



BEE – OPPORTUNITY OR PROBLEM?

Ever since NCS announced that it had acquired a BEE partner, the feedback has been varied – without doubt the majority one of commiseration and inevitability, the minority being of a positive nature. Whether we like it or not, business and general society in South Africa is faced with inequalities and imbalances that we either approach and resolve jointly as exciting opportunities to harness the full potential of our country's resources, or leave it to be forced through, further polarizing our nation.

NCS does not claim to be an expert or to be an authority on matters pertaining to this initiative – what we do have is complete buy in from our people to constructively approach the issue of joining hands and moving forward together into the future; where a person is judged on one thing alone – his commitment and ability to perform his function within NCS.

The concept of black owned equity was not the initial focus of our drive towards BEE. Privatisation of NCS via an MBO resulted in 12% of equity being in the hands of deserving senior staff members. We rather focused on operational issues – ensuring that the classic layers of white management, Asian supervisors and black work force prevalent in Natal was disbanded. Yes, we placed targets of 40% senior management to be from the previously disadvantaged community. 60% for professional and middle management. Skills development has always been a big priority at NCS and here our commitment brought rewards as we had a number of great people emerging through the ranks. Our skills development plan was well put together and focused; we increased spending on education (primary, secondary and tertiary) for our staff. We increased in – service training levels as well as started an ambitious drive on “learnerships”, taking on 17 learnerships within our first year. Only once we had the foundations right, reflecting a positive balanced scorecard did we look at acquiring a Black Empowerment Party. Again, there are many fly-by-night operators out there, but there are also many superb people able to add value to one's organization. Medu Capital bought a significant stake of NCS in April 2005; they do not know President Mbeki personally, nor do they have contacts with deal makers handling large tenders – they are professionals who have introduced us into the new network of business South Africa; a vibrant, exciting cosmopolitan mix of get ahead people.

Our draft scorecard stands at 72,6%, placing us right up their with the front runners. We have been recognized by the DTI sponsored Impumelelo as one of the top 300 empowerment companies in South Africa.

This transformation is no problem in NCS' eyes – South Africa must be one of the most exciting places in which to do business currently. Opportunities abound and it's great to be a South African!