



**ALLIANCE  
Of  
Communication Workers Union  
&  
South African Communication Union**



Dear Colleagues

**OPENSERVE Company Forum Report 9<sup>TH</sup> AND 10<sup>TH</sup> October 2018**

We met and engaged with OPENSERVE management today at the company forum. The company delegation was led by Mr. Lucas Ndala, COO of OPENSERVE, a business unit of the Telkom Group. OPENSERVE still has a number of outstanding matters dating back to 2016 and 2017. We were given some feedback by Lucas Ndala on many of the issues covered in this report to members;

**1. Dispatch System**

- Advantex will not be used after 30 November 2018.
- The new Click system is being rolled out nationally and will be fully operational by the time Advantex is switched off.
- The roll out has apparently been smooth with fewer challenges in the regions.

- Click is presented as a compliance-based system that measures time on the job.
- We were told that a specialist on the Click system from Australia will be coming to South Africa to assist with challenges experienced in the field at present.
- Management will be required to assist with proper loading of skills for the correct technician to be dispatched to the correct assurance or installation task.
- The Management team has introduced a war-room, but strangely labour has not been invited to attend these secret discussions. . . .
- Employees are also encouraged to escalate problems via the IT platform and not by email to individuals.

Considering the above, it is depressingly clear that the COO of OPENSERVE has a completely different picture of the apparent success of the CLICK system than his managers and specialists do. It is clear that he is not aware of the stumbling blocks that are present in the daily operation of this system. Some inefficiencies of the Click system are: technicians sit idle and wait for updating or rebooting of the system; they also wait idly when the system is completely off line, which happens often. These idle periods affect the technician's performance and customer satisfaction. This is to the detriment of customer retention as well as the technician's Performance Pays award. We are losing customers by the thousands because of this.

## **2. Contractors**

- We raised our very serious concern about sub-standard work being done, and in many cases not completed, by contractors that are not properly managed, checked or trained to be competent in the field.
- Lucas Ndala raised a concern about planners from OPENSERVE apparently 'moonlighting'. He issued a threat by saying that those individuals would be dealt with.

Once again it is abundantly clear that the COO is getting information from his management cadres that does not give him the true picture of what the real concerns of employees in the planning environment actually are. One prime example is the fact that many planners are on the OP1 level and remunerated as such BUT they

function as though they are on the S6 level. This has been a bone of contention for years and to date there has been no meaningful response from the likes of top management.

### **3. Safety in the operations**

This was raised by Lucas Ndala, who feels that employees, management and Organised Labour are not treating this matter with the seriousness it deserves.

Organised Labour voiced our own concern on this topic which revolves around the applicable training needed. It is our considered opinion that the training given is mostly not even relevant to the function performed by the employees in their respective fields.

One glaring example of this is the fact that there are many cable-jointer offices with full staff complements that have to date still not received any Optic Fibre training. To make matters worse those same employees in many instances must sit and watch contractors work on their OPENSERVE network after being trained by Telkom.

We also raised a concern about the present Health and Safety committees which seem to be more concerned about the safety and compliance in buildings than they are in respect of the employees and the operations in the field, where the real income is generated. It is evident that our employees in the field are not viewed as a priority by the Health and Safety committees any more.

The COO has committed to address all safety issues directly from his office on an ongoing basis. He has also asked Organised Labour to assist him in this vitally important function. We need to sensitise all members about the vitally important matter of observing safety in the workplace, office, vehicles and operations. Any deficiency could lead to minor or serious injuries or even death. WE ENCOURAGE OUR MEMBERS TO REPORT ANY SAFETY ISSUE OR CONCERN, NO MATTER HOW SMALL OR INSIGNIFICANT.

### **4. Leave during December shut-down period in affected areas**

The 10 percent rule may be increased based on the demand during the December period.

The finalized plan will be communicated by management at the end of October 2018.

Organised Labour raised a concern about the timing of the company communication - we felt was too close to December and does not give employees enough time to plan their own leave accordingly.

Management's response was that all employees that are applying for leave during the December period need to put their request on the system as soon as possible so that the company can address the business needs.

#### **5. Performance Pay**

Members will remember that the Alliance has been demanding that STI be re-introduced until the new PP system can be made compliant and agreed to by management and Labour.

Telkom will be making a presentation to the Unions on their new proposal. This is to address the longstanding concern that OL has on this issue. It must be noted that a final ruling on our CCMA win on the Performance Pays CPA is still outstanding. The company appealed the CCMA judgement which went in our favour and the matter is now at the Labour Court. A date for the hearing will soon be set down.

#### **6. Op1/OP2 Admin staff performing on OP1 level**

- Even though the company views the matter to have been addressed we exposed management who did not comply with the simple exercise requirement that was agreed to in the previous company forums. The company believe that the apparent complexity of the OP2 function is too far apart when compared to the OP1 function. We highlighted this serious unfair conduct by giving examples of so many admin support employees performing almost totally on a different level.
- The concern remains on the agenda of the company forum until there is justice done in a fair assessment of the affected employees and where a salary benchmark must be complied to as per company pay philosophy.
- The company has committed to respond to our requirement shortly. More feedback to follow ASAP

## **7. Op1 / S6 Planners**

Management was of the view that the matter is closed. We reminded the company that all affected employees were supposed to receive a set of questions to confirm if they were doing functions belonging to S6 even though they are OP1's. We also indicated that those that are confirmed be promoted to the S6 level immediately and should not have to wait for the position to be advertised which will then be ringfenced for the affected employees.

- As per the same as the OP2/OP1 concern, management were once again exposed. They have not complied with the simple exercise requirement that was agreed to in the previous company forum. The concern remains on the agenda of the company forum until there is justice done i.e. a fair assessment of the affected employees and where a salary benchmark must be complied to as per company pay philosophy.
- The company has committed to respond to our requirement shortly. More feedback to follow ASAP

## **PDMS**

We have received many complaints from members about the failure of management to do any one-on-one meeting as per the collective agreement when contracting on performance.

Members also raised the concern that the development plan as per PDM requirement is also not been dealt with.

The matter was brought to the COO's attention for his urgent intervention. We stated that management will be flooded with ROD's if this is not addressed. We await the COO to address the conduct of management in compliance with PDM.

## **8. Network Build (Metrics for PAY for Performance)**

We raised this matter in the light of our concern about the complexity of the value chain through which the section operates. Management admitted that there are no metrics, and employees are treated like

general workers where the overall performance is used. The matter will be discussed further by the PDMS/Pay for Performance task team.

#### **9. PPE**

The matter raised was referred from the Regional Forums. The challenge is currently the company is in the process of appointing a service provider which is taking a long time due to companies not meeting the standard required by Telkom for PPE.

Telkom has indicated that for affected employees who are without protective gear in respect of safety boots and two-piece overalls these items can be sourced via internal processes with their promoter. We have raised our discomfort about the fact that jeans and T-shirts are not covered, including a cap which forms part of PPE. The matter remains unresolved and will be escalated to the next level.

#### **10. Regional Forums**

Regional Forums in most regions are not being convened, and in some regions the Full Time Shop stewards are not allowed to attend these forums. We have also requested that all the RME's should attend the Company forum which was rejected.

We have warned Openserve to resolve these concerns, and HRBP Justin Hughes has promised to engage management and revert to the unions

#### **11. Standby and security assistance on Call out requirements in the operations.**

The Standby costs have come under attack by management in Regions where employees who were doing Standby operations in areas are refused in some instances and allowed in others without a valid reason. It became clear that when Telkom.SA agreed to increase the standby allowance to R1000, the plan was to reduce the number of employees on Standby. Management argued that it was a cost-saving initiative which we did not agree with. We will be following up on the matter and will inform management on the way forward.

Considering the stance of management here it becomes clear that there is a serious disconnect between top management strategy and the priority of customer retention in the business. We need to seriously apply our mind on the rationale of the business in the last few years. Our priority is and must always be employee retention as well as customer retention and not just showing profit for a few shareholders.

#### **VERP EXIT FUNCTIONS**

There have been many rumours, and in some regions even direct orders, about a change in the VERP exit function policy for those in the OPENSERVE environment.

It has been confirmed by Nene Thidiela, The Finance Executive in OPENSERVE, that the policy as laid out in :

GROUP HUMAN RESOURCES

COMPANY SPONSORED FUNCTIONS POLICY

(Long Service, Retirement)

Document Number: PO-HR0028

E-Dox System Number: HR-000535

still applies. Any member in OPENSERVE who has applied for the VERP and gets given an instruction, suggestion or recommendation contrary to the policy above MUST please contact their local shop-steward immediately.

**THE CHOICES YOU MAKE, NOT THE CHANCES YOU TAKE DETERMINE YOUR DESTINY...**

**END**

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