

## Reality feedback: Confederations Cup – how did we do?

By Daniel Munslow

During a panel discussion at the 2010 National Communications Partnership (NCP), key figures involved in the organisation of the FIFA 2010 World Cup debated the hot topics around infrastructure; crime; tourism; and media. The session, hosted by Jeremy Maggs, revealed a common sense of unity, but also mixed opinions as to the progress that is been made.



### Transport – solving huge obstacles

Sibusiso Ndebele, Minister of Transport, is focusing his department's efforts on creating a central command, where transport issues can be addressed without the multiplicity of command. This becomes critical in ensuring consistent message delivery to commuters. Ndebele believes that South Africa is in a post-conflict era with the taxi industry, and refuted statements that the country is being held to ransom by taxi operators. He notes that negotiations and discussions are ongoing.

Ndebele was satisfied with the manner in which the taxi industry conducted itself during the Confederations Cup, and says that lessons have been learned and improvements will be made.

Park-and-ride was another major area of contention, where simple trips could take as long as three hours and poor communication was evident. Ndebele recognised that the communication side ran short, as did the co-ordination between the different transport facilities. He further believes that central command is the solution, as it will enable consistent and efficient message delivery.

“Confusion rises out of the unknown,” says Ndebele, requiring better and more regular messaging. He believes it would help if the media and communicators shared these messages with the public and shared one voice.

### Service delivery

Sindiswa Nhlumayo, Deputy Director General: Department of Tourism, reassured the audience of the conference that there is enough accommodation to cater for international audiences. Where the issue arises, is whether the accommodation is graded and suitable for guests. There are more than 100 000 graded venues, with many other venues ungraded.

Nhlumayo says that graded accommodation is critical, as it provides a common platform to visitors to identify the right places to go and what service to expect. Service delivery is the most important aspect of tourism, says Nhlumayo, as this reflects on the entire country and the legacy the World Cup will leave in the minds of global visitors.

How can this be communicated to every stakeholder at all touch points? The Department of Tourism has hired consultants to engage with and identify all people in the service industry, and ensure that they are able to deliver a high quality of service. Gaps will be identified and training will then be rolled out to all service touch points. The training will focus on being effective ambassadors for the country, and ensuring positive engagement on all fronts.

“As South Africa, the information provisioning is not up to scratch”, says Nhlumayo. There is no central number that tourists can contact to obtain relevant information. Another problem, according to Nhlumayo, is the information on hand at information centres, such as at airports. All touch points must be trained to answer all questions for consumers and aim for service excellence.

### Safety and security

This is another major area of focus, mostly met during the Confederations Cup. During the 2010 bid process, 17 category promises were made to FIFA that ensure everyone's safety.

A post-mortem to the security around the Confederations Cup was held in mid-July, during which all divisions gave feedback. This did not happen during the event, raising concerns over a lack of communication and synergy between the various stakeholders. The government structures seemed to work well, but harnessing the synergy between the different role-players will ensure better security.

More than 50 000 security personnel will be deployed during the World Cup, all of which have or will undergo multi-disciplinary training ahead of the event. The concept of security communication is a combined effort, and does not stop with one department.

South Africa still suffers from a negative perception in other countries when it comes to safety and security. Sector policing will come into play during the 2010 World Cup to ensure no areas are neglected.

### Ready, but room for improvement

Ron DelMont, Head: FIFA Office, South Africa, says the global soccer body is generally happy with the state of readiness ahead of the World Cup. Debriefing sessions are ongoing, and general issues and learning from the Confederations Cup include the training of staff; centralising communication and ensuring the consistency of message

delivery; safety and security in areas that have not been tested during the Confederations Cup; the infrastructure in areas where Confederations Cup matches did not take place; and other smaller matters that are addressed in integrated meetings.

As for transport and communication around that, “information needs to be provided to them [tourists] before they arrive, and reinforced upon arrival”, says DelMont. These efforts are under way, but need to continuously reinforce these messages.

On the accommodation front, DelMont is satisfied that progress is being made, but also needs to increase the volume in order to accommodate the 0.5-million guests that South Africa is expecting.

### **Finding balance**

Derek Carstens, Chief Marketing Officer: 2010 FIFA World Cup Organising Committee says clear objectives were set ahead of the 2009 Confederations Cup in terms of marketing and of educating the public. Carstens believes the objectives were met, but that there is room for improvement with a dual challenge – a need for a nation-building exercise (a heart exercise) and for education (a head exercise). The challenge is to get the balance right.

The present focus is on the qualifying rounds that drive the focus – who is coming to South Africa? Where will they play? After that, there will be a focus on the event itself. The budget for the event is only R20-million, with Maggs suggesting that the marketing team started with their hands tied. Carstens acknowledges that budgeting realities mean the public themselves will have to decide whether to embrace the event or not.

### **Broadcasting readiness**

Gab Mampone, Acting Chief Executive Officer: South African Broadcasting Corporation, says the public broadcaster is ready for 2010, with all strategies; implementation plans; and budgets in place – “there is no doubt about that”. Mampone noted the flawless success of the broadcasting of the 2009 Confederations Cup. Over 200 countries received top quality programming from South Africa during this time.

Having said that, Mampone notes that there is still room for improvement, and that this will take place. He says the internal matters of the SABC are being addressed and will be on track going forward. Even with the recent difficulties, there were no breaks in broadcasts, and the ship continued to steer in the right direction.

Match delivery and the news around the FIFA 2010 World Cup will be delivered nationally; internationally; and to public viewing areas.

### **About the 2010 NCP**

The right to host the FIFA 2010 World Cup brings South Africa a unique opportunity that extends well beyond football.

One of the biggest impacts from hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup will come from the phenomenal marketing and communication opportunity it will offer the country and continent. As world attention focuses on the first African World Cup, this is an opportunity for Africans to tell their own stories.

The 2010 National Communication Partnership is a joint effort of communicators across society and in the many creative and communication disciplines to take advantage of this communication opportunity of a lifetime to benefit our country and continent.

The 2010 National Communications Partnership had its genesis in a meeting in early 2006, convened by GCIS and the IMC, and hosted by the Minister in the Presidency, of senior government communicators and a group of private sector corporate communicators. The latter expressed their commitment to taking advantage of the 2010 FIFA World Cup communication opportunity for the benefit of the country and continent.

They identified the need for a facility to ensure a well co-ordinated marketing and communication campaign in the build-up to 2010, to maximise tourism and foreign investment opportunities for many years beyond 2010, as well as to mobilise South Africans across sectors as hosts, and to build national pride.

Such a facility would help ensure that all 'left hands' were aware of what 'right hands' were doing; facilitate the development of an overarching strategic vision for communicators across sectors and disciplines so everyone worked together to take advantage of this communication opportunity of a lifetime for our country and continent.

As a result, the 2010 National Communications Partnership (NCP) was formed. Its plenary membership now stands at around 250 leaders of communication across sectors and disciplines – marketing; advertising; communication; public relations; creative industries; and tourism in the public and private sectors. The work of the Partnership is driven by a task team representative of the various disciplines and sectors, which meets monthly.  
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