



Federal Road Safety Corps

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

"Creating a safe motoring environment in Nigeria"

HIGH PERFORMANCE ORGANISATION

Getting the Corps to Dance



"No one can whistle a symphony. It takes an orchestra to play it." - H. E. Luccock.

Getting the Federal Road Safety Corps to deliver its mandate entails synchronising all levers of

The Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) has made significant progress to eradicate road traffic crashes and create a safe motoring environment in Nigeria. The number of deaths per 10,000 registered vehicles dropped from 156 deaths in 1988 (at the inception of the Corps) to 41 deaths in 2012. Credit for this remarkable achievement goes to the management and officers of the Corps who have gone through significant transformation to create an organisation that consistently delivers on its goals - a high performance organisation.

Preamble

In 2007, as Osita Chidoka became the Corps Marshal and Chief Executive (COMACE) of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), he wrestled with various perspectives on how to

The Federal Road Safety Corps provided the data on traffic road safety in Nigeria. All other data are appropriately referenced. **Nextier Advisory** compiled and produced the report.

Copyright © 2013 by the Board and Management of the Federal Road Safety Corps. To order copies or request permission to reproduce materials, call +234-700-CALL-FRSC (+234-700-2255-3772), write Federal Road Safety Corps, National Headquarters, Olusegun Obasanjo Way, Zone 7, Wuse District. PMB 125, Abuja, Nigeria, or go to www.frsc.gov.ng. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, used in a spreadsheet, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise—without the permission of Federal Road Safety Corps.

transform the Corps from a lethargic public sector organisation into a nimble organisation with private sector values. He knew that his preferred option must include a transformation of the over 20,000 staff, most of whom were unmotivated, into a high performance team. The key challenge was how to successfully navigate this effort without suffering the fate of many public sector reform programmes that asphyxiated before they could achieve sustainable reform.

Human capital is usually the best place to start such reform effort. In his book, *"Who Says Elephants Can't Dance"*, Louis V. Gerstner, Jr., the Chairman and CEO of IBM from 1993 to 2002 recounts the historic turnaround of the behemoth from the brink of bankruptcy into an adept company re-emerging at the frontline of the technology business. Gerstner situates his achievements within the context of the changes he brought to the organisation's culture. The book provided some interesting accounts of that transformational journey, however, the question remained whether a public sector organisation in Nigeria could be taught to dance?

Like Gerstner, Chidoka's reform was going to be a battle for the soul (culture) of the organisation. It would focus on building a merit-driven and knowledge-based organisation that would leverage technology to drive operational excellence. Unlike IBM that operates in the United States, an environment that thrives on dynamism and change, FRSC operates in an environment where performance remains largely unrewarded, especially in the public sector.

Setting the Strategic Context

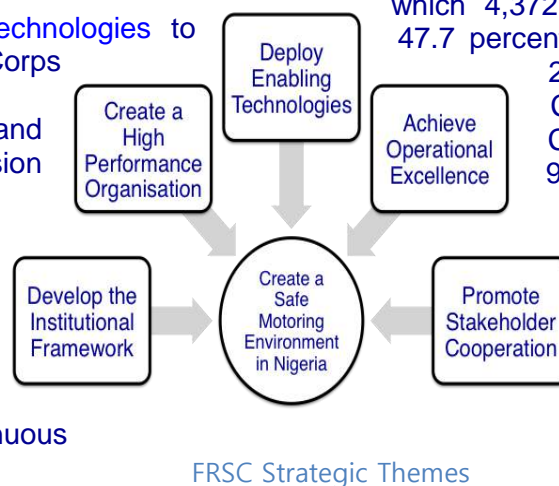
Sustainable organisational transformation cannot be achieved without an overarching strategy. FRSC management realized the need for and created a comprehensive strategy with the following strategic themes:

- Develop an institutional framework that positions FRSC as the lead agency for road safety management;
- Create a high performance organisation to drive the implementation of FRSC's mandate;
- Deploy enabling technologies to improve the Corps operational effectiveness and data-driven decision making;
- Achieve operational excellence through a commitment to quality service and continuous improvement; and

- Promote multi-sectoral stakeholder cooperation towards creating a safe motoring environment in Nigeria.

Taken together, these strategic themes (and the resultant initiatives) led to outstanding performance of the Corps based on institutional, operational, and tactical reform measures that were championed by Osita Chidoka's leadership team. By 2011, at the end of Chidoka's first term as COMACE, FRSC recorded 4,765 road traffic crashes (RTC) that resulted in 21,836 casualties of which 4,372 deaths occurred. This is a 47.7 percent drop in RTC incidents from 2006, the year prior to Osita Chidoka becoming the COMACE, when there were 9,114 incidents resulting in 22,334 casualties of which 4,944 deaths occurred.

The transformation at the FRSC and the significant drop in RTC has been internationally recognised with the 2008 Prince Michael of Kent



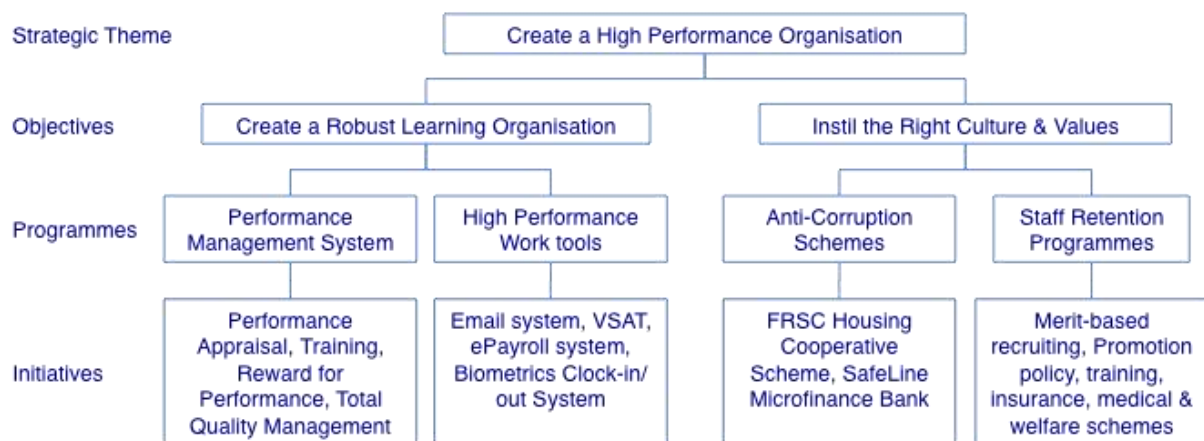
International Road Safety Award, the 2009 National Productivity Award, the 2012 World Bank recognition as the “Lead Agency in Africa”, and routine invitation by other African governments to provide technical assistance with the establishment of their road safety agencies. Under the Chidoka leadership, FRSC has become the national and international model for public sector agencies thanks to its focus on building a robust learning organisation and on instilling the right culture and values.

Robust Learning Organisation

FRSC management understood that to create an organisation that will consistently achieve its mandate it needed to facilitate a process for continuous improvement. There

Performance Management System

In 2010, FRSC implemented a Performance Management System (PMS) for evidence-based evaluations that effectively eliminated arbitrariness of performance appraisals and instituted meritocracy. The Corps sets its corporate goals at the beginning of the year and these goals are cascaded to departmental-level objectives, and subsequently linked to Corps staff deliverables. Supervisors use coaching sessions to ensure all parties understand the key performance indicators, and the process by which they will be evaluated at



was need for a system to align individual deliverables to corporate goals, evaluate performance, plug capacity gaps, and reward performance.

various intervals during the year.

The PMS is central to the transformation at the Corps. Its major success is that it places



Quantitative scores derived from the Corps' Performance Management System inform promotion and career advancement decisions.

the onus on the individual to do the right thing, the right way and at the right time because decisions on career advancement and compensation are driven simply by the results of this process. Linking individual deliverables to departmental goals implies that both are closely correlated and measurable.

The performance reviews have created healthy and positive competitive culture within the Corps especially because of the prizes won by the top performing departments. For instance, in 2010 and 2011, all the staff in the top-performing department received an additional 15 percent to their basic salary while the Head of the Department was sponsored to attend a special course at Harvard University. All staff in the second best department received an additional 7.5 percent of their basic salary while the Head of Department was sponsored to attend an international training programme in London. Staff of the department in the third position, received an additional 5 percent of their basic salary.

are evaluated using six criteria with different performance weights ¹. The PMS has enthroned meritocracy in the Corps because there is clarity on what is required to make it to the top of the organisation. It has also enthroned teamwork because to win, the department must collectively win.

High Performance Work Tools

In tandem with transforming FRSC into a learning organisation, management needed to ensure an adoption of technology to drive effectiveness and efficiency. The first goal was 100 percent computer usage by all staff.

Prior to 2007, communication within the Corps was mostly via telephone and surface mail. Official Memos took over 10 days to travel from the Zonal Commands to FRSC Headquarters and back before action could commence on an issue. Official mail delivery took about 10 days before feedback could be received. Then, only one (1) courier service company, DHL was engaged to carry out mails.

The various departments and Corps offices

To improve on its communication



With increased computer usage, FRSC management instructed that all promotion examinations should be conducted online. This practice fostered a technology culture in the Corps. Today, ICT is applied in one form or the other to complete administrative or operational tasks within the Corps.

processes, FRSC management insisted on 100 percent staff email usage. With the initial low adoption rate, FRSC management instructed that salary notices and other

It is almost impossible to start and complete any administrative or operational function within the FRSC without employing technology in one form or the

notifications would only be sent electronically and that only staff with active FRSC emails would be paid their salaries. This move was controversial and severely opposed and resulted in petitions to the then President, Umaru Yar'adua to dismiss the COMACE.

By the end of the first month, only 5,000 Corps staff had signed up for their corporate emails. Realising that the COMACE would not retract his position on salary payments, adoption of the email system began to increase which meant increased use of computers within the Corps. This was a significant organizational culture win for the COMACE. The Corps was slowly starting to dance.

Buoyed by these early successes, FRSC management instructed that promotion examinations would be conducted online. To date, over 9 examinations have been conducted online.

These simple measures fostered a culture of technology use in the Corps. Today, it is almost impossible to start and complete any administrative or operational function

within the Corps without employing technology in one form or the other.

VSAT Terminals

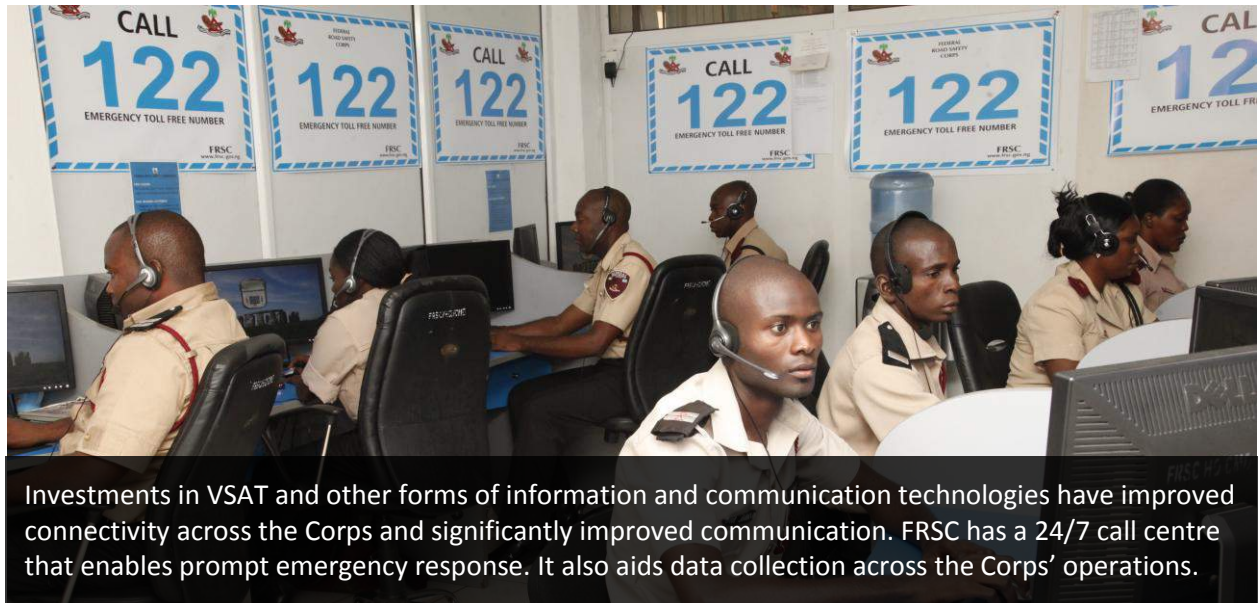
FRSC invested in a network of very small aperture terminal (VSAT) technology to improve interconnectivity between its offices. At the start of the

project in 2007, FRSC had no VSAT terminals. By December 2012, close to 400 terminals had been deployed across Nigeria to connect the various offices. This vast network has improved communication and connectivity in FRSC and resulted in increased response time to emergency situations. Today, FRSC is able to respond to road traffic crash incidents within 20 minutes of receiving an emergency call.

E-Payment System

Most public sector organisations in developing countries, where accountability

The e-Payment system resulted in an 85 percent reduction in FRSC payroll and associated administrative costs in the first



Investments in VSAT and other forms of information and communication technologies have improved connectivity across the Corps and significantly improved communication. FRSC has a 24/7 call centre that enables prompt emergency response. It also aids data collection across the Corps' operations.

systems are not fully developed, have high incidents of "ghost" workers resulting in loss of significant resources paid as salaries to non-existent staff. FRSC was no exception. The management introduced an e-Payment system that collated staff biometric data to effectively process salary payments. With this new payroll system, salaries were deposited directly into authentic bank accounts and eliminated the signing of thousands of cheques every month. This facilitates an auditable transaction trail, and eliminates opportunities for financial leakages.

Furthermore, FRSC management instituted a process where contractors and service providers were similarly paid through the ePayment platform. This process left an auditable trail that eliminated financial leakages.

year of implementation. Given the success of the system, the then President Umaru Yar'adua instructed that all public sector agencies should adopt e-Payment for all payments to third parties. This was one of many occasions where initiatives pioneered at FRSC were adopted by other public sector agencies.

Biometrics Clock-in System

The culture of unaccountability that pervades the federal civil service fosters professional tardiness and truancy. Pre-2007, it was common for FRSC staff to arrive at work at any time and depart at a time of their choice.

FRSC management decided to implement a biometric clock-in system to monitor staff arrival and departure times. Failure to clock-in results in forfeiture of salary for the day and impacts overall performance evaluation.

Data from the biometric system was linked to the automated payroll system and salaries were computed based on the number of days "clocked". The system is used to generate a query to the offending staff to explain work absences and/or tardiness.

Over 95 percent of FRSC staff started arriving at work on time in the first year of the implementation of the biometric system. The system sent a strong message that the Corps was on a transformational path and its zero tolerance methodology demonstrated that attendance and conduct during office hours were being monitored. Even more importantly, the system directly and swiftly impacted salaries. The technology was pilot tested at FRSC Headquarters in Abuja. It has since been deployed to a number of Commands across the country. There is a plan for full-scale deployment to all Commands and Formations.

Over the intervening years, guided by the performance management system and the high performance work tools, FRSC has

succeeded in creating an organisation that is continuously learning and improving its ability to deliver on its mandate. Against this backdrop, and in tandem, FRSC management worked to instil the right culture and values in the organisation.

Culture & Values

Anti-Corruption Schemes

Osita Chidoka is of the belief that a high performance organisation must be driven by a corporate culture that is engrained in a value system steeped in integrity. Under his leadership, FRSC management set out to create an organisational culture that impedes corruption.

The Corps expanded their benefits and compensation programme to include home ownership, healthcare, insurance, access to credit facilities, etc. However, it tied access to these programmes to continued employment at the Corps. If one is caught engaged in corrupt practices, the officer risked their eligibility to the programme.

Staff Housing Scheme



FRSC management expanding the Corps' benefits system to include home ownership, healthcare, insurance, credit facilities, etc. Any staff member indicted for corruption loses all these benefits. FRSC believes that these benefits will help instil the right culture and value in the Corps staff members.

FRSC management wanted a private sector solution to its staff-housing needs. It encouraged the creation of an FRSC Cooperative Society with voluntary membership. The Co-op worked closely with Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria to leverage the National Housing Fund (NHF). With the NHF, Co-op members can contribute 10 percent equity towards a home purchase and pay down the remaining 90 percent at a fixed interest rate of 6 percent over a 30-year period. With clarity on the source of development finance and mortgage repayment, FRSC Co-op engaged a private sector real estate company to develop the residential estates.

From its inception in 2007, FRSC Co-op has developed a total of 342 houses: 76 2-bedroom, 218 3-bedroom and 48 4-bedroom. These homes, which are in housing estates, are located in over 5 cities across Nigeria. Homes in the estates are available to both FRSC and non-FRSC staff to ensure that the communities have a mix of residents from diverse backgrounds.

SafeLine Microfinance Bank

Access to affordable banking services and solutions was a major challenge for some Corps staff. In some instances, it was difficult for them to meet the stringent credit requirements stipulated by commercial banks. When the COMACE realised that FRSC Co-op had over 13,000 members, he saw an opportunity for the Corps to start a microfinance bank that would offer tailored financial services and

solutions to FRSC staff. SafeLine Microfinance Bank obtained its license from the Central Bank of Nigeria in 2010. The core objective of the bank is to create a vehicle through which FRSC staff can save and invest towards their retirement from service. This additional financial commitment incentivizes the officers to not violate the FRSC code of conduct.



SafeLine MFB is one of the most successful microfinance banks in Nigeria. FRSC staff and its other customers are able to access medium to long-term

SafeLine Microfinance Bank has increased its capitalisation from ₦20 million in 2010 to ₦200 million in 2012. Its current authorised capital is ₦500 million. It has over 30 products tailored to the financial needs of Corps members and its other non-FRSC customers.

Life Insurance Policy

Thousands of FRSC staff put themselves in the line of danger daily in the discharge of their duties. For instance, between 2007 and 2012, 507 FRSC staff died or suffered permanent disabilities while on active duty. Therefore, a major cause of concern for FRSC management is to guarantee that in the event of an on-the-job hazard the welfare of the family members of the

affected staff is guaranteed. As a result, FRSC management worked with the insurance industry to create a Life Insurance policy for its staff. To date, over 18,574 staff members are enrolled in the policy. FRSC continues to educate its staff on the importance of obtaining these policies.

Access to Healthcare

In addition to the government mandated health insurance scheme, FRSC staffs have access to two dedicated FRSC medical facilities. These medical facilities offer free medical consultation to FRSC staff members and up to four of their registered family members. The Corps intends to expand these facilities to all the Zonal Commands in Nigeria. In the interim, Corps staff can also avail themselves of the services of the 47 Roadside Traffic Clinics across Nigeria although these facilities are focused on emergency medicine.

FRSC management believes that providing these HR benefits will dissuade staff from engaging in corrupt practices since they and their dependents risk losing these coveted benefits: access to healthcare, home ownership, and credit facilities.

FRSC management also appreciates that it must put structures in place to actively dissuade unprofessional conduct. As a matter of policy, FRSC staffs are not expected to carry a lot of cash on their person while on patrol operations. Each staff is expected to register the serial numbers of the cash they have on their

person in the Duty Room before embarking on the patrol. Random spot checks are conducted on the patrol teams to deter them from collecting bribes from motorists and other road users.

Staff Retention Strategies

FRSC management seeks to achieve the return on its investment in creating a robust learning organisation, utilizing high performance work tools, and fostering an organisational culture that shuns corruption. Therefore, it is imperative that it establishes programmes that foster staff retention.

In 2007, when Chidoka became COMACE, there had not been any staff promotions in the prior six years resulting in low staff morale. After consultations with staff to develop pragmatic solutions, the Corps introduced a number of policy changes to increase staff retention.

Promotion Policy

By 2012, FRSC communicated a policy on how staff talent would be attracted, trained and retained in the organisation. This policy provided clarity on the sort of organisation FRSC management was seeking to create and how staff members fit within the organisational structure.

Promotion Examinations

Starting from 2008, all Corps staffs had to take various levels of examination to progress from one job grade to another. The examinations demonstrated that all promoted staff met the minimum requirements under the same benchmark. This process eliminated nepotism and arbitrariness from the promotions process

These promotion examinations have become a symbol of pride and distinction for Corps staff members within the public sector.

Training

The Corps invests about 7.9 percent of its annual budget on staff training. Unlike in other organisations where training is seen



and, in its place, enthroned meritocracy. Between 2008 and 2012, over 6,790 Corps staffs have taken the promotion examinations with an 80.2 percent success rate. The examinations are administered electronically with verifiable and auditable results.

Furthermore, FRSC staff members are encouraged to obtain further qualifications to fast track their career progression; a new academic or professional qualification is an opportunity to advance to a higher position. Over 549 FRSC staff members have taken and passed the conversion examinations and advanced their careers within the Corps.

as a perk to favoured staff, FRSC instituted a policy that ensures staff members can apply for a course of study after about 3 years in the organisation. The training must be targeted at addressing a capacity gap probably identified during the routine performance evaluations. In some cases, the Corps offers partial and full scholarships for staff to attend universities in Nigeria and abroad. However, certain conditions of services are attached to these scholarships.

Timely salary payments

The introduction of U-Pay brought efficiency to the salary administration at FRSC and ensured timely payment of salaries. Staff members are now confident

about the timely payment of their monthly salaries.

What are the Critical Success Factors?

In her book, *"Reforming the Unreformable"*, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Nigeria's Coordinating Minister of the Economy and Minister of Finance, recounts how a team of reformers battled to fix a series of inept institutions and position Nigeria's economy for long-term economic growth. Likewise, from the start of his tenure in 2007, Chidoka saw his challenge as "reforming the *reformable*." He held the philosophical belief that people are inherently good with the ability to achieve greatness and perform at very high levels of proficiency if equipped with the right aptitude and provided with leadership they can believe in.

From the start, Chidoka posited that the most critical success factor was the quality of the people in FRSC. His goal was to create an organisation where excellence is the standard -a goal not alien to FRSC given its reputable pedigree. As a result,

FRSC focused on developing a professional, result-oriented and high performance workforce capable of delivering the organisation's mandate.

The efforts of the FRSC at creating a high performance organisation presents lessons for public sector reform, which though fraught with difficulties, yields worthwhile results. Below are some of the elements that contributed to the success of creating a high performance organisation at the Federal Road Safety Corps.

Seek Champions Outside the Box

Reform literature is replete with stories of industry outsiders who have accomplished some of the most remarkable industry transformations. This is simply because, as outsiders, they are unaware of the proverbial sacred cows within the industry and will touch even the untouchables in a bid to achieve their set goals.

Chidoka was the ultimate outsider. As a 35-year-old civilian, Chidoka was appointed to a position that had been the exclusive



Osita Chidoka, FRSC Corps Marshal and Chief Executive (left) with Prof. Wole Soyinka, first Chairman of FRSC and Nobel Laureate for Literature (in a white shirt). Prof. Soyinka is credited with staffing the FRSC with professionals and creating a pedigree of excellence.

preserve of retired senior military officers. His appointment was an indication that President Obasanjo wanted to inject new DNA into the agency, and more importantly, wanted him to shake things up.

There is an interesting correlation between the Chidoka and Gerstner stories. As IBM danced on the brink of bankruptcy, various technology industry superstars (including Bill Gates) were invited to assume the CEO role and drive the transformation. None of these industry insiders accepted the job

transformed and he brought his business management skills he had honed at ExxonMobil and in graduate school to his mission of transforming the Corps. And he did.

Build Your Team ... Fast

Teamwork is essential for success. This is even more important when the organisation is about to go through some significant changes. The commitment and integrity of the leader is most critical at this stage to win the trust and commitment of his team.



because they believed IBM had already gone over the brink and was unsalvageable. As a management consultant with no technology industry experience, Gerstner's held no preconceived notions about IBM. Where industry insiders saw IBM as irredeemable, Gerstner saw a challenge that needed a few good ideas. Chidoka held no preconceived notions about the do's and don'ts of a public sector organisation. He saw an organisation that needed to be

Chidoka would prove to be the requisite inspirational and transformational leader to achieve this. Chidoka had to look within the Corps to find proponents to drive and implement his reform agenda. More importantly, he needed to quickly demonstrate his aptitude and attitude to gain the confidence of his team. This is a critical step in public sector reform.

Battle of the Minds

Most of life's feats are won or lost in the mind. For instance, it was for decades believed impossible to run a mile in less than four minutes. In 1954, Roger Bannister shattered the "four minute barrier" and freed the human mind to conceive this feat. A few months later more people broke the barrier.

The same can be said for reform programmes. The first task is to win the minds of the people in the organisation to believe that transformation is possible. At FRSC, Chidoka and his team focused on getting the staff members to believe in their collective ability to achieve impossible feats. FRSC management reconnected the organisation to its early pedigree of elite professionals and highlighted its image as trailblazers going where no other Nigerian government agency had gone before. The leadership had to win this battle for the mind to win the reform war.

Communicating the Reform

The role of communication in a reform process cannot be overemphasized. Public advocacy and awareness of the reform objective is a critical signal that the status quo is being challenged. The reformer must expect resistance from the beneficiaries of that status quo.

According to Chidoka, he lost count of the number of petitions to President Umaru Yar'adua demanding the termination of his appointment. Luckily, he had won the trust

and confidence of the president with some of the early victories. Also, the president understood that reform, though painful, was the only way to get the organisation to meet its mandate.

Notwithstanding the risk, the reformer must engage with the sector stakeholders and general public and openly communicate and declare the reform goals mindful of the fact that failure to deliver on the declaration is as good as the end of the reform process.

Strategic, tactical and operational communications initiatives must be executed to all internal and external stakeholders for alignment and buy-in to the overarching goal. Communicating the reform milestones, challenges and achievements facilitates transparency and demonstrates the transformation commitment and progress.

Visible Accountability Processes

With the performance management system, everyone at FRSC understood that there was no longer any hiding place for non-performance. Measurable targets were set for everyone in the organisation and people were held accountable for their deliverables.

The rewards for success and penalties for failure were clearly articulated and understood. Various rewards including salary increases and paid training programmes in prestigious Ivy League universities were availed to the top

performers. The consequences for failure were also clearly articulated and swiftly executed.

Leadership is Personal

Chinua Achebe, the renowned Nigerian author, argued that *The Trouble with Nigeria* is simply and squarely a failure of

quality and competent staff must be trained to conduct effective policy formulation, regulation, conflict resolution, planning, quality control, enforcement, etc. At the core of this transformation is the continuous implementation of the performance management system that ties individual performance to departmental



leadership. Chidoka understands that to lead, one must be willing to subject oneself to the demands one is making of the followers. As a result, the same stringent performance targets that are set across the organisation are also ascribed to the Office of the COMACE.

As with the targets of the other departments, Chidoka's targets are visible to everyone in the organisation. The Office of the COMACE is also liable to receive the reward (for success) and punishment (for failure).

Conclusion

As FRSC gradually transits from its operational traffic management thrust into a more strategic regulatory role, high

goals and then corporate goals.

The process of implementing this initiative was difficult given that the Corps had over the years become unaccountable. However, the implementation of the performance management system has moved the organisation from one where nepotism and favouritism was the vehicle to the top to one where measurable performance targets and verifiable meritocracy has been imbibed.

Today, the Corps is an example of operational excellence within the Nigerian public sector. Getting the Corps to this level was not without effort. The proceeds today are that, like IBM, the Corps can gracefully do the waltz to the symphony of change.



