

## Water and Sanitation in the News

### ***Eureka! Simplicity - could this be the answer?***

We face a daunting task in our WWTWs and WTWs with repairing and maintaining our badly aging infrastructure and the frustration that comes with the issue of service delivery to our communities in infrastructure failure and water quality at times. What should be daily routine has become crisis management.

The question is what do we do now? A quote by Arthur Ash could be part of the solution "Start where you can, use what you have, do what you can" We can start with effective solutions just like Municipal Assistant™. The answer is in "Simplicity". There are systems on the market that offer all sorts of asset management functions, but how are these systems useful when they are not empowering the very people who face the challenge every day with having to manage WWTWs and WTWs effectively and also cost efficiently?

The general mind set is that if it's expensive, it must probably be effective, however, this is not always the case. The solution should rather be that which empowers the people who work hands on every day to deliver quality effectively. Such a solution changes the status quo of service delivery to our communities, accompanied by the step by step planning and motivation from the staff who, as mentioned, are working in crisis mode every day to deliver quality services and work ethic.

*"Always do your best, what you plant now, you will harvest tomorrow"* – Og Mandino. So this brings us to the question: Where do we begin to fix what seems impossible? We start with simplicity, by taking a step back and asking another question: how far has the system we are using now brought us to our desired goal of what we are striving to achieve?

Municipal Assistant™ has been designed to be user friendly and to empower by utilizing modules that create a step by step process of compiling data from component level inventory, to maintenance management, to the reports needed, and the vital forms of information and management tools needed by WWTW and WTW departments to achieve the goals set out for delivering quality. WAMTech takes it further by incorporating interim engineering services, training and compiling maintenance schedules to name just a few of the components of Municipal Assistant™ solution. This offering from WAMTech aims to empower WWTW and WTW staff with an efficient system and ultimately helps staff to take ownership thereof.

That being said, it is still up to the powers that be to realize that spending billions to solve a crisis does nothing if the very people working daily to operate the WWTW and WTW don't have a full

understanding of the tools that have been handed to them to run a smooth operation.

I have met process controllers and discussed their needs with regards to maintenance and operating systems and the same statement I hear every time is: "We need simplicity"

Minister of Water & Sanitation, Nomvula Mokonyane stated:

"...ageing infrastructure and the maintenance thereof remained a big challenge. This included a lack of technical capacity to ensure that water was protected, conserved, managed and controlled sustainably and equitably, as well as the capacity to perform operations and maintenance activities" (Business Day: 15 July 2014).

This brings yet another question. Is Government empowering staff at WWTW and WTW by giving them tools that are solution driven, or are staff at WWTW and WTW being overwhelmed by crisis management with systems that are complex and don't give ownership to Municipalities, and not empowering them?

Pioneer Scientist Isaac Newton discovered the theory of gravity, one of the world's greatest discoveries with a simple apple falling from a tree. This theory, in many decades to come, put man on the moon by understanding the engineering principals of rocket propulsion to exit the Earth's atmosphere and gravitational force. This goes without saying that a simple step in the right direction can change the outcome for generations to follow.

I encourage municipalities to look to simplicity to give the tools to motivate and ultimately empower in a step by step process to work a solution to the crisis we are facing in our water infrastructure.

Eureka! Simplicity!

**Letter by Mike Nord – WAMTech Sales Executive**



The **Municipal Assistant™** System was developed to provide local municipalities with the necessary tools to ensure the sustainable use and management of their water resources

Contact Mike Nord at (021) 887 7161

WAMTech are specialists in implementing technology systems for improved governance, focussing on Water and Public Health Information Systems

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