

IMPORTANCE OF SECRETARIAL PROFESSION IN PROMOTING EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The quality of service delivery provided by public institution has been assumed to be very poor over the years. Sadly the inefficiency which characterized these services has crept into the private sector. Little wonder the average Nigerian citizen is daily assaulted with poor customer service delivery by operators in almost all sectors of the economy. Attempts have been made to improve quality of service provided by the government to the Nigerian populace over the years. The SERVICOM programme launched by the Federal Government in 2005 was designed to address obvious gaps in service delivery using some selected sectors as pilots. They discovered that many public services were inaccessible, of poor quality and indifferent to customer needs. This paper will examine the importance of secretarial profession in promoting effective service delivery in Nigeria, proffer solutions and recommendations.

Introduction

Surveys and opinion polls confirm that the public want improvements in the ways in which governments serve citizens, that is, a public administration that delivers better services and extends their reach and coverage more effectively and efficiently. Citizens expect improvements in the capacity of the public service to deliver more and better services at lower cost. When terse criticisms of the poor performance of government in provision of quality service are made, the buck is often passed down to the public service. Although the Public Service cannot entirely blame the allusion to it is justifiable. Why? One may ask. The reason is simple. More often than not, it is Public Servants who initiate development policies that are eventually funded by Government. Public Servants also supervise the implementation of development programmes. When development funds are misappropriated or carted away, most times such acts of corruption are perpetuated with the collaboration of Public Servants.

Upon assumption of office as President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo initiated programmes including seminars, retreats etc. at which the role of the public service in governance were discussed with Top management of the Service. Report of several Committees and panels that carried out studies on the public service were analysed. Several factors ailing the service and affecting its performance were:

- * Politicization of the top hierarchy of the civil service;
- * Lack of financial accountability and probity
- * Perpetual breakdown of discipline
- * Virtual institutionalization of corruption at all levels and segments of the service
- * Disregard for rules and regulations
- * Loss of direction
- * General decline of efficiency and effectiveness.

According to Akanbi (2007), with the reform, secretaries should now come to appreciate themselves as have been sounded all over the world. They should see themselves as bridge and a life wire in any organisation. They should see themselves as manpower that is richly endowed with natural and human resources, skilled, competent and dynamic. A secretary should know his/her own relevance in the very organisation he/she is working. This can be gauged by answering some basic questions. Such as:

- * How does my absence really affect the organisation I am working for?
- * Are we secretaries adding significant value to production of good/services?
- * How well have secretaries suffered down-sizing, right-sizing, retrenchment, etc?
- * Am I a dynamic and creative worker?
- * How positively disposed to my work am I?
- * How honest and dedicated am I to my work?
- * I urge you to continue to ask yourself such and other self-assessment questions.

Secretarial Profession

A profession is an occupation or vocation that requires special skills, knowledge of some department or learning and qualifications to do a job, especially one with high social status. The definitions show distinct characteristics that could be attached to a vocation or occupation to portray them as profession. Some of these characteristics are extensive but may not include every attribute that has ever been ascribed to professions. This is because, the search for standardised criteria by which a vocation/occupation can be recognized as a profession has been on for years; yet there is still disagreement on a universally acceptable list of the characteristics of a profession Dada and Fadokun, (2010).

In early modern times, members of the nobility had secretaries, who functioned quite similarly to those of the present day. They were always men; most had command of

several languages, including Latin and were required to have what we would consider today as a broad generalized education. As commerce and trade expanded people of wealth and power needed secretaries, (confidants and trusted agents) to handle correspondence on private or confidential matter, most particularly matters of state. Following the Renaissance, men continued to dominate clerical and secretarial roles. They maintained account books, in addition to performing stenographic duties, and were known for their exemplary penmanship skills. Many laboured long hours, with their 'secretary' desks serving as their files and workstations. As world trade expanded in the 15th and 16th centuries, secretaries often attained an elevated status and held prominent positions. Secretarial status titles frequently included 'personal' or 'private'. Men continue to dominate the secretarial field until the late 1880s. With the invention of the writing machine, many women entered the office workforce in various clerical roles. During the industrial expansion at the turn of the century, business offices faced a paperwork crisis. Women solved the crisis by adapting well to new technologies such as the adding and calculating machine, telephone, and typewriter. Many women held, or aspired to hold, position as secretaries. They attended secretarial schools and worked to attain superior skills. The demand for secretaries was so great that it outpaced the supply.

In the 1930s, the number of men with the title secretary dwindled. Women dominated the office workforce. Some were promoted from stenographer pools, some were graduates of Business College or secretarial schools, but all were seeking the professional status and pay previously enjoyed by their male counterparts. Today, secretaries (also known as administrative assistants, office coordinators, executive assistants, office managers, etc.) are using computers, the internet and other advanced office technologies to perform vital 'information management' functions in the modern office. Secretaries no longer "simply" type correspondence for the boss. Now, they often write that correspondence – as well as plan meetings, organize data using spreadsheet and database management software, interact with clients/vendors and the general public, supervise the office and other staff, handle purchasing and even train other workers. Work teams are becoming more prevalent. Job descriptions are expanding and new titles are being created, such as administrative coordinator, office administrator, administrative specialist and information manager. Employers are paying more for specialised skills such as desktop publishing and database management. In addition, many companies are providing performance-based bonuses to outstanding administrative support professionals to help acknowledge their contributions. The future is bright for computer-literate, well-educated, professional secretaries.

Criteria For Professionalism

A Profession is an occupation that usually requires advanced education and training, yet one need not be a member of a learned occupational field, such as medicine, teaching, or law to be considered professional, athletes, artists, actors, accountants, managers and secretaries can also be considered professionals. What distinguishes

professional from non-professionals in the same occupation is that professionals meet the highest standards of their occupations or do something with great skill and expertise. Generally, the person who can answer yes to many of the following questions is a professional:

1. Are you in an occupation that requires primarily intellectual ability? Do you have to do more thinking than doing?.
2. Has your educational training required study in the liberal arts, course arts, courses requiring abstract conceptual applications rather than practical training?.
3. Is your success measured in terms of your service to others rather than in personal or monetary gain?.
4. Does your occupation require a license or state or national examination or certificate to practice?
5. Does your occupation have a code of ethics?.
6. Is there one strong group that represents most of the members of your occupation and gives autonomy or ones to your group as well as to individual members?.
7. Do you consider your occupation to be a lifelong career?
8. To stay on top of your field, do you have to continue to read and study?
9. Have you established your own standards or excellence that are comparable to the high standards of other professionals in your field?
10. Do persons outside your field respect your special knowledge and abilities and consult you on matters pertaining to your field of expertise?

Institute Of Chartered Secretaries And Administrators (ICSA)

ICSA is the international qualifying and membership body for the Chartered Secretary profession and the world's leading authority on corporate governance; working alongside governments, represent the interest of organisations where legislation is concerned and promote best practice in business management. Our International Qualifying Scheme (IQS) offers the broadest study of business disciplines of nay profession and an accelerated rout to the position of company secretary. Chartered Secretaries work across all industries and operated in public and private sectors, often holding well-remunerated position at board level, or run their own companies providing company secretarial services. With the opportunity to work overseas, becoming a Chartered Secretary is a passport to arguably the most diverse, challenging and rewarding career among leading business professions.

The ICSA promotes best practice in corporate governance, liaising with governments and regulatory bodies worldwide. We publish guidance notes and best practice guides and through our subsidiaries provide information and training, boardroom performance evaluation and dedicated software. The ICSA has 36,000 members worldwide and is represented in over 70 countries. The qualification programmes are designed to be as flexible as possible. As well as our own scheme, we work with a

range of academic of institutions mandated by the ICSA to provide course (as MA or MS level) that leads to the award of Chartered Secretary. This approach ensures we deliver versatile study options and tuition tailored to particular sectors and career paths, providing you with a highly marketable and coveted professional qualification.

The Nigerian Institute Of Professional Secretaries

Nigerian Institute of Professional Secretaries established under Degree No. 1 of 1990, which is the first professional body for Secretaries throughout Nigeria. Aims and objectives for which the Institute is established are:

1. To promote the science and encourage the growth of Secretarial Administration, Office Technology Management and Business Education in Nigeria and also to increase the knowledge relating to Business education and promote their dissemination .
2. To promote the establishment and maintenance of standards of competence and conduct by those engaged in and are interested to engage in private secretarial profession ad to foster and maintain a high standard of professionalism in the face of secretarial administration.
3. To organise and hold lecturers, seminars, workshops, conference, luncheon, dinners and in-service/professional training and issue certificate of proficiency to secretaries.
4. To print and distribute Newsletter, Bulletins, Magazines, Journals, Periodical, etc. to member and receive articles from members for publication and distribution among members of the institute.
5. To participate in other secretarial/office technology activities that may be necessary to accomplish the above objects.

Benefits Of Membership

Given the importance of professionalism to an association of this nature, one of the principal benefits of becoming NIPS members and the recognition obtained for one's high personal performance as well as the information one would receive from the institute's journal about developments concerning the professional in both Nigeria and around the world. Our designator letters connote the acquisition by the holders of the basic professional standards lay down by the institute. Other benefits desirable include:

1. A direct involvement with a growing body of senior professionals, exchanging ideas and setting new standards.
2. A unique opportunity or self-development. NIPS, creates the requisite avenues for self-development by members on an on-going basis.
3. As a medium for information gathering ad service delivery INPS Headquarters and its full-time personnel serve as clearing house of information for consulting on strategies and techniques, issuing journals, newsletters and special reports, keep members informed about emerging issues and trends in the profession.

4. Client information: NIPS maintains extensive information on members regarding their development and skills. NIPS members are usually cited for client selection because of their high quality and credentials. From time to time, presenting the institute's view points on specific issues with a bearing on secretarial administration, office technology management, new developments in the profession, etc.
5. Attending meetings: Annual General Meetings, Conference, Luncheons, Dinners, Seminars, Workshop, etc. organised by the institute at reduced rates.
6. Celebrating the secretary week once a year.
7. Use of the institute's Employment Register/Consultancy Services.
8. Assisting student members to pass their professional examinations at first attempt by providing them with lectures, handout notes and office skills with Nigerian and Overseas materials etc.

Generally, membership in professional organisations offers four major benefits:

- * Avoidance of obsolescence through the development and maintenance of new knowledge and skills
- * Friendships
- * Job referrals
- * Professional role models.

Monthly meetings and workshops during the year offer valuable forums for personal and professional development. Also, friendship that evolves from working with others toward a common cause can also lead to improved employment opportunities. Participation on committees, as a member and as an officer, develops leadership and management skills. Currently, the professional Secretaries International is taking an assertive role in bringing about desired changes in the secretarial profession and its status. National 'speak outs' have been organised to air and share viewpoints among secretaries.

The Certified Public Secretary

Certified Public (or Professional) secretaries are distinguished by meeting the certification requirements set forth by various professional bodies in different jurisdictions, which include a rigorous exam. The areas covered in the Certified Public Secretary exam indicate the key areas of career duties performed by Certified Public Secretaries, which include accounting, communication and office administration, office technology and management. As secretaries develop increasingly sophisticated skills in these areas, they advance to positions of greater responsibility that go well beyond how the role of 'secretary' has been traditionally defined. A certified public secretary administers databases, creates financial presentations and performs other tasks that make these professionals indispensable to the executive team.

The chief concern of the profession is about good governance and the enhancement of

productivity in organisations. The CPS profession plays a pivotal role in promoting positive work ethics, efficiency in business management and good corporate governance. The mission of the profession is to contribute effectively to the improved life of mankind by promoting good corporate and institutional governance through sustainable quality training quality assurance and positive ethical practice by members. The profession applies in various sectors with members being able to carry out key roles in the public sector, local authorities, the cooperatives sector, non-government organisations and a host of other different organisations. The title of the CPS varies according to type of organisation and possible title include, but are not limited to Company/Corporate Secretary. Administration |Managers, Human Resources Managers, Provincial Administrators, Personnel Officer, Executive Officers, County and Town Clerks, Secretary/Managers, Hospital Administrators, Project Managers, Charity Trustees, Private Practitioners, etc.

Depending on the field of employment, the roles of a certified secretary may vary but they all have one thing in common; ensuring that whatever entity they work for complies with the laws of the land and internal management procedures by their employers. Some of the duties and roles duplicate themselves in the various form of secretarial employment while others are unique to a company secretary.

Secretarial Profession In Promoting Effective Service Delivery

According to Isineyi, (2006), Secretarial Profession is experiencing dramatic changes in the workplace. One of the aspects of the changes in office service. Most organisations have witnessed remarkable growth in business activities. Business environment has become more turbulent than before thus calling for efficient application of tools of modern information and communication technology in dealing with threats and harnessing of opportunities. As an organisation strives to become more efficient and effective, secretaries would be required to sharpen their ICT competencies. The new millennium secretaries should have sound educational background and a good business education. Such a secretary should identify himself with every bit of the organization's interest bearing in mind the need to cut down cost, eliminate wastages in terms of time and resources and also increase the level of efficiency, effectiveness and productivity. This point has raised some contending issues that should be handled, namely:

- * Have the practicing secretaries been adequately trained to meet the challenges of the new millennium?
- * Who should be responsible for training and retaining the practicing secretaries?

In a study of 600 secretaries in Anambra and Enugu States aimed at identifying the prospects of secretaries in the era of automation, the following findings were made:

- i. Many secretaries now use computer to render their services.
- ii. Secretaries now participate in decision making and implementation

- iii. Knowledge of modern office machines has become compulsory for prospective secretaries.
- iv. Increased office automation has improved the quantity and quality of secretarial services.
- v. There are greater opportunities for secretaries.
- vi. Employers now demand knowledge of computer operation a condition for employment.
- vii. The use of computer has reduced the mistakes usually made in secretarial services.

These are some of the vital areas secretarial practitioners should use to evaluate themselves in relation to their present skill and knowledge acquisition level. They are vital for business educators who are charged with the duty of producing secretaries. It is a truism that many secretarial personnel are now using computer both in their offices and at homes. The knowledge of computer and other computerised equipment is the main springboard for growth and opportunities in secretarial profession at the moment. A combination of knowledge of computer, administration, management, entrepreneurship, in addition to personal drive to serve will catapult a secretary to the present and future secretaries. Computer technology is the pivot of almost every industrial operation in the new millennium. It is either that one acquires the knowledge of computer and uses it for solving business problems or the person will sink into the oblivion. Contending issues, therefore, arise from this discourse, namely:

- Are all practising secretaries in Nigeria truly computer literate?
- Are secretaries really exploiting the opportunities offered by computer?
- Have the organisations acquired computer and other computerised equipment for the use of secretaries?
- Do the professional association have any role to play to ensure that secretaries in Nigeria are provided with computer and other modern office equipment by their employers?
- Is the quality of computer education imparted to students in secretarial schools adequate for them to hold secretarial positions in the new millennium?.

According to Chike D (2010), Office Technology Management and Development: A too for shifting to paperless office for timeless an effectiveness will give boost to the importance of secretarial profession in promoting effective service delivery in Nigeria. Most national, multinational companies and organizations have fully automated their offices for timely processing of data for efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. This is clearer in the secretarial profession effective service delivery in the following areas:

Modern Office Technology: Office today has witness a lot f transformation,

which resulted to online or electronic handling of records and transactions. Among the Modern Office Technologies (MOT) are Chatting Technology, Packaging of Report is Portable Document Format (PDF) transmission, online scheduling of meetings, Language Translation and Transcription Technology, Internal Technology etc., every modern office that desired to accomplish Stephen (1992) concept of 'service at customers' point of need' would endeavour to entrench these modern technology.

Paperwork: Is the routine part of a job which involves dealing with letters, reports, records, retrieval and management etc involving rectangular sheets of paper.

Paperless: Is almost opposite of paperwork. It is the routine part of job which tends to reduce or limits the number of volume of paperwork or papers involved when dealing with letters, reports and records.

Effectiveness: Something is effective when it produces the intended result within the shortest time.

Online Record Transmission Technology: The office has witnessed a sporadic change in the mode of transmission of records and file from one remote location to another. The use of File Transfer Protocol (FTP) and document originally maintenance and compression packages like Acrobat reader has made handling of message/file transfer easier. According to Adobe Systems in 1993 for document exchange, PDF is used for representing two-dimensional documents in a manner independent of the application software, hardware and operating system.

Archiving Technology (E-Storage): Archiving can be referred to as electronic storage (e-storage). Archiving according to Wikipedia (2009) is a collection of historical records and the location in which the collection is kept. Archives contain records (primary source documents) which have accumulated over the course of an individual or organization's lifetime. Most time office records are lost due to improper preservation and activities creatures like rodents and cockroaches or fire outbreak and like. Archiving technology which tends to preserve documents virtually help offices in recovery of records in cases of unexpected events.

Electronic mail (e-mail) communication: Electronic mail is a shift to the conventional mail delivery system deployed in offices to entrench a more stable and reliable system of delivery of mail aided by speed of electricity. Email messages are delivered within few minutes or even seconds. It is cheaper than faxing and phone calls. Yet surprisingly, the modern offices are far from having and using e-mail

facilities for delivery of messages. What may be considered as modern office in this era, houses computer units and underutilizes it for most speedily process that would result to timely delivery of information, which the office is meant for. Rather a critical look at computer utilization in modern offices would just be for watching movies. This is against the ethics of business, usually business slogan always says: 'Business before pleasure'. Office Technology Equipment (OTE) should be fully deployed for business profitability.

Online Meeting Scheduling and Conference: Modern Office managers should not only rely on the conventional ways of scheduling conference and meetings, but should try new technological innovations as part of transformation of the electronic world. With latest office technology such as Apple iCal, Lotus Notes, Mobile Doodle (Beta), I Google Widget, Face Book Doodle, Blueberry etc. Office manager should be able to schedule board meetings, business lunch and conference calls.

Due to lack of deployment of implementation of online meeting and scheduling techniques, efficiency and timeliness has eluded office settings in delivery of services and improvement on profit margin of business entities.

According to Skweyiya Zst (2011), I want to emphasise today that secretaries have a new role to play in the Public Serviced. As the Public Services changes to represent the value of the new South Africa, the role of secretaries in ensuring that these changes are effectively implemented is as important as every other staff member in the Public Service. We trust that this conference will address these issues and support secretaries in their efforts to create a dynamic and effective public Service. In the last year, unprecedented changes were implemented in the Public Service. These include firstly, the Batho Pele or 'People First' project, which engenders a customer orientation and holds public servants accountable for the services they provide. Batho Pele is about consulting users of services, setting services standards and getting the best possible value for money. Secondly, the Public Serviced Commission produced the first Code of Conduct for Public Servants, which was promulgated in June 1997. The development of a high standard of professional ethics in the Public Service will not be achieved solely by the existence of this Code of Conduct. Heads of departments, senior managers and human resource managers need to play an active role in promoting ethical behaviour and rooting out corruption. Promoting effectiveness and efficiency in public administration are thus of utmost importance for the Department of Public Service and Administration. Thirdly, the new Public Service Regulations were developed to replace the cumbersome Public Service Regulation, Public Service Staff Code and the Personnel Administration Standards. The new regulations contain the mandatory practices, procedures and policy norms to which all executing authorities, managers and employees must adhere.

These regulations are designed to improve the performance and; productivity of

public service employees and provided scope for departments and provinces to apply personnel practices that are suited to their circumstances. They are set to fundamentally transform the manner in which the Public Service is managed. They will make it easier for managers to actually manage and will make it easier to hold them accountable for results. The revamping of the Public Service Regulations encompasses some areas of mutual interest with Public Service Trade Unions, particularly in improving labour relations. The Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council was officially registered as bargaining council in terms of the Labour Relations Act in October, 1997 to provide a vehicle for co-determination and improving labour relations.

My Ministry strongly supports the efforts and concerns of the Public Service Secretaries Forum to eliminate the culture of non-performance, to a culture of high performance. The commitment by the Ministry to human resource development through education and training clearly link up with the Public Service Secretaries Forum's commitment to improve the efficiency and general performance of all Public Service Secretaries. The White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service was published in 1997 and is consistent with the Labour Relations Act and other relevant legislation. In terms of the new policy, managers are accountable for the proper utilization of human resources in terms of their predetermined operation goals and expected outcomes. Strong and effective performance management is a key feature of the new human resource management policy.

To facilitate the unprecedented changes the Public Service is undergoing, my Ministry believes that three elements are vital. The first is training, the second is providing greater recognition for the secretarial profession and the third is developing greater responsibility to secretaries. I will discuss each of these in turn. The Department of Public Service and Administration, in its White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service clearly states: 'Government has adopted the view that all public servants from the most senior to the most junior require on-going training as an integral part of their professional life'. We believe that every single member of the new Public Service is vital to the overall success of the new government.

As Nigeria moves into an era of shrinking resources and increasing population, high productivity and quality will increasingly become the key to progress and success in every organization, public and private. Without improved productivity and quality, the success of the Reconstruction and Development Programme cannot be guaranteed. Hence the need for organization likes the Public Service Secretaries Forum to guide and promote secretarial professionalism and to improve the productivity and quality of all secretaries in the Public Services.

The work and professional environment of secretaries are continually changing. This is illustrated by the rapidly ever-changing state-of-the-art technology. Windows

2000, microsoft, Word 98, Excel 98 and so forth, if you haven't heard of this, I guess that you're being short-changed. Guess the point is nobody will hire a secretary today who is not familiar with basic word-processing software – let alone computer literate. The training of secretaries to master new technology will never stop. And when it does, the institution is bound to collapse. In this regard, this forum has an important role to play in lifting the quality of the secretarial profession to new heights. Training therefore is no longer the preserve and monopoly of Public Service elite. Training must become the medium to drive effective and efficient service. The new Public Service Regulations dismantles the web of rules and regulations to ensure that Public Service staff like secretaries is encouraged to use their own initiatives. Competent secretaries do not need to get authorization from above, to perform their duties efficiently and productively. As the Public Service is charged with the task of becoming more responsive, the roles of front-line staff members are constantly changing. We hope through the new system, that secretaries are not bound by a 'glass ceiling' restricted that the home fires remain burning, the new environment is designed to encourage development of staff. Secretarial professionalism is crucial and to obtain this professionalism is not an easy task. This is a major challenge for the Public Service Secretarial Forum and rest assured your organisation has the full support of my Ministry to realize these challenges and goals. The changes adopted by the DPSA, in essence, recognize the need not only for secretarial professionalism, but also for professionalism within the Public Service as a whole. The answer lies in internalizing the vision, principles and code of conduct – and as a forum finding innovative ways of supporting its implementation and compliance. This ultimately is the core of good governance.

I hope your organisation can assist the Public Service in its goal to be developmental in orientation, adaptive to changes, responsive to the needs of the communities, which nurture it, and also be capable of learning and sustaining progress. In realizing this goal I am confident that this forum will bring us closer to a new equitable and appropriate training dispensation for public servant that serve these goals.

Challenges To Effective Secretarial Service Delivery

Secretarial education is a component of vocational education that provides knowledge and skills for would-be confidential secretaries to perform efficiently and effectively in the world of work. It also involves acquisition of skills, knowledge and competencies that make the recipient proficient in secretarial profession. According to Aliyu (2006), Secretarial Education is offered in Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and the Universities, primarily to educate and train students to become competent professional secretaries. The Nigerian Tertiary Institutions that offer Business Education, (secretarial option), face some challenges in a bid to provide the desired knowledge, skills and competencies to secretarial students in office technology and information systems. To date, many Nigerians tertiary institutions that offer Business Education (Secretarial option) do not have adequate computers and the internet facilities in their

laboratories to provide the secretarial students with the knowledge, skills and competencies needed in the advanced office technology and information systems. The secretarial students that graduated from the universities do not have iota of fundamentals of information processing and computer literacy. They do not possess the basic skills required to utilize computer operating system such as word processing e-mail and the internet. Those who may boast of having to operate computer or can browse on the internet may have gone extra mile to learn from the 'roadside' computer centres or institutes.

Modern Office Technology and information systems, in every simple terms depict, modern office machines used in office administration by secretarial administrators, clerical workers and managers for the purpose of increased productivity, efficient, effective service delivery and also improved management decision-making. According to Mclead and Johnes (1987), Modern Office Technology (office automation is the application of electronic and electro-mechanical devices for the purpose of increasing productivity for workers. They further buttressed that modern office technology and information systems included general computers, special purpose office machines and communication equipments. The computer which is the latest office technology is use by the office workers to create, store, retrieve and transmit business communications. The computer is used for processing written communications by using various word processing software and hardware that are currently in use. The secretarial administrators or managers use word processing to prepare written communications. In these instances, word processing is usually regarded as a means of communicating information from the manager to someone else. Word processing is also viewed as a corporate resource for building a strong intra firm communication network, facilitating the flow of information to the managers. Other office information systems include Electronic voice and voice mail, videotext, image storage and retrieval, facsimile transmission, electronic calendaring and tele-conferencing. According to Azuka (1998) office technology is a process by which machines and equipment are introduced in an office with a view to facilitating the administrative process. Egbokhan (2000) stated that office technology entails the use if machines with appropriate skills and techniques to make job easier in the office and promote effective and efficient service delivery.

According to Deming (1982), quality is the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy started or implied needs, adding that quality should therefore be aimed at the needs of a customer present or future.

Integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is imperative for NAPSSON Members should not be left out in the dynamic world of ICGT. Even though it is evident that many organisations have incorporated ICT, there is need for secretaries to develop ways of harnessing ICT resources. This can include such things as a common website that will offer access to secretarial resources, tools databases, liked to relevant sites etc.

How are you changing your attitude? How psychologically and socially prepared are?. It must be acknowledge that i the present day productivity depends on knowledge, skills and attitudes of the people, as much as it depends on capital. What are you doing to reach your optimal potentials?. Do you have passion for excellence? NAPSSON branches should make training mandatory. Provisions should be made for members who miss out participation in annual conference/exhibitions, in form of publications/multi-media resources at a reasonable fee. This can be integrated into the ICT core.

Ponder on this anonymous statement. “SUCCESS IS WHEN YOU ADD VALUE TO YOURSELF WHILE SIGNIFICANCE IS WHEN YOU ADD VALUE TO OTHERS”. Serviced to others and society is the real pathway to importance. Secretaries should cope with civil service reforms continuously. You should make continuous self-assessment, self-awareness and self-development. This will not only make you to identify your strengths, you can also identify your weakness. Correct weaknesses and build on your strengths. You should continue to develop yourself and improve your skills and your networking. These are very essential for your relevance, retention and development.

Strategies For Effective Secretarial Service Delivery

From the list of challenges in the foregoing section, we can deduce some strategies that can be deployed to advance the cause of effective secretarial service delivery. Let me outline briefly a triangle of actors and basic strategies available to them.

- * Provision of enabling environment for sustainable secretarial infrastructure development and service penetration.
- * Create technological villages/incubation centers and sponsor R&D with adequate grant and appropriate incentives (e.g., tax benefits) to investors and entrepreneurs;
- * Eliminate or reduce tariffs on imported ICT products without discouraging/killing local talents/innovation.
- * Ensure steady power supply.
- * Adoption of education curricular and syllabi integrated ICT enabled training in all schools, including stipulation of minimum ICT knowledge for secretarial graduates
- * Investment in ICT infrastructure development and penetration.
- * Increase ICT penetration beyond urban centres,
- * Entrenchment of professionalism
- * Organise strategies bodies and functions/events, aimed at arousing enthusiasm and curiosity to explore, discover and use ICT.

Without an efficient, effective and well-motivated Public Service, the implementation of Government Policies and Programmes which are aimed at improving the living

conditions of the citizenry will be seriously impaired. Until very recently, however, various initiatives on reforming and revitalizing the Public Service were not specifically linked to ensuring service delivery improvements. Recommendations on Public Service improvements by Wendy Thomas Team, in Goke Adegoroye (2005).

- * Creating citizens and customers' demand through among others;
- * Communicating service entitlement and rights.
- * Publishing accurate and timely information about performance.

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