

## SABC board fiascos: does anyone still care?

Once again, the SABC is in turmoil and it comes as no surprise that yet another SABC board chairman has screwed up (it's almost as though screwing up is considered an essential quality of the post). The danger, however, is that nobody cares about SABC board fiascos anymore.

 By [Chris Mberdyk](#) 31 May 2010



This time, it's about the decision by the chairman and CEO to go ahead with the appointment of a head of news without consulting the board. Of course, the decision was quickly overturned because the rules are quite specific about the board appointing heads of news.

### Political appointment

The problem, as always, is that chairman Ben Ngubane is a political appointment. And the problem with political appointees is that they very quickly feel that they can do what they like because they have the support of the ruling party behind them.

There are exceptions, of course, as was the case with previous chairman, Kanyi Mkonza, who was appointed by the Mbeki administration and then very early in her term of office ran out of political support when the Zuma cabinet took over.

### Couldn't care less

The worrying thing, now, is that SABC problems from board infighting and rule-breaking to the local content fiasco, biased news and general staff unhappiness, are things that far too many people are caring less and less about. These have all gone on for so long that no-one is really surprised anymore. It's all par for the course.

And it will continue to be par for the course as long as the chair is filled with a political appointee. As long as the chair is filled by someone who has no knowledge or experience of the broadcast industry. And as long as the chair is filled by someone who clearly doesn't take much notice of those members of his board who do have broadcast experience.

### Business acumen

The SABC is in desperate need of a leader who understands big business and, more particularly, big media business. As long as it is forced to keep kowtowing to political demands, it will continue to struggle.

The SABC can either be a national public broadcaster or a business. It cannot be both without running into heavy losses every time there is a downturn in the economy. Particularly in future when TV cash-cows such as the 30-second commercial start losing favour. Something that is already happening in many world TV

markets.

Our national broadcaster is living on borrowed time.

## ABOUT CHRIS MOERDYK

Apart from being a corporate marketing analyst, advisor and media commentator, Chris Moerdyk is a former chairman of Bizcommunity. He was head of strategic planning and public af for BMW South Africa and spent 16 years in the creative and client service departments of ad agencies, ending up as resident director of Lindsay Smithers-FCB in KwaZulu-Natal. Email Chris on [moerdyk@gmail.com](mailto:moerdyk@gmail.com) and follow him on Twitter at [@chrismoerdyk](https://twitter.com/chrismoerdyk).  
View my profile and articles...

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>