

Actually, Hlaudi *is* the right man for the job...

 By [Chris Mberdyk](#)

24 Jul 2014

Hlaudi Motsoeneng is absolutely the ideal man for the job as Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the SABC.

Well, that is the only logical conclusion I can come to.

Think about it.

The African National Congress (ANC) knows that for about three-quarters of all South African voters, the SABC is their only source of information on what is happening in the country. Which is why no one in the ruling party gets too upset about issues such as service delivery shortfalls and Nkandla. If the majority of the population don't actually get to hear about all these things then what does it matter if minority media get their whammies in a froth?

It seems pretty clear to me that the ANC is quite happy with the job the SABC is doing in terms of communicating with the masses, particularly given the fact that against all logical odds, they did actually win the recent elections pretty convincingly.



Hlaudi Motsoeneng: The right man for the job, says the writer. (Image: SABC)

Other aspects that support Motsoeneng's appointment include the fact that he is incredibly well connected politically, being a bosom buddy of the president and also very popular among the rural masses. Just a recently he was hailed as a hero and awarded the gift of cattle and the choice of a comely maiden.

He is clearly a man of immense clout and has all the right attributes of the ideal COO to keep everyone in the SABC from the board to the studio cleaners on their toes and keenly aware that stepping out of line will have extremely negative effects on job satisfaction.

The biggest of clue of all to the logic behind his appointment lies in the fate the previous communications minister, Yunus Carrim.

High hopes

Now here was a man who, after a succession of failed communications ministers, was actually seen by many media analysts to be on the right track with regard to the SABC. He was doing the right thing in more ways than one. There was little doubt he was trying his best to turn the SABC into a business and to bring back a modicum of objectivity to the ranks.

After the elections, he was not only booted out of the job but also out of President Jacob Zuma's new cabinet. The only logical conclusion is that while he might well have been succeeding as a communications minister under normal circumstances, he was failing hopelessly in terms of the abnormal circumstances under which the governing party wishes the communications ministry to be run.

If indeed the political trend continues with the ANC losing ground to opposition parties, albeit by little bits and almost insignificant pieces, it is going to be vital for the ANC in the years ahead to control what the majority of the voting population should or should not be hearing.

Which is why the SABC board is now made up entirely of ANC cadres without any effort as there was in the past to have at least a few independent voices and why Hlaudi Motsoeneng is the absolutely ideal man for the job.



Yunus Carrim: Seen by many as being on the right track. (Image: GQIS)

You could say the COO has a bigger task than that of a CEO, who has to be more of a motivator than disciplinarian. A CEO's role is mostly that of the good cop.

No change expected

The COO, on the other hand, does not have to be nice. He has to be tough, decisive and if possible, downright scary enough for no one to want to question his judgement.

The only thing that might make my logical conclusion somewhat illogical is the fact that we are told that a few SABC board members did vote against his appointment.

This seems to suggest that even though the SABC board is now made up 100% of ANC cadres, some are not blindly following the rules.

Frankly though, I am not going to let that impact on my argument and I assume that sometime during that board meeting, in a moment of weakness, some members decided that for the record it should not all look like rubber stamping and a foregone conclusion.

I don't expect anything to change within the SABC in the years ahead. Yes, it might have to be continually propped up with injections of extra cash but 75% of the voting public won't know that.

So, the only logical conclusion I can come to, given all the evidence, is that the ANC wants the SABC totally under their control as a hedge against the majority if South Africans turn away from them.

ABOUT CHRIS MOERDYK

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