

Figure 6:

Figure 6: *Customer Care Seminar for Marketing and Public Affairs Group*
Photograph



Source: *Rail News* 1999: 6

Apparently there was more work and constant supervision on employees at headquarters than in Southern and Northern District. There isn't much activity in Southern District. The new management is close to the junior employees, they mingle with them freely. There is rapport in most departments. The transparency the new management has been advocating is slowly taking shape.

4.8 Relationship with other railways and ZR's major customers.

The attachee enjoyed the hospitality of the Station Master and Chief Marketing Manager, of NRZ, Chief Mechanical Engineer of Spoornet of South Africa, Managing Director of SNNC, and Cimenkat of Democratic Republic of Congo, at the corridor meeting in Livingstone.

It was interesting for her to visit most of the major customers of ZR. Some of those she failed to meet at their respective stations where interviewed at the co-ordinating meeting in Livingstone.

4.9 The Effect the attachment had on the author

It was a time of excitement and depression at the same time. The achievements of the new management team, which the author hoped would be advertised on radio or Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation television was not done.

The author was happy that most customers were happy to have someone from ZR follow up on the problems they were encountering and find out how best the services could be delivered. Most of them felt greatly honoured.

In conclusion the attachee can say that it was worth while experience to do her attachment at ZR.

The next chapter highlights the problems and constraints of ZR and what management perceive as possible solutions.

Chapter 5

Constraints and Challenges of ZR

5.0 Introduction

Zambia has two main railway systems. These are ZR and the interstate company, TAZARA. Historically the railways have played a dominant role in the nation's economic development, being the major transporters of copper, which is the country's main export and source of income. The railways are the major and convenient carriers of bulk cargo.

Railway transport is the backbone of the Zambian transport system, accounting for a significant percentage of the movement of the country's foreign trade and is ideally suited for goods traffic handling, especially long distance bulk traffic. Railway transport is cheaper and more environmentally friendly than heavy road freight transport.

...It is estimated that the cost of freight carried by road that could easily be carried by rail is US\$ 150 million per year to Zambia in direct costs such as damage to roads and indirect costs such as increased accidents. Any increase in rail transport will therefore have direct benefits to the country in these areas (Cabinet Memorandum, 1997:7).

In recent years the performance of these systems have not been impressive. The railways continue to face serious operational problems. For example, ZR has been experiencing lack of working capital for a long time despite the operating expense being met from year to year. It is arising from this poor performance that the government saw the need of restructuring as being imperative. Table 6 shows ZR's performance between 1990 and 1995, indicating profit before tax.

Table 6

Table 6: ZR's performance between 1990 and 1995, indicating profit before tax

	1990/91	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95
	Million (K)	Million(K)	Million(K)	Million (K)	Million (K)
Turnover	3,606	6,691	19,042	30,564	23,148
Operating profit (loss)	(400)	1,558	2,786	9,912	1,128
Interest on loans	(156)	(263)	(859)	(10,634)	(7,109)
Profit before tax	(556)	1,295	1,927	(20,555)	(5,081)
Taxation	(3)	*	(15)	(60)	25
Profit after tax	(559)	*	1,912	(20,615)	(5,956)
Provision for dividends	<u>0</u>	<u>(170)</u>	<u>(200)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Retained profit/loss for the period	(559)	<u>1,105</u>	<u>1,712</u>	<u>(20,615)</u>	<u>(5,956)</u>

Source: Cabinet Paper presented at the SADC Railway Options Workshop, Pretoria, September, 1996.

5.1 Government's view of the ZR restructuring to make it commercially viable and method of restructuring

The government saw the need to improve the operational efficiency of ZR as far back as the 1980s following the inception of a Fourth Railway Project (FRP) co-ordinated by the World Bank in 1985.

The main objective of this project was to improve operational efficiency of ZR through provision for replacement of life expired equipment and infrastructure. Emphasis too was placed on improving the productivity of existing assets, considering the fact that deterioration had occurred in the infrastructure.

In view of this, the Bank proposed a Railway Restructuring Project (RRP) which finally started in 1994 with the full moral support of the government. The project's main aim was a long-term sustained commercial viability of ZR in a competitive business environment.

Consequently, the commercialisation process in ZR has been an ongoing exercise for sometime now. It started by attempting to reduce the heavy asset base, which resulted into human resource rationalisation through retrenchment of about 3,000 workers and then restructuring of the organisational structure in 1995. Table 6 below tabulates the problems ZR has been encountering.

The privatisation process currently sweeping across Zambia has not left any parastatal company untouched. ZR has to compete reasonably with the road transporters, therefore, the government has seen the need to privatise ZR in a few years to come. It awarded a contract to a Swedish firm whose acronym is HIFAB, for two and half years. This was under agreement signed in 1997. The management's main objective is to restructure ZR for two and half years under the direction of the Board of Directors of the Railway. The HIFAB management team took office in March 1998.

The HIFAB International-AB Management team is positive that ZR can be transformed into a viable and profitable freight company, given some favourable external conditions, that is, privatisation of the company, recovery in copper production and related industries, stable conditions in Congo, and investment in track and rolling stock.

5.1.1 The Zambia Privatisation Agency (ZPA)

ZPA is the organisation that has been given the mandate to sell all state owned enterprises including ZR, to interested buyers, both Zambians and foreigners.

To ensure transparency in the sale of ZR, the ZPA will place advertisements in the national press when it will be ready for sale. Radio and Television programmes will also be conducted to inform and educate the public on how the privatisation process of ZR will be carried out. In addition the ZPA will publish, from time to time, a status report on the pace and progress of the privatisation programme of ZR.

The Human Resources Directorate of ZR has been spearheading the restructuring exercise that has taken place so far. ZR has full political support for the restructuring. The new management team has the duty to ensure that it is fully restructured to allow it operate commercially and survive the competition with other modes of transport in the current market economy.

The government aims at planning core business operations in the economy be it in private hands or not. It is the duty of the government to create an enabling environment through policy, to enable the growth of private sector driven enterprises.

5.1.2 Role-played by ZR and its mission statement

ZR's main objective has been to secure and provide an adequate system of public transport by rail for goods and passengers. ZR has endeavoured to offer quality services so as to satisfy its clientele. However, this effort has been difficult on account of the poor track condition that has been obtaining for a long time in some sections.

5 2 **Summary of the problems indicated in Table 7**

The most pressing problem is the ability of ZR to pay the retrenchees. The payment of the retrenchees was scheduled to be done before the end of 1999. Ideally this should have started in September 1999. If ZR had to use its own resources generated from the operations, the restructuring work would have slowed down. In any case it would have shifted the focus of the new management team from restructuring towards dealing with the politically sensitive retrenchment issue.

ZR also lost one legal battle relating to a previous retrenchment exercise, which will require the payment of USD\$ 2.5 million to former employees. Unless there is a solution found by the end of September, there is clearly need to develop a new strategy for the remaining part of the project. Management is of the view that an exercise of this nature should preferably be done at the beginning of the project. Furthermore, the need for ZR to pay off 1998/ 9 retrenchees in the absence of timely World Bank support, places further severe pressure on the finances. Options of resolving credit agreements, loans and mortgages are being pursued. In the short term at least USD400,000 per month will be used from the monthly Spoornet cheque to pay off retrenchees and estates of recently deceased personnel.

Cash flow will become even more critical following the recent court outcome in favour of 1992 retrenchees and the initial failure of RAMCOZ to meet their debt judgement in favour of ZR.

Restructuring and its consequences remain the major issues. Further downsizing of the staff is not possible until funds can be secured. However, by February/March 2000 ZR would complete the prime task of the sale of houses to employees. What will remain outstanding is obtaining title deeds for the new owners. The employees have welcomed the sale of houses.

Table 6: The Problem Structure at ZR

Zambia Railways not viable

Declining market

Operational losses increasing

Ineffective use of resources

Loss of customer confidence

Interference with management

Regional conflict
Railway designed for mono-economy
Dependence on regional railway network

Demotivated workforce	Theft
Worker claims not compatible ZR finances	New non paying debtors
Inability to Borrow Money	old liabilities & debts
Too many non activities	Lack of Investment
Subsidisation of GRZ capitalisation	Under

Wrong Priorities Available Funding
Lack of accountability in 'confused' Organisational structure
Past poor management practises
Poor supervision board

Frequent de-railments
Poor infrastructure & rolling stock
Deferred maintenance

Comm. problem among stakeholders
Unclear perception of roles.

Table 7

Table 7: The Problem Structure at ZR

Source: Paper presented at the Board of Directors 1999 September, 1999

It was perceived as the major incentive that the new management has put in place. The major outstanding problem is the issue of a 'living wage' which management promised the employees. This seems to be a non starter.

In conclusion, the attachee noted with sadness that although there was an increase in the expenditure between March and June, 1999. However, actual expenditure only achieved 89% of the budget. For repairs and maintenance the actual was only 45% of the budgeted expenditure.

3 The main problems of ZR

The main problems of ZR include:

c) Lack of working capital for a long time which led to deferred maintenance.

d) The heavy vandalism to the signalling equipment is an external factor which has undoubtedly affected operating efficiency. For example, cables have been vandalised.

With reference to this particular problem, the Managing Director in one of his circulars pointed out:

...on the negative side, operations continue to be disrupted by track and signalling problems. The root cause of these serious difficulties is lack of maintenance in the past and lack of cash now to repair our infrastructure. The condition of the track is such that we are having to review the future of all passenger services. (Newsletter, Vol. 4,1998:4)

e) Rescheduling of payments of interest on loans and debt servicing of both government and other third party loans.

f) Difficulties in meeting replacement cost of infrastructure and equipment, loan repayments and interest, and payoff dividends. These were compounded by lack of retention of profit for future re-investment.

Table 8

Table 8: Turn-over of chief executives from 1967-1999

Year	Name	Nationality
1967-1968	Frank, Lucarotti	Irish
1968-1970	Sidhom, S.F.	Sudanese
1970-1975	Fast, H.J	Canadian
1975-1976	Soko, Hosea	Zambian
1976-1979	Mazoka, Anderson	Zambian(1st ZR employee GM)
1979-1981	Richard, Venis	British
1982-1984	Monze, Basil	Zambian
1984-1988	Hachipuka, Emmanuel	Zambian (1st MD)
1989-1992	Mhango, Daniel	Zambian
1992-1994	Simumba, Oswald	Zambian
1994-1995	Sindowe, Hudson	Zambian
1995-1998	Mambwe, Clement	Zambian
1999	Crawford, Robert	British

Source: Makungu, (1999) Paper presented at Miss Zambia Railways Pageant

- e) Little revenue generated from operations resulting in only very necessary maintenance work being carried out. Table 6 gives the company's performance for the period of five years, from 1990-1995. From the table it is clear that the profit before tax has not been sufficient to service the items mentioned above.
- f) Overstaffing of ZR and the problem of securing funds for retrenchments.
- g) Lack of grants from the government to cover the company's maintenance and rehabilitation of the dilapidated rail-line.
- h) Lack of a positive attitude amongst employees towards work. For instance, trains are supposed to be clean, punctual and reliable and accordingly the train-crew should be courteous, friendly and professional in the discharge of their duties. This is not normally the case. There are times when trains are not clean, punctual and the schedules are unreliable.
- i) A very high turn-over of management which has affected the growth of the company.

5.3.1 Inventory of Names of Chief Executives who have ruled ZR

After the split with RR, a general manager headed ZR. Table 8 gives the turn-over from 1967. Before ushering in the current managing director, each Zambian managing director brought in his own –"isms," that is, they recruited their own people in the company. Some had qualifications and others were ill qualified. There is more information in Chapter 7.

5.4 Reason for securing expatriate management

When the government approached the World Bank to help ZR, the bank could not help because it did not have faith in the management then, because of its poor image.

This made the MMD government to seek help from an outside company which could make ZR commercially viable.

When the MMD government came into power, they saw a necessity to concession ZR. They wanted to ensure that private sector management expertise and capital was available to facilitate the sustainable development of the railway. This could be done by dealing with the long term failure to maintain the railway's infrastructure and to ensure it complies with commitment to the concessioning option promoted under the Southern African Development Community Transport and Communication Protocol.

The current managing director, Crawford from HIFAB International-AB took over from March 1998. ZPA chose a foreign company to prepare ZR for privatisation with a hope that, the concessioning of ZR would have the following impact:

- i. The infrastructure of ZR would be properly maintained and proper investment made to make ZR safe and efficient.
- ii. A significant new capital would be available to ZR for making good the deferred maintenance and for dealing with ZR's operational problems;
- iii. The imposition of private sector management would allow the railway to become self sustaining and cease its reliance on the government and donors;
- iv. ZR should be able to transport more freight faster, and possibly cheaply with a higher degree of reliability; and,
- v. ZR needs to retrench approximately 3,000 workers. However, these retrenchments would be required even if no concessioning took place to ensure the survival of ZR. The World Bank would only help ZR if it meets international conditions.

In the Cabinet Memorandum, it is stated:

Concessioning offers two advantages to ZR in this regard: firstly, it attracts private sector investors to provide capital; and secondly, the

World Bank has indicated that it will seriously consider providing support to the ZR during the concessioning process. The main basis of this support is the proposed funding of the retrenchment benefits for the excess workers including the 970 already on transitional leave (Cabinet Memorandum, 1997:2).

5.4.1 Reason for concessioning ZR

Concessioning of ZR follows the government policy on privatization and the removal of government from the delivery of primary commercial services, whilst retaining government ownership of the key infrastructures for strategic reasons. The government would want to retain the track infrastructure, which it had neglected for some years. The track infrastructure has been in a poor state for sometime. The Cabinet Memorandum says:

The infrastructure of ZR is also in a very poor condition after approximately 30 years of inadequate or inappropriate investment. There is a requirement for significant capital investment (Cabinet Memorandum, 1997:2)

In order to understand the complexity of the problem ZR is facing the reader needs to be aware of the strategies which the company has followed in recent years. (Table 9) reflects data for SADC railways by comparing 1993 and 1998. Excluded from the table are SNCC, Angolan Railways and TRC for which no data is available. Table 9 depicts Interconnected Regional Rail network (IRRN).

On non-payment of debts by the government and some major customers, Ivan Oldings, the then, Director Technical and Marketing said:

...While the problem of ZCCM and Ndola Lime's non-payment of dues remain significant monies came from them in August and privatisation

Table 9

Table 9: Interconnected Regional Rail network (IRRN)

Railway	Route	Staff compliment		% change	Staff productivity		%Change
		1993	1998		1993	1998	
Botswana (BR)	888	2024	1164	-42,5	669	1035	+54,9
CFM (C)	317	4978	3712	-25,4	63	56	-11,1
CFM (S)	696	2553	3877	+51,9	127	135	+6,3
Zimbabwe	2759	15362	10435	-32,1	394	479	-21,6
+ Spoornet	20765	81334	48889	-39,9	1136	2161	+90,2
Swaziland (SR)	300	745	679	-9,1	969	9961	-0,8
TAZARA	1860	6756	5400	-20,1	352	243	-31,0
NamRail	2382	1999	1822	-8,6	572	508	-11,2
ZAMBIA (ZR)	1273	8518	3305	-61,2	157	248	+58,0
Other SADC Railways service							
Malawi	763	3658	969	-73,5	32	69	+115,6
CFM (N)	877	2195	1534	-30,1	32	128	+300,0

Staff productivity measured in thousands of units of traffic units viz. (net tonne-km freight + passenger) per employee.

Source: SATTC Annual Progress Report 1998-99

of Ndola lime should put our relationship with them on a better financial footing in future (ZR Newsletter, Vol.5, September, 1998:4).

5.5 Freight traffic performance

ZR was experiencing a continued decline in total tonnage handled from 1993/94. The net tonnage moved was declining at an average of 13% per annum for the five financial years from 1993/94 to 1997/98. This prompted the new management team to introduce customer care service. This was aimed at retaining the existing customers and winning some new business associates for ZR. Mr. Oldings furthermore, pointed out:

...the housing of the new customer service section and freight and accounts in the same building should significantly improve the present credit control and debt collection thus ease cash flow. (ZR Newsletter September, Vol. 5, 1998:4)

6 How management Account for the poor public image

The number of locomotives running could not match the volume of cargo being carried. This contributed to the difficulties that the customers encountered with ZR. Mr. Oldings pointed out:

...Locomotives availability continues to be a major worry and derailments add to our difficulties in moving the tonnage on offer. The increasing tonnage has also put pressure on the serviceable wagon fleet and with the exception of the container carriers every wagon that the workshops or carriage and wagon sidings repairs is immediately loaded with traffic. (ZR Newsletter September, Vol.5, 1998:4)

Table 10 shows performance indicators between March and June, 1999.

Table 10: Performance Indicators from March- May 1999

Function	Indicator	Target	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June
Freight	1 Mio tons mov/av	1.80	1.65	1.65	1.65	1.66	1.65	1.63
	2 Revenues mUSD	28.5	1.64	1.32	1.70	2.16	1.43	1.90
	Accumulated USD		1.64	2.96	4.66	6.82	8.47	10.37
Operation	3 tTU/ employee	304	190	189	191	190	224	213
4	GRTKM/litre fuel	160	100	79	82	81	102	72
5	Transit time hours	40	65	65	79	45	43	38
6	Main line derailm	4	5	5	7	6	11	9
Passenger	7 No/month	63,000	52,300	38.60	44.000	63,583	69,418	75,850
Incl Mulobezi	8 Rev/month mUSD	0.15	0.13	0.09	0.11	0.15	390	437
9	Rev/passenger	2.30	2.49	2.33	2.50	2.43	5618	5,205.00
	Accumulated mUSD	1.80	0.13	0.22	0.33	0.48	1,599	2,036.00
Locomotives	10 Km between fail.	15,000	8,400	7,853	6,599	7,815	8,475	11,553
11	No of locos	40	41	41	41	41	41	41
12	Availability	30	26	27	27	27	28	26
Track	13 All in km/month							
14	Concrete resleep.	2	2.1	2.6	5.7	1.1	3.2	3.9
15	Lifting of TSR	20	37.8	14.0	32.7	12.3	19.0	17.0
16	Welded rail	5	Plant not	yet in	Operatio		4.8km	3.9
	Emerg. repair	10	3.4	3.9	n	3.7	welde	13.8
						7.4	9.3	
Human R	17 Active staff	2,400	3,432	3,431	3,408	3,397	3,367	3,354
18	Staff on trans leav	0	920	1,087	1,036	1,007	992	970
19	Days lost in dis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Finance	20 Debtors		43,780	41,780	41,906	41,000	39,900	42,984
21	Creditors		14,240,	14,176	14,022	15 000	15,100	15,638
USD	22 Operating ratio	60						
23	Cash closing tUSD	2,000	1,811	2,375	1,237	5,1000	3,000	1,098
	Rate of each	2,300	2,650	2,400	2,400	2,560	2,590	2590

Source: ZR Newsletter, Vol.15 July 1999:5

5.6.1 Explanation of the Performance indicators in table 10

a)	Freight: Mio tons mov/av	i) moving average for traffic carried.
b)	Operations	ii) revenues musd-revenue earned for freight traffic iii) tTU/employee-average traffic unit per employee iv) GRTKM/litre fuel-Gross tonne-Km carried per 1 v) Transit time hour-average time taken to complete a trip from Livingston Sakania. vi) main line derail-derailments which occur on the main line.from (litre or fu consumed)
c)	Passengers	I) No/month-No of passengers carried per month ii) Rev/month million USA Dollars musd-Total/revenue from passenger traff month in Iii) Rev/passenger-Average Revenue earned in US Dollar per passenger carried
d)	Finance	i) Debtors-total amount owing to the company by various debtors or business p for service rendered. ii) Creditors- Amount the company owes various business partners for service s goods. iii) Cash closing tusd-Available at the close of the month
e)	Infrastructure/Track	i) Re-sleep-changing wooden sleepers with concrete sleepers. ii) Lifting Temporarily speed restriction imposed due to track defects and restor normal speed after repair of the track. iii) on going repair work
D)	Locomotives	i)Km between fail.-Km between failure means average distance travelled by locomotive a breakdown. ii) Active fleet that is locomotives which can be used iii) Availability no - Average number of locomotives available for service per day.
G)	Human Resources	i) Active staff-Those no of staff who are still serving ii) Staff on transitional. leave -Members of staff iii) Members of staff awaiting (retrenchment) Severance package iv)Days lost in dispute: Days lost in industrial unrest due to dispute or unrest

The old management contributed to the poor perception of ZR to the public and their major customers by poor management. This has been elaborated in Chapter 7. There were, a number of small things which they overlooked and exhibited carelessness. For example, fuel was being sold to truckers, which forced the new management to dye the fuel red. The new management implemented the idea of dying all fuel in locomotives and vehicles on a trial basis, beginning on October 5, 1999. The exercise started in Kitwe and Ndola and management warned the employees:

Anyone found with dyed fuel will be regarded as having stolen it except when the fuel is in ZR locomotives or transferred with proper authority. The company has decided to add an additive to the fuel to easily identify stolen fuel (Newsletter, October, Vol.18, 1999:1).

The management had earlier on warned the employees to refrain from pilfering. This was reported in a ZR newsletter:

Management appeals to all employees to refrain from acts that would cause unnecessary misery and hardships to themselves and their families. Thefts and fraud are serious offences, which will attract severe disciplinary action. Management does not derive any joy in dismissing employees, but remember that theft and fraud mean instant dismissal and several employees are currently on suspension due to theft (Newsletter, September, Vol.17 1999:4).

The company took this warning seriously and had suspended a number of employees when the attachee was on the PA. Most of those suspended were from the infrastructure department. They were caught selling rails without permission.

The managing director was hopeful that the funds which remained with Emerged Railways would enable ZR to meet some of their past obligations, fund some retrenches, and provide for a small part of essential overdue maintenance. Emerged

Railway is the joint committee comprised ZR and NRZ staff who had been discussing the assets that remained with Southern Rhodesia. He further said:

But our long term future depends on the injection of much large amounts of external funding. That will probably be at least a year away. It depends on the government writing the necessary letters to the World Bank to enable the process of bidding for the money to start (ZR Newsletter, August Vol. 4, 1999:4).

However, in the letter in August 1998, the Managing Director states:

Our financial position remains extremely serious. Our survival in the short term depends on the government repaying some of its debt to the railway, and also the ability of other major debtors such as ZCCM and TAZARA to meet their obligations (ZR Newsletter, August Vol. 4, 1998:4).

5.6.2 Over-expenditure as setback.

The company was spending more than it was making. For example, the Managing Director in the ZR August Newsletter reported:

Our monthly expenditure exceeds our income and that expenditure does not begin to cover all essential repairs and maintenance. Such a situation can not continue for long. Every employee can help by reducing costs, eliminating waste and maximising productivity. Your efforts at all levels are vital for our survival and future success and I am certain we can count on your continued commitment. (ZR Newsletter, August, Vol. 4. 1998:4)

In the ZR Newsletter of October 1998, the management reminded the workers of the problems they were encountering on account of over-expenditure and misuse of company property. They said:

Employees will be aware that ZRL experienced telephone problems on 28 and 29 September. These were due to high telephone bills and present cash flow difficulties (ZR Newsletter, October, Vol.6 1998:3).

The next chapter highlights the input of the author to ZR during the attachment period.

Chapter 6

The Input of the Attachee

6.0 Purpose of the Attachment

The attachment took place between July 1 and October 31, 1999 at ZR headquarters in Kabwe.

6.0.1 What the attachee went to do at ZR

The attachee wanted to investigate and establish the reasons, which led to the bad image of ZR. She wanted to help out, where necessary, in the image building as pointed out earlier in the report.

6.1. What the ZR made the attachee do during the attachment

The attachee was assigned several duties during the attachment. The assignments included:

6.1.1 Organising the launching of the workshops sales outlet

The attachee was asked to work with the SPAO on the organising committee for the launching of the main workshops sales outlet in town. Some items made at the workshops were sold in town in a rented shop along Freedom Way. The managing director officially opened the sales outlet to the general public on August 20, 1999.

The organising committee met for two weeks before the actual launching. The committee comprised six persons, four gentlemen from the main workshops and two ladies from public affairs.

The main assignments for the attachee and Mrs. Chushi included designing an invitation card, which was supposed to be confirmed by the Manager Public Affairs, buy decorations and decorate the shop for the occasion. They were also supposed to write a speech. This was not done due to lack of time in which to get the facts from

Manager Workshops, Mrs. Helen Munkumba. She was appointed and took over office at almost the same time of the preparations. The engineers who were acting before her were not happy about her appointment; therefore, they boycotted welcoming her. There was no smooth hand over when she took over. The immediate subordinates to the acting manager refused to do anything for the manager. Therefore, it was practically impossible to write a speech. The gentlemen on the organising committee from the workshop, however, wrote something, which was given to the Manager Workshops.

6.1.2 Seventy Third Agriculture and Commercial Show

The Manager Public Affairs asked the attachee to work hand in hand with Mrs. Chushi in the organisation of the Agriculture and Commercial Show in Lusaka. She was taken to Lusaka with Mrs. Chushi to look at the state of the show building. The building was in a dilapidated state. The attachee made suggestions on the colours and a few other things to purchase in order for the place to look habitable. The first day was characterised by hardwork and procurement of several assorted items. It was very interesting for the attachee to do this. But this was short lived because the chairman of the Agriculture Show stopped the attachee from attending. Reasons for stopping her were not given.

6.1.3 Interviews of managers

a) BBR Marketing Manager

The week when the student was attached to the Directorate of Traffic and Marketing, in particular to the Marketing Manager, Mr. Stephen Tembo, a lot of things happened to the attachee. The attachee enjoyed working with the Marketing Manager. He is a modern and pragmatic manager. He introduced the attachee to the Marketing Manager of the new Railway Company called BBR, Mr. Shepherd Ntini. He encouraged her to interview him about BBR. The manager freight wanted the public affairs and the traffic and marketing departments to learn something from the new railway company. Mr. Ntini visited ZR from August 24 to 26, 1999. He pointed out that BBR comprised shareholders from diverse backgrounds. SANLAM of South

Africa, new Limpompo Bridge, old Mitchell of South Africa, NRZ, and a few other investors. It became operational on July 15, 1999. He further said that BBR was trying to operate within its concept of the organisation: build, operate and transfer (BOT). They were hopeful that their concept would come to reality.

i) Interview with the Managing Director on the Launching of BBR

The student was asked to interview the Managing Director on the launching of BBR. The following are the highlights of the interview. The BBR was inaugurated on September 1, 1999, by president Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe. It was held at Beitbridge, five Km off West Nicholson and was witnessed by a large crowd, including chief executives of Spoornet, NRZ and ZR. In an interview, Mr. Crawford expressed hope as president of SARA, that management of BBR would work with other railways to achieve a similar service and meet the needs of the customers. He furthermore, pointed out that BBR was a profound development in the railways system. It was the first significant example of a private sector concession in the sub-region.

ii) Interview with the ZR Chief Medical Officer on the XI th ICASA conference.

The Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Jabes Tembo, and two other medical staff attended the XIth International Conference on AIDS and STDs in Africa (ICASA) in Lusaka from September from 12 to 16 1999. The theme of the conference was 'Looking into the future-setting priorities for HIV/AIDS in Africa.' He pointed out:

there was no new information given to the participants. They were encouraged to refrain from casual sex and abstinence was encouraged (exclusive interview).

Dr. Tembo also noted with sadness:

There were a number of HIV/AIDS patients who contracted HIV/AIDS by various means, other than casual sex. These are from mother to

child, needles and contaminated blood transfusion. It is unfortunate to succumb to this killer disease by these means (exclusive interview).

iii) Preparation of corridor and co-ordinating meetings.

The attachee helped in the organisation of the corridor meeting for the Southern African countries. When Mrs. Chushi went to Lusaka to attend the International Conference on Aids and Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Africa (ICASA), the attachee was asked to do various duties. This included the pre-liminary preparations of the corridor meeting scheduled for October 5 to 7, 1999, and coal co-ordinating meeting on October 8 1999. The attachee booked for forty leather folders and two executive briefcases for the Coal Co-ordinating meeting on phone at BIMZI Leather Company in Lusaka.

Initially Wasawange Lodge was selected as a suitable place where the meeting could be held. The organising committee later felt that it was expensive to hold the meetings at Wasawange. They opted for ZR boardroom, which the attachee was asked to book. She booked through the Head Operations' secretary.

The student reminded the secretary to ensure that the place was cleaned before October 4 1999. The student was very disappointed with the state of the ZR boardroom in Livingstone. The Manager Freight said that the ZR boardroom was not suitable for the meeting, because it was not well ventilated. The room looked as if it had not been swept for weeks and the surroundings were too dirty. This forced him to change the venue.

It is unbelievable that the ZR station and foyer which was the destination of the visitors was not swept for that week. The Station Master suggested that the meeting be held at Livingstone ZR Senior Guest House. When the team from Kabwe went there they found that a lot of things were missing. The television and other small accessories were stolen a month before the meeting. At this point the attachee and her colleague, Mrs. Chushi were quite anxious about the state of affairs. This prompted

the Manager Freight to revert back to the initial booking at Wasawange Lodge. The place was homey and welcoming for the visitors.

The attachee booked for the bouquet of flowers from Shoppers' Butchery for the Conference Room. She also helped Mrs. Chushi to organise where the meeting would take place. The dining terrace was used on the first day of the meeting, because the conference room was booked. They did protocol work and ensured that the conference room was clean, the complementary gifts: folders, ties, paper desk boxes were given to each participant. They arranged teas, lunches, photocopying all necessary documents before and during the meetings for the participants. It was their duty to make visitors feel at home.

On the all the attachee contributed in one way or the other to the success of the meetings. The delegates who attended were impressed with the organisation. It was a meeting with a difference. The change of venue was a big step in the preparations of the meeting. The Manager Freight was excited at success of the meeting and was very grateful to the two of us for the support and input.

iv) Conducted Tours by Kalonga Secondary School and Mapalo Primary School

The attachee and Mr. Chrispin Chanda took the Grade Twelves from Kalonga Secondary School on a conducted tour to the workshops. One of the superintendents explained in detail about almost every item manufactured at the workshops. Their teacher, Mr. Rapheal Bwalya, was very grateful to ZR management for the opportunity which was accorded to them.

Mapalo Primary School, Grade Six and their class teacher had a good time. Mrs Chushi and the attachee took the pupils on a conducted tour of the railways station, CTC and main workshops.

6.1.4 The Summary of the seventeen FGDs conducted in Kabwe

This report is part of the findings of the interviews carried out by the attachee on 20th and 23rd August 1999 on the current perception of the company's image by the employees.

6.2. The purpose of the discussions

The interviews were carried out mostly through FGDs, personal interviews, and participant observation. The aim of the discussions was to examine the corporate identity from an insider point of view, that is, management and unionised staff. The other report given was in regard to the outsider, that is, the passenger and the commercial business user of freight transport services. There were differences in terms of views with respect to both groups.

The discussions were aimed at arriving at the current image and perception of ZR and the various factors affecting it. Does the image of the company have a bearing on the company's performance?

After the FGDs with the various employees at headquarters and central region, the sentiments of the employees which are discussed in the findings were presented to the Managing Director, Director Finance, Director Technical services, and Director Human Resources with their Heads of Department respectively. This was done between September 10 to 21 1999. Most of the things in this report were considered and a further report on the observations and comments of the Directorate and Heads of Department will be presented.

In the summative report, an attempt was made to assess the impact of the public image on the morale of the worker and internal performance, and its impact on customers. Although the FGDs were carried out department by department, the report was not arranged that way in order to avoid repetitions. Rather common issues raised were presented together.

Furthermore, the report incorporates verbatim representative sentiments of each issue discussed. Appropriate recommendations were made at the end of each report. The attachee hoped that the recommendations would be helpful to both management and the employees. It was not only the sentiments of the workers and employees on Transitional Leave (TL) which have been reported, but also the responses of the Managing Director and the Directorate.

6.2.1 Findings

a) The participants were excited with the new management team. They were aware of the new management's vision and objectives and were ready to add value to the activities of ZR. The corporate image of the company was slowly improving, but the only setback was the dilapidated track. Therefore, management should look at the track as their first priority. Participants were willing to work extra hard and bring the vision to reality.

Most of the employees talked to were happy with the research topic. They pointed out that a good image for any company was inevitable for its economic growth. They were hopeful that would help ZR to assess its weaknesses and strengths.

The company normally experiences an increase in passengers in summer, which is the peak period for passenger traffic. But 1999 was a year with a difference.

The high tonnage this year can be attributed to the high profile launch on the shipment of cattle and coal last May. In the last three months we have recorded a high tonnage. There was an increase in business. The Directorate of Marketing and Freight had a high profile launch on the shipment of cattle and coal last May, which led to an increase in cargo movement. For example, there is an increase in transportation of coal from 20% to 80% (Manager Freight August, 1999).

b) Communication with the Government

One female participant from information and technology section has appealed to management to have constant rapport with the government. She said:

The current government policy does not protect railway transport. They have been allowing trucks with high tonnage to enter the country.

What transporters were supposed to convey by rail was transported by road. This has had two implications: a) ZR is losing to the roads in terms of shipment. b) The high tonnage transported by road has had an adverse effect on the life span of the roads. The government is ever rehabilitating the roads at the expense of the rail track, therefore, there was need for the government to help ZR maintain the track. They should give ZR the responsibility of weighing the trucks. Management should hold consultations with the stakeholders on changing the transport policy. The government should re-visit the policy and if possible ZR should take over the supervision of the weighbridges since the government employees manning the weighbridges have lamentably failed. Management should also ask the government to give ZR a tax rebate on fuel. (Female participant, August, 1999).

c) Low wages

There was a feeling of abandonment by management among employees in all departments. Most participants cited low salaries as the biggest problem.

The economy is biting, we are waiting for the promised Living Wage. We are tired of the dead wage, one participant said. This sentiment was expressed by most of the participants. With the meagre salaries we are getting, management should consider paying electricity and water bills.

The suspension of increase in the salary and pay in lieu in the Conditions of Service has brought about untold suffering. Their main worry was how to maintain their families. Failure to provide the basic necessities to one's family resulted in frustration. We are perpetually broke and we can't clear the debts. Our salaries only last for a few days, therefore, management should consider reviewing this. We are worse than refugees, for how long are we going to sacrifice? one participant complained.

In order to make up for the low salaries the participants have adopted various coping strategies. One of these strategies is doing private business during working hours. For instance one participant said:

We work with divided attention. One mind is at home thinking of an empty bag of mealie meal and where to get some beans as relish. We use company time to sell our merchandise in order to make ends meet. It is unfortunate that we are using company time.

Some of the participants were frustrated because they were forced to look for money during working hours, when they knew that it would result in low productivity. Another participant:

We are due for salary increment. Why should we suffer by receiving productivity allowance, which is 37% of our salaries. This is a pure mockery. It is too small, especially that it is taxed. It is not fair for us to carry the burdens of our colleagues on transitional leave. For how long are we going to sacrifice?

Low social status

There was a general discontentment among the workers. One male respondent pointed out that the era was gone when the social status of a ZR employee was looked at with envy.

As ZR employee we have been reduced to the standard of a council worker. The council is a service organisation, but ZR is a profit making company. When employees make profit, management smiles, said a senior railman.

Another senior railman said:

Management has stopped caring for ZR's social amenities. It is difficult for a person to concentrate on work without physical exercise. For physical exercise is of value.

The study revealed that some employees wanted management to consider changing the project policy. A male participant said,

Why give a full detailed report to a friend in another department when I know he will benefit and I the originator won't even get one Ngwee. Therefore, there is need for fairness.

Some employees who were over 45 years were worried about job security and were afraid because of not being computer literate. They were in a quandary. One senior railway man said:

The new management should realise that there is no village without old men for consultations. It seems as if ZR is aiming at phasing out old men. But they need to know that young men are full of democracy

e) Lack of training

All departments cited lack of training as a set back. Some employees adopted the trial and error method of doing things. One participant said:

Every employee in the company needs to undergo some basic training on how to operate a fax machine, photocopier machine, and how to access the computer. New equipment is bought without sending us for prior- training. Sometimes we undergo stress before understanding the manual and learning how to handle the new machine. Sometimes they buy machines which can't go round the entire department.

Most employees pointed out that there was need for in-house refresher courses and seminars in order to be moving with time. Others said that since the company had no money to send employees for further training, therefore, the company should be ordering literature on various topics to enable the employees update themselves in new methods. One participant from audit said:

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Since we don't attend seminars and refresher courses we need latest manuals in order to arm ourselves with the latest technology, but management is not making a deliberate effort to buy these materials.

They also pointed out that there were some bad elements among senior managers with regard to training. One male participant said:

There have been times when a junior officer was supposed to go for training but a senior manager would go instead, who will not even use the new skills acquired. Please, they should let the worker from the shop floor be exposed for he can easily share the new knowledge gained with the colleagues. Most employees insisted on being trained, because people who are trained perform better. At first value, the graduate in engineering from Northern Technical College (NORTEC)

could perform better than a graduate from the University of Zambia (UNZA). But I can assure you madam, that after five years of hard work and persistence, a graduate from UNZA would be twice better than his counter part from NORTEC because of the vast knowledge gained during training, one male participant explained.

f) Secretaries

Secretaries were asking for a salary increment. One female participant said:

Managers are highly paid, but we their secretaries are misplaced. Our qualifications in this company are not recognised. Most of the companies grade secretaries by their speed, but we do not know where ZR is getting this new idea of picking secretaries anyhow provided you are well known then you can be the manager's secretary. It is a pity that this is happening in this company.

They were asking management to start paying them confidentiality allowance. One secretary said:

We do suffer from inferiority complex. When bosses refuse to see the customers, they would ask you to tell a lie. The thing is, in most cases, the visitor would be aware that you are telling a lie. Therefore, we strongly feel there is need to be compensated.

They said management should consider sending all of them to various short computer courses. Another participant said:

The trend is that only some secretaries are sent. Please, if this kindness by management can be extended to us all.

g) Workshops and printing room

The members of staff at the workshops complained bitterly on the status of the unauthorised stalls where they buy food. There is no canteen or tuckshop at the workshops. A male participant said:

During the period of cholera outbreaks, some employees die from diseases like cholera and dysentery.

They further said:

We are not using proper steel to make bolts. We appealing to management to buy us quality-testing machines and steel. We need new machines. The machines we are using are out dated.

From the printing room one participant said:

We need a new photocopier, and the infrastructure department should work on the roof because it is too low.

They also requested management to be sending them for medical check-up every six months.

They said that safety policy must be adhered to at the workshops. A male participant said:

There is no trained fire fighter at the Workshop despite the training school being in Kabwe. We have self-styled fire fighters. This is not healthy.

In addition the female participant said:

The offices are dilapidated. For example, the Sales Office at the workshops has no tables, carpets, and yet we do receive different types of clients.

h) Clinic

Members of staff at the clinic were appealing to the new management not to close the clinic. They said that a clinic was vital in the life of any company.

The study revealed that most manuals at the laboratory were too old and out dated. The laboratory technicians needed latest manuals and magazines to avail themselves with the latest technology. One technician observed:

The department has the best equipment in the whole of Kabwe. If only management could buy the reagents for the clinic we could be the best clinic in town, Kabwe Mine Hospital can not match with us. Why should we be spending money on the Mine Hospital when we are well equipped?

i) Police Unit

The policemen were living in fear because of the presence of two hired security firms. One constable said:

With the presence of the security firms we are not sure of job security. Management should realise that ZR police are loyal. They have the sense of belonging, because they are employed on a permanent basis. Therefore, they are ready to die for the company.

The presence of the hired security has made the ZR police to become lazy and relaxed. This was evident at Lusaka station where ZR police were not rendering their services. Consequently, there was unruly behaviour amongst petty thieves who made the

railway station their harbour. Instead of ZR police chasing away the unruly boys, it was the Zambia Police who were trying to bring sanity to the station.

One sergeant said:

The idea of hiring security is alien to us as Zambians, because in Africa it does not create a sense of belonging. A guard from the hired firm cannot guard property like a ZR police who is aware that if the property is stolen it is detrimental to the economic growth of his company and can lead to the closure of the company. We should do away with Securicor and the G3 security firms.

Some ZR policemen were ready to work faithfully. They have developed a phobia for the millennium, for they were not sure of what January had for them. One constable said: "Oh madam, we are working under pressure." Therefore, management was urged to give the ZR Police the benefit of doubt. Another sergeant said:

We are running the goods trains very well despite the tough conditions of service. One officer guards from point A to B. We have managed to gain the confidence of our customers. Had it not been for our commitment customers could have run away

One policeman pointed out:

The police unit had become an effective force under new management. We are moving with time.

Furthermore, they were asking management for an in-house refresher course as they entered into the next millennium. They wanted to face it with confidence.

j) Drivers

One driver said:

We are asking management to buy us new uniforms. We have not received our denim suits for the past two years. Though we are looked down on as inferiors, our job description requires us to be smart. You know madam, we meet important people as we take our bosses to higher offices in the sub-region. Therefore, we are required to look presentable. Our meagre salaries cannot help matters at all.

They were asking management to consider paying for their driving licences. For example, Public Service Vehicles (PSV) licences were very expensive. One driver said:

We fail to renew our licences because of our poor salaries. It is not that we are trying to be difficult and demanding. If management cannot pay then let them consider giving us loans for the same; they can recover the money in a given period of time.

They pointed out that some bosses never inform them in advance about the following day's long journey. In future they were pleading for leniency on the part of their bosses. One participant said:

We are family men. We need to plan each day in advance. We do understand that there are some urgent trips but at least those trips which are not urgent, we would appreciate if we were told a day before. We do keep other secrets how can we divulge this.

They were asking management for in-house refresher course or seminar on 'public relations' and 'how to drive better in the next millennium.'

k) Office Orderlies

The office orderlies were against leaving the work place an hour earlier each day so that they could come for work on Saturday for five hours without getting overtime.

One participant said:

Management should revert back to the old system where we were given two Saturdays in a month to do thorough cleaning. The work cannot be done properly in one hour. This hinders us from performing very well, because the hours were very few.

One male cleaner said:

The leaving of hours is an intimidation, because it is not in the Collective Agreement. Therefore, instead of working for eight hours we are working for twelve hours without being given overtime. They are taking advantage of us because we are illiterate. Why are our managers following this outdated method. I am very sure the new management does not know about this. There are times when we clean, without cleaning materials.

They requested management to extend the service of hiring a cleaning company on a quarterly basis to dust all the offices at top office as they approached the new millennium. They were also wondering why the company slogan changed from: 'We are on the right track' to 'the sleeping giant is awakening.' They felt that the old one was better and catchy, because the sleeping cow can achieve very little.

They were asking management to include them on the list of people to be receiving pay advances in order to solve some of their financial problems. There were times when they were referred to the Mine Hospital, but they could not afford to pay and yet they were working for one of the biggest parastatal companies in the country.

The office orderlies and messengers were asking management for in-house refresher courses or seminars on how to improve their skills and public relations

1) Sentiments from the retrenched and employees on Transitional Leave (TL)

The retrenched were happy with the ideal of downsizing the staff. They appealed to the new management team to observe certain crucial items in the management of the company. One retrenched said:

It was a good idea for the government to reduce the numbers. But what the government and the new management team does not know is the fact that, the number on paper and the actual number of people do not tally and will never tally as long as some people remain in higher positions in the company. I have said so, because there are a lot of 'ghost workers' in ZR.

Some workers on TL were very bitter that they were no longer in employment, because their positions were not abolished as they were told before they left. Their positions have been given to relatives of the managers. Another retrenched said:

I am a very bitter man, for I never expected to be retrenched, I was not ready to leave employment at 42 years. I was told my position was no longer valid under new management, but someone's relative was given my position. Where is the morality?

Another retrenched pointed out:

the sad part of the company is that they're losing billions of Kwacha on some people without realising. One man gets retrenched in Kabwe and gets his dues and the relative in management pushes him to Ndola and continues to draw a salary. Is our country going to develop, why should one person benefit from the company twice? They also noted

some loopholes in the handling of the employees who were on TL.

One retrenchee said:

The company is losing billions of money on us, since we are being paid our monthly salaries and all allowances, except for a small amount called productivity allowance. We are no longer productive and our counterparts who are working are demoralised because their salaries are the same as ours. For us on TL we are excited because we are doing our own things while getting a salary.

6.2.2 Conducted tour to the Northern and Southern District

These were the sentiments on the perception of ZR by the major customers and passengers. This particular report is based on spot interviews with ZR's major customers and passengers.

The interviews were aimed at finding out the present perception of the customers, that is, the corporate identity of the company. It was hoped that the company would address the negative views noted in a positive way in order to boost the corporate image, and indeed business.

The following were the findings about and the observations of each one of the companies visited.

a) Amanita Premier Oils Limited.

Amanita Premier Oils limited has just come back after some years of silence. In the past when they had business dealings with ZR they incurred losses.

The General Manager, George Allison, said:

The supply of coal is very erratic. This made us to leave rail transport and opt for road haulage. For example, at one time the maize ZR

transported from Choma to Lusaka went missing. However, since we came back we are very happy with ZR's competitive tariffs. The only set back is lack of reliability.

Allison appealed to the new management team to buy coal-handling equipment and to provide sufficient stock of coal from Maamba Collieries to avoid stocking out. They also asked for an efficient communication system between ZR office and their marketing office.

b) Chambeshi Metals

Chambeshi metals were very happy with the improved service in six months from May to October. There was a tremendous improved care service; the goods were received in good time. They appealed to Manager Operations through Chambeshi station master not to be combining wagons. It was practically impossible to offload 50 wagons a day. They could only manage 12 wagons a day. This would help them not to pay demurrage for the mistakes which were not theirs. They felt unfairly treated for ZR to charge them demurrage, when more than 12 wagons are delivered. Their work force can only unload 12 wagons per day.

The Superintendent, Hira Singh, said:

ZR should always inform us on the status of wagons by fax. I am also asking the new management to revive the rail siding in the industrial area.

They have asked the new management to review their transportation charges. The transportation charges by road transporters were less than ZR, but they are more comfortable to transport their goods using ZR. However, if the charges by road would be less than by rail, they can easily change.

They were hoping to expand their business. They would open a smelter by October 2000. Therefore, there would be a lot of freight in 2000. This means more business for ZR.

c) Consolidated Tyre Service

The problems Consolidated Tyre Services (CTS) encounters with ZR were not the Customer Care Officer's own making. It was due to the poor infrastructure. They were asking ZR management to work on the track. However, they have appreciated ZR's communication system.

ZR usually delivers the goods in good time. Once Masuku/Maamba collieries give CTS the wagons and train numbers, CTS is able to liaise with ZR. Without giving wagons and train numbers ZR can not do much. The Purchasing Manager said: "Our business relationship with ZR is cordial; we haven't experienced any problems".

d) Chilanga Cement (Lusaka)

Chilanga Cement (Lusaka) was very pleased with the Customer Care they are receiving from ZR. They commended Traffic and Marketing Directorate for enhancing good relations through efficient communication from the Northern District Team (Ndola). They were happy with the personal contact established and were congratulating the new management for favorable customer care.

e) Chilanga Cement (Ndola)

ZR was failing to meet the needs of Chilanga Cement (Ndola), because of long transit time. For example, one of Chilanga's major customers LUSEN Distributors of Lusaka prefers road transport to rail transport because they experience fewer breakages. LUSEN gets 1,500 tones of cement per month. Some customers from the Democratic Republic of Congo were shunning ZR because of so many stoppages and were afraid that their goods might be tempered with. They further said most customers were interested in time and quality, but because of the poor infrastructure goods by train took long to reach their destination.

There was poor communication between ZR and Chilanga Cement Ndola on the status of the wagons. They appealed to the Traffic and Marketing Directorate to make the information available on the status of wagons. They revealed that sometimes when customers visited them they did not have the information at hand on the status of wagons. They would also like to know how many days the cargo took from Lusaka to Ndola. The general feeling amongst most customers was that transportation by rail took long. The freight section was encouraged to keep their promises. The Sales Manager, Joseph Chalwe said:

There were times when the wagons were promised for a particular day and were finally brought 3 or 4 days after the stipulated day. They also pointed out that it was almost impossible to get a wagon on demand from ZR.

They also appealed to the Directorate of Technical Services to assist them with staff from Rolling Stock to help with the repairs of their locomotive engines.

f) Cimenkat

Cimenkat pointed out that the problem they had was receiving underweight goods. They always get goods weighing less than the weight recorded on paper. This problem is not only with ZR, but also with the whole region. For example, they would load 1,500 tones of copper in Chingola, but when the copper arrived at Lubundi the weight would be less. The loss would be more than 5% close to 7.6% of the cargo delivered.

They also complained of receiving wagons with bent doors. This resulted in receiving coal with dirty particles.

g) National Breweries Kitwe

National Breweries PLC (NB) sent congratulatory messages to the new management team for the efficient service they were offering. ZR was able to move 10/11 wagons at a

terrific speed, as compared to the past. For example, in the past the wagons heading to NB Kitwe would be found at Chilanga Cement, but this has been rectified under new management. The situation had changed. ZR was more responsible.

The other problems encountered in the past were late deliveries of coal wagons. For example, wagons would take weeks before reaching Chilanga. Furthermore, there was no proper communication between NB and Maamba Collieries, which made NB to resort to road transport for some time.

This was compounded by Maamba collieries's inefficiency in loading the coal and failure to communicate to ZR in good time after loading. NB appealed to ZR to persuade Maamba Collieries to improve their communication system. Immediately Maamba improves its communication system NB will completely divorce road transport except that the rates of Dar Farms were very competitive.

The NB Company Buyer, Mr. Charles Daniel Chisenga, commended ZR Management for restructuring the company. He said that, "Young men are doing very well. They are bearing fruit. It is good that old men have gone with their old tactics."

h) Ndola Lime PLC

The reception at Ndola Lime was very bad. Nevertheless, they had something to say. One of the managers pointed out that they were losing \$20,000 per day due to non-availability of tarpaulins. consequently, their Silos were always full. The service they were getting from ZR was very poor. For example, ZR was sending wagons which were very old and without Tarpaulins. The Customer Care Service Department had very little regard for them as a major customer. Even where it was evident that the delay was due to ZR's inefficiency, they were made to pay. For example, Ndola Lime was charged demurrage for not sending wagons back in good time, when they knew that it was not Ndola Lime's fault. The wagons were sent minus tarpaulins. Esther Musozya said:

There was an oversight on the part of ZR. They have not been providing tarpaulins for covering lime on the wagons. There was no way one could send lime without covering it with tarpaulins.

They pointed out that as a traditional customer, they were not getting proper customer care. ZR was aware of how many wagons and tarpaulins Ndola lime needed per day. For quick lime 10, and for ordinary lime 15 to 20. There was no need for Ndola lime to be requesting for wagons. Rather, ZR should always communicate how many wagons left the station for Ndola Lime and the time of departure. The period of delivery of lime to various customers has been very inconsistent. Therefore, the services have been very unsatisfactory. They hoped for improved customer care.

They have always wanted ZR to transport their bulk goods to different points. They advised ZR management to ensure that the person who was in charge of the wagons in transit takes responsibility for the safety of the tarpaulins in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Customer Care Officer should keep a record of tarpaulins.

i) Shaik Import and Export

Shake Import and Export Company was worried at the way ZR is handling their goods. They were not impressed with how ZR was working. They incurred losses because of the carelessness of ZR. General Manager, Kenny Mkandawire, said:

They have fared very badly since they started dealing with us. The biggest hurdle for me in this business is ZR. They lost our salt between 19th and 20th October 1999. Our wagons were broken into. How can this happen to us when ZR has security personnel. Does it mean management has no regard for our business? ZR might look at salt as nothing but when you leave salt in the bush, you can not find it.

) Societe' Nationale Des Chemins De Fer Du Congo (SNCC)

SNCC complained of lack of communication.

They pointed out that communication was very important because it would enable them to monitor the speed and movement of the cargo. They requested the Customer Care Officer to be informing them of the departure time, date, and the expected day of arrival of the freight in transit, for the smooth running of the business.

They suggested that the originating railways must ensure that railage is paid before shipment. The manager freight said that it would be impolite for ZR to insist on advance payment from their old major customers for this can easily erode customer care and confidence.

k) Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (ZCCM)

The attachee visited some ZCCM plants.

i) Nkana Division

ZCCM Nkana division lamented the shortage of locomotives and wagons. They have more traffic than wagons offered. This problem was compounded by shortage of manpower from ZR for operating shuttle locomotives between ZCCM and ZR siding (no loco driver and shunter).

ZCCM were perplexed at the rate at which derailments occur. They experience two to three derailments per week. The General Manager (Metal imports), Mr. George Mutambo, wondered how the track would be during the rain season. He pointed out that there seems to be some general problem inherent within the structure, after the restructuring. The reaction time from ZR staff after the derailment was very poor. Therefore, they appealed to management to provide a permanent track supervisor.

ZCCM, Nkana Division is appealing to ZR management to provide Northern District with MFD equipment for lifting derailed wagons. The MFD they are using is too old and in bad shape.

ii) ZCCM Nchanga Division

Nchanga Division were happy with the services they were receiving from ZR Chingola station. Since the arrival of the new management, there was a lot of improvement. They appealed to management to buy the station master a vehicle or motor bike.

iii) ZCCM Konkola Division

The Konkola Division was very happy with the customer service. They hoped it would be the same during the rainy season.

They recommended that the customer care officer from ZR should inform the plant on the status of the wagons and give information about sidings. This would help the superintendent from ZCCM to send their members of staff to reconcile with ZR employee on the movement of the wagons.

They asked ZR to be sending wagons with tarpaulins. The superintendent appealed to the new management team to buy the Station Master a vehicle or a motor cycle. He pointed out that it would help the Station Master to make spot checks at will in the plant.

They wanted information on insurance. They were not sure of whom to pay for the derailed coal. Is it ZCCM or ZR? They appealed to ZR to empower Station Master with executive powers.

iv) ZCCM Mufulira Division

The relationship with ZR was good. They appealed to ZR to work out measures of reducing on charging demurrage.

l) Lever Brothers

The Logistics Manager pointed out that business with ZR was getting exciting, because in the past it used to be very bad. Mr. Terry Katebe said that, "Communication has improved tremendously and goods were delivered in good time." They appealed to the new management team to work on the track infrastructure. A perfect infrastructure would reduce on transit time.

m) Maamba Collieries

The Managing Director was grateful to the new management team for the improved customer care. He said that, "the customer care has improved tremendously. We are happy ZR is getting better."

n) DIMON ZAMBIA (Tobacco Development Company Limited)

the Assistant General Manager, Landson Mitti, commended ZR for the excellent services. Each time they asked for wagons ZR made them available to them, before they could even pay. DIMON finds ZR to be very accommodating.

They appealed to ZR to make the following information available.

- a) Movement of traffic
- b) Times of movement
- c) Estimation on transit time
- d) What they allow to be carried on the wagons and what they do not allow.
- e) The weight limit

o) Nitrogen Chemicals of Zambia (NCZ)

NCZ was ZR faithful customer. Their main mode of transport was ZR. They would use road haulage when the customer insisted because they would have no choice. The marketing manager, Selisho Chanda, emphasised on Just on time (JIT) in business. He pointed out that it was difficult to make ZR move on demand. They appealed for more wagons since they were opening a new plant for ammonium nitrate.

NCZ owes ZR colossal sums of money. Mr. Chanda thanked ZR for being patient with them the time they went through a dry spell. He thanked the staff at Kafue station. He said:

The staff were courteous and responded to the requests promptly. I am not impressed with the Station Master's office at Kafue. The chairs

were cracked, the old office typewriters need to be replaced with computers, the curtains were in a bad shape. We do go there as customers for business, therefore, we expect at least a good office.

NRZ's priority in terms of transport was ZR. They appealed to ZR to communicate with Spoornet on their behalf so that they could send back the tunkers in good time to reduce on delays.

They also asked for Schoema engine from Manager Workshops, which was supposed to run between Musuku and Choma.

6.2.3 Passengers

The state of the passenger train did not meet international standard. Some passengers said:

There was need to repaint and upgrade the train to its past glory. It should be a shinning finger, to both local and tourist customers.

There was an outcry from the passengers that Regional railway industries should come together. They also recommended that all railway companies standardise their operations and acquire internationally accepted technologies and machinery to facilitate regional transportation.

Recently a ZR passenger train was barred from entering Victoria Falls town in Zimbabwe because of dirty coaches. Some passengers noted that, with such embarrassing episodes, ZR would certainly not benefit from the regional railway grouping. They said, however, that this was avoidable. ZR should be considered for privatisation, and the company should be privatised for the future as we approach the digital age.

Some passengers were grateful to ZR that the fares were very fair. They appealed to the new management team to improve on time. The passenger service train never arrives on

time. Instead of the journey taking eleven hours between Lusaka and Livingstone, it normally takes 15 or 18 hours. They encouraged management to improve on transit time. One passenger pointed out: “most business persons and tourist prefer road transport because time is money.”

6.2.4 Coal Co-ordinating Meeting

Maamba Collieries Limited (MCL) is the sole producer of coal in Zambia. All manufacturing companies depend on coal from MCL. For the smooth transportation of coal the business partners do have quarterly meetings with Maamba. The privatisation of Maamba is still on.

The following were the highlights of the coal co-ordinating meeting which the attachee attended. MCL revealed that the telephone problems still existed and frantic efforts were being made to acquire the more reliable Zambia Telecommunication company (ZAMTEL) services. They informed their customers that they were still receiving verbal inquiries by customers regarding loading schedules, as well as size distribution. In fact, MCL had problems with communication to the DRC. In most cases communication was done through Belgium.

After presentation of the amount of coal sold between July and September 1999, MCL reported that, there was low pit production during the months of August and September 1999. Coal could not be exposed due to outage of Dragline for three weeks in August 1999.

Table 11

Table 11: *The Sale of Coal and mode of transport between July and September, 1999*

Month	Rail	%	Road	%	Total
July	8497	61	5513	39	14,012
August	1, 2861	69	5786	31	18,647
September	6148	51	5864	49	12,012

Source: *Paper presented at the Coal Co-ordinating meeting*

They appealed to their customers to make orders in advance. The managing director said:

a total of 50,000 clean coal is projected for the period of October to December 1999. Customers are encouraged to make necessary orders more especially for December to avoid panic as the company hoped to break ten days

They appealed to their seasoned customers to buy quality peas coal. There was more demand for cheaper quality coal than the previously preferred high quality peas coal.

They appealed to ZR to be supplying enough wagons, because during the month of August ZR did not supply enough wagons.

Corridor Meeting: ZR - NRZ - Spoornet (Beitbridge) and ZR - NRZ

BBR - Spoornet (Plumtree).

The corridor meeting occurs from time to time to assess if the set objectives are met. The members of the corridor strive not to damage the environment with their operations. The common objective of the corridor team was to serve their customers' needs by providing a seamless service, which is safe, cost-effective, predictable and on time.

Botswana Railways (BR) did not attend the meeting. At the corridor meeting ZR emphasised that, all railways should handle each other's customer in a special way as if they were their own customers without partiality.

They pleaded with their counterpart NRZ to observe the regulations, which were on paper when exchanging wagons. Sometimes the crew from NRZ would leave the coaches on the Zambian side without being certified fit. Therefore, they asked them not to send wagons with major defects.

6.2.6 Sentiments from Management

The attachee presented the problems discussed to the Managing Director and the three directorates with their heads of department. Some of the of the problems were sorted out when the attachee was still on attachment.

a) Office Orderlies

The question of office orderlies doing two jobs (office orderly and messenger) is not justifiable. After restructuring, management has merged the job of office orderly and messenger. One manager said that,

It is not possible to split this job into two, because we are aiming at down sizing the current number of workers.

Before restructuring messengers used to sit the whole day doing nothing. It was very difficult and distressing to supervise loafers. The Head Administration and Training said:

“The office oderlies/messengers were supposed to sweep from 06:30 to 07:30 hours. Their Lunch is from 11:00 to 12:30 hours. They are supposed to finish off their sweeping between 12:30 and 14:00. They knock off at 16:00 hours.

Another participant said:

There are times, when one would be with a customer and then a disorganised office orderly would come into the office with a mop, sweeping broom and bucket. I do not know how one can please this group of employees.

For the delivery of bulk goods, the office orderlies were given bicycles and mail bags. One participant said:

You rarely see these people carrying their mailbags, or riding their bicycles. Most of them have given out the bicycles to their relatives and mailbags to their children.

Hence, the Head Administration and Training was advised to ensure that the officer who supervises them does his job properly. He was supposed to ensure that they came with mailbags and their bicycles except for two or three office orderlies who were new. The whole department was of the view that instead of buying new bicycles they would rather give them loans to buy bicycles and mail bags. This would help them keep the bicycles properly. ZR would recover the loans in a stipulated months.

The Director Human Resources, Christopher Musonda ,pointed out:

The company was facing some financial problems. It had taken management some time to pay off the former employees who were on transitional leave. The government has not honoured its word. If they did we could have paid them. We do understand the transitional period the government is going through with the standing still of the sale of mines.

He further explained:

The other complication ZR had was Zambia Privation Agency (ZPA). ZPA would want to privatise ZR in the remaining nine months. It was really difficult to convince the employees from this point of view that the current suffering is not our wish as management. The money, which we have been giving out rentrechees, they had to source it form somewhere.

The company had no capacity to pay office orderlies overtime fortnightly. The supervisor was encouraged to use his discretion when need arises.

The Head Industrial relations said:

Office orderlies should not complain about managers on transfers finishing company money on hotel accommodation and guesthouses, because it was in the Conditions of Service for managers. Transfers won't be a common phenomenon in the company since houses have been sold. In the past it was mandatory for the company to give houses to its employees. There are changes in the Conditions of Service. It is not possible for management to be paying overtime to office orderlies every month. ZR had no capacity to pay overtime habitually, because the company was running without the help of the government.

b) Water and ZESCO Bills

Management felt that it was their duty to be reminding the employees from time to time about the goodness of being a landlord. Utilities such as telephone, water, and electricity bills were the responsibility of the landlord. It was a pity that some members of staff had not yet believed that they were landlords. They were still looking up to ZR their employer to pay their bills and cater for other expenses of renovations. Management was delighted that the employees were happy to be empowered with home ownership. Furthermore management encouraged the landlords to continue maintaining the surroundings so that the area of residence could continue looking habitable and clean. Nevertheless the Director Human Resources said:

It is unfortunate that some employees were paying evaluators instead of spending the hard earned cash on re-painting their houses and make them clean.

d) Drivers

The Head Administration, David Ndumba, pointed out that all executive drivers had uniforms.

The only one without uniforms were the drivers of Director Finance and Director Traffic and Marketing.

The Director Human Resources urged the drivers to tell their families their job description and what the job entailed.

The Head Administration was asked to hold a meeting with the drivers so that they could be using uniforms which were bought for them the previous year. The human resource directorate refuted claims that uniforms were not bought for drivers.

d) Low Wages

The Director Technical Services, Hansjorg Ebercher, pointed out that there was need to pay ZR employees a living wage. He said:

We fall short of words when we compare ourselves with other parastatals like ZESCO and ZAMTEL. We shall not forget to look at what we can afford to give out and still remain comfortable. Because of this at the moment we can't give our staff a living wage because the number is still high.

The Director Finance, Lars Jahnsen and members of staff in his directorate were very happy with the presentation of the worker's sentiments. He said:

It was good to discover the sentiments of the subordinates so that improvements can be made where necessary.

e) Police

The managing director advised the police that their services were needed. Not only during the reign of the new management team, but even after the Swedish team leave they will still have their jobs. On the loyalty of ZR police, the Director Human Resources said:

The police should realise that we don't need them to be loyal. We want to see them work and good results. We are striving to make the company viable, so that by June 2000 it can attract private participation in different countries for bidding. However, we are still restructuring the company to make it attractive to private investors. Therefore, employees should get ready for retrenchment. ZR will soon be ready for grabs.

f) Project allowance

On the project allowance being given to a certain category of employees, the Director Human Resources pointed out:

Project allowance is paid to an employee who does an extra piece of work apart from what they usually do. Therefore, there is need to give an employee an allowance after presenting a monthly report.

6.2.7 Suggestions made by the attachee and the reactions from various managers.

The attachee presented some problems to various managers after the FGDs:

a) Passenger Department

The attachee informed the manager passengers on the poor state of all rail stations in the Southern District. During the FGDs in Livingstone, it was revealed that the councils along the line of rail in Southern Province had threatened to sue ZR or close all stations in Southern District. They have written warning letters to station masters at Mulobezi, Livingstone, Kalomo, Choma, and Mazabuka. One participant said:

The train was in a bad state. I am wondering why as ZR we should wait for the council to sue us in order to have the toilet cleaned. The work by some sub-contractors is of sub-standard.

Another participant added:

The passenger train is no longer what it used to be in the past. In the 1970s when we were at school we used to travel by train, because it was more ideal to travel by train than by bus and trains were properly kept. For example, trains had running water. Today our train cannot be compared with NRZ. ZR train has no running water. The taps are dry. Why should we subject our people to such misery.

Another participant said:

It was unhygienic to clean/wash the trains at the train station where people board the train. The washing bay should be moved to some other spot. It should not be near where people wait for trains.

The following are the reactions of Manager Passengers, Luke Mwanza on the state of the passenger train. He said:

The appearance of the train was going to change in a few months time, because the painting of the trains was underway.

He referred the author on some issues raised to Manager Workshops and Manager Operations.

On dirt on the passenger train the Manager Workshops pointed out:

The paint which was used to paint the train was of poor quality. It was 'sido' paint. Unfortunately it was bought in bulk. It has overstayed. The painting exercise has started. There was an agreement between passenger department and main workshops to be releasing 6 coaches in stages every month. By the end of ten months all the 52 coaches will be painted.

The author reported to Manager Workshops, Mrs Helen Mukumba, on the state of the wagons. Some customers had complained on some wagons with bent doors and on how they were receiving coal with foreign particles. Mrs Mukumba said:

The wagons with bent doors haven't been brought for repairs. It is a pity that customers are getting dirty coal, otherwise, when wagons get dirty they are cleaned. Wagons are normally cleaned at line points and all minor repairs are supposed to be done whenever they are reported. The wagons were in short supply and there was maximum utilisation of the wagons, Sometimes it was difficult to have them released for servicing. Most of the wagons have outlived their usefulness. They were relatively new. They are not yet 32 years old though they look old. They should be maintained properly but the only set back is lack of funds. We normally get a quarter of what we would ask for. Basically it would be better for us to do a major overhaul on some of our coaches and wagons. In additional, the other set back has been in the purchase of spare parts. Headquarters purchases spare parts. It could be true that spare parts are not sent to districts in good time.

When the attachee spoke to Manager Rolling Stock, Webster Mtambo, he said:

The paint they used on painting the coaches was of sub-standard. The paint they bought was of cheap quality. Therefore, the people cleaning the train are failing to do a good job. Dirt on the coaches cannot come out when they scrub. The passenger train needs to be repainted.

Wagons, are in short supply. However, discussions are underway with Africa Development Bank (ADB) to help finance the locomotives. I hope we will be successful.

The attachee suggested that toilets be built for the workers who were living in cottages. The answer from one of the managers in charge was not satisfactory.

She also reported to the Manager Signals and Manager Operations on the slow movement of the train. The trainmen told the attachee that they were finding it difficult to drive the train at 25 km per hour. They were used to 40 km per hour. One trainman said:

It extremely boring to drive at 25 km per hour. Sometimes I do find my self dozing. Tell our bosses to plead with the new management to do something on CTC. May it be their priority number 1

In conclusion, one can say that there is a lot of work to be done by new management in order to build a good image. However, the attachee was very pleased with the communication style of the new management team. They responded positively to most of the sentiments cited above. Some of the problems cited are no longer problems.

The purpose of the next chapter is to examine management and organisational communication at ZR and how they respond to the needs of the workers in the light of building a good image. The attachee has included interpretations, implications and criticisms in her findings. In some parts of the next chapter it was difficult to present the discussions without making recommendations.

Chapter 7

Findings and Discussion

7.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the attachment on the public image of ZR. In order to examine the public image of ZR there is need to review the theoretical framework, the general trends in the development of ZR as a way of contributing to national development. Therefore the attachee will examine management and organisational communication at ZR and how management respond to the needs of the workers. Numerous definitions of communication have been given in this PAR, but the attachee has picked on organisational and management communication.

From Chapter 3 the attachee discovered that the problem of communication has been made more challenging in that it is not an area for an isolated specialist. This is so, because there is no single approach to the study of communication. Adequate understanding of the concept of communication depends on a wider variety of talent and range of specialisation.

It is imperative that more scholars should engage in studies of research in development communication within organisations. Therefore, the science of communication would require the co-operation of both the practitioners and the scientists. Thus the newspaper editor, the radio broadcaster, the movie producer, the psychologist, the sociologist, the anthropologist, the political scientist extra all have an important role to perform in communication.

7.1 Interpersonal communication within ZR

At ZR, it was observed that interpersonal communication was widely used. The attachee noted that interpersonal communication is very important for the growth or expansion of the organisation and for national development. It is, therefore, the most persuasive form of communication.

Interpersonal communication at ZR is better than it used to be in the past. Interpersonal communication is an important tool of communication, because one gets the feedback right there and then. ZR uses face-to-face programme and at the end of each programme they evaluate to see if information has been disseminated or not. They have a greater effectiveness in dealing with apathy or resistance on the part of the receiver of a message. This is a two-way exchange of information. An individual can ask for clarification on the information, which he would miss in a message during a discourse. With the past management, internal communication was very poor. Interpersonal communication is better than it used to be in the past. The new management team is emphasising on transparency within the organisation and is trying to create a healthy communication environment. For example, they have been distributing Newsletters fortnightly and Rail Magazine twice a year

7.2 Independent Mindedness in ZR

Infante and Gorden (1987) investigated the argumentativeness in interpersonal communication inside an organisation through a theory called independent Mindedness. This is the characteristic which values individuality and constructive argument within an organisation.

The theory of Independent-Mindedness involves the tendency of people to have their own thoughts and opinions rather than passively accepting the opinions of others and express and advocate those personal views. The theory assumes that a company must reflect the larger culture of their workers if they intend to manage effectively. For example the new management team has been trying hard to use organisational communication by giving freedom to the employees to make suggestions. At ZR the employees have been given the liberty to help build the image of the company by making suitable suggestions. Each month a selection of the best practical suggestion in terms of positive contribution to the welfare of the company wins the author's cash award of K100,000.00.

ZR management has done this with a view to having the employees effectively contribute to the growth of the organisation. This has made the employees more productive and committed to ZR. Most of the employees talked to seemed to be very proud and satisfied with their jobs, except for some that were lacking tools and spare parts in some departments.

The new management team has done this, so that they can build on values of the indigenous people. According to Infante and Gorden (1987), this theory assumes that values held by the general society should be affirmed in the workplace. There has been good rapport between the directors and managers, whilst there was not much communication between managers and their subordinates. For example, as pointed out in Chapter 6, there were times when some managers would make trips abroad instead of the junior officers from the shop floor. Most of the workers pointed out:

The Managing Director is a man of integrity. He sometimes uses his money on official trips and he rarely claims it from the company. But some of our men from old management cannot do that. They always want to benefit from the company.

Therefore the middle managers were not giving their subordinates enough Independent-Mindedness on the job, as the managing director would want them to do.

There has been good rapport between the directors and the employees, except that there is not much time for them to mingle. The employees were of the view that the new management team from time to time could visit the shop floor without notifying them.

They observed:

The only time when we mingle with the Managing Director and the directors is during social functions. The Managing Director has a sense of humour.

Generally the workers are excited about the new management team. The idea of making suggestions has been commended by most of the employees. There is no discrimination. The Manager Public Affairs and his team were commended for submitting all suggestions voluntarily to the executive committee.

The high morale brought about by the introduction of suggestion making was evident by the way the subordinates responded. The employees commended the new management team for introducing such means communicating within the company. One participant said:

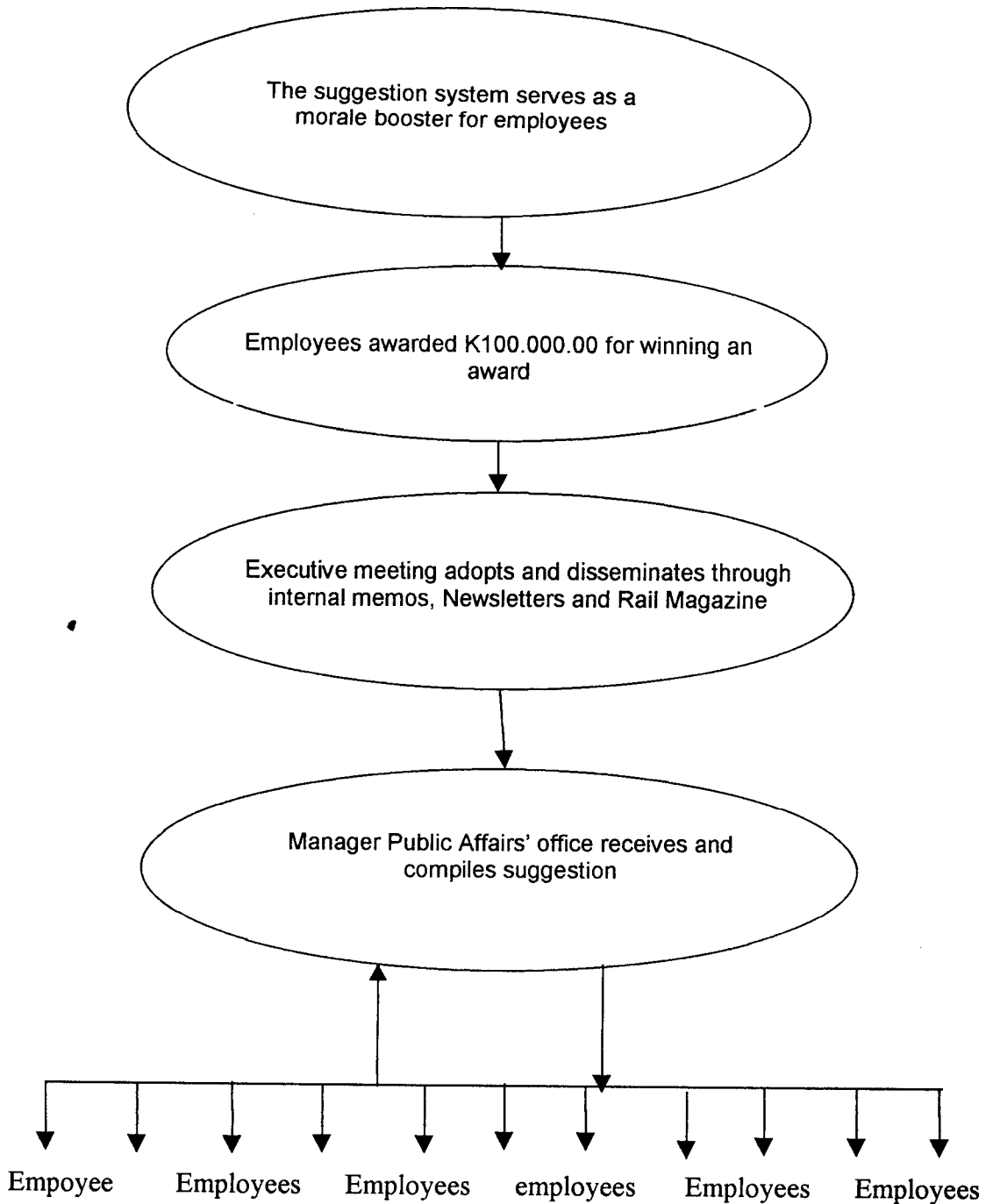
We do not know how it was going to be if the letters were to pass through our heads of department. You cannot be sure if your suggestion would be forwarded or not. If it goes there, there would be a lot of alterations. The new management team has done a wonderful thing for us subordinates. At least we are able to exercise our rights as employees.

Therefore, the employees are very happy with the new management team, because as subordinates they have been given the freedom of speech within the organisation. Figure 9 depicts the system followed in making suggestions.

The new management team is characterised by quick response. It is a pity that they took over a rundown infrastructure. Their quick response was evident when the Traffic and Marketing Department had a joint in-house training with public affairs on customer care. One of the visiting lecturers, the Marketing Manager of Zambian Breweries, Augustine Seyuba, condemned the ZR slogan: 'The Sleeping Giant is Awakening.' He said the slogan was dormant and not catchy.

Figure 7

Figure7: *The author cash award system*



Source: *Attachee's observation during attachment*

He suggested to the participants that the Manager Freight through the Managing Director's office change the slogan. After the meeting he immediately reported to the Managing Director who later presented it to the executive committee. The executive committee then asked the employees to come up with suggestions. Management decided That the winner of the best slogan would win the author's award of K200,000.00. The response from the employees was overwhelming.

It was clear that the theory of Independent Mindedness was at work at ZR as employees were given the freedom of speech. They were able to argue with their leaders through suggestions. This theory argues that employees who have more freedom of speech at work were more committed to their organisations. Indeed, this was evident at the time when the author was on attachment. Most of the employees were committed to work, despite the low wages. During the FGDs they were able to raise their sentiments without fear of being victimised by management. Those who have benefited from the suggestion programme were more committed to work than before.

The attachee discovered that with this system in place there was no need for employees to always wait for the union representative in order to present their problems to management. The directors were more easily accessible than before.

On the whole, employees were more satisfied with the performance of the new management team than the previous management. For example, employees who were caught in acts of fraud and thefts are dismissed. This has enabled the employees to start rebuilding confidence in the management. It was apparent, the new management team's aim is to do away with all sorts of vices.

7.3 The use of Agenda building in ZR

As indicated in Chapter 6, the attachee suggested to the new management team to use agenda building as they seek to rebuild the image of ZR. This was rejected. One of the managers said that he could not see the need of advertising when they were already known by the public and the fact that they had adequate customers.

The new management team has undoubtedly made a positive contribution to the evolution of the company. Some serious problems noted in the past as revealed by the Mumpanshya Commission no longer appear to be problems. The attachee was of the view that the new management team should advertise their achievements. They should tell the public that they were different from the past management which were renowned for tribalism, nepotism, corruption and for thefts of property which belonged to ZR as reported in the Mumpanshya Commission of Inquiry in 1977. The new management dismisses any caught/ or found guilty of such vices.

Because of the bad image of ZR and the alarming reports, the former president of the Republic of Zambia, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, appointed the commission of inquiry to:

- a) Investigate and report on the allegation of tribalism, nepotism and corruption involving persons exercising authority in relation to or serving ZR.
- b) investigate and report on the allegations of thefts of property in the possession of or belonging to ZR by persons exercising authority in relation to or serving under ZR or by other persons. Other matters were investigated into which the commission of inquiry thought would be beneficial to the public (Commission of Inquiry, 1777:2).

This was prompted by the Zambia Railways Amalgamated Workers Union (ZRAWU). The National Executive committee adopted five Resolutions, of which the fourth Resolution prompted the government to establish a commission of inquiry. The fourth Resolution read:

The national executive committee is now convinced that the present railway management is all out to promote all forms of social evils on the railways including tribalism, corruption and thefts. This sad state of affairs is evidenced by the inability of the railway management to

dismiss or has been forced to dismiss some senior employees who have swindled the railways thousands of Kwacha. .. the committee would like to see also an immediate resumption of the FRAUD SQUAD which was intentionally abolished by the railway management to conceal their perverse drive to easy riches (Commission of Inquiry, 1977: 58 :58).

The Commission of Inquiry confirmed the allegations:

Tribalism is practised on ZR by means of favouritism, on the part of some of those who hold high positions of members of their tribes in relation to appointments, promotions, the exercise of disciplinary functions, and in showing hostility and harshness to members of other tribes. In this manner tribalism is practised on a very large scale and, in certain instances, without any sense by those concerned (Commission of Inquiry, 1977: 58: 58)

•
The evidence of the findings of the commission of inquiry was overwhelming. It was reported:

We have found that there exist apathy, timidity and acquiescence on the part of persons who would otherwise prevent the practice of tribalism. There is virtually no single person amongst the top managers, who can offer disinterested advice to the General Manager. The Personnel Manager only seems to be carrying out the directions and instructions of the General Manager, while the office of industrial relations does not seem to have any power to prevent or influence tainted administrative action. On the other hand the expatriate staff seems to be positively unconcerned or, in certain instances consciously used by Zambians to achieve their ends in return for promises to have their contracts renewed (Commission of inquiry, 1977:59).

In addition, thefts were confirmed in the commission of inquiry report:

The incident of thefts in ZR is alarming. There has been so many senior persons involved in gross neglect of duty, frauds and thefts that the ordinary worker is led to believe that all members of the management are thieves. The favouritism which certain persons have enjoyed in relation to disciplinary measures have worsened the incidence of thefts as well as weakened the morale and discipline of general workers. As one commercial superintendent observed, if ZR was a small organisation, it would have wound up already because of thefts. We are also satisfied that the tendency on the part of the chief Internal Auditor (Mr.ON) not to audit senior officers as the general manager's resolve to deal with frauds and thefts administratively have shielded offenders and hampered police investigations (Commission of Inquiry, 1977:59).

In view of the vices portrayed by old management there is need for a massive campaign to tell the nation of the new management's achievement. The public have the right to know that ZR has a different group of people with a high profile. They should make a deliberate move to convince the customers and the prospective customers that they are different. The employees have seen the difference between the new management team and the old regime. This comes out very well as they work together.

According to Lang and Lang (1966), the mass media forces attention to certain issues. They are constantly presenting or suggesting objects of what individuals in the mass should think about, know about, have feelings about.

Research on Agenda Setting has addressed this point with more than two hundred studies over the past three decades. Comparatively little study has applied to the

observation of Lang and Lang one step earlier in the distillation of news, namely, to how sources present issues, information, and themselves to the media, and what effects of those presentation might be.

The media have helped the new management team by what they have been reporting since the new management came into power. Most of the reports about ZR have been talking about the woes of the previous management. Even other reports have revealed that the attributes of someone promoted and announced in the local papers, television and advertising significantly would correlate with the public opinion later, if someone would take a survey. For example, prior to and after the coming of new management team a lot was written on the woes of ZR and consequently the bad public image. Therefore, Mccombs (1997) said: "This is the logical of extension of traditional agenda setting or agenda building" (Mccombs, 1997: 29).

Mccombs emphasised the point of how the media do tell the public on what to think, not just what to think about.

7.4 Cultivation Theory in ZR

This section it is not only on television, but print media and radio broadcasting have been discussed. In Cultivation Theory television has been considered an influential source of information that plays a role in constructing viewers' social reality. It is like this because television conveys simulations of everyday situations since it shares similar characteristics of everyday situations and also shares similar characteristics of real life events (e.g., sound and sight). Therefore vicarious experience via television may become part of our social experience and serve as a basis for social judgements such as prejudices and stereotypes.

The concept of accessibility in cognition and memory also may explain the stronger influence of television on the public. According to Wyer and Srull (1986) when reaching impressions of others or things:

We reach our memory heuristically, that is, we seek and use information, which is the most accessible (easily retrieved) and save extra cognitive efforts (e.g., further search) unless it is required.

Therefore, information that is activated recently or retrieved frequently is considered highly accessible, since it is placed and stirred close to the top of our memory bin. (Wyer & Srull, 1986: 279-80)

Thus, the attachee insisted on the importance of using media in the company because cultivation and social cognitive effects of television are more likely to occur when messages of ZR are placed near the top of viewer's memory.

Therefore, due to limited personal interaction with the new management team the major customers and general public may compensate for their lack of firsthand information about ZR new management team by relying on television portrayals when making social and economic judgements about ZR. The more frequently the television information is used, the more accessible the television information will be.

From the various studies undertaken by different scholars it has been concluded that television messages had a significant impact on viewers' perception when first hand information is lacking.

The attachee stressed the use of the media because she believes that information disseminated by mass media is more likely to exert influence on the prospective customers who have had little or no direct contact with ZR, because they are lacking in sufficient method of evaluating information. Therefore, positive reporting on television on the achievements of the new management team would have a positive effect on the public. Wilcox et al (1999) said:

Television has the strongest emotional impact of all media. Its visual power situations seem close to the viewer. The personality of the

television communicator creates an influence that print media cannot match

Although negative ZR images are presented in news accounts, cultivation of relatively positive portrayals of ZR in an entertainment context would yield high results. Therefore, giving positive portrayals of ZR in entertainment would change the bad public image to a good one.

The company, however, should not only use one mass medium in their campaign. Such type of campaign works better when several types of media are used. For example, radio programmes have the greatest advantage over television. Wilcox et al. point out:

Radio's greatest advantages are flexibility and the ability to reach specific target audiences. Messages can be prepared for and broadcast on radio more rapidly than on television at lower cost (Wilcox et al., 1999:240).

Print Media is useful to Inform, educate, entertain, editorialize and influence their customers and employees. Newspapers, newsletters and magazines can be kept for a long time by the reader, therefore, the reader can go back and research when need arises. They give more detailed report than any other type of media. They can be used for market segmentation and for printing of adverts. Usually printed advertisement are of a better quality and are easily translated.

As pointed out earlier in Chapter 4, the Managing Director had asked the Manager Public Affairs to do a cost benefit analysis, which he never did. This was not done and reasons were not given. Wilcox et al. stressed the importance of choosing the media suitable for the type of work one does. They said:

Wise selection of media, based on the audience sought and the money available, is an important skill for public relations practitioners to develop (Wilcox et al., 1999:240).

ZR has internet facilities. Therefore, there is need for management to have a web site page. Before they could do this, there is need to examine between the print, electronic, Internet, and film media individually. The media and the public relations people need each other. There is need to understand each other. There is need to understand this sensitive interplay by the Public Affairs Department.

ZR prefers advertisements or press releases than any other form of communication. These are usually printed in the newspaper according to the customer's specifications.

7.5 Diffusion of information as means of communication in ZR

Everett Rogers (1995), the great researcher who introduced diffusion of information as a means of modernisation has defined organisational communication as discussed in Chapter 3.

The theoretical framework of this chapter is also based on diffusion of innovation, a process that communicates, that changes a new object, concept, or technology to members of the social system over a period of time (Rogers, 1995:Passim). According to Rogers (1995), the diffusion process assumes that within a social system an innovation is introduced, communicated, evaluated, and consequently either adopted or rejected.

According to Muller and Bass (1990), the diffusion process includes four key elements: innovations, communication channels, time, and social systems. For this study, the change or innovations is the change of ZR bad image through quick response or JIT and the social system in ZR.

The FGDs revealed that those who were in old management should have relinquished their positions or retired. One participant said:

You cannot put new wine in old skins. Therefore, the new management team should have come with their own people and place them in all strategic points. They could have performed better had they brought the people who were in the Bi-lateral Agreement. It is a pity that they do not know how subtle these people are.

The Bi-lateral agreement further reveals that the new management team and their higher educational levels and international experience as they stated in the Bi-lateral agreement could have performed better. The original structure on paper was superb. Managers of that calibre could have readily adopted innovations. Some of the old managers have had difficulties. For example, in adopting innovations despite some innovations being perceived as profitable.

Therefore, communication of the innovations to prospective adopters tends to decrease barriers to adoption. It is true that some managers lack exposure, coupled with limited knowledge about an innovation, although this can be changed over time.

It has been revealed that business can gain sustainable competitive advantage by innovations in technology. The quick response (QR) is a type of Just-In-Time (JIT) manufacturing system which have been adopted by many of ZR's major customers. Companies were no longer stock piling as in the past. Most of these customers' transit time is, therefore, very critical. The bad economy has affected every company to the point that they have adopted the JIT principles, which might put ZR at a disadvantage. The customers are linking their production to delivery time.

7.6 Quick Response and Just-In-Time innovations information as a means of communication in ZR

The QR and JIT have helped firms to respond to consumers' demands within a changing competitive environment. For example, LUSEN Distributors are the major distributors of various goods. They have a network of freight companies which they hire to distribute various goods like cement, cotton, maize, fish etc. ZR is not one of the companies being used by LUSEN because it considers ZR to be very inefficient. ZR can make earn out of this company if it adopted JIT methodologies. It is a pity that ZR cannot accommodate LUSEN Distributors who believe strongly in JIT.

From the data indicated in Chapter 6, it is apparent that ZR has not yet adopted the JIT principle. Immediately ZR will implement the JIT principles, the quick response will positively rebuild the image of ZR.

The quick response programme developed by Apparel Manufacturers and Retailers around 1985 was:

- A way to cope with problems challenging the Apparel industry, uses a combination of strategies to reduce inventory levels, improve merchandise, quality, increase stock turnovers, and reduce merchandise mark-downs and inventory costs (Kurt Salmon & Associates, 1990:29).

Fundamentally, QR is a way of gathering information about consumer preferences and to reflect them in production decisions in a timely manner. To comply with consumer needs, QR relies on sales data. Through computerised information systems, sales data are transmitted and transformed as useful information that reveals consumers' preferences and reactions and decisions are then made promptly to respond to what the customer wants.

This point was underscored by the Marketing Manager of Kabwe Industrial Fabrics Company (KIFCO), Juulu Simule. Therefore, if ZR would work on QR, it would not be a big problem, because co-operative relationships are established among customers through the coal co-ordinating meetings and other fora. Most of their major customers are linked to ZR by computers. Others are yet to be liked. They are nevertheless, constantly exchanging fax and telephone messages.

The factors discussed above provide guidance for ZR employers. Individual employees are happy with the new management team's vision and objectives. However, relatively, little is known about which factor or factors exert the most influence on the outcomes of employees' input. Having this information would assist employers in making the proper designation of individuals and thus, reduce the risk of costly penalties associated with misclassification. For example, the FGDs revealed:

Some positions have been given to some employees who are not eligible, just because they are related to some top officials.

The next chapter is the conclusion of the PAR and recommendations made during the attachment. The recommendation were based on the observations, therefore, they might be subjective. The attachee is grateful to the new management team that some of the recommendations made during the attachment were adopted.

Chapter 8

Conclusions and Recommendations

8.0 Introduction

The previous chapter examined public image in the light of the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter 3 at ZR. The attachee included interpretations, implications and criticisms in her findings and discussions.

ZR is one of the two main railway systems in the country designated to transport bulk goods. It is the cheapest mode of transport and is more environmental friendly than heavy road freight hauliers. It is the largest investment upon which other sectors of the economy depend. ZR is important for the development of Zambia which is a landlocked country. Therefore, there is need for ZR to maintain a good public image for the development of the country's transport sector.

8.1 Conclusions

People's perception normally take some time to change, therefore, the new management team could have taken advantage, or specifically developed a market-driven strategy for the railway industry to increase responsiveness to demand. Furthermore, small and medium size industries may still be reluctant to invest or use ZR transport due to the length of time required to deliver goods in order for them to realise returns on investment. Even though the attachee's attachment data did not offer direct answers to such issues, the attachee is urging ZR to consider potential long-term increases in productivity in the context of their return on investment.

Most importantly, ZR requires knowledge of the market, industry and available technology to survive and make profit. Seminars and in-house training are inevitable for all ZR employees, so that they are aware of the importance of keeping their customers informed on any developments and changes within ZR and those outside ZR but directly linked to it. That is, ZR should inform their customers about how ZR's bad image is improving with the coming of the new management team. The Public

Affairs should take the initiative of informing their customers that the improved image of ZR may improve their competitive advantage, especially with regard to faster merchandise turnaround time and merchandise production costs. For example, joint seminars and training programmes with other railway corridor members may provide opportunities to learn about JIT and customer care through communicating with railway firms like NORDIC Railways that have already adopted these new methods.

There is need for a multiway communication network in ZR. The attachee simply means that communication in departments should be regular lateral contacts with each other and that relevant information flows readily and easily up and down the management chain. Good communication which can easily change the perceived bad image of ZR and change it into a better company. This is only possible if seniors are not the only ones talking to subordinates and ordering them about. It must also include vertical communications from juniors to seniors, juniors talking to seniors and perhaps most importantly, seniors actually listening to what is being advised. This is vital in good organisational communication in the life of a vibrant firm.

In addition, in the marketing of ZR, there must also be good management communication between various departments. For example, the Marketing Research and Rates section of the Traffic and Marketing Directorate, should be in regular contact and have discussion with the Public Affairs Manager who advertises on behalf of other departments. There must also be good relations amongst departments. This cannot exist when there is antagonism, closed minds or lack of respect between any two parts of the marketing department.

ZR should realise that good communication is neither a propaganda exercise nor a flood of information that inundates, frustrates, confuses, or irritates the recipient. Good management communication is the art of informing people correctly and concisely so that they may perform effectively or an attempt to persuade others to see one's point of view.

The calling of restructuring specialists (new management) from Sweden to restructure the company has a lot to do with the top down method. Most business sectors in the country have been terribly affected in the same way. What happens is that when the visiting expertise leave, things have tumbled or gone back to their old deteriorated state. This makes one to wonder as to why the government cannot use local expertise in such duties. Sustainable development requires that local experts should be involved in the process of finding solutions to developmental issues.

Therefore, ZR needs to identify itself with the way it requires to operate. The Public Affairs Department needs to plan a controlled communication function by planning in advance in order to make a deliberate positive image. Most companies portray a negative image because they do not plan for the organisation in advance.

8.2 Recommendations

Without a good image it would be difficult for the company to prosper. Therefore the attachee made the following recommendations:

- 1 The Managing Director should set the tone to build trust among members of staff/employees, particularly between the administration and unionised workers.
- 2 Management should engage an independent consultant to evaluate their performance every two years or three years. The consultant should find out the sentiments of the staff and their major customers. The reason why they should engage an independent person is that members of staff may fear to express themselves if management carried out the exercise.
- 3 The company should begin addressing the issue of corporate identity, the Managing Director needs to emphasise on internal communication skills and strategies. This will enhance friendship and transparency amongst stakeholders.

- 4 Most workers would want to attend in-house seminars and refresher courses, in order to embrace the new innovations taking place in the world. Since the company cannot afford to send them for further training. The company should organise these.
- 5 Management should provide professional literature on different topics according to departments, including manuals, for the employees. This would enable them to be up to date in the industry.
- 6 Since the company does not have the capacity to send its employees for further training in order to improve their various skills, management should consider introducing loan facility or send employees for further studies. The money could be recovered in a stipulated period of time.
- 7 Loans for employees who are in strategic places should be facilitated. For example, employees like office orderlies should be given loans for bicycles. It would be very expensive for the company to be maintaining bicycles.
- 8 Since the secretaries are discontented with the method of promotion, management should have a clear policy just like any other professionals in the company.
- 9 There should be monthly meetings with the government on the rehabilitation of the track. Management should make the government realise that the ZR track infrastructure is its responsibility. In addition, ZR should organise a symposium through the office of the Directorate of Traffic and Marketing in conjunction with the National Roads Board and the government on how the dilapidated track infrastructure is affecting ZR business, Zambian economy and its effects on the life span of the main roads.

- 10 There should be a task force to inspect the work of the sub-contractors, to avoid sub-standard work. Management should aim at maintaining high standards of workmanship.
- 11 The standards will not be maintained if stakeholders (customers, employees, and clients) are not satisfied with the performance of Management. Therefore, it is imperative that Management gives emphasis to the genuine complaints raised by the employees. A Company's image is largely dependent on the performance of the employees. Therefore, if employees' needs are not met, they become frustrated and this affects their effectiveness and later the image of the company as well.
- 12 Since change is difficult to cope with, Management should handle their employees, with much patience.
- 13 Since the company at the moment has no signalling system, the trains are moving on paper orders. There is need to find out from other countries in the SADC and Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) on how they are managing the rail transport, so that ZR can learn from them. Civil Engineers and the key figures at shop floor should be sent on attachment to NRZ or Spoornet to see how their friends in the same environment are managing the track.
- 14 Management in conjunction with union president and his team should disseminate new information to union members from time to time.
- 15 The Managing Director through Manager Public Affairs should be represented in all monthly departmental meetings. This will enable Manager Public Affairs fit into the system, after the restructuring. There is needs to be more proactive than reactive if results have to be seen.

- 16 Departments and individuals that have been successful in internal fundraising strategies should be acknowledged at the highest level by giving them an award. Manager Public affairs under the auspices of the Managing Director need to encourage all employees to aim high.
- 17 There should be concerted effort to sell the Managing director's office to the would-be customers, who may not be familiar with the performance of the new Management. For this to succeed the Managing Director's Personal Secretary need to be proactive. She should be incorporated in the in-house training on customer care.
- 18 Employees should take the liberty to find answers to questions they may have. The management team is there for them
- 19 Manager Freight should ensure that the tarpaulins are accounted for. The Directorate of Traffic and marketing should come up with stringent measures. If possible, customers should be made to pay for any loss. If possible ZR should buy tarpaulins and ensure that there is accountability. The carelessness exhibited might result into employees taking advantage of the situation.
- 20 Station Masters in towns where there is much business like Chingola, Kitwe, and Ndola should be assigned with motor cycles, if vehicles are expensive to purchase for constant communication and supervision with the mines. Mobile cellular phones should also be bought for them, but stringent measures should be put in place so that there is no abuse of these facilities.
- 21 Since the passenger train has no running water, Manager Workshops should facilitate the quick installation of water tanks on passenger trains.
- 22 Manager Passengers and the Chief Medical Officer should ensure that the commercial/train inspectors, and health inspectors are on their feet carrying out

inspections of the passenger train before passengers board it. This would make the sub-contractors to abide by the contracts.

- 23 The Chief Medical Officer, under the auspices of the Company Secretary should not hesitate to cancel the contract of sub-contractors who are failing to meet the required health standards.
- 24 Sub-contractors with reputable names, not just because some one within the company knows them should be sub-contracted to carry out works.
- 25 Manager Public Affairs should enhance constant rapport between ZR and the sub-contractors to encourage friendship and standard workmanship.
- 26 The track infrastructure is a major setback despite being the backbone of ZR. ZR Management should consider to do away with the sub-contractors who are offering sub-standard work. Reputable companies who have been working for Spoornet and National Railways of Zimbabwe should, where possible be sub-contracted.
- 27 All managers should undergo an in house training on customer care. Manager freight has exposed members of his department to this course already.
- 28 There is need for managers to attend management workshops and seminars on how to manage people at colleges such as the National College for Management and Development Studies in Kabwe.
- 29 MFD equipment should be on the priority list because of the many derailments.
- 30 There should be consistency in the delivery of lime if ZR wishes to keep her old customer

- 31 The economic slump has affected every company. Most companies have stopped stock piling. They no longer tie their money in stocks. Therefore transit time is very critical. Just In Time is the word in business. Therefore, most companies believe in Just In Time Delivery. They are linking their production to the delivery time. The company must, therefore, endeavor to meet each customer's expectation and possibly exceed them.
- 32 ZR must find independent people from time to time to evaluate their performance in line with what the attachee did.
- 33 Communication skills and strategies, mass media, like radio, newspapers, Internet and television, must be enhanced within the company in order to build the good image. This will strengthen communication. This type of communication will help to build the right attitudes within and outside the company.

8.3 Conclusion

The rebuilding of a good image of ZR is inevitable. There is need for constant rapport between the government and ZR management. Through dialogue and consultation the government would be made to see the benefit of having a sound track infrastructure. The government should meet its obligations in the running of ZR. Most railways cited in this report said their governments maintain their track infrastructure. The inconsistency by the Zambian government in the running of ZR has made it inherently difficult to have and build a positive image.

The author is of the view that there should be proper communication strategies by ZR to provide a linkage with the government that will influence continuous rapport between the government and ZR. If this would be attained then a good public image will emerge in the light of what has been discussed in this report.

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