mixed for staff of all departments to share their experience and to meet with each other. Obviously logistics will

always be an obstacle in such a scenario due to the geographic lay out of ATNS's responsibilities.

Least successful part of the UPSIDE workshops.

Mentioned by half of the managers interviewed was the matter that they were uncomfortable with the approach of the facilitator. Words like 'too focussed on the negative, did not enjoy her and confrontational' were used. Some managers were of the opinion that the facilitator did not understand the operational environment, as it requires tough decisions to be made within a split second, where people skills can't always be applied. The fact of the matter remained that the company was not able to operate without its employees and with reference to the high rate of resignation that it proved to be a serious matter. It appeared as if managers were using operational requirements as an excuse for diversity incompetent behaviour, possibly due to their lack of experience in this discipline.

A middle level manager noted that some staff viewed the workshops as *'bitching sessions and acted as if they have done their bit, now it is the manager's job to make us feel different towards diversity'*.

One manager even described the workshops as a negative experience for the department's staff due to discussions that only focused on ATCs and ATSAs. It was mentioned however that once the relevant department's existence was recognised within the workshop, that their issues were discussed. This proved the importance again that external consultants need to familiarize themselves extensively with each department that they are dealing with and make sure that all possible diversity factors are at least explored. Noting of course that a one-day workshop placed significant limitations on any effort.

Another manager was of the opinion that employees did not air the real diversity issues because they feared being labeled as a racist or sexist. He

continued by adding that too many less relevant discussions took place, leaving not enough time for more people to raise their diversity issues and concerns. The respondent added that a safe place was not created for the discussion of more sensitive diversity issues.

Of importance was also the matter of having workshops at the ATA facilities (walking distance from the operational center). This was not an environment conducive to learning for managers, due to work pressures that were still a factor, i.e. *"I was called out of the workshop for a Search and Rescue incident and I could not attend everything and on returning I found it difficult to focus on the workshop again"*.

#### Did the workshop equip you for managing diversity?

Another junior manager raised a concern regarding power struggles within his section and that he was not certain of how such issues could be dealt with. Interesting though was the fact that his comment was based on personalities within his section that considered themselves as having the right to question everything and everyone, while being faultless themselves. This section was white male dominated with only two additional white females.

One manager mentioned that not all people learned at the same level and that some needed to be nursed in the diversity process, but this statement echoed the response from half of the managers that replied to the success of the workshops only as something that the staff needed. The impression left was that of some operational managers did not need the workshop. Another manager mentioned the importance of managers in the operational field to realise the impact of telling a student *"You are not able to do it."* This related to the negative self-fulfilling prophecy of Human (1999) that was triggered by managers verbalising their pre-conceived ideas about an employee. This matter questioned the openness of some managers and the impact that the workshops had on them, because a manager outside of the operational environment made this

observation, but it was never opted by any operational manager as a good learning experience in understanding their impact on employees. In this sense it appeared that half of the managers interviewed did not think of the diversity intervention as something that had to equip them for managing diversity.

#### What would you change about the intervention?

Suggestions made for improving such a diversity process were not to let it stop, or to allow for too much time to lapse. Appoint a dedicated person to administer and drive the whole process and get initiatives *"from the people for the people"*. One specific manager forwarded a request to two of his principle staff members to develop and implement a diversity intervention within their office to address/facilitate diversity issues, because the workshops failed to address all the issues. The request was made for the continuation of informal discussion groups on diversity issues and cultural differences or short monthly videos. Quite a few managers suggested the groups to be smaller and cross-functional. Questions were raised towards departmental budgets that were not spent on diversity competence development, i.e. team builds.

A senior manager suggested that future workshops needed to be more integrated, i.e. a greater mix of levels and disciplines within the company, in other words a workshop with ATCs, ATSAs, AIM, technical staff and Head Office staff together. He voiced a need for a team of trained facilitators to run workshops simultaneously throughout the company, *"employees were at different levels of understanding at different times. Some staff would be excited about what they were learning, while it was old forgotten news for others that did their workshop a seven months earlier"*. Another manager suggested the following: *"I just think workshops...workshopping around our environment will be better. It would be easier for everyone, especially for ATNS or for maybe for Operations to uhm to have it around your environment because there is certain things that could or might happen in Woolworths that is OK, if it happens here its gonna kill people"*.

### Diversity competence/development assessment.

Responding to the question on if they have been measured on their diversity competence, the answer was 'No'. Senior managers that had managers reporting to them mentioned that the junior managers were assessed on their diversity competence on an informal basis. In this matter they based their overall impression of this competence on the amount of complaints received from the junior manager's sub-ordinates as well as their observation of the relevant manager's staff interaction. This impression then formed part of the manager's quarterly performance assessment.

Equipping managers with tools to deal with situation-relevant diversity issues in their respective departments was a need identified by almost all of the managers. Although case studies were discussed during the workshops, the request was for case studies focused on operational situations, *"I wanted to see her (the facilitator) in action, how someone with experience in diversity handle conflict situations"*.

*"We over-extend to accommodate a person, people absconding for 3 days, it is expected of the manager to keep on phoning until you can actually speak to that person. Then in the end it is ...my culture this and my culture that. We need to have a working culture because animosity is spread when the company allows leniency to person X but not to person Y because of their different cultures"*.

### ATNS directives and policies

Policies and procedures did assist managers in managing diversity within their departments, but half of the managers were of the opinion that managerial staff higher up in the ATNS hierarchy did not put enough effort in establishing better diversity management capability within the organisation.

Guidance and support from superiors in managing diversity within the department.

A middle level manager raised a concern towards senior management's formulation and implementation of the company's strategic imperatives. After formulating these imperatives without consulting any other ATNS employees, it was forced upon all managers to simply implement it. Another manager added that they had to attend a diversity workshop, received guidance on developing a diversity plan and were then left to their own devices for managing diversity – *"You will be competent in diversity management"*. Another junior manager raised the question *"How do we as a company become an employer of choice?"* A middle level manager mentioned that some managers attended the workshops but still continued with a personalised power style and even reverted to bullying at times to achieve their own goals. A middle level manager mentioned that some senior managers that forced certain decisions onto them, had no understanding of adult education. The following comment mirrored the call from line managers: *"I would like to be heard... well I'm talking about departmental and company level, sometimes you have to deal with issues you don't know what the answer should be or there might be, might be other issues, legal issues uhm uhm HR issues uhm industrial relations issues.... That I don't have an Industrial Relations degree, please when I ask for help give me advise....I'll phone you back and then its four days later"*.

One manager did however incorporate a social staff gathering once a week and two managers made use of staff's individual performance discussions to retrieve feedback from staff on an informal level pertaining to their own management style and staff relations. This was also the manager that received a high rating from his staff with reference to his diversity management competence. Another manager mentioned the need for trained and experienced facilitators for each center/department to address and resolve issues between staff and managers/staff for these departments to swop facilitators for sensitive issues that require complete objectivity.

The talent manager at ATNS was responsible for the continuation of the diversity process after the previous internal facilitator (Manager: Employee Development) resigned. The facilitator concluded *"Not much has happened in terms of diversity in the last year"*. This response explained the occurrence of drive dissipation as the workshops were completed while the company entered a phase of significant structural change in 2005.

## CHAPTER 6

### 6.1 DISCUSSION

In reflecting on the research performed within ATNS on the success of their diversity intervention, a great number of lessons were learned. As with all interventions, the success was highly depended on what a company did with the lessons learned through such a process. This was simply true because only by means of the continuous re-inventing of oneself, a company would bare the sweet fruit of past pains.

In the literature study the researcher referred to Roosevelt Thomas (1991) that urged corporate America to move beyond AA to managing diversity. The author's reasoning was that corporate culture dictated that ability of a company in the sense of making employees feel part of the in-group or new environment. He mentioned that diversity did not mean differences but was supposed to encompass similarities as well. Throughout the intervention, the ATNS did not make use of the secret strength that lay hidden in the similarities of employees that could create cohesion, bearing in mind that the initial start of the transformation process was ultimately to create awareness and identify challenges. It may have remained debatably on what factor to concentrate for the start of an intervention, i.e. identifying challenges or seeking common denominators within a workforce.

Finding a common denominator (similarity) that would bind the people of ATNS together had to be explored at least at some time during the transformation process to secure the continuation of diversity conversations that fuelled the inertia of transforming the corporate culture within. Ubuntu may as well have been the key to explain to employees that the company was the people and that the people were the company.

Maier (2002) clearly emphasised the importance of employees having to identify with the corporate culture of their employer, in order to establish a healthy working environment. As the consultant found, apart from ATCs enjoying their job, employees did not identify with the company, nor had any pride in working for ATNS. Human (1996b) mentioned that the burden of change could not be placed on newcomers when a company was seeking organisational growth and change and the ATNS HR Directive 2/97 also stipulated the importance of proper induction. Some respondents also questioned the relevance of the diversity workshops/awareness when the new staff never got exposed to the training. The Directive also stated that induction was the responsibility of the new employee's manager and even listed initiatives that could be used in planning induction training (i.e. planning of social event), but unfortunately it appeared that proper induction training in most departments fell by the wayside. Establishing an in-group culture within ATNS had to involve active efforts to make newcomers feel at home, especially on an inter-personal level. In addition, the silos that were identified by the consultant added to the struggle of establishing the new corporate culture.

Evaluating the intervention according to Morrison's (1992) five steps indicated that ATNS did uncover their diversity problems and that the top management did proclaim their commitment to the process via the internal newsletter. Unfortunately staff experienced the process as just another '*flavour of the month*' initiative, possibly because lower level managers never bought into the process and never aired their commitment to the process by any means possible. A good example was the uninformed staff arriving at the workshops, while the EEF minutes stated that it was the managers' responsibility to communicate the need for transformation and the importance of the workshops. This beckoned the question on how the managers were informed of the transformation. This lack from lower management may have been an indication of senior management's failure to get managers' buy-in via an ownership drive that allowed them to participate in setting the course for transformation. This

question was also supported by the research of Rynes and Rosen (1995) that found diversity training to be more successful when mandatory participation/attendance was required from managers rather than employees.

Rynes and Rosen (1995) also found support for long-term follow-up and explicit managerial rewards and subscribing to a broad definition of diversity. These findings were proof of the need that ATNS had to focus more on the diversity training of their managers on a continuous basis in order to assist them in their personal and managerial transformation. In turn, the lack of managerial rewards for competence in managing diversity had to be recognised as a contributing factor to the lower level of success that the transformation process achieved. The effect was also enhanced by the fact that no managers were ever evaluated on their diversity management. Another side to the story was that managers at various levels did not make use of the company's reward and recognition policy that allowed any staff member to nominate colleagues or managers for exceptional growth or change in the diversity arena. It could also be that this was due to ATNS's strong focus on the operational side of business and only the recognition thereof.

The reasoning for diversity training that had to be focussed more on managers was further supported by Fernandez (1993) that found female powers to be restricted by their superiors due to the superior's belief of a female's domestic responsibility. During one of the focus groups it became evident that some senior managers within the company still struggled to shed their old beliefs and habits, pertaining to the female manager and employee. Such managers had to be brought to a point of realisation that they either had to adapt or die, because the company could not afford to continue in a manner that tolerated diversity incompetence or failure to change. The company's female directors made up 33% of the total senior manager complement and such a representivity would also create future animosity if male managers were allowed to continue in their old-fashioned manner. Booyesen (1999) also found that the

South African business environment favoured black and female approaches to management, i.e. the inspirational manager. Thus the ATNS female managerial staff complement created a good opportunity for the company to re-ignite the transformation process.

In addition, compared to Morrison's (1992) steps, it also appeared that ATNS chose solutions that fitted a balanced strategy as was evident through their new strategic imperatives that embraced and aligned the company's business and its people, i.e. continuous improvement of their safety record, becoming an employer of choice and maintaining long-term financial sustainability. As managers and employees all reported that they were not evaluated on their diversity competence (and only some departments on the progress of their departmental action plans), it appeared that there was a failure to demand results and revisit the goals. This factor obviously culminated into a failure at the final step of using building blocks (i.e. diversity continuation training and discussions or celebrations of attained diversity successes) to maintain the momentum. The new internal facilitator mentioned that not much has happened regarding the diversity process since the workshops ended a year earlier. Unfortunately for ATNS this was due to a series of events that were not all under their control, i.e. resignation of the CEO, resignation of the internal diversity facilitator, five changes to a total of seven senior managers and the completion of the diversity workshops that meant the end of the consultant's contract. Thus after the workshops were completed, the company suddenly had a new CEO, appointed a new full-time external consultant (associate of initial consultant) and a hierarchy shuffle. The value of an internal facilitator was obvious, but on both occasions these facilitators were appointed in other full-time posts already (the latter facilitator changing posts as well from Manager of Recruitment to Talent Manager). Rynes and Rosen (1995) found that diversity training was more prevalent (one may then conclude also more successful) where a diversity manager was in place and top management held positive beliefs towards diversity management. Although ATNS had an internal facilitator that could serve

as a diversity manager, it was evident after the external consultant completed her task that the transformation process could have continued in a far more efficient manner if the company appointed a facilitator on a full-time basis. The GM: HR also mentioned that the company realised their mistake in not training internal trainers to execute the workshops simultaneously within all departments in order to maintain the momentum. Coordination of such a training drive would still have required an internal facilitator to coordinate the process and an external consultant to supply experienced advise/guidance and training to the trainers.

Why appoint a full-time internal facilitator? Changing a culture is one of the most difficult endeavours a company can commit to and it is difficult to change something that you are not aware of. The internal facilitator understood the inside works and existing culture of the company and the success of a continuous diversity drive depended greatly on an individual that the senior management/CEO of the company could rely on. By no means could such a facilitator abscond the senior management of their responsibility and commitments towards the transformation process. On the other side, no person can serve two masters and allocating a full-time resource to a transformation process appeared to be non-negotiable, especially in larger organisations.

The facilitator acted as an ombudsperson to some individual cases of diversity disputes, but in general the role of the ombudsperson was not communicated well enough to all staff because respondents indicated that they were not aware of a diversity issues reporting system. The Manager: Employee Development also acted as a facilitator to the CEO to allow first hand feedback on the progress of workshops and audits, but more importantly on the issues reported by employees from all stations around the country (during workshops) and to the ombudsperson. The facilitator was trained and accredited by the external consultant to present a portion of the workshops and also acted as facilitator to the external consultant for co-ordinating workshops, audits and feedback sessions. The facilitator did however fail to establish an agreed

procedure to deal with diversity related disputes and this procedure had to play a paramount role later in the diversity process when managers and employees failed to adapt to the corporate culture change. In addition the resignation of the facilitator and appointment of a new facilitator that was not familiar with the whole process resulted in the failure to identify re-adjustments to the diversity strategy as the company changed and subsequently required communication of such changes to all employees. A full-time facilitator should have been able to determine the progress of the transformation process and at the required periods also identified, recommended and implemented diversity strategy changes to ensure continuous drive and change.

Human (2005) mentioned that it was important to focus on the diversity change rather than on the diversity management and this may well have been part of the reason why the company lost their momentum in the transformation process. According to Thomas and Ely's (1996) paradigms, it appeared that ATNS resorted under the discrimination/fairness paradigm like most other South African organisations, that were colour/gender blind as they fell short of transforming the corporate culture into embracing/leveraging diversity. The authors had eight preconditions for enabling a paradigm shift/transformation. The first precondition was that leaders had to understand that their diverse workforce had different perspectives, but this may have been very difficult for ATNS's managers as they operated/grew up in a very regulated working environment, i.e. aviation safety regulations. Possibly this was the reason why the consultant found many managers to struggle with the change in their management style and why employees experienced these managers as *'not willing to listen to our concerns'*. Some other preconditions were an organisational culture that encouraged openness, made workers feel valued, created an expectation of a high standard of performance from everyone and stimulated personal development. In this sense it appeared that the company was not ready to make the transformation due to their organisational culture that was not conducive to the change. Contributing factors were the absence of a healthy psychological

contract with employees, exit interviews that indicated a lack of development opportunities and the fear of victimisation. Another precondition was the need for a well articulated and widely understood mission (including strategic imperatives and values of the company), of which ATNS managers had some knowledge, but they failed to filter it through to staff in order to ensure a common drive and aim throughout the company. Another lacuna according to the preconditions was to be found in the absence of artefacts that promulgated the way of living for ATNS employees. Artefacts were too few and far between to allow employees to envisage en revisit fun times with colleagues at any social occasion or proud moment of achievement.

Kochan et al (2003) completed research that found training and development focussed HR practices such as coaching, open communication, interactive listening and providing challenging assignments and opportunities for development, reduced the negative effects of racial diversity on constructive group processes. On this front ATNS did well in establishing good coaching relationships in some departments. On the other hand the results from exit interviews indicated that communication and interactive listening provided obstacles as was also evident in quite a few managers' inability to communicate objectives and motivate staff. Providing challenging assignments and opportunities for development also proved to be lacking due to the operationally focussed environment of the company that forced these managers to ignore the matters they were less competent in, i.e. setting career development plans for employees and challenging employees to cognitive conflict in order to derive the best possible decision in a project. On second thought, if so many researchers found these factors of communication, interactive listening and challenging opportunities for development to be of paramount importance, surely ATNS had to be in need of a brain-storming session to at least create some challenging opportunities for their staff (if not on a full-time occupational level, then maybe on a project level for a number of disciplines). Clearly the Study Assistance Directive per se did not constitute an acceptable level of opportunities for development.

Although no real racial diversity issues were identified, the silo operations of the company indicated a type of diversity challenge that required training, as Kochan's research also found high levels of training in diversity management and career development countered the negative relationship between racial diversity and group processes. This research was supported by Richard et al (2004) that found better decision-making occurred within groups that had a high diversity factor, but it took time develop the capability. This could be telling for ATNS as they expand their business into Africa and require greater input from their diverse workforce in order to prepare and deal with their African clients in a more innovative manner that may even attract other international partners or clients.

Of great importance was the stress and tension that the ATC job in particular caused and when further elevated by the heterogeneity of attitudes and abilities among all staff of all departments, the untreated tension could lead to less creativity according to Triandis, Hall and Ewen (1965). As a result the low levels of mutual attraction caused dislike and mistrust (Adler, 1992), a phenomenon that was tangible during the workshops and lead to negative stereotyping due to misunderstanding and a lack of knowledge between the different departments (Human, 1996a). The negative stereotyping appeared to be a bomb ready to explode as numerous comments during the diversity workshops (mainly made by ATCs towards/about ATSAs) caused negative internal emotions within some colleagues. The consultant mentioned that due to employees having fear of victimisation, the senior management had to explicitly state their approach and dealing with such matters, but on this occasion it appeared that ATNS as a company had to start with a zero tolerance program that could evict negative comments toward any employee of ATNS. Polzer (2004) illustrated that the negative effects of sub-group power dynamics within a company prevented buy-in to a new corporate culture and this reiterated the importance of management's stance of zero tolerance in order to ensure successful transformation.

Only once such action against negative comments took place, the company would be able to build cohesiveness that would lead to a higher morale that reinforced team spirit, motivation and social integration (Smith et al, 1994). McGrath (1984) found cognitive conflict had a positive impact on the quality of decisions made, although it required a learning attitude and a mature approach. The added dilemma for ATNS was, however, the high level of affiliation that the consultant identified within managers that as a result did not take criticism well or alternatively experienced the questioning from staff as negative. In their defence comments were made by some managers that they did not always know how, i.e. *"I don't always know how to manage the different personality types within my pool. All I have is my ATC background and I need more help from those people that know.... like HR"*. This comment confirmed the need that managers had for further training to embrace diversity management and enhance the change in the corporate culture.

Joplin and Daus (1997) formulated six challenges confronting leaders of diverse groups that were in support of the previous suggestion for action against negative speech. The main challenge for ATNS was to enable their managers to overcome the six challenges, i.e. to face and synthesize the diversity of opinions, to establish an emotional identification with followers of a variety of backgrounds, ensuring participation, overcoming inertia and addressing real/perceived tokenism. Understanding the kaleidoscope of Human (Fig 3.3) and applying it to the day-to-day working experience would have been a useful tool to embrace the first three challenges. Numerous directives and policies compounded the burden on managers as a great amount of responsibility for managing staff rested with the line managers. As was mentioned earlier by the researcher, it was impossible to expect any manager to excel in all facets of management and as this was a burning issue in most organisations, the need had to be addressed of establishing a level within management that took responsibility for the well being of staff and the corporate culture, while not being burdened by strategic, HR and operational responsibilities. A lot of companies tended to promote their star

performer to a managerial position, but the individual was good at what he/she was doing, not at managing people (definitely a valid point for investing more in the screening of managerial appointments within ATNS). The responsibilities that the policies placed on line managers were far greater than their ability to cope or competently manage. The responsibilities on top of their operational responsibility were succession planning, determining training needs, recruitment, induction training, performance management and appraisals, coaching and career planning.

Human (1996b) stated that managing diversity was just effective management of people, but that it was based on three fundamental principles, namely a positive expectation of individuals and their competence, open and honest communication and constructive feedback as well as an evaluation of performance-based results. For ATNS in some instances it unfortunately appeared that managers did not communicate (i.e. informing staff of transformation and diversity workshops), nor did they supply constructive feedback to employees or had a positive expectation of individuals and their competence (numerous managers mentioned that they were of opinion that some staff was just not interested in the workshops or managers would comment on the competence of an individual by stating *"He just doesn't have what it takes"*). The study by Thomas (2003) found the exact same impact that line managers in other South African companies had on the failure of transformation, as these managers simply blocked the change process due to their refusal to accept responsibility for change within the company. The operational performance within the company again over-shadowed the need for an evaluation of performance-based results in managing diversity. This in turn was the reason why the transformation process lost its drive and allowed managers to fall back into their previous routines and responsibilities.

Adele Thomas (1996a) developed a model for managing diversity and one factor that she mentioned was not addressed sufficiently and was partly

responsible for the lower level of success allocated to the diversity intervention. This factor was the development of a communication strategy – the company only made use of their internal newsletter and the managers as their main mode of communication. As was evident in the EEF minutes, many EEF representatives were not clear on the aim and responsibilities of the Forum, in the same instance the ATNS employees could not buy-in to the transformation process because they did not understand it. An added problem was the 24-hour shift system of the operational side of the company that made it difficult for management to communicate with employees in a proper manner.

The importance of diversity awareness training was well motivated by the adapted skills continuum of Graham and Englund (2004) that illuminated the danger of being unconsciously unskilled in diversity. Only once aware of one's incompetence would you be able to grow and address such lacunas within oneself. The continuum did however also indicate the importance of progression on the continuum in order to become consciously skilled or competent in diversity management. In other words awareness training by itself would never complete the full circle of transformation. Progression on the continuum coincided with the continuous drive that was required from management that was mentioned by numerous researchers/authors. In this regard the time lapse after the diversity workshops and in-between different departmental workshops took its toll. One manager reported his observation to be one of excitement for the staff of one department, while it was already old news to another department where the novelty has worn off and departments could not share their excitement and newly acquired drive.

Referring back to the second paragraph under 'Discussion', Ubuntu was never used to build on the initial diversity awareness training. Booysen (1999) researched the South African business environment and found that people wanted inspirational leaders that empowered them and as this need was a function of Maslow's hierarchy, it coincided with needs expressed during focus

groups and exit interviews that referred to a shortage of development opportunities. (Note that there was a distinct difference between development and promotion.) In addition, people want to experience the feeling of accomplishment (i.e. Maslow's hierarchy) and McFarlin (1999) had the answer to this via the use of rituals and celebrations. As a manager noted that none of the successes of the transformation/workshops were celebrated, thus staff had no idea of what was achieved because no successes, were reported. In celebrating the successes staff would have developed a sense of belonging to a successful team and experienced what it meant to be part of company rituals that instilled a sense of pride and cohesiveness.

Although the researcher found it difficult to get managers of colour to participate in the research interviews, the greater impact of this matter was absorbed by ATNS themselves. Shortly after the completion of the diversity workshops, the company employed a new CEO and the company hierarchy was re-shuffled. In addition, a lot of people resigned, i.e. only two of the seven senior managers in the company were employed by ATNS at the time of the diversity intervention. The intervention itself was also performed in parallel to a paramount operational system change. In all it appeared that although the company was in need of a transformation, the timing was as important in order to guarantee employee buy-in and maximum resource availability. Just a CEO change has a great impact on a company loaded with high tension, adding the rest of the factors would seriously limit the chances of transformational success. Keeping all of this in mind, it would appear that ATNS did well to at least achieve some success by means of the intervention.

The number of resignations did prove to be a matter of concern, especially for the fact that employees that represented all the demographics within the company resigned. The external consultant also mentioned that there was no psychological contract between ATNS as accompany and its employees. The conclusion drawn from these facts painted the picture of a corporate culture that

lacked inclusiveness, where no individual regardless of their race or gender, operated as either an individual or otherwise within a silo. The matter was further deteriorated by the generational trends within the company because the younger generation type wanted respect to be earned as an individual, while the older generation type demanded respect because of their position (note that the generation type behaviour was not necessarily coupled to age). This coincided with Booysen's (1999) finding discussed earlier that found South Africans to be favouring inspirational managers that empowered them to be their best (new generation thought process).

The overwhelming majority of white managers, especially in the operational field that also formed the core business of the company, proved to be to the company's detriment in specific reference to the EE aim of ATNS's operations. Understandably they had to rely on the experience of white employees and managers to maintain the business throughput, but in the long run with regards to the demographics of South Africa, mentorship programs to uplift the experience of black operational staff will have to be considered. ATNS as a company experienced the need for alternative initiatives and viewpoints in the operational department already, but with a dominating white majority the equilibrium will never be achieved. The AIM department already reported on the success that was experienced due to their mentorship program and although the operational field differed from the AIM department, black managers had to be raised up in the operational field to allow scope for the future. Obviously aviation safety would always enjoy the priority, but it can't be used as an excuse.

Pertaining to the business case for diversity management in ATNS, it appeared that managers and employees did not understand it due to the failure of continuation. However, some managers did still discuss diversity matters with their staff or at least provided the opportunity for discussion. The departmental action plans all evolved around a way of living/code of conduct and the responsibilities of the department head and the action plans were quickly moved

to the back burner when the EEF no longer required feedback on their progress. If the departmental heads had empowered their staff to take responsibility for developing the action plans, i.e. setting a code of conduct, enforcing it and facilitating creative discussions, the progress on these action plans may have been far greater in impact. Although some managers found the initial assessment of the consultant useful, the change that employees observed in their managers were reserved to only a few, thus it appeared that the managers did not understand diversity and the effects on performance due to the way they thought and communicated to people. The responses from most interviews and focus groups also indicated that the broader organisational issues surrounding effective management and development of people pertaining to diversity were understood, but it appeared that some employees still perceived race and gender as diversity.

Regarding the diversity process that ATNS decided on, the following were not completed or executed properly to ensure greater success: the clear communication of the business case for diversity management (however, this was clearly set out at an extended management meeting at onset of the transformation process – according to the interviews managers were aware, but the information never filtered through to the staff. In addition, the EEF minutes also indicated the uncertainty among employees on why the transformation had to take place). Departmental diversity action plans were developed and approved but the progress reports that had to follow thereafter, died a silent death. In some instances this may well be due to ATNS's failure to develop and implement a relevant performance management system for diversity management on department and individual level. Only after the research interviews and focus groups took place, manager discussions on diversity action plans started again.

According to the available minutes, the EEF did not meet on a monthly basis, as was required by the Directive. This obviously questioned the commitment of the company towards the success of the transformation process. The minutes of two EEF meetings also indicated the lack of commitment that the

Forum experienced due to the non-response from departments on representative nominations, staff attending the meetings and the lack of feedback that representatives had to present to their respective departments. The EEF minutes indicated a serious lack of knowledge and strategy regarding HIV and the seriousness of the issue may cost the company dearly if they failed to prepare a relevant workable strategy. Company values were in support of the organisation's diversity transformation, but according to the response gathered from the focus groups, putting it to action was a problem as there were reports of the lack of communication, trust and respect as well as a lack of recognition, team work and development opportunities.

An adding factor to the lack of opportunities and development could possibly have been embedded in the implementation of policies and procedures. Although HR Directive 1/2001 indicated the importance of a Career Development Plan that also had to be measured on an annual basis, this was unheard of in the operational environment. The Directive stated that the onus was on the individual to make use of the opportunities presented by ATNS, but employees appeared unaware of these opportunities. The Management Directive 2/2005 stated that the Training and Development Committee had to identify the training need of the company and in this process they also had to consult with employees. A possible reason for the lack of development opportunities may well have been due to the staff shortage that always had priority, but communication between the Training and Development Committee also appeared to be a concern.

The HR Directive 1/2005 stated that ATNS was committed to address the need to remedy the negative effects of the past and recognise the diversity within the workforce. This statement also illustrated the company's position in a discrimination/fairness paradigm (Thomas & Ely, 1996) that failed to recognise and embrace the value of a diverse workforce. It was also stated that the company believed that most employees, given the opportunity, would add value

to the company. The question then had to be asked why only most and not all employees, unless the recruitment process lacked depth.

The Insight newsletter was not used to its full potential in order to inform staff more efficiently on the transformation process. Some explanations on the functioning and representatives of the EEF were insightful. First of all the newsletter was used to inform employees on the commitment of senior managers to the transformation process, but staff had contact with the lower level managers that never aired their stance or commitment to the process. In addition, the employee letter column for diversity issues never saw the light due to the lack of space in the newsletter. The answer to a greater success may well have been in these letters, as it would have enabled management to identify and continuously adjust the direction of the transformation as soon as non-alignment was pointed out by employees.

In summary the workshops as part of the diversity intervention were intended as awareness training to all employees and were a good start to the transformation process. It also set a good platform for future discussions, but according to the responses, workshops and interviews, staff required follow-up sessions to facilitate the continuation of diversity discussions (not necessarily formal discussions, but rather outside of the work environment). Many respondents echoed the need for staff to participate in learning activities that were fun, but more importantly they mentioned the need for an opportunity to develop a process of learning and progression that would be "*by the people for the people*". Employees thought the self-assessment that was completed during the workshops was insightful, but again it was uttered that they wanted more. Employees wanted to learn more of themselves with reference to the assessment and then required more detail on the tools available to bring about change. At least 50% of respondents recalled the significant impact that the Elliot eye experiment had on them as well the discussion that followed on their opinion of other countries' residents and then what other would say about South Africans.

In conclusion it was of great importance to confront employees with the actual reality of what they may cause by means of pre-conceived ideas.

## **6.2 CONCLUSIONS**

ATNS was in need of a corporate culture change as the company expanded rapidly and required a transformation that had to carry them through turbulent times of re-organisation and adapting to their changing environment on a national and international level.

The success of the diversity intervention with regards to the research project, were determined according to the sub-problems of the research question.

Sub-problem 1 - To what extent did ATNS go beyond an employment equity approach to managing diversity?

The first sign of going beyond EE to managing diversity was visible through the diversity intervention. The drive to comply with EE targets was still eminent, but the intentions for the future were correctly aligned to take the company from EE compliance to managing diversity by means of the departmental and individual action plans.

The departmental action plans were specifically aimed at changing the way in which employees of ATNS treated each other and worked as a team to achieve communal goals. Although the plans were not very descriptive and measurable it did ignite a new way of dealing with colleagues. The focus was more on *'living the plan'* than on measuring the achievements of targets.

The corporate culture was also in a process of being changed in order to enable the company to move from EE to managing diversity. The continuous

drive in changing the culture was unfortunately lacking due to various reasons previously mentioned that were beyond the control of the company. The process drive was weakened by the company's overwhelming operational focus, the implementation of a new operational system and the change of CEO and internal facilitator due to resignations as well as a change in company structure.

The absence of artefacts that displayed the ATNS brand and employee well-being displayed a lacuna of psychological contract between the company and its employees and also filtrated into a tolerance of counter culture productive behaviour that inhibited the creation of an inclusive culture.

Sub-problem 2 - To what extent did the company leverage diversity potential for strategic benefit?

The new strategic imperatives have enabled the company to leverage on the diversity potential for strategic benefit, although at the time of the research, this was not measurable yet. The Business Development and ATA departments leveraged on the diversity potential of the company in order to develop good relations and new business opportunities within Africa.

Internally it however appeared as if the company was not yet embracing diversity in the sense of incorporating its diverse workforce into creative cognitive conflict to achieve business success. ATNS did not enjoy the full benefit of managing the diversity potential within the company for greater strategic success, simply because staff were not presented with challenging opportunities for personal development. Positive cognitive conflict was ignored in most instances instead of promoted in discussions to allow all the different viewpoints to be discussed and brain-stormed (some attempts were made to generate such discussions, but were not facilitated in an attempt to get to the best solution). Not involving staff in the development and implementation of the departmental action plans was a perfect example of this matter. On numerous occasions staff

mentioned that they wanted a diversity intervention '*by the people, for the people.*'

The positive side of diversity was never explored and finding the common denominator that embraced all the employees of ATNS was never used as a spark for facilitating change and creating an inclusive culture. Changing the corporate culture required such a focus that could start conversations and instil a sense of pride. The most significant suggestion from a manager was that employees had to be put in an informal situation where they had to be dependant on each other, thus culminating in '*ubuntu.*'

Sub-problem 3 - To what extent did the diversity intervention sufficiently equip the personnel with skills to leverage diversity potential within groups?

The videos that illustrated the impact that prejudice and discrimination may have on a person that were on the receiving end, as well as the open discussions on the personal experience of staff and the discussion of diversity scenarios were sufficient in making staff aware of these factors.

Most important was the need for keeping the process evolving. Mentioned in the literature study was the importance of using building blocks (i.e. more diversity training/discussions/information sessions) to build on the initial awareness training and develop a broad definition of diversity (to include difference of opinion, way of doing or arguing to get to the best solution).

The intervention included a change of the performance management system in order to incorporate diversity management. Unfortunately this matter lost its drive as well (although it started again at the end of the research project). In addition, the lack of rewards presented to managers that excelled in managing diversity proved partly responsible for the low level of interest shown by managers. Not adapting and complying to diversity management requirements

had no consequences and thus condoned the actions of such managers as well as allowed the continuation of such behaviour.

Sub-problem 4 - What role did managers play in the success of the diversity intervention?

A serious factor appeared to have been the lack of training for managers. A significant amount of managers had significant field experience of their respective disciplines, but they lacked the managerial knowledge, skill and experience to manage people/diversity.

Middle and lower level managers were also not incorporated into the process of determining the way forward and providing input for the diversity intervention. In effect this impacted their level of buy-in to the intervention. In addition these managers failed to inform staff of the transformation process and to communicate their personal commitment to the process. In essence this reflected on a poor communication strategy within the company as a whole, partially influenced by the commitment of managers (especially line managers), their lack of insight pertaining to the importance of the transformation process and their level of buy-in/inability to communicate and motivate staff accordingly.

Some line managers were also not sufficiently equipped to manage and direct healthy cognitive conflict in order to allow the diversity within the workforce to come to its full potential. Some line managers were also unable to handle diversity conflict and address tokenism/discrimination effectively due to their high personal levels of affiliation. These issues confirmed the importance of continuation training that had to follow the initial awareness training.

Sub-problem 5 - To what extent did personal attitude/experience regarding diversity within the workplace, contribute to the success of the diversity intervention?

Evident from the interviews with managers and focus groups held with staff, it was clear that personal attitude and perception played a significant role in the success of the intervention, mainly due to opinions that existed prior to the workshops. The success stories were from those managers that were hurt through the diversity audit's results, but took it to heart and decided that they did want to change. Those managers found to be non-responsive to the critique also found the workshops to be of a lesser value, simply because they did not buy in to the transformation process or their personal need to change.

In addition, a lot of managers mentioned that the workshops only had an effect on those employees who were willing to learn something from the experience. Most junior employees believed themselves to be diversity competent and thus not needing the workshops. Some older employees perceived the workshops as a waste of time. As with the younger employees, both sides of the spectrum decided beforehand that they need not change.

Perhaps a greater emphasis on the individual action plans could have sparked a conscious experience that all employees of ATNS had to change in order to make this process work.

Sub-problem 6 - What approach did the diversity consultant use and what role did she play in the success of the intervention?

As an external consultant with a wealth of knowledge and experience, the consultant made use of awareness training to expose managers and staff to possible pre-conceived ideas and opinions. A self-assessment was used to enable staff to plot themselves according to their situational reactions and opportunities were created for group discussions based on personal experience pertaining to diversity. In addition, the consultant presented groups with diversity scenarios that had to be solved in group format.

As a follow up to the awareness workshops, managers had to take responsibility for a department to formulate and implement a departmental action plan. Added to this plan had to be individual action plans of what staff planned to do in an attempt to improve their diversity competence. The managerial audit that followed the workshops also depended on the experience of the external consultant. A fair process of evaluating real-time issues within the managerial ranks of the company required the objectivity of an external individual that had insight into group dynamics, corporate culture and leadership skills in order to identify areas of potential growth.

The consultant played a significant role in the success of the intervention, possibly too a great role, due to the collapse of the transformation process straight after the completion of the workshops. This occurrence also proved the significance of an internal driver to manage the transformation process and adjust the strategies accordingly, once the external consultant's task was completed.

In summary, it was clear that the start to any good intervention would be to identify the barriers to that transformation and then break down these barriers by making people aware of their own pre-conceived ideas. This is especially of significance when people are facilitated in exploring their own personalities and the reasons explained why certain people act in a specific manner, i.e. personalised power or affiliate power. Once aware of your own actions and motivation driving it, companies should be able to change their corporate culture with greater success.

Without such a change any attempt to change the corporate culture will be fruitless and only lead to frustration, because as the Book of Times portray it in Proverbs 23: 7, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." (The Bible).

### **6.3 Potential Implications of the Research Results**

The research results should enable ATNS as well as other companies to plan or rectify a transformation process more effectively. Important factors of such an intervention were identified in order to serve as guidelines that could not be ignored when a company seeks to manage diversity effectively and to their strategic benefit, i.e. changing the corporate culture proved in this research to be the most important factor that was underestimated.

The research pointed out the importance of managerial training, communication and buy-in for transformation success in diversity management. It also indicated the need within the company to make use of building blocks and celebrations to enforce continuous progress. Although no direct answer was found for measurability, the proper performance management system and individual responsibility factor proved to be a great necessity for embedding diversity management into the corporate culture.

### **6.4 Limitations to the Study**

Although all precautions were taken to ensure accurate and non-contaminated recording of data in the interviews and focus groups, the fact that the researcher performed the study in ATNS, as his employer, the possibility exists that some information may be lost due to familiarity of peers/managers with the researcher. Given the ultimate goal of this research as contributing to the larger DEISA study, there will be opportunity for members of the research team to analyse the raw data provided from the present case study.

Secondly, the time constraint played a significant role. The researcher approached 14 companies in 7 months for participating in the research project, without any success. The response time for these companies varied between 14 days and 2 months and the main reasons provided for declining participation

were work pressure and not being able to release staff to participate in the interviews or focus groups. Some companies did show significant interest, but it however, appeared that once the introductory information was supplied – referring to secondary data that had to focus on employment equity and targets – that they became less interested. The researcher can only assume that many of these companies may have been concerned about revealing the extent of progress on employment equity and diversity.

First hand information was lost due to the resignation of the two key role players in the ATNS diversity intervention, namely the CEO and the diversity facilitator/manager: employee development. These resignations occurred shortly after the workshops and departmental action plans were completed in April 2005.

## **6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Brain-storm ideas as a team (manager and staff of each section) to present staff with development opportunities and challenging assignments in order to facilitate personal growth to the benefit of the company.

Put words to action and start establishing an environment and procedure where there is zero tolerance for negative speech. In addition, this procedure must actively promulgate recognition of performance and penalising non-performance.

Start a screening process specifically of the operational environment in order to identify potential black staff to embark on mentorship programmes where white operational managers could start to impart their knowledge onto these candidates now already. Obviously the company has to make it lucrative to both individuals, but a process needs to start somewhere.

Actively break down the silos phenomenon by means of the previously mentioned zero tolerance procedure and make use of inert-departmental team building sessions on a continuous basis. The first team building session for the Johannesburg ATS Centre had a great response, but the company needs to bear in mind that research has proven that it will take time and require continuous drive/effort. Various team building approaches can be made use of as building blocks in an attempt to keep employees talking on the subject of diversity and becoming consciously competent in connecting with diverse backgrounds, creativity and opinions. In addition, changing the corporate culture requires people to spend time together and the perfect tool for that initiative would be by combining rest areas at the Johannesburg ATS Centre (as recommended by external consultant) and providing communal rest areas at the Isando Head Office. The company artefact at every station/office needs to display the employees of ATNS having fun and being proud of their company.

Managers need to be vigorously trained if the company requires them to become natural in managing diversity and competent in communicating the importance/relevance of embracing diversity. Especially in such an operationally driven environment dictated by extreme regulations, managing diversity would not come naturally.

Any further initiatives demanded a comprehensive communication strategy that could ensure managers and staff's comprehension of the importance, role and integration (into rest of the company objectives) of the relevant plan.

Enforce a proper measurable performance management system that incorporates diversity management competence. In addition the staff and managers that progressed significantly in their diversity competence had to be acknowledged visibly and rewarded accordingly.

## **6.6 Recommendations for further research**

Managerial training and experience in identifying and addressing diversity issues and actually developing the skill and people knowledge that will enhance managers' efforts to stretch each employee to the benefit of company and employee, i.e. leveraging diversity.

Formal research is required to determine the value and actual effect of story telling, celebration, song and dance on the corporate culture and growth of companies, as recommended by various African authors. Celebration in particular could have been a useful tool to address certain communication issues within ATNS, i.e. serving as indicator to staff on the importance and progress of the transformation process. Further research aimed at establishing the value of these rituals in specifically addressing corporate culture changes may shed light on why organisations struggle to transform their corporate culture.

The approach the external consultant took indicated that awareness training was a good starting point. The focus on managers and individuals by means of departmental and individual action plans had mixed success due to various factors. Further research on the significance of an external consultant and an internal facilitator would be useful to indicate the value of establishing hurdles of the past culture (external consultant) and the continuous internal drive required (internal facilitator) for changing to a new corporate culture of embracing diversity.

To compliment the research completed by Booysen (1999), a further study into the available methods to develop managers in becoming competent in managing/embracing diversity may indicate an important reason why South African organisations struggle to change corporate culture in order to embrace diversity.

Developing a performance management model that incorporates diversity management as a concrete measurable factor with the least amount of space for bias and ample guidelines for measurable growth.

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## **APPENDICES**

### ***Appendix A: Interview questionnaire***

#### **Interviews protocol for managerial staff at ATNS:**

1. What strategies do you have in place to leverage on diversity?
2. Are these strategies linked to Employment Equity? How?
3. How are the diversity strategies linked to the business objectives?
4. Define the success of ATNS's diversity strategies.
5. How are these successes measured?
6. What has the impact of these successes been on the business?
7. How is performance of managers on diversity issues measured?
8. What was the role of the diversity intervention in achieving the business aims and objectives?
9. In your opinion, what have been the greatest achievements of the diversity intervention?
10. What were the limitations of the intervention?
11. What was the most successful part of the UPSIDE workshops for managerial staff?
12. What was the least successful part of the UPSIDE workshops?
13. Did the workshops equip you sufficiently for managing diversity in your department?
14. What would you change about the intervention and the UPSIDE workshops?
15. Have you been assessed on your diversity competence/development as a manager? Describe.
16. In your opinion, do the ATNS directives and policies support you in managing diversity in your department? Describe.
17. In your opinion, do your superiors guide and support you in managing the diversity within your department? Describe.



## Appendix C: Integrated model for diversity management

